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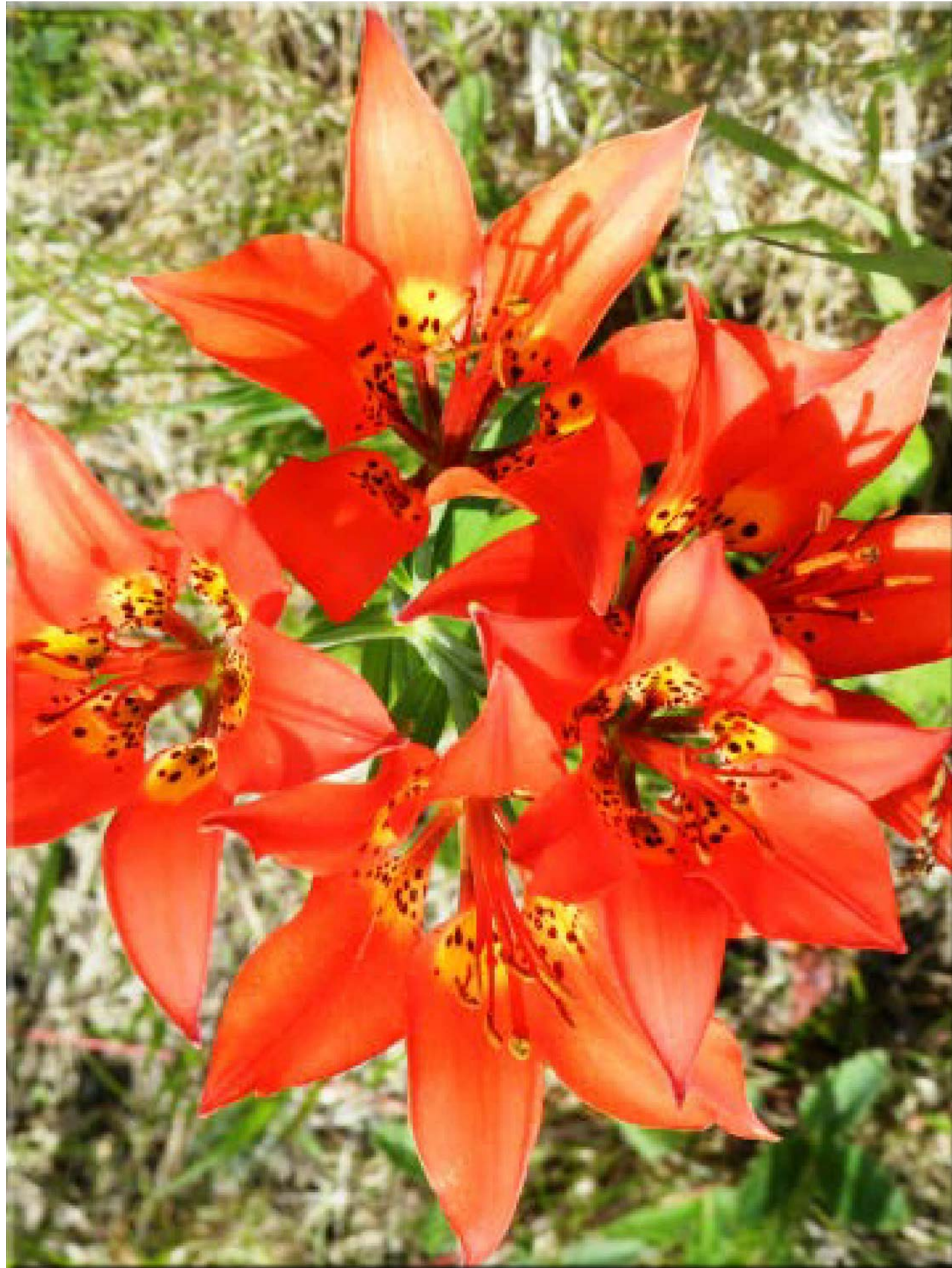
EDITORIAL

The annual migration had a different character this year: large flocks of ducks and trumpeter swans, usually only a handful in number, stopped and visited before flying through. The trumpeters stayed for three glorious weeks, flying beside the truck as I drove into town. Then the sand cranes arrived and hundreds of them moved onto the field next door, feeding and dancing and quarreling. It was a parliament of fowles. This *quint* also boasts a different character, offering new works for your summer reading. Celebrating the present and the past, this *quint* is made for those who appreciate diversity, covering topics concerned with the responsibility of the reader, Renaissance rhetoric, *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, subversion and sartorial codes, radical reform, poetical genetics, the *Terminator* films, landscape architecture, and apartheid.

Writing itself has proved to be our opening topic this spring. In "Critical Compassion: The Reader as Witness in Maria Campbell's *HalfBreed*," Keely Cronin examines the effectiveness of Campbell's didactic rhetoric. Then, using Erasmus, Patrick Harris, in "Renegotiating Religion: Renaissance Rhetoric," masterfully discusses a gestalt of shared ideas found throughout the works of Margaret Fell and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Next, George Steven Swan thoughtfully reviews the proposition that a key to the creation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was an little known play, Anthony Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (with its humbly-born character Turnop). Courtney C. Jacobs takes us into the nineteenth century with her insightful discussion of cross-dressing in "The Clothes Make the (Wo)man: Nineteenth- Century Female Literacy, Subversive Sartorial Codes & Tabitha Tenney's Cross-Dressed Novel." Also grounded in the nineteenth century, Kiri Walden's groundbreaking article, "Writing for rights: how Caroline Norton sugared the pill of radical reform" introduces us to an overlooked women's rights writer. Moving into the twentieth century, Carrie L. Krucinski gracefully charts the literary influence of Sylvia Plath in "*Bloodlines: The Poetical Genetics of Sylvia Plath, Louise Gluck, and Sharon Olds*." Following, Antonio Sanna's perceptive paper, "The Dystopian Future of the *Terminator* Saga and the Battle that 'would be fought here, in our present,'" investigates presentations of technology and culture in the popular *Terminator* series. Lunberry Clarke's highly enjoyable meditation on landscape art and architecture, "Landscape onto Language: Floating Form Less," delights in the playfulness of reader response. Finally, we are honoured to welcome Sharon L. Joffe back to *the quint*. "Michael Jackson, Apartheid, and Me" reminds us that individuals and artists can improve the world.

the quint welcomes a new poet, Laura Hanna and her exquisite work to the journal. Like Sharon L. Joffe, Anne Jevene has returned and has brought us a sampling of her verse. I thought it was time to showcase the variety of things North of the 53rd Parallel. Here's to stimulating reading and thoughtful poetry on those comfortable midsummer evenings! I'm looking forward to sitting on my back porch again with this copy of *quint* and a cool drink. *the quint* will be back in September with more offerings just in time for cooler weather. Until then, may you find beauty before, behind, and on every side of you.

**Sue Matheson
Co-Editor**



Northern Tigers

Photo: Sue Matheson

Critical Compassion: The Reader as Witness in Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*

by Keely Cronin, University of Waterloo, Kitchner, Ontario

In Maria Campbell's autobiography, *Halfbreed*, the narrator often speaks directly to the reader, asking questions and provoking a dialogue with the text. While some critics have indicated that Campbell intends to enact an "explicitly didactic purpose" towards potential white readers (Keahey 101), and others assert that she hopes to inspire and comfort Indigenous readers (Episkenew), I would suggest that this direct address in fact establishes Campbell's story as testimony, and therefore figures the reader as a witness to the victories, tragedies, hopes, and injustices that Campbell experiences as a Metis woman in Canada. As a witness, the reader bears the responsibility of creating meaning in the text, which I will argue is crucial in determining the effectiveness of Campbell's autobiography. Of course, all readers will react to and engage with the text differently, but I suggest that investing readers with the responsibility of witnessing can encourage particular behaviours and promote certain outcomes in the reading process. There are three aspects to the act of witnessing: an affective response, an intellectual engagement, and an ethical responsibility to the narrative and its narrator. Each of these necessitates

the others, and can facilitate a reading in which the witness engages in a dialogue with the testimony, and allows her politics, ethics, and actions to be influenced by it. To establish such a dialogue, Campbell connects to her witness emotionally, encouraging the reader to identify with the narrator as well as other characters in the text, and to exercise compassion and empathy through these connections. However, one must also problematize an exclusively emotional response to the text, in that it can easily overlook the complexities of context, racial difference, or one's own privilege. As such, critical self-reflection is necessary to acknowledge one's prejudice and understand how it influences a reading of the autobiography. In fact, Campbell models the kind of compassionate and critical responses she hopes to find in a witness, and indicates that the appropriate affective and intellectual reading of the text can provoke a sense of ethical responsibility to the narrative and its narrator, allowing the autobiography to fulfill its purpose of not only testifying "what it is like" to be Metis in Canada, but also transforming the witness and promoting action. As such, reading *Halfbreed* as a witness to Campbell's testimony creates a productive reading practice in which the autobiography achieves its aims: to communicate an alternative to the dominant narratives in Canadian history, and to incite emotion, thought, and action in the engaged reader.

First, Campbell establishes her autobiography as a counter-narrative to the discourse of Canadian history. In doing so, she portrays the particular experience of the Metis in Canada, but also establishes a point of common interest with the reader. From the beginning of *Halfbreed*, she clearly addresses her intended audience, stating "I write this for all of you, to tell you what it is like to be a Halfbreed woman in our country. I want to tell you about the joys and sorrows, the oppressing poverty, the frustrations and the

dreams" (Campbell 8). The emphasis on the reader, "you," is noteworthy here, in that it sets her apart from the narrator, indicating that Campbell will provide a perspective on life in Canada to which the reader may not otherwise have access. However, Campbell also refers to Canada as "our" country, aligning herself to some extent with the Canadian reader as she presents this alternate history. Campbell presents her memoir as "what it was like . . . what it is still like," asserting the reality of the life she writes and challenging the reader to see both the historical truth and the present reality of the Metis people (13). She details the early lives of the Metis as hunters and fur-traders, as well as the intrusion of white settlers and resulting disruption of Metis economics, government, and traditions. According to Campbell, because the Metis people found that their "way of life" was suddenly "a part of Canada's past," their future became one of "poverty" and "shame" (13). Christine Crowe indicates that when an "Aboriginal auto-biographer makes a truth-claim, the implicit question that follows that claim - "Do you believe me?" - creates a critical dialogic site between the author/narrator and the reader within specific historical and political contexts" (190). In Campbell's text, the implicit "Do you believe me?" is followed by explicit direct addresses and questions to the reader, which reinforce and maintain this dialogue. Additionally, the fact that Campbell opens her narrative with a historical account of her people situates it within a greater narrative, suggesting that it is just as historically accurate, significant, and powerful as anything that "the history books say" (Campbell 11). I would indicate that, in Campbell's efforts to define her story as taking place outside of the dominant Canadian discourse, while also aligning herself with the reader as a fellow Canadian, she establishes the text as what A.E. Janetta calls a site of both "dialogue and difference" (Janetta 63). Campbell engages the reader in her

narrative through points of comparison, while also specifying that this text will challenge the assumptions of the prevailing national narrative, creating alignment with the reader while also maintaining difference.

The creation of both unity and distance between reader and narrator contributes to the witness-testimony dynamic, as it is clear that the reader, while certainly apart from the events testified to, also has a stake in the narrative. As Dori Laub indicates in her book *Testimony*, which addresses the position of the witness in Holocaust studies, the role of the reader or listener is necessary for the testimony to succeed; there needs to be “a bonding, the intimate and total presence of an *other* - the position of one who hears. Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude” (71). For *Halfbreed* to satisfy its purpose, the reader must act as a witness to the events and conditions described in the text, and be emotionally involved in the testimony: “the listener has to feel the victim’s victories, defeats, and silences, know them from within, so that they can assume the form of testimony” (58). This degree of participation in the traumatic narrative will create for the reader an “ethical imperative” to engage with and even experience “part of the original trauma, albeit in a secondary manner” (Rak 56). By directly addressing the reader, asking questions, and trusting the witness with personal, painful details, Campbell asserts that her work is not a monologue, but a dialogue in which she expects the reader to participate. It is important to note, however, that the witness also “stands at a distance” from the events represented in the text (Bernard-Donals and Glazjer 15), and she must be aware of this distance so as to avoid falsely identifying with the narrator of the testimony. Therefore, Campbell provides cues along the way for the witness, to promote an understanding of the connections being made, as well as the moments at

which the reader must be conscious of her distance. Campbell’s autobiography provides opportunities for the reader to recognize shared interests and develop an intimacy with the narrator, but also cultivates awareness of where she does not or cannot align with the perspective of the Metis narrator.

The witness-testimony framework places significant responsibility on the reader to form a connection with the text, just as the writer must facilitate that connection. Laub asserts that there are three levels of witnessing: “the level of being a witness to oneself within the experience, the level of being a witness to the testimonies of others, and the level of being a witness to the process of witnessing itself” (75). I would suggest that, in the narrator-reader dynamic of Campbell’s autobiography, the reader acts as the second form of witness, as she is involved “not in the events, but in the account given of them” (76); in her position as listener, she is required to support and bring to life the narrator’s testimony. As Jo-Ann Episknew indicates in *Taking Back Our Spirits*, Indigenous autobiography such as *Halfbreed* works “on a moral level” by “inspiring empathy in its readers and by appealing to their sense of justice” (75). The emotional connection that Episknew refers to will establish the necessary intimacy between narrator and reader, and encourage the witness to participate in a dialogue with the text through her own emotional responses. The reader should also, however, enact witnessing on the third level, as witness to the “process of witnessing itself,” to “realize [the] dimensions” of the testimony and to “reflect on . . . memories as they are spoken, so as to reassert the veracity of the past and build anew its linkage to, and assimilation into, present-day life” (Laub 76). This third level is particularly important in that Canadian history is called into question and rewritten as Campbell presents the events of the Red River Rebellion from

the perspective of the Metis. She provides contextual details and the motivation of her people, “decolonizing the history of the colonial regime and, by extension, the national collective myth” of Canada (Episkenew 79). She also emphasizes the contemporary circumstances of the Metis, providing an opportunity for her witness to reflect on the social and political conditions that disenfranchise Campbell’s people so as to “build anew its linkage to, and assimilation into, present-day life” (Laub 76). As a witness, the reader will participate in Campbell’s testimony, but by practicing awareness of her role in this process, she will complete the important work of reflecting thoughtfully to develop a sense of responsibility to the text.

Having established the three fundamental responsibilities of the witness, one must investigate how Campbell facilitates both emotional connection and critical engagement with the text in order to develop in the reader an ethical motivation to effect change. First, Campbell appeals to the reader on an affective level, provoking emotions such as empathy or compassion in her narrative. Early in the text, Campbell frequently addresses the reader directly, inviting her to witness life within a Metis home and community. Describing her childhood home in Chapter 3, for example, Campbell begins with what is essentially an invitation into the text: “I should tell you now about our home before I go any further” (19). She then details the colourful “braided rugs,” the “special smell,” and the “kitchen and living room . . . combined into one of the most beautiful rooms” she has ever seen (19, 20). Though it is clear that the family lives in poverty, this warm, intimate description of a place that is dear to the narrator reinforces her connection to the reader, who is invited into a space that is sacred to the narrator, implying trust and closeness between Campbell and the witness. In addition, she also provides opportunities for the

reader to identify with her experience through small details and common childhood adventures. In “But Enough about Me, What do You Think of my Memoir?,” Nancy K. Miller suggests that autobiography establishes a “relational mode” between writers and their readers that “creates identifications . . . conscious or unconscious, across a broad spectrum of so-called personal experience” (Miller). In one childhood anecdote, Campbell states “like many other kids, I ran away from home,” providing an opportunity for the reader to draw a parallel to her own life before reading the rest of the anecdote, which is both humorous and indicative of the care of her family and community. Such opportunities for identification also address more serious subjects, such as the poverty and disenfranchisement of her people. Later in the autobiography, after her father’s involvement in Metis politics ends in frustration, Campbell details the detrimental effect that this disappointment has on her entire family and asks “Have you ever watched a man die inside?” (68). Here, she asks the reader a direct question, provoking a dialogue in which the reader must consider her own experience as well as her potential complicity in the events that led to the devastation of Campbell’s father. Again, the inclusion of this very personal detail establishes a point of connection that has the potential to elicit an emotional response or even a point of identification. The witness to this event can certainly recognize and perhaps even understand the pain that a child might feel at seeing her father so disheartened. By providing such opportunities for empathetic connection and identification for the reader, Campbell facilitates the project of witnessing for the reader.

Though the process of identification is important in establishing a connection between witness and narrator, it can also sometimes work to emphasize the differences

between the two. For example, when Maria is fourteen, she befriends a young white girl named Karen, with whom she becomes very close. I would suggest that, for a potential white and/or middle-class reader, Karen provides an opportunity for the witness to identify with someone other than Maria in the narrative. Campbell states that “Karen was the first person that [she] ever confided in,” and that her friend understood the “fears and poverty” of her family and “helped . . . when she could” (82), a parallel to the intimacy, empathy, and kindness of Campbell’s reader. She fondly remembers sharing her dreams with Karen, but realizes that these dreams were “so different from each other’s”; while Karen “admires” and romanticizes the poverty in which the Campbells live, Maria sees that Karen takes “her lovely home for granted” and fervently wishes to some day be able to “finish school and take [her] family away to the city,” things that, for Karen, are unquestioned (83). In this instance, Campbell directly refers to the privilege of her white friend and the advantages it will bring in her future, as well as Karen’s apparent ignorance of this privilege. For a white settler reader, this is an opportunity to draw parallels between her own life and Karen’s, and therefore to reflect upon the text to develop an understanding of how her own privilege has come at the expense of others, and how this might affect her reading process. In such an instance, the emotions that a reader will experience in identifying with Karen might not be positive, but the event of witnessing demands that the witness not “simply recognize the event but . . . confront it” (Bernard-Donals and Glejzer 12). Identifying with Karen in this instance forces the witness to confront her feelings of guilt and and sadness at her complicity in the colonial structures that so severely oppress Campbell’s family and community and, as Bernard-Donals and Glejzer indicate, this is a necessary process if the the witness is to fulfill her

responsibility to the text.

A reader-as-witness structure provides the possibility for an affective reaction to the text; the reader can identify and empathize with the protagonist or with other characters in the narrative, cultivating emotions of compassion, happiness, frustration, pity, and guilt. However, an exclusively emotional response in the reader could potentially be problematic in that it may not adequately acknowledge the effects of racial difference that are unavoidable if the reader is, in fact, a white reader, as some suggest Campbell intended. According to Julie Watson and Sidonie Smith, “the axes of the subject’s identifications and experiences are multiple, because locations in gender, class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality complicate one another . . . [and] do [not] overlap neatly or entirely” (xiv). In other words, the perspectives of both narrator and reader are complicated by various factors, and the reader must be aware of these complications rather than assuming that she fully comprehends or empathizes with the testified experience of the narrator. For example, some readers may identify with Maria on the basis of gender, responding emotionally to the challenges of motherhood, femininity, vulnerability, and sexism in their reading. However, one cannot assume an “undifferentiated (read normatively white) global “sisterhood,”” and therefore a white female reader can only identify with Maria to a certain extent (Watson and Smith xv). Alternatively, as Roxanne Rimstead points out, *Halfbreed* is also a poverty narrative, which provides the opportunity for a witness to identify with the protagonist through “her struggle to support her brothers and sisters through extreme poverty, which includes dropping out of public school, working . . . at cleaning and other forms of child labour, scrounging for food, and hiding from the welfare agency” (156). In fact, Campbell herself refers to this potential similarity, saying

“I know that poverty is not ours alone. Your people have it too” (13). However, she immediately expands on this potential point of connection to emphasize the difference, noting “but in those earlier days, at least you had dreams, you had a tomorrow” (13). For Maria, discrimination occurs not on one of these axes, but on all three: gender, class, and race. Cheryl Suzack points out that “Campbell’s story . . . articulates how social and political discourses intersect to facilitate her disempowerment along axes of race and gender” (132), creating a particular narrative of discrimination that is unique to Campbell’s experience. As such, identification with Maria or her family on the basis of gender or class risks minimizing the racial difference that informs Maria’s experience as a Metis woman living in poverty. Rather, the witness must negotiate her own privilege and engage critically with the text to understand how racial difference can make full identification with the narrator impossible, even if she can identify on other axes.

If the reader has an affective response to the narrative by identifying with Maria as a woman, or as one who has lived in poverty, there must be an intentional consideration of how these aspects are impacted and exacerbated by Campbell’s position as a racial “other.” When Maria drops out of school to help support her siblings by cleaning houses for women in her community, her employers often discriminate against her on all three axes of race, class, and gender. One of her employers, Mr. Grey’s oldest daughter, “didn’t like Indians and talked in front of [Maria] as if [she] was deaf. She would tell her visitors that [they] were only good for two things - working and fucking, if someone could get [them] to do either” (Campbell 94). Other employers show prejudice because she is poor, watching her “in case [she] stole something,” or on the basis of her gender, worrying

that she will “lead sons or husbands down the garden path” (94). In these instances, the witness-reader may identify with Maria because of the classist or sexist treatment she experiences, but a white reader cannot identify fully because Maria’s race exacerbates and intensifies the discrimination against her. As Anne Whitehead notes in “Reading with Empathy,” an analysis of similar issues in Sindiwe Magona’s *Mother to Mother*, sometimes “‘being moved’ can too easily blur into ‘moving on,’ which in turn fails to recognize the ongoing struggle” of the racially oppressed; therefore, an experience of *Halfbreed* in which the reader empathizes on the basis of class or gender without considering how her own racial privilege differs from Maria’s is a problematic and incomplete reading (193). Whitehead also quotes Hemmings, who asserts that “empathy may alter the white subject by ‘expanding her horizons’ but it ‘in many ways reinforces the position that she (always already) occupies in relation to the racialized Other’” (185). A text such as *Halfbreed* emphasizes the necessity of self-reflection and intellectual engagement on the part of the reader-witness so as to identify instances in which emotional identification is appropriate, and others in which it is impossible.

I would suggest that placing the responsibility of the witness upon the reader can potentially prevent some of the aforementioned problems that can occur when a reader has a visceral response to a text. The act of witnessing requires not only emotional participation, but a critical, intellectual engagement in which the reader determines her own relationship “to [the] atrocity” (Rak 57). In her discussion about teaching trauma narratives in universities, Julie Rak suggests that “the witness helps to make the human effects of history both visible and communal [and] . . . must confront the trauma of

her own history as part of the witnessing process” (57). Rather than responding to Campbell’s autobiography with pity, or inappropriately identifying with her without proper regard for racial difference, the witness must instead reflect on her own complicity in the oppression of the Metis in Canada. Campbell indicates her desire for such a response in a 1991 interview with Hartmut Lutz, in which she says

if you sit across the table from me, and you say “You poor thing, you’ve been oppressed, you live under colonization” . . . you cop out from what your people came from. And we’re no longer equal sitting across the table from each other. What happens then is, I become the poor oppressed person, and you have power over me.” (59-60)

Campbell’s statement that to pity someone is to have power over that person suggests that an affective response to her work can potentially reinscribe the racial hierarchy in which the white reader has power over the Metis writer. She states, however, that if both reader and writer “acknowledge that [their] grandfathers and grandmothers came through great struggles, then [they] can talk to one another . . . and appreciate and value what [they] have to say” (Interview 60). An openness on the part of both narrator and witness creates a dialogue in which “the autobiographical occasion . . . becomes a site on which cultural ideologies intersect and dissect one another, in contradiction, consonance, and adjacency. Thus the site is rife with potentials” (Smith and Watson xix). If the reader acknowledges that Campbell’s life story has been impacted by a long history of political disenfranchisement specific to the Metis people, and recognizes her own part in it, just as

Campbell acknowledges the faults and difficulties of her people, reader and narrator have the potential to bring about a future of people “com[ing] together as one” that Maria hopes for at the end of *Halfbreed* (Campbell 156).

As I have indicated, it is important for Campbell to cultivate both an affective response and a critical self-awareness in her reader in order to create an ideal witness to her life story. To encourage this level of engagement, Campbell herself models the compassion, respect, and empathy that she hopes to find in her reader-witness. Beginning in Chapter 16, she details her descent into prostitution and drug abuse after Darrel leaves her, and takes full responsibility for her decisions in this instance, saying “I could say at this point I was innocent and had no idea what I was getting into . . . [but] I knew . . . There was all the opportunity in the world to run away those first few months, but instead I made myself believe that one day I would wake up and there would be all the things in life which were important to me” (Campbell 116). Immediately after this statement, however, she models the compassion and empathy that she hopes to find in the reader, saying “I feel an overwhelming compassion and understanding for another human being caught in a situation where the way out is so obvious to others but not to him” (116). Here, the reader might be tempted to criticize Campbell’s decisions, but she reminds the witness of her responsibility to reflect upon her reaction and to consider the context in which Maria makes this decision. At this point in the narrative, Campbell specifies that she still dreams of “symbols of white ideals of success,” which “when followed blindly . . . can lead to the disintegration of one’s soul,” and it is because of these dreams that she resorts to prostitution and then drugs (Campbell 116). With this statement, Campbell reminds the reader of the social and political factors that have brought Maria to a point

in her life in which prostitution seems like a viable option, and therefore reinforces the importance of compassion and awareness of the larger issues at hand.

I would indicate that Campbell also models the self-awareness that her readers must practice after many of the anecdotes in which she is inclined to judge others based on their actions. This self-awareness is central to the act of witnessing; as Rak indicates, the witness has an “ethical imperative to . . . hear the survivor’s story (and importantly, the silences which make up part of that story) and *understand her own reactions* to the story as it is being made” (Rak 56 emphasis mine). Throughout *Halfbreed*, Campbell often discusses her own process of self-reflection; she reveals her judgements and prejudices, often towards her own people, but also indicates how she negotiates a more nuanced, thoughtful response in which she is sensitive to the context of the situation and the humanity of those whom she is inclined to judge, as well as her own similar faults. Near the end of her autobiography, Campbell states that a close friend, Edith, taught her a valuable lesson: “to look at [herself] as critically as [she] looked at [others], and to believe that the same thing that drove [her], drove them to being what they were, that basically we had all suffered trouble and misery, and that their problems were as big and as important as [hers], regardless of how unimportant [she] thought they were” (Campbell 143). In Chapter 21, Maria puts this self-reflection into practice as she finds herself tempted to judge a mother who leaves her young children vulnerable to racism. When Maria is working in a restaurant in a small town in Alberta, “two little Indian boys came in” to use the bathroom, and the white patrons in the establishment mocked the children, saying “Watch it! The bow and arrows are coming” (136). Maria makes sure the

children return to their parents, and for a moment is tempted to criticize their mother for being “too gutless” to enter the restaurant and protect her sons (136). However, she realizes that she cannot blame these parents because she “understood why they were afraid,” and recognizes that she too sometimes hides under the blanket of shame to avoid facing reality, “ugly as it was” (137). After the anecdote, Campbell reflects on the social conditions that have shaped this family before she passes judgement, and in doing so, prompts the reader, who has witnessed this event through Campbell’s telling, to be equally thoughtful and consider context before judging. Though the witness may not be able to identify with the experience of racial prejudice as Maria can in this situation, she can at least consider the social and political forces that have contributed to the debilitating shame of the parents before judging their inability to protect their children.

For the reader, recognizing one’s privilege and admitting the benefits of this privilege may be difficult both intellectually and emotionally, but it is this very process that allows the event of testimony to fulfill its purpose. Therefore, the witness must face “difficult knowledges” in a process of “intellectual, emotional, and ethical engagement that exerts enormous demands on the reader” (Perreault and Kadar 6). As Sara Ahmed indicates in *The Cultural Poetics of Emotion*, maintaining consciousness of context, racial difference, and one’s own privilege will not necessarily be an easy task in that it will not “transform bad feeling into good feeling” (193). Therefore, engaging critically with a text such as *Halfbreed* does not leave the reader free of guilt or shame at her complicity in Canadian oppression of Indigenous populations. These lingering feelings are significant in that they do not allow “being moved” to easily lead to “moving on,” preventing the affective response from being the only response (Whitehead 193). However, Ahmed notes that

to recognise the injustices of colonisation as a history of the present is to rewrite history . . . If the violence of what happened is recognised, as a violence that shapes the present, then the ‘truths’ of history are called into question . . . Recognition is . . . about claiming that an injustice did happen; the claim is a radical one in the face of the forgetting of such injustices. (200)

Ahmed’s statement reinforces the importance of the role of the witness to Campbell’s autobiography, in that she must face the “difficult knowledges” she encounters in the text, including her own struggles with complex emotions and reactions (Perreault and Kadar 6), in order to carry out her responsibility to “recognize the injustices of colonisation” (Ahmed 200). Though such a task will certainly be difficult for the witness, Ahmed asserts that the simple act of recognition, free of condescension, co-option, or pity, has power in itself.

As I have demonstrated, figuring the reader as a witness to the events of Campbell’s life and the condition of her people encourages a response that is both emotional and intellectual. This complex dialogue with Campbell’s autobiography also facilitates in the reader an ethical obligation to the text and its narrator, which can potentially encourage the kind of political and social change that Campbell hopes for at the end of the text. Though Western critical practices tend to privilege reason over emotion, I would suggest that it is the combination of the two that can be powerful and influential in determining the political engagement of a citizen. As Diana Brydon theorizes in “Dionne Brand’s Global Intimacies,” one must accept that, in addition to reason, “emotion plays a part in determining the ways in which citizens make sense of political reality” to create an

appropriate response to political events and social conditions (1002). Brydon identifies significant power in the “emotional registers of the political” that can allow one to challenge the “dominant imaginaries” that continue to oppress and victimize the Other (997). Therefore, the witness can cultivate both reason and emotion to motivate political action and contribute to Craig Womack’s vision of “relating literature to the real world in the hopes of seeing social change” (96). Similarly, Episkew asserts that the power of Indigenous stories lies in their transformative abilities, and insists that identification and transformation are available even to a white settler reader. She suggests that Indigenous literature allows the witness to “come to understand Indigenous people as fellow human beings,” which, in turn, “has the potential to create a groundswell of support for social-justice initiatives to improve the lot of Indigenous people” (190-1). Such a paradigm relies on the reader to connect with and show compassion for the Indigenous lives portrayed in literature, and to recognize her “own unearned advantage, [her] own complicity” rather than to simply “enact an externalized form of recognition relative to Indigenous people’s truths” (Hargreaves 96). As Crowe indicates, witnessing is “a political and “dynamic” process whereby society both receives and is altered by the testimony,” suggesting that there is significant potential for action and transformation in the witness, who is “charged with the responsibility of carrying on the story and ensuring its continued transmittal” (190). Indeed, considering the reader as a witness to Campbell’s testimony involves her emotionally, intellectually, and ethically, rather than constructing her as outside of the text. Such participation and investment work to engender political motivation, and the reader may be involved in work to “improve the lot” of Indigenous people in Canada as a result.

It seems that Campbell may indeed intend to incite action in her readers through her autobiography, as she frequently expresses her belief that unity among Canadians would benefit us all. Though she certainly recognizes the importance of acknowledging difference, and encourages readers to be aware of privilege, Campbell also prompts them to establish connections with one another in whatever way possible. In many cases, she speaks of the plight of Canada's poor, and indicates that these people should develop a "united voice on many issues affecting both whites and Natives" (155). Campbell's activism begins when she is just a young girl, inspired by Jim Brady's declaration that "many people were poor, not just [the Metis]" and his hope that "maybe someday we could put all our differences aside and walk together and build a better country for our children" (65). Though Brady's later actions disappoint Campbell, his sentiments seem to stay with her. She states at the beginning of *Halfbreed* that "poverty is not ours alone. Your people have it too," and later expresses her sadness that "poor people, both white and Native, who are trapped within a certain kind of life, can never look to the business and political leaders of this country for help" (118). Here, it is Campbell who exercises empathy, as she acknowledges the plight of the poor across Canada, regardless of race. However, she also empowers them by suggesting that, if they unite, they have the potential to effect change in Canadian society. She states

I realize that an armed revolution of Native people will never come about; even if such a thing were possible what would we achieve? We would only end up oppressing someone else. I believe that one day, very soon, people will set aside their differences and come together. Maybe not because we love

each other, but because we will need each other to survive. Then together we will fight our common enemies. Change will come because this time we won't give up. (156-157)

Here, the "we" shifts from the "we" of the Metis people at the beginning to the "we" of all Canadians, and though she states just moments earlier that she is not the "idealistically shiny-eyed young woman" she once was, this statement is nonetheless hopeful and inclusive, as Campbell envisions "our country" as truly united (156, 8). For Campbell, "ultimately the notion of connection and relation is more important than the notion of difference," and she hopes that literature can facilitate alternative modes of connection to inspire different groups of people to create change (Jannetta 64).

As I have established, reading Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* as a witness to the events to which she testifies encourages both emotional participation in and critical engagement with the autobiography. This involves identification with characters in the text and self-awareness on the part of the witness, in that she must align herself with the narrator while also maintaining consciousness of her own privilege and prejudices. As Hargreaves indicates, a text that figures the reader as witness "invites the more profound recognition" of her complicity in the oppression of and discrimination against Indigenous populations (Hargreaves 96). Campbell facilitates such an emotional stake on the part of the witness by speaking directly to her, inviting her into the narrative, and asking questions to request her participation. As I have suggested, however, an exclusively emotional relationship to a text can be problematic in that the reader may not reflect upon her own privilege or consider how this has affected her connection to the narrative. Therefore, Campbell models the compassionate, thoughtful response she hopes to find in her reader, which can

provide the impetus needed for the text to effect change by inspiring action on the part of the witness. As Episkenew indicates, Indigenous autobiography “is an act of imagination that inspires social regeneration by providing eyewitness testimony to historical injustices” (75). It is, therefore, both political, “which requires action,” and ethical, which “requires moral engagement” (Ross, qtd. in Episkenew 75). By provoking empathy in the reader while also necessitating self-reflection and participation, Indigenous autobiography such as *Halfbreed* can encourage readers to seek “social change by challenging [them] to take action to redress injustices” (75). However, the act of witnessing Campbell’s *Halfbreed* poses a particularly complex process for the reader, as “a more radical reckoning with . . . privilege . . . offers no immediate comforts, but instead much uncertainty and work” (Hargreaves 98). It is just this “radical reckoning” that, one hopes, will motivate the reader to fulfill her ethical responsibility to the text, to become politically involved, working toward the unity for which Campbell still hopes (Hargreaves 98). As such, reading-as-witness is a particularly productive practice in which the reader can allow her emotional investment and critical engagement to develop a sense of ethical responsibility towards the text, which will, in turn, incite action and create change.

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After Dusting Canary Yellow Walls

It's about the rose,
about its inability

to tell me
about the beauty

in your eyes,
their tiredness

leaving behind
a trace of blue—

a memory
for

everything
they
touch.

—Laura Hanna



Renegotiating Religion: Renaissance Rhetoric

by Patrick Harris, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

The Renaissance, we are taught, was a time of learning, a time of knowledge, and a time of renewed intellect. This was the period in which our society emerged from the Dark Ages and began its steady upward ascent to its current pinnacle. While the merits of this particular narrative are certainly subject to debate, there can be no question that the ideas of the era were revolutionary. However, there does appear to be a trend within them. In the course of our exploration of Renaissance authors, I found remarkable similarities in the works of Margaret Fell and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. In the pages that follow, I will show that these, coupled with the guidance of Erasmus—one of the earliest rhetorical theorists of the era—reveal a gestalt of the shared ideas of the Renaissance.

Well-Spoken Women

Margaret Fell's tract *Women's Speaking Justified, Proved, and Allowed by the Scriptures* is, as one might gather from the name, devoted entirely to the justification of public speaking by women. In this text, we see an important rhetorical move: The deliberate reinterpretation of scriptural passages. This move is best appreciated in its context. Fell

chose to address her essay to supposedly learned men whose lives were devoted to the interpretation of the Bible, and she chose to contradict them using that very same text. I find it extremely unlikely that Fell arrived at this decision lightly. She was persecuted on numerous occasions for her religious affiliations, including four years imprisonment “under grim conditions,” during which *Women’s Speaking* was written (Bizzell and Herzberg 750). Regardless, she launched into her argument with fervor.

Interestingly, Fell did not open with the aforementioned reinterpretation, but instead chose to reach out to her audience by reiterating something she felt they should already know: The parable of Eve and the Serpent. Having restated the highlights, Fell summarized the results of God’s judgment by writing,

Let this word of the Lord, which was from the beginning, stop the mouths of all that opposed womens [sic] speaking in the power of the Lord; for he hath put enmity between the woman and the serpent; and if the seed of the woman speak not, the seed of the serpent speaks; for God hath put enmity between the two seeds, and it is manifest, that those that speak against the woman and her seeds speaking, speak out of the enmity of the old serpents seed; and God hath fulfilled his word and his promise. (753)

Notice here the fervor of which I spoke—Fell’s opening argument is that those who oppose the raising of women’s voices are benefiting the descendants of the biblical serpent.

After so strong an overture, Fell does not slow down, but moves steadily on to the reinterpretation noted above. The primary focus of her opposition—and therefore, of

Fell herself—is a statement by the Apostle Paul, who reportedly said “Let your women keep silence in the Church” (qtd. in Fell 754). Wisely, Fell chooses not to challenge the authority of the Apostle Paul, nor to argue that his words were recorded improperly. Instead, she suggests that the context of the passage is necessary to understand it. By grounding the quote in its setting, she declares that Paul was speaking to both genders in turn: “Where it doth plainly appear that the women, as well as others, that were among them, were in confusion, for he saith ... ‘If any man speak in an unknown tongue ... let him keep silence in the Church.’ Here the man is commanded to keep silence as well” (755).

However, she is not content with this interpretation alone. She goes on to quote Paul’s assertion that “They are commanded to be in obedience, as also saith the law”¹ and therefore should ask their husbands questions at home rather than in church (qtd. in Fell 755). Fell’s argument seems to hinge on the notion that the phrase “saith the law” indicates a sub-group of women in general. In other words, the women to which Paul referred are those operating under Jewish law, having not (yet) converted to Christianity. While this is, perhaps, not the most effective argument that was available to her, it certainly does give pause; I leave consideration of its veracity to those more versed in Scripture than I.

Lest we misunderstand Fell’s argument as hinging entirely on biblical interpretation, she gives due consideration to the religious affiliation of her detractors. As an Englishwoman

¹ In the interest of accuracy, I find it necessary to note that it is unclear in the source text how much of this is a direct quote from the Bible and how much is Fell’s interpretation. In the available copy of Fell’s tract, quotes are marked by italics, and in this case, it reads as follows: “But the Apostle saith further, *They are commanded to be in obedience*, as also saith the Law; and *if they will learn any thing ...*” (755). Searches online for the source of the quote (1 Corinthians 34-5) reveal a wide variety of translations, none directly matching this, but all contain some reference to something similar to “the Law.” I am unable to determine whether the absent italics in Fell’s text are an indication of emphasis, an artifact of printing, or something else entirely.

in the 1660s, said detractors were rather by definition affiliated with the Church of England. Within the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, a portion of the prayer service used by the Anglican church, one finds Mary's speech praising God. Fell makes what might be considered an obvious argument regarding this hypocrisy: "Are you not here beholding to the Woman for her Sermon, to use her words to put into your Common Prayer? and [sic] yet you forbid Womens [sic] Speaking" (758).

These three moves—the reminder of obvious examples, the reinterpretation of opposing arguments, and the nod to established doctrine as supporting her argument—combine to make an effective argument. While in Fell's case it was not a particularly conciliatory argument, the structure itself does not necessitate this approach, as we will see in consideration of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's text, *The Poet's Answer to the Most Illustrious Sister Filotea de la Cruz*.

Although Sor Juana's circumstances were not quite so dire as those of Margaret Fell—she was not imprisoned in Lancashire Castle, for instance—she was very much under attack by a segment of religious society that felt she should not be writing on the topic of theology. The addressee of the letter, "Sor Filotea de la Cruz," was in fact the Bishop of Puebla, who had published an essay by Sor Juana, without her consent, under her real name, and with a preface warning her to mind her place in the future (Bizzell and Herzberg 781). It is very logical, therefore, that Sor Juana's letter takes a polite and humble tone, in asking "Sor Filotea" to acknowledge her right to comment on important matters.

Sor Juana opens with biblical precedent, choosing to focus on examples so obvious

that she does not feel the need to expound on their relation to her argument. Her list of wise and cherished women is not exhaustive, but certainly serves to illustrate her point:

For there I see a Deborah issuing laws ... the exceedingly knowledgeable Queen of Sheba, so learned she dares to test the wisdom of the wisest of all wise men with riddles ... an Abigail ... Esther ... Rahab ... Anna the mother of Samuel; and others, infinitely more, with other kinds of qualities and virtues. (784)

It is suspect, of course, when rhetorical examples are left to "speak for themselves." However, in this instance, there is not much to say other than to restate the specifics of their cases. Since the audience is, very specifically, a Bishop, taking time to explain such obvious and well-known stories might be perceived as insulting.

Instead, Sor Juana moves on to reinterpreting a biblical passage. Inevitably, she brings up the very same passage that Fell chose to analyze: Paul's address to the Corinthians. This might be considered the "go-to passage" of the debate, since it seems to explicitly address the rights of women to comment on theological matters. However, Sor Juana challenges that interpretation by bringing up the inherent contradiction with another of Paul's statements: The first, as noted above, "Let women keep silence in the churches"; the second, "The aged woman, in like manner, in holy attire [...] teaching well [retraction in the original]" (qtd. in de la Cruz 784). She cites the investigation into this contradiction found in a work entitled *For the Scholar of the Bible*, as well as its conclusion, wherein the author "resolves ... that women are not allowed to lecture publicly in the universities or to preach from the pulpits, but that studying, writing, and

teaching privately is not only permitted but most beneficial and useful to them” (785).

Having now provided an interpretation of Scripture suitable to her argument—and, perhaps to demonstrate her humility, not even one of her invention—she moves on to the doctrine of the Catholic Church. She quotes St. Jerome, speaking on the education of a young girl: “[Her] childish tongue must be imbued with the sweet music of the Psalms ... Let her every day repeat to you a portion of the Scriptures as her fixed task [substitution in the original]” (qtd. in de la Cruz 786). Not content to stop there, however, Sor Juana goes on to cite commonly-held concerns regarding the tutelage of young girls: “Many parents prefer to let their daughters remain uncivilized and untutored, rather than risk exposing them to such notorious peril as ... familiarity with men” (786). The only option, it seems, is to have “old women of sound education” on hand to instruct younger women, who will in turn teach the next generation (786).

Having established the necessity of learned women, if only for the purpose of making more learned women, Sor Juana takes one more pass at Paul’s now-infamous instruction, contextualizing it within her argument: “In the early Church, women were set to teaching each other Christian doctrine in the temples. The murmur of their voices caused confusion when the apostles were preaching, and that is why they were told to be silent” (787).

I find it fascinating that the structures of these two unrelated documents, originating on different continents and written to the needs of two separate organizations, resemble each other so strikingly: The reminder, the reinterpretation, and the appeal to supporting doctrine. The rhetorical strategies are nearly identical, though their implementation

results in two very different texts. It seems, therefore, that a step back is necessary, and both should be viewed through the lens of the rhetorical guidelines of the day.

Contentious Context

In order to evaluate these artifacts of the Renaissance, we must consider the works that shaped the situation leading up to them. The obvious choice, then, is to look to Desiderius Erasmus, a widely-published Catholic theorist. His work *Ecclesiastes* was printed the year before his death, more than a century before the works of Margaret Fell and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. As *Ecclesiastes* was intended specifically for the instruction of preachers in the construction of their sermons, and given the passage of time between publication dates, I would not attempt to argue that Erasmus necessarily influenced Fell or Sor Juana directly (though neither I would seek to imply that they had no opportunity to read him). Instead, I would note that scholars have described the work as “nothing short of revolutionary ... single-handedly rout[ing] the medieval thematic sermon,” and that “Erasmus is generally held to be a key figure in the Renaissance” (Bizzell and Herzberg 584-5). The foundation laid by Erasmus undoubtedly informed the ways in which Fell and Sor Juana approached their respective tasks.

This foundation is clearly visible after even a casual reading of the second book of *Ecclesiastes*. At the very outset, Erasmus addresses the elephant in the room: The works of Augustine, and by extension, the role of tradition in rhetoric. With a passing comment, Erasmus makes what I consider to be a key statement: “Even if [Augustine] had omitted nothing, the very different nature of the times still requires simpler and plainer instruction

in certain topics” (629). Make no mistake, earlier rhetorical texts have departed from their predecessors in various ways: Pagan Romans from the Greeks, Christian Romans from the Pagan Romans, and so forth. Nevertheless, the acknowledgement of Erasmus that so great a personage as Augustine, writing to the same organization and similar government, was still limited by his time, is nothing short of extraordinary. I contend that this approach, if not this particular piece of text, set the tone for the entire Renaissance—but we will return to this later.

The specific application of this advice should also not be overlooked—to wit, that certain areas of instruction should be “simpler and plainer” (629). Not only is Erasmus advocating the reexamination of existing ideas, he is calling for a demystification of theology. This seems to be the core of both Fell and Sor Juana’s writings; in both cases they are seeking simple and straightforward explanations for a disconnect that they perceive in the practices of their respective churches.

Just as Sor Juana called upon scholarly attempts to reconcile conflicting passages, Erasmus calls in to question a number of such concerns with Scripture. Though he does not offer any solutions, he acknowledges that

Sometimes a controversy arises regarding the letter and the spirit of something, about seemingly contradictory passages of scripture, for example ... what the Law is ... likewise whether Lot’s daughters sinned when they filched offspring for their drunken father ... and, if they sinned, whether they committed incest, since it is obvious that Adam’s offspring could only have been propagated through the marriage of brother and sister ... There

are innumerable things like this in the Bible. (630)

This is an important statement, because it opens the door to multiple interpretations of scriptural passages. Although Erasmus intended this privilege for preachers in the process of composing sermons, it seems unlikely that so worldly a man overlooked the implications for private citizens. Neither was he ignorant of the Protestant movement, occurring during the composition of *Ecclesiastes*, nor its departure from Catholic doctrine and the attached rigid scriptural interpretation. In light of his earlier argument for “simpler and plainer” explanations, I contend that Erasmus opened this door intentionally, and it was held firmly open by those who followed after (629).

Also contained within *Ecclesiastes*, we see one possible reason for the structure embraced by both Fell and Sor Juana. Though Erasmus spoke several times against needless partition of argument, he acknowledged the necessity of attempting multiple lines of reason within a sermon. “The same procedure should be followed ... as in the *loci* of arguments: knock at every one, but pick those that can be useful [emphasis in the original]” (638). Though Erasmus—sufficiently fond of copious speech that he wrote a series of books on the topic—found nine logical arguments on the topic of a young couple marrying, Fell and Sor Juana contented themselves with only three for their own arguments: The Bible supports them plainly, the passage of the Bible that seems to contradict them is misunderstood, and the established opinions of the elders of their respective churches clearly support their opinion. Erasmus, I suspect, would have approved.

Much of this book of *Ecclesiastes* was spent on the importance of an argument’s

status, a concept corresponding to the stasis questions of Antiquity. Of particular relevance is his treatment of a specific charge of matricide: “The charge is ‘I accuse Orestes of parricide because he killed his mother,’ the refutation ‘He killed her, but rightly’” (644). Consider the parallel to the passage from Corinthians: The charge is “Paul said that women should keep silent in church,” the refutation “He was speaking of specific women” for Fell and “He was speaking specifically of the building” for Sor Juana. In both cases they are arguing the status of the statement, by claiming it hinges on context and was never intended as a broad condemnation.

We should also not overlook the admonition issued on the nature of criticism. “The one who is rebuking,” Erasmus writes, “is urging the recognition of one’s own wrongdoing and coming to one’s senses, for this is the only aim of someone who rebukes in a Christian fashion” (636). This is a useful point to consider in evaluating both source texts. First, in the case of Fell—forceful though her argument may have been—we see contained within it no active condemnation on those who oppose her, merely an attempt to open their eyes. Fell’s goal is not retribution, and she does not seek apology. She merely wishes for the world to see what she sees, and—if we can assume she believed her own argument—she feels it is quite urgent that they do so, lest the seed of the serpent gain the upper hand. Similarly, Sor Juana desires no apology; she is simply defending herself against an entirely unreasonable onslaught of criticism brought about by someone who, however impersonally, betrayed her trust. She hopes that he will understand her view, and offer her permission to continue to hold it, but nothing more.

Finally, Erasmus speaks to the function of focus: “Once [a preacher] considers

the theme on which he is to speak, he relates everything to his essential point ... and does not ... stray in his words like a madman, uttering things that are irrelevant or even contradictory” (640). Moreover, he says, “great happiness would accrue in human existence if everyone kept his eye on his target—not the one that desire has proposed, but the one that God and honorable thought has put before him” (650). While a modern reader is left to wonder what sort of meandering gibberish Erasmus must have sat through, to feel such an explicit injunction necessary, there is no question that he is unequivocally praising a concentrated and unwavering approach to any given subject, which can be seen in both Fell and Sor Juana’s works.

It would be odd indeed if all of Erasmus’ advice were visible within the works of these women, and indeed it is not. Still, despite the distance and decades between them, the texts written by Fell and Sor Juana reveal his influence, as they are products of a culture he helped define.

Synthesis and Summary

In his text *Novum Organum*, Francis Bacon codified a number of common flaws in human understanding. One category, which he called “Idols of the Theatre,” was described thus: “Lastly, there are Idols which have immigrated into men’s minds from the various dogmas of philosophies, and also from wrong laws of demonstrations” (746). This is the most explicit statement I can imagine of what seems to be the general theme of the Renaissance: The necessity of reexamining things that were previously (“always”) taken for granted.

As I discussed in the introduction to this paper, modern students are taught that the Renaissance was about new ideas, and perhaps—given the way we presently feel about Galileo Galilei, for instance—the beginning of our acceptance of “things as they really are.” However, as is so often the case, that understanding is limited at best. Based on the rhetorical works I have discussed here, and the others that we have read in our exploration of this era, I conclude that the revolution of the Renaissance did not result in *new* ideas—it resulted in a reexamination of *old* ideas. Society, it seems, sat down to rethink its basic precepts, and discovered some very interesting things about itself and the world in which it existed.

This is, to my mind, the most interesting single idea I have yet encountered in relation to Renaissance rhetoric. Ironically, I am having difficulty communicating the importance of this. Since each new generation of rhetorical theorists sits down with the works of those that came before and decides what they want and what they’d rather be rid of, why is it important in this one instance? Perhaps the best way of explaining it is this: This was the moment when Western society made an intentional break from tradition, not for the sake of improved function, but because it no longer felt like continuing to do things just because they had always been done.

This raises the question of how best to evaluate other eras. If the focus of the Renaissance is the intentional departure from the ways things were always done, can other ages in rhetorical history be so categorized? Could we call Antiquity the phase of exploration, and the work of Romans the phase of codification? Further analysis could be done on collected works of the medieval period or the Enlightenment, and considering

the “big picture” of each rhetorical age might well yield better understandings of the documents produced in each.

In parting, I wish to acknowledge that declaring the *Zeitgeist* of the Renaissance to be “breaking from tradition” may seem rather obvious—after all, this was the age that gave us Peter Ramus, who so famously went after Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian (Bizzell and Herzberg 675-8). I contend, however, that sometimes the obvious is too readily overlooked. This behavior represented a vast change in the way rhetors thought about rhetoric, and I would present it as an important item for a scholar of the history of rhetoric to consider. After all, this is the age that gave us Peter Ramus! It strikes me that rereading these texts with this lens firmly in mind seems critical to proper understanding.

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Icarus

hot pin
feathers
falling
O/n rocks but
unable
.... forward motion
in
circles, Spirals, loops, Back up forth
down
tooCloseto
be fore
hitting
then...higher sailing floating
joyupabitter
smile and brightnessshining
(fromyourfingertips)

—Anne Jevne



The Proximate Source of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

Anthony Munday's *John A Kent and John A Cumber*

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To the Dark Lady

I. INTRODUCTION

The following pages review the longstanding proposition that a key to the creation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was Anthony Munday's play, *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (with its humbly-born character Turnop). The literary item *John a Kent and John a Cumber* has been found, over the years, to be wanting in merit. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* can be interpreted as the proximate rejoinder to *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. Thereby, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the Munday-Turnop character becomes Bottom the weaver. Duke Theseus, the authority figure in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, dismisses the play-within-the-play enacted by Bottom (Munday) and Bottom's fellows. Thus does the author of the later, classic work derisively judge as inadequate *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. Bottom specifically is twitted as threatening to ruin his company's stage

performance with an extempore performance debacle. Bottom, famously, is magically given an ass's head. But this transpires with language so calibrated as to apply to Anthony Munday personally. For Bottom is "translated."

But *John a Kent and John a Cumber* dates circa December 1590. Why might the author of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have proved still mindful of Munday's 1590-caper during the 1594-1595 span of the composition of that subsequent, beloved comedy? Evidence obtains suggesting both: (1) that some version of *John a Kent and John a Cumber* was presented in December 1594; and (2) that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* premiered in January 1595. Repeatedly have literary historians recognized how elements of *John a Kent and John a Cumber* feed into *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Nevertheless, too little attention has been paid to the arresting coincidence in the dates thereof.

In one or another guise, *John a Kent and John a Cumber* was, by a reasonable reading of the record, rendered onstage a mere 54 days prior to the initial presentation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. That initial presentation would have celebrated the wedding of Lady Elizabeth Vere, daughter of the 17th Earl of Oxford, Edward de Vere. Munday had been Oxford's servant. Thereby, Munday marks the flesh-and-blood bridge between the earlier play and that family. These pages therefore speculate over how tightly-linked could have been these two men with those events of 1594 and 1595.

II. THE KEY TO A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

John a Kent and John a Cumber today is known primarily as one source of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Munday's play concerns two pairs of rival suitors, each **pair**

supported by one of the play's eponymous rival magicians.¹ In 2003, Meredith Skura posited: "It is a kind of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, but with the rival lovers Lysander and Demetrius each doubled, and with Oberon split into two competing Fairy Kings."²

Agrees David Bevington:

Perhaps the most suggestive possible source for Shakespeare's clownish actors, however, is Anthony Munday's play *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (c. 1587-1590). In it a group of rude artisans, led by the intrepid Turnop, stage a ludicrous interlude written by their churchwarden in praise of his millhorse. Turnop's prologue is a medley of lofty comparisons. The entertainment is presented before noble spectators, who are graciously amused. *John a Kent* also features a lot of magic trickery, a boy named Shrimp whose role is comparable to that of Puck, and a multiple love plot.³

Harold F. Brooks submitted that were *A Midsummer Night's Dream* influenced by Anthony Munday's play *John a Kent and John a Cumber*, that influence operated at many points: its importance would lie in having helped to suggest the combination of a considerable number of the leading features of the *Dream*. These precedents (if that is what they are) have been well summarized by Nevill [sic] Coghill: Munday has:

Lovers in flight from parental opposition to their love.

1, Meredith Skura, *Anthony Munday's "Gentification" of Robin Hood*, 33 *English Literary Renaissance*, pp. 155, 170 (Issue 2) (May 2003) (available at www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/full/10.1111/1475-6757.00023).

2. *Ibid.*

3. David Bevington, in William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pp. 86-87 (New York: Bantam Books, 1988) (David Bevington ed.). All citations are to this text.

Moonlit woods through which they flee to join their lovers.

A mischievous fairy imp, in service to a master of magic.

A crew of clowns who organize buffoonish entertainment in honour of their territorial overlord, on the occasion of a double wedding.

Contention for the leading part. Malapropisms.

Young men led by an invisible voice until they fall exhausted.

A 'happy ending' with True Lovers properly paired and wedded.

These features are seen by Coghill as making 'in combination . . . a dramatic vehicle, a schema; . . . a main shape or formula for a stage-action'; the nearest thing, in fact, to the comprehensive source which beyond this the *Dream* does not have. As evidence of a relationship between the two plays these general resemblances are supported by three parallels in the dialogue, two of them verbally close.⁴

Brooks further notes of Coghill:

He also compares with Puck disrupting the rehearsal, his speed on Oberon's errands, and his pleasure in the resulting mischief, Shrimp's throwing the rustic's serenade into confusion (1. 580 S.D.s), his 'I fly Sir, and am there alreadie' (988), and his 'Why now is Shrimpe in the height of his bravery/That he may execute some part of his Master's knaverie (376 f.). The fool's coat thrust on Cumber (1378-84) compares with

4. Harold F. Brooks, *Introduction*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pp. lxiv-lxv (London: Thomson Learning, 2003) (Harold F. Brooks ed.) (*The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare*) (footnotes omitted), citing Neville Coghill, *Shakespeare's Professional Skills*, pp. 50f., 53 (1964).

the ass-head clapped on Bottom; and with Theseus on the prospect of amateurish entertainment, Oswen and Pembroke on the like: 'How bad so ere, yet must ye needs accept it'; 'Else Oswen were we very much to blame', etc. (388-94).⁵

Hawkeyed assuredly was Oxford's Professor Neville Coghill. But Coghill skirted a further parallel. Here he recounts a meritorious visual-musical effect in characters circling a tree:

Later, Shrimp and his victims are thus directed in the text:

The boy trips round *Oswen* and *Amery*, sing[
chyme, and they the one after the other, lay them[
vsing very sluggish gestures, the Ladyes amazed[
about them. (II45)

This is a well-found visual and musical effect: unfortunately Mundy was too pleased with it and repeated it in the very next scene: once again the wretched Oswen and Amery are led in by the unseen musician and kept circling round a tree until they can hold up no longer:

Enter Shrimpe leading *Oswen* and *Amery* around the tree.
Oswen. were euer men thus led about a Tree?
still circkling it, and neuer getting thence?
My braynes doo ake, and I am growen so faynt,
that I must needs lye downe on meere constrynt.

5. *Ibid.*, p. lxv n. 1.

he lyes do[

Amery This villayne boy is out of doubt some spirit,
still he cryes follow, but we get no further...

In all my life I neuer was so wearie.

follow that list, for I can goe no longer.

[he lyes down]

(I395-I402)⁶

Notwithstanding all of his attention to Munday's exploitation of song and of contextually ludicrous circling about, Coghill falls blind to its *A Midsummer Night's Dream* link. For therein is the newly ass's-headed Bottom the weaver abandoned in the forest by his terrified brother-mechanicals:

BOTTOM I see their knavery. This is to make an ass of me, to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can. I will walk up and down here, and will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

[Sings.]

The ouzel cock so black of hue,

With orange-tawny bill,

The throstle with his note so true,

The wren with little quill—⁷

As Munday delivers this tree, singing, and circling about, so another playwright conceives of his forest, wherein Bottom ridiculously resolves to walk up and down and sing. And Coghill also will skirt, without perceiving, the heart of all this ado.

As well, Brooks in his own right elaborates further double comedy parallels, to evidence which playwright was indebted to his counterpart-predecessor:

As they sink down exhausted, 'Faintness constraineth me', says Demetrius, and Hermia, 'Never so weary ... I can ... no further go'. In like plight, Munday's Oswen exclaims 'I am grown so faint/That I must needes lye down on mere constraint,' and Amery, 'I never was so wearie ... I can goe no longer'. Coming upon the rehearsal, Puck cries 'What, a play toward! I'll be ... an actor ... if I see cause'. Shrimp, his equivalent in *John a Kent*, reports to his master, 'yonder's great preparation for a play', and their dialogue ends with the magician declaring 'in thy play I purpose to make one'. In Munday, the passages are connected: at the same time as this intervention is prepared for, so is that of Shrimp which leaves Oswen and Amery exhausted; hence if the one episode recurred to Shakespeare it would be likely to bring the other with it. There is no such juxtaposition at one point in the *Dream* to

affect Munday, if he were the debtor, in the same way.⁸

7. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III, scene i, lines 115-23 (Bevington 1988). "Professor McCloskey, moreover, taking Bottom's song, 'The Woosel cocke, so black of hew,' as a parody of a poem that came out in 1594, suggests for Shakespeare's play the date 1595." John W. Draper, *Stratford to Dogberry: Studies in Shakespeare's Earlier Plays*, p. 71 (Pittsburgh: U. of Pittsburgh Press, 1961), citing F. H. McCloskey, "The Date of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *MLN*, XLVI, 389.

8. Harold F. Brooks, *supra* note 4, pp. lxxv-lxxvi.

6. Neville Coghill, *Shakespeare's Professional Skills*, pp. 51-52 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

So how had *John A Kent and John a Cumber* **measured-up?**

III. THE QUALITY OF *JOHN A KENT AND JOHN A CUMBER*

A. *John a Kent and John a Cumber* Stumbles

How inferior is *John a Kent and John a Cumber*? Advised by Professor T. W. Baldwin,⁹ Arthur E. Pennell edited *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. Finds Pennell: “Munday, labeled by Meres as ‘our best plotter,’ has in this play probably produced a good example of his plotting facility, a facility which is, however, more mechanical dexterity than artistry.”¹⁰ Worse: “The characters are all one-dimensional, having little or no personalities, not even the depth of a ‘humour’ which could react for or against a situation.”¹¹ Again: “One does not examine the poetry in *John a Kent* for its beautiful imagery or lyrical power. . . .”¹² Too, Pennell discerns of the element of disguise in the genre of historical romance: “Insofar as Munday makes the device a basic element in his plot structure he is merely following a common practice, and. . . neither this nor the other romance characteristics in the play were handled with any degree of distinction.”¹³ Moreover:

All that one can say of Munday in *John a Kent* is that he attempts to create a touch of the pastoral and magical but is never quite successful. His clowns

9. Arthur E. Pennell, *An Edition of Anthony Munday's John a Kent and John a Cumber* (Acknowledgement) (New York: Garland Publishing, Incorporated, 1980).

10. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

manage to provide the play with a good deal of country comedy and bumpkin quality but elsewhere there is a disappointing lack of definitive atmosphere. This is probably due mainly to the lack of poetry in the play.¹⁴

How does Pennell's verdict on *John a Kent and John a Cumber* compare with the verdict on Bottom's contribution, handed down by the author of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? The ridicule visited by *A Midsummer Night's Dream* upon Bottom (and his presentation) is the dismissal of Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (and of the company, the Admiral's Men) by the author of the former prestigious (but derivative) comedy. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* unleashes a cloudburst of contempt for its mechanicals' project.

B. *Pyramus and Thisbe* Falters

Philostrate, the Master of the Revels, reports to Theseus, Duke of Athens::

A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious. For in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted.
And tragical, my noble lord, it is,
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.

Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,

14. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears

The passion of loud laughter never shed.¹⁵

Philostrate emphasizes that the offering of Bottom's team can titillate only as a joke:

It is not for you. I have heard it over,

And it is nothing, nothing in the world;

Unless you can find sport in their intents,

Extremely stretched and conned with cruel pain

To do you service.¹⁶

Condescending, in accepting the mechanicals, is Duke Theseus:

The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.

Our sport shall be to take what they mistake;

And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect

Takes it in might, not meri

15. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene i, lines 61-70 (Bevington 1988).

16. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene i, lines 77-81 (Bevington 1988).

Takes it in might, not merit.¹⁷

Witnessing the Prologue to the mechanicals' play, Theseus comments of one: "His speech was like a tangled chain: nothing impaired, but all disordered."¹⁸ Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, is Theseus' bride. Of the entertainment, she opines: "This is silliest stuff that I ever heard."¹⁹ After the performance, Duke Theseus tells Bottom: "Marry, if he that writ it had . . . hanged himself. . . ., it would have been a fine tragedy;" ²⁰ He that writ *John a Kent and John a Cumber* was Anthony Munday. Yet perhaps that line was too cold towards Anthony. For Theseus at once continues: ". . . .a fine tragedy; and so it is, truly, and very notably discharged."²¹

After all, William J. Rolfe comprehended of this somewhat chivalrous Duke:

The central figure of the play is that of Theseus. There is no figure in the early drama of Shakspeare so magnificent. His are the large hands that have helped to shape the world. His utterance is the rich-toned speech of one

17. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene i, lines 89-92 (Bevington 1988). Not in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* alone did its author design condescendingly to grant an acting company more than that company had coming to it. Hamlet shares this exchange with Polonius:

Ham. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used, for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time, After your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. God's bodkin, man, much better! Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honor and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. . . .

Hamlet, Act II, scene ii, lines 524-34.

18. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene i, lines 124-25 (Bevington 1988).

19. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene i, line 209 (Bevington 1988).

20. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene i, lines 353-55 (Bevington 1988).

21. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene i, lines 355-56 (Bevington 1988).

who is master of events—who has never known a shrill or eager feeling. His nuptial day is at hand; and while the other lovers are agitated, bewildered, incensed, Theseus, who does not think of himself as a lover but rather as a beneficent conqueror, remains in calm possession of his joy. Theseus, a grand ideal figure, is to be studied as Shakspeare's conception of the heroic man of action in his hour of enjoyment and of leisure. With a splendid capacity for enjoyment, gracious to all, ennobled by the glory, implied rather than explicit, of great foregone achievement, he stands as centre of the poem, giving their true proportions to the fairy tribe upon the one hand, and upon the other to the "human mortals."²²

What manner of 1594 playwright likely imagined *himself* as a blueblooded, grand ideal figure, an heroic man of action in his hour of enjoyment and leisure, ennobled, and giving their true proportions to mere mortals? The 17th Earl of Oxford, beyond any dispute, proved a playwright respected in his time.

David Schalkwyk tended to confirm that the ridicule laid by *A Midsummer Night's Dream* upon Bottom (and his troupe's performance) belittled Munday's *John a Kent* and *John a Cumber* (and the Admiral's Men²³):

It has been suggested that the mechanicals' play—superfluous to the strict demands of the plot—afforded Shakespeare a chance to poke fun

22, Shakespeare's Comedy of A Midsummer Night's Dream, pp. 34-35 (New York: American Book Company, 1918) (William J. Rolfe ed.).

23. The most recent scholarly study of the Admiral's Men is Andrew Gurr, Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company, 1594-1625 (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2009).

at what Alvin Kernan calls the "kind of junk theatre that ordinarily made up the bill of fair at Elizabethan palaces", thereby enabling him to make his own more accomplished work shine by comparison. Both the styles of delivery that Bottom considers appropriate for lovers and tyrants and the unimaginative narrowness of these types appear to belong to a theatre increasingly challenged and displaced by the realism, variety, and poetic and philosophical richness of Shakespeare's pen and stage.²⁴

The First Quarto of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* constitutes a text of weighty authority. Yet only dubiously might it be fancied to have been printed from the author's autograph final draft: Several errors are reproduced in the First Quarto for which, evidently, its playwright was responsible.²⁵ The First Quarto is of highest textual authority because bearing earmarks of having been printed from the dramatist's autograph draft in its final condition, nevertheless being not a fair copy but foul papers. Ambiguities and mistakes attributable to an author (because they would never survive rehearsals) signal a foul paper text.²⁶

An acknowledged evidence of foul paper copy are inadequately precise directions.²⁷ In Act IV, scene ii, a First Quarto stage direction regarding the entrance of Quince, Flute, Snout and Starveling omits the names of the last two (a tinker, and a tailor) to utilize

24. David Schalkwyk, Shakespeare, Love and Service, p. 77 (New York: Cambridge U. Press, 2008) (footnote omitted), citing Alvin Kernan, Shakespeare, The King's Playwright: Theater in the Stuart Court, 1603-1613, p. 21 (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1995).

25. Harold F. Brooks, *supra* note 4, p. xxxiii.

26. *Ibid.*, p. xxii.

27. *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

instead “and the rabble.”²⁸ This indefiniteness brands the First Quarto as the author’s.²⁹ Neil Freeman judges that “the Q1 stage direction refers to Starvling and Snout rather uncharitably as the Rabble.”³⁰ Sure enough, Brooks finds this direction “a delightful specimen of author’s language.”³¹

Was a glovemaker’s (John Shakespeare’s) son³² and a haberdasher’s (Gilbert Shakespeare’s) brother³³ the manner of author who looked upon tinkers and tailors (or upon a carpenter or bellowsmender like Quince and Flute, or upon a weaver or joiner like Bottom and Snug) as rabble? Definition 2a for ‘rabble’ in *The Oxford English Dictionary* cites 1513, 1529 and 1568 sources to provide: “A tumultuous crowd or array of people, a disorderly assemblage, a mob.”³⁴ Definition 2b cites 1529 and 1560 sources to read: “Applied contemptuously to a class or body of persons, imagined as collected in a mob.”³⁵ Definition 2c cites 1553 and 1581 sources to declare: “*the rabble*, the common, low, 28. *Ibid.*, pp. xxiii, 100 n. 3.

29. *Ibid.*

30. William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, p. 66 n. 2 (New York: Applause Books, 1998) (Neil Freeman anno.) (The Applause Shakespeare Library Folio Texts).

31. Harold F. Brooks, *supra* note 4, p. xxiii.

32. A.L. Rowse, *William Shakespeare: A Biography*, p. 14, 22, 32 and 48 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963).

33. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

34. *rabble*, in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, p. 64 (def. 2) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) (2nd ed.) (vol. 13) (J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner preps.).

35. *Ibid.*

or disorderly part of the populace (or of a company); the mob.”³⁶ Was even a status-famished son behind a successful 1596 bid to attain a coat of arms and gentleman status for John (and thereby for Will of Stratford)³⁷ likely to share foul papers so exposing to workaday stage-players (not unlike Will’s own player-brother Edmund Shakespeare³⁸) his true mindset?

Schalkwyk immediately continues with language tending to confirm that the First Quarto’s father declined to be too one-sidedly callous to Anthony:

The mechanicals’ play may be execrable and their understanding of theatrical convention nonexistent, but the parody does not run entirely against them. The aristocratic audience of “The Lamentable Tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe” are held up to ironic scrutiny in the ostentatious superiority of their commentary, and there is something delightfully unselfconscious about “bully” Bottom’s presumption to correct the Duke on a technical matter of following the script:

THESEUS The wall methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

BOTTOM (*to* Theseus) No, in truth, sire, he should not.

“Deceiving me” is Thisbe’s cue. She is to enter now, and

I am to spy her through the wall. You should see, it will fall

36. *Ibid.*

37. A.L. Rowse, *supra* note 32, p. 276 (“unlikely that the old man, ... was behind this”); Tucker Brooke, *supra* note 33, p. 17 (“effort ... came from the poet”).

38. A.L. Rowse, *supra* note 32, p. 339; Tucker Brook, *supra* note 37, pp. 56-57.

pat as I told you.

(*Enter Flute as Thisbe*)

Yonder she comes (5.1.180-5)³⁹

For how many times might Oxford's onetime youthful, servant-secretary, Anthony Munday, unselfconsciously have presumed to correct his boss concerning one or another detail?

What might seem the verdict upon not Anthony's play but on Munday, personally, handed down by the author of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

IV. THE QUALITY OF JOHN A KENT AND JOHN A CUMBER'S AUTHOR

A. Bottom Belittled

The author of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* already (before the demonstration of Duke Theseus' condescension) had suggested that writing a romantic comedy laced with magic was beyond the common folk. For when Bottom awakened in the woods from his ass's-head enchantment, he soliloquized:

I have had a most rare vision, I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was. Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was—and methought I had—but man is but a patched fool if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive,

39. David Schalkwyk, *supra* note 24, pp. 77-78, citing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene 1, lines 180-85.

nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream. It shall be called "Bottom's Dream," because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke. Peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.⁴⁰

Opposing Bottom's "more gracious" passage is a famous speech delivered by Theseus⁴¹:

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet

Are of imagination all compact.

One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;

That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,

Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

40 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act IV, scene i, lines 203-17 (Bevington 1988). Consistent with Bottom-as-Munday is the explanation by Fleay (of Bottom's odd closing words to this speech) that Bottom reflects Robert Greene (in alluding to Greene's *Maiden's Dream*, sung at the death of Sir Christopher Hatton). A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 321 (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963) (Howard Horace Furness ed.). For: "Nobody tells us more [than Greene] about the miseries of an attempted literary profession." *Greene, Robert*, in J. W. Saunders. *A Biographical Dictionary of Renaissance Poets and Dramatists, 1520-1650*, p. 62 (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1983). And who else knew, like Greene, the miseries of an actual literary career? Hill holds of Munday's patronage-sycophancy: "Unsurprisingly, his lifelong concern manifests itself in a number of his works." Tracey Hill, *Anthony Munday and Civic Culture: Theatre, History and Power in Early Modern London 1580-1633*, p. 83 (New York: Manchester U. Press, 2004). And George judges a 1588 dedication by Munday to Edward de Vere: "Munday pursues the earl without mercy." Gerald Douglass George, *Earning a Living as an Author in Early Modern England: The Case of Anthony Munday*, p. 69 (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State U. Graduate College, May 2006 (Ph.D. diss.) (http://etd.ohiolink.edu/view.cgi?acc_num=bgsl1453500898)). Multiple influences make sense.

41. Harold Bloom, *An Essay by Harold Bloom*, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pp. 137, 161 (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 2005).

And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.⁴²

Contrast Bottom's incoherence with Duke Theseus' rhapsodic discourse, for Queen Hippolyta, extolling the potency of a genuine poet's pen.

B. Bottom Extempore

How might *A Midsummer Night's Dream* guarantee that Anthony knows that the oafish Bottom = Munday? Munday is alleged to have professionally performed extempore, but to have proved unsuccessful.⁴³ Compare the dialogue of mechanicals Snug the joiner, Peter Quince the carpenter, and Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Therein, Bottom greedily grapples for an assignment extempore, a prospective performance threatening cataclysm:

SNUG Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUINCE You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM Let me play the lion too. I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me. I will roar, that I will make the Duke say, "Let him roar again, let him roar again."

42. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene i, lines 7-17 (Bevington 1988).

43. George concurs that Munday apparently was an improvisational performer hissed off his stage. Gerald Douglass George, *supra* note 40, pp. 6, 44, 112 and 114.

QUINCE An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL That would hang us, every mother's son.⁴⁴

Bottom's reach for an assignment extempore equates Bottom with Anthony. Or does this read too much into *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

C. Bottom the Lady

Likewise does Bottom lunge for the female role of Thisbe. Bottom can push to play this role even while wearing a false beard for Bottom's Pyramus role, thanks to Thisbe's mask. But Peter Quince reserves the Thisbe part for the resisting Francis Flute, the bellowsmender⁴⁵:

FLUTE Nay, faith, let not me play a woman. I have a beard coming.

QUINCE That's all one. You shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM An I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, "Thisne, Thisne!" "Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! Thy Thisbe dear, and lady dear!"

QUINCE No, no. You must play Pyramus; and, Flute, you Thisbe.

44. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act I, scene ii, lines 60-71 (Bevington 1988).

45. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act I, scene ii, line 36 (Bevington 1988).

BOTTOM Well, proceed.⁴⁶

Peter appeases Nick with Bottom's posting:

QUINCE You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man. A proper man as one shall see in a summer's day, a most lovely, gentlemanlike man. Therefore, you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

QUINCE Why, what you will.⁴⁷

There follows obscene dialogue about beards.⁴⁸

That Pyramus (Bottom) is a sweet-faced man might be explained as preparatory of the audience to be shown Bottom bearing an ass's head. But what is the point of Bottom bidding to speak as a female in a monstrous little voice? And is there any additional rationale for Pyramus (Bottom) to be sweet-faced and lovely? Too, if Francis expressly has a beard coming, why needs Nicholas a false beard?

Anthony was orphaned at ten; both of his parents died within a year of one another. He moved with his mother from his birth parish; following his mother's death, he vanishes from the records for six years.⁴⁹ On the evidence of an accusatory tract,⁵⁰

46. A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act I, scene ii, lines 41-51 (Bevington 1988).

47. A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act I, scene ii, lines 77-83 (Bevington 1988).

48. A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act I, scene ii, lines 84-89 (Bevington 1988).

49. Meredith Skura, *supra* note 1, p. 173, citing Historical Manuscripts Commission JP 13, *Index to Testimentary Records in the Commissary Court of London* (London: 1974) (Marc Fitch ed.).

50. Celeste Turner, *Anthony Munday: An Elizabethan Man of Letters*, pp. 58-59 (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1928).

which Munday deliberately neglected to contradict,⁵¹ the youth Anthony had joined a troupe of traveling⁵² actors, Turner supposing: "perhaps acting in women's roles, if he began young enough...."⁵³ Turner adds that in 1576, Munday "was but a boy of sixteen, such as might enact women's parts on the stage;...."⁵⁴ (Dr. Garry Wills concurs that ages sixteen or seventeen marked the outer limit of a boy's performance of female roles.⁵⁵)

The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, as a patron, knew Anthony from *circa* 1577.⁵⁶ Until

51. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

52. "The first regular theatre was not erected until c. 1576." *Ibid.*, p. 4n.11.

The requirement that plays and innyard theaters be licensed, along with the other drawbacks of playing at inns, probably drove James Burbage (a carpenter-turned-actor) to rent in 1576 a plot of land northeast of the city walls and to build here—on property outside the jurisdiction of the city—England's first permanent construction designed for plays. He called it simply the Theatre. About all that is known of its construction is that it was wood. It soon had imitators, the most famous being the Globe (1599), built across the Thames (again outside the city's jurisdiction), out of timbers of the Theatre, which had been dismantled when Burbage's lease ran out.

Sylvan Barnet, *Prefatory Remarks*, in William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pp. vii, xiv (New York: New American Library, 1963) (Wolfgang Clemen ed.) (The Signet Classic Shakespeare).

53. Celeste Turner, *supra* note 50, p. 4.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

55. "A boy recruited at age eleven or twelve had perhaps five years of training and performance before him." Garry Wills, *Verdi's Shakespeare: Men of the Theater*, p. 9 (New York: Penguin Books, 2012). Wills, who implies the absurdity of Edward de Vere as author of the Shakespearean *corpus*, *ibid.*, p. 7, adds of the doubling of a boy actor in *Macbeth* as Macduff's wife and Lady Macbeth: "It is poignant that Lady Macbeth, who was not in on the murder of Macduff's wife, somehow learned of it before the sleepwalking scene when she says, 'The Thane of Fife [MacDuff] had a wife – where is she now?' (Act 5, Scene 1)." *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Alternatively, a doubling entailing that exact line recklessly gambled that a boy (the same Macduff's wife—Lady Macbeth, even as Christopher Reeve was Clark Kent—Superman) could *always* elude risibility. *Where is she now?* (Comparably risky was the boy-as-Cleopatra's passage at Antony and Cleopatra, Act V, scene ii, lines 216-219.) What playwright, wording lamentation for Macduff's wife would so dare? A patrician craving to see his plays performed (yet who wrote them overly-long—because also meant to be read—he needing no share of the box office), and who could play with actors like tin soldiers? Or the Stratford man whose brother Edmund probably was, *Shakespeare (3), Edmund (1580-1604)*, in Charles Boyce, *Shakespeare A to Z: The Essential Reference to His Plays, His Poems, His Life and Times, and More*, p. 584 (New York: A Roundtable Press Book, 1990), a professional actor?

56. Tracey Hill, *supra* note 40, p. 84.

October 1577, Anthony was...sixteen.⁵⁷

Anthony, or an oft-joshed Anthony at least, could have caught the jest.

D. Bottom the Weaver Translated

i. Anthony Translated

Bottom (after Bottom magically is given an ass's head) is told by Peter Quince, his brother mechanical: "Thou art translated."⁵⁸ In two other places in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is "translated" invoked in the obvious sense of transformed.⁵⁹ Once before Bottom's translation was this term invoked, tickling the audience's subconscious sensitivity to that word. Again, after Bottom's translation, does utilization of that word remind the audience of Bottom's translation. Moreover, after Bottom's translation another mechanical, Robin Starveling, tells Peter Quince that Bottom "is transported."⁶⁰ Brooks submitted that Robin "conflates, I believe, his [Quince's] erroneous word for Bottom transmongrified, and a normal one for his being 'conveyed away'"⁶¹ Itself a humorous coinage had been 'transmongrify.'⁶²

57. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

58. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III, scene i, line 113-14 (Bevington 1988).

59. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act I, scene i, line 191; Act III, scene 2, line 32 (Bevington 1988).

60. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act IV, scene ii, line 4 (Bevington 1988).

61. Harold F. Brooks, *supra* note 4, p. 100 n. 3.

62. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1061 (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, Publishers, 1948) (5th ed.).

Henry Alonzo Myers recognized the importance of Bottom's translation:

Bottom, that king of the world of nonsense, undergoes a series of "translations." An ass in the eyes of the audience from the beginning, but a man of parts to his fellows, he later becomes through magic an ass in appearance, later the object of Titania's dotting, later still the object of her loathing, and later still Bottom once more. Meanwhile, to complicate the scheme, he wishes to become Pyramus in the play, and also Thisbe, and also Lion. (I'll spare you the working out of his "translations" in ABC's.)⁶³

But even Myers (who thinks that he can spell out Bottom's translations like the alphabet) cannot catch the inside joke.

The merry author of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* certainly knew how to write "transformed" when he meant changed in form. Witness his usage thereof in, e.g., *Much Ado About Nothing* ("love may transform into an oyster"⁶⁴); *Hamlet* ("transform honesty from what it is to a bawd"⁶⁵); *Othello* ("transform ourselves into beasts"⁶⁶); *Antony and Cleopatra* ("transform us not to women"⁶⁷); and, most relevantly to poor Bottom's

63. Henry Alonzo Myers, "Romeo and Juliet" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream": *Tragedy and Comedy*, in William Shakespeare, *supra* note 40, pp. 155, 165 (from Henry Alonzo Myers, *Tragedy: A View of Life* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U. Press, 1956)).

64. *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act II, scene iii, line 26.

65. *Hamlet*, Act III, scene i, line 112.

66. *Othello*, Act II, scene iii, line 280.

67. *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV, scene ii, line 36.

plight, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (“Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he transform me to a piece of cheese!”⁶⁸). Why does *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* exploit the oddsounding “translated” to communicate the familiar “transformed”?

The inside-joke was that the word “translated” meant much more to Munday. Most elements of London commercial life from medieval days had been governed by craft guilds (mysteries). These were interwoven into London’s politicoeconomic fabric. Guilds controlled admission to a craft, functioning like closed shops. They were, too, benevolent fraternities.⁶⁹The Drapers numbered among the twelve great companies.⁷⁰

Young Anthony had, of course, begun a career as an apprentice to a printer.⁷¹Any freeman who had served his apprenticeship could become a member of another company by “translation.”⁷² His father (Christopher Munday) had enjoyed freedom of the Drapers’ Company.⁷³ In 1585, Anthony likewise had gained freedom of the Drapers: by patrimony. Patrimony marked a method of “translation.” Munday and Bottom, whatever their pretensions, are only working stiffs. Rabble. This contrasts them with the blueblood

Vere. So signifies Quince’s “translated.”

68. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act V, scene v, lines 87-88.

69. Jennifer Potter, *Strange Blooms: The Curious Lives and Adventures of the John Tradescants*, p. 243 (London: Atlantic Books, 2006).

70. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

71. Tracey Hill, *supra* note 40, pp. 20, 28.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 29. Citizens in early modern London did not always, nor even frequently, pursue the trade associated with the livery company with which they affiliated. Invariably, a citizen declared his corporate membership as an element of his civic identity. Tracey Hill, Letter to the Editor, *London Rev. Bks.*, July 22, 2010, p. 5.

73. Tracy Hill, *supra* note 40, p. 28.

It is credible that a roiling to-do over humble Munday’s translation back during 1585 had reached the ears of even exalted Edward. In the Hill formulation: “Gaining freedom of the Drapers by patrimony, as Munday did in 1585, was a difficult process (agreement of all parties concerned had to be gained and the individual’s certificate had to be amended); it was not encouraged by the City and was thus uncommon compared to freedom by ‘servitude’ (i.e., completed apprenticeship).”⁷⁴And it has been reported that Oxford still employed Anthony as late as 1586.⁷⁵ Oxford mingled with writers far beneath that highborn Earl’s social station.⁷⁶

This company membership-shift meaning of translated was familiar at the time. Richard Tarlton (circa 1555-1588) began as a player with Sussex’s troupe and won such repute that Tarlton in 1583 was selected as a founding member of the Queen’s Men.⁷⁷ Like Munday, he was a playwright and balladeer who pursued additional business. He had served a youthful London apprenticeship to haberdasher Ralph Bowell, becoming in 1576 a freeman of the Haberdashers. Tarlton translated to the Vinters Company in

74. *Ibid.*, p. 29 (footnote omitted). Thomas Middleton, a bricklayer’s son, was made free of the Drapers during 1626 through redemption, i.e., via purchase. *Ibid.* at p. 100 n.60.

75. Eva Lee Turner Clark, *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare’s Plays: A Study of the Early Court Revels and Personalities of the Times*, p. 780 (Jennings, LA: Minos Publishing Company, 1974).

76. Nonetheless, with whom would Oxford mingle as an equal? Oxford habitually poured wrath upon servants who had departed Oxford’s employ sans permission. Alan H. Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary: The Life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford*, p. 328 (Liverpool: Liverpool U. Press, 2003).

77. John H. Astington, *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare’s Time: The Art of Stage Playing*, p. 219 (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2010).

1584, carrying on as a tavern-keeper.⁷⁸

An author fluent in Latin reflexively senses that the oddsounding “translated” tied to *both* Bottom and Anthony, as the more natural “transformed” did not. From Latin, “translated” signifies, literally, “gone over to the other side.”⁷⁹ And in shifting from the printers to the drapers, Anthony indeed had switched to the other side. Thus an authorial option for the otherwise-incongruous “translated.”

If Theseus is the commanding center of the play, Bottom remains the guileless instrument of his omniscient playwright. Coghill comprehends that it is Bottom’s translation whereby many confused or conflicting characters’ crooked ways are rendered straight, in

that Bottom is linked in depth with the fairy world: not simply part of a conjuror’s prank, as Turnop is in *John a Kent*, but as the chief instrument for the restoration of concord in the world of nature; for that is how the ‘translation’ of Bottom by an ass-head works upon the story; he is the root of reconciliation as Oberon perceives:

Ile to my Queene, and beg her *Indian* Boy;

And then I will her charmed eie release

78. *Ibid.*

79. From the Latin, “*translated* transformed (literally ‘gone over to the other side’).” William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, p. 38n. (New York: Penguin Books, 2000) (Russ McDonald ed.) (McDonald’s emphasis).

Problematical is Vere’s Latin: “Oxford’s errors in Latin confirm, at any rate, his indifference to etymology.” Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, p. 67. Orazio Coquo on August 27, 1577, testified to the Venetian Inquisition “that Oxford was a fluent speaker of both Italian and Latin.” *Ibid.*, p. 157.

From monsters view, and all things shall be peace.

(III, ii, 375-7)⁸⁰

After all, consider:

the great solempnitee [sic], into which the entire cosmos of the play is logically integrated: for had not Theseus planned his feast, Bottom would never have gone to the woods: and had he never gone to the woods, Oberon would never have been reconciled with Titania; and had they not been reconciled, the forces of nature would still have been at war and the new amity would never have come about that brought Oberon and Titania to Dance in Duke *Theseus* house triumphantly,

And blesse it to all faire posterity.

(IV, i, 86-7)

And thus the ducal succession in Athens is partly the work of Bottom.

Bottom is a weaver.⁸¹

Now, comprehend Coghill: Bottom’s *translation* so impacts the tale that he is reconciliation’s root. All opposites are woven into a consistent pattern through Bottom the weaver. The author of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* thereby far excels, with Bottom, the clumsy utilization of Turnop by Munday the *draper*. But this reading could appear to lay overmuch weight upon the solitary verb: translated. So why else might Anthony

80. Neville Coghill, *supra* note 6, p. 57.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

grasp, had there transpired an Edward de Vere spoof, that Bottom equals Munday?

ii. Anthony the Weaver

Why is *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* weaver (a colleague to Robin Starveling, Quince the carpenter, Snout the tinker, Flute the bellows-mender, and Snug the joiner) dubbed Bottom? James L. Calderwood propounded:

Technically, 'quince' refers to the 'quines' or 'quoins' (wooden wedges) a carpenter had need of, 'snout' to the nozzles a tinker would repair, 'bottom' to the core of the skein a weaver winds his yarn on, 'flute' to the flutings of the church-organs a bellows-mender would sometimes mend, and 'snug' to the kind of fit a joiner would aspire to. Starveling's name is non-technical, but in its reference to the proverbial thinness of tailors (it took 'nine tailors to make a man') it points to a metonymic corporealisation that also characterizes Snout, Bottom, and, in the bawdy sense, 'Peter' Quince most obviously, but also Flute, who qualifies to play Thisbe because of the trilling exhalations from his own thoracic bellows, and Snug, which implies a cosy bodily warmth and security. Finally, 'quince, also refers to both fruit and tree, 'snout' has obviously animal implications, and bottoms and snuggling are not restricted to humans. When their names combine artful labour, human and animal bodies, and nature like this, the term 'mechanicals,

seems a misnomer for the workmen.⁸²

Therefore is Bottom the Weaver doubly a weaver: foremost as weaver, but likewise as Bottom ("core of the skein"). Yet why must be this translated character be a weaver, rather than the carpenter, tinker, tailor, bellows-mender, or joiner?

As seen, Munday gained freedom of the Drapers' Company via patrimony, a means of translation. And the noun, draper, originally denoted one who made woolen cloth, as this noun was utilized in 1572 by W.H. Turner: "The mercers and wollen drapers shallbe [sic] incorporated to one incorporation."⁸³ And the rare and obsolete verb, to draper, meant "To weave, to make into cloth."⁸⁴ Too, the noun, drapery, in 1610 communicated the manufacture of cloth, as in "Flemings...to teach our men that skill of Draperie or weaving and making wollen cloth."⁸⁵ So since gaining freedom of the Drapers in 1585 had Munday himself proved one among a species of weaver.

Author Anthony's London civic pageants included his first one extant, *Triumph of re-united Britania*, presented on October 29, 1605. Therein, Munday's byline identifies

82. James L. Calderwood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pp. 104-05 (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992) (Twayne's New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare), citing Elizabeth Sewell, *The Orphic Voice: Poetry and Natural History*, pp. 127-33 (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1960). Historian Rowse made the point in 1963, overlooking citation to Sewell. A. L. Rowse, *supra* note 32, p. 208.

83. *draper*, in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, p. 1019 (def. 1) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) (2nd ed.) (vol. 4) (J.A. Simpon and E.S.C. Weiner preps.) [quoting W.H. Turner, *Select Rec. Oxford*, p. 342 (1572)].

84. *draper, v., id.*, p. 1019 (def. 1).

85. *drapery, id.*, p. 1019 (def. 2a) (quoting Holland, *Camden's Brit.*, p. 352 (1610) (vol. 1)).

him as “citizen and Draper of London”.⁸⁶ For his 1614 pageantry authorship, Munday produced *Himatia – Poleos: The Triumphs of Old Drapery, or the Rich Cloathing of England*. Munday had been commissioned to produce it by his Draper’s Company brothers.⁸⁷ Bottom and Anthony both constitute weavers who are translated.

E. Bottom the Weaver and St. Paul

Exactly how continually-conscious of weaving proved the author of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*? It has been seen that Bottom soliloquizes that his vision “hath no bottom.” Russ McDonald explains that Bottom’s phrase accurately reflects Bottom’s vision “because it is like a tangled skein of wool with no base or bottom (a metaphor from weaving).”⁸⁸ And it has been seen (in section III B, *supra*) that Theseus dismisses the carpenter Peter Quince’s Prologue to the mechanicals’ play as “like a tangled chain: nothing impaired, but all disordered.” Quince’s Prologue is like a tangled skein of wool because devoid of any bottom. Sure enough, it is immediately *after* Theseus’s belittling of Quince’s Prologue that Bottom enters.

Too, Munday-as-Bottom illuminates the aforementioned Bottom speech that “eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen” Bottom’s Dream, so-called

86. Gerald Douglass George, *supra* note 40, pp. 145 (first extant), 144 and 146 (October 29), and 145 and 177 (Draper byline).

87. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

88. William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *supra* note 79, p. 69n. (McDonald’s emphasis). “... Nick or Nicholas is no longer thought to have been a type-name for a weaver; but Bottom obviously refers to the spool or nucleus a weaver’s thread is wound on.” Alastair Fowler, *Literary Names: Personal Names in English Literature*, p. 108 (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 2012).

“because it hath no bottom.” If Munday’s *John a Kent and John a Cumber* constitutes the *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* source, then well might the latter’s author reflect upon this stream of consciousness: *John a Kent and John a Cumber*-Munday-translated-Draper-weaver-bottom (skein-core) -Bottom the Weaver. And bottom (skein-core) itself evinces St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians, in William Tyndale’s pre-Shakespearean New Testament:

The eye hath not seen, and the ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath opened them unto us by his spirit. For the spirit searcheth all things, yea the bottom of God’s secrets.⁸⁹

The reverse-reading of the playwright’s inspiration is this sequence: St. Paul-bottom (of God’s secrets)-bottom (skein-core)-Bottom the Weaver. But how is one to evidence the stage-fairytale’s playwright wrote when mindful of Tyndale’s St. Paul? Whereas one nearly *knows* he wrote when alert to *John a Kent and John a Cumber*.

Anthony, at least, would have caught the multiple references.

F. Anthony Hissed

Thus does the real poet-author of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (by way of Theseus) harangue the maladroit Munday (by way of Bottom): My play unfolds the right way. Your inept effort in *John a Kent and John a Cumber* bespeaks buffoonish incompetence. For *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* sinks Bottom to depths of poignancy unsuggested by

89. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 (Tyndale) (<http://faithofgod.net/TyNT/1co.htm>).

any author previously.⁹⁰ Just how closely can one link the self-assured dramatist Oxford to the yesteryear Munday who had been hissed from the stage? The Earl of Oxford took over the Earl of Warwick's company of actors between January 2-April 13, 1580.⁹¹ J. W. Saunders recounted of Munday: "He acted (not very well) with the Earl of Oxford's company,...."⁹² And Celeste Turner fancied: "Perhaps he was the one man who, in 1581, acted with the Earl of Oxford's nine boy players at Bristol; the company had been active throughout the preceding year."⁹³

Munday as an actor had been hissed from the stage. Triumphantly contrariwise, Puck's (Robin Goodfellow's) Epilogue to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* closes with a call for applause ("Give me your hands") instead of hisses ("the serpent's tongue")⁹⁴:

And, as I'm an honest Puck,
If we have unearnèd luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call.

So, good night unto you all.

90. "One school of criticism would preserve Shakespeare in a pose of lofty disregard for his competitors, imagined in retrospect as his hapless inferiors." James J. Marino, *Owning William Shakespeare: The King's Men and Their Intellectual Property*, p. 103 (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

91. B. M. Ward, *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford 1550-1604: From Contemporary Documents*, p. 267 (London: John Murray, 1928).

92. *Munday, Anthony*, in J. W. Saunders, *supra* note 23, p. 117. Unfortunately, Saunders (citing only Turner's 1928 biography) fails to inspire confidence, dating Munday from 1553-1633. But Munday's 1560 birth had been established in 1959. Leslie Hotson, *Anthony Munday's Birth-Date*, 204 *Notes and Queries*, pp. 2, 3 (January 1959).

93. Celeste Turner, *supra* note 50, p. 28, *citing* J. T. Murray, *1 Eng. Dramatic Companies*, pp. 344-49.

94. *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *supra* note 21, p. 243.

Give me your hands, if we be friends,

And Robin shall restore amends.⁹⁵

Nor are these the only influences of Munday or of *John a Kent and John a Cumber* upon *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

V. THE FARCE AS DANCE

A. *John a Kent and John a Cumber* as Dance

Unnoticed before Pennell, one sees in the structure of *John a Kent and John a Cumber* a powerful touch of the jig (and/or dance).⁹⁶ The majority of discussions of Elizabethan theater disregard the jig.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the jig was sociologically a fundamental element in the balance between courtly and popular modes in the Elizabethan theater.⁹⁸ The stage jig's name is owing to the overt sexuality of the jig's theme.⁹⁹ The word commonly was used regarding social dances between couples.¹⁰⁰

Much of this play resolves into a kind of reciprocating action potently indicative of

95. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene 1, lines 425-33 (Bevington 1988).

96. Arthur E. Pennell, *supra* note 7, p. 27.

97. David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan Playhouse*, p. 46 (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2005).

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

100. *Ibid.*

patterns derivative from the jig, dance, or (maybe) the folk play.¹⁰¹ Parallelism in the action renders obvious Munday's preoccupation with pattern (most likely, a dance pattern.). One discovers sufficient evidence within the play's structure to disclose this feature of the dance: Performers take turns (as it were) much as they might in a dance like the "canary." Therein, alternate dancing apparently was commonplace, and admirably was suited to accompany dialogue singing.¹⁰² Often were the stanzas sung by the performers in turn.¹⁰³ So totally does *John a Kent and John a Cumber* assimilate dance elements that Pennell wonders whether Munday developed it from some elaborate song dialogue (whereby a plot is sustained through several hundred lines).¹⁰⁴

Asides, scarce in the prompt-books of Anthony's day, are found several times in *John a Kent and John a Cumber*: These, usually, are of the mocking sort presented in the songs of jigs. There is an effort to attain naturalness in the dialogue.¹⁰⁵ This is a noticeable facet of the song in the jig (with its speedy alteration of singers and some irregularity to the speeches' length.¹⁰⁶) *John a Kent and John a Cumber's* opening scene (a disconsolate lover's being advised by a friend, and the eventual awakening of that lover) contributes

101. Arthur E. Pennell, *supra* note 7, pp. 30-31.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

104. *Ibid.*, (citing Charles Reed Blackwell, *The Elizabethan Jig*, p. 346 (Chicago:1929)).

105. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

106. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

to a pattern likewise discerned, traditionally, in the opening scenes of jigs dedicated to contests between wooing-rivals.¹⁰⁷

Munday the balladeer appears to have utilized every song and dance tradition with which he was acquainted. His play marks an amalgamation of folkplay, ballad and jig.¹⁰⁸ No other play wherein Anthony had whole or partial authorship is so permeated with the dance motif.¹⁰⁹ Pennell concludes:

[T]he structural pattern of Munday's play is particularly interesting. Munday used the disguise device extensively but combined with it the basic features of the dance—combined them to such an extent that definite symmetrical movements are established within the entire structural pattern. In this regard, therefore, *John a Kent* is singular and may thus be considered of historical significance. Since no other extant play in this genre shows this particular characteristic, it is possible that *John a Kent* is a unique example of the type of play which may have evolved as a hybrid structure of song and drama.¹¹⁰

Or *did* someone notice as much, centuries pre-Pennell?

107. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

108. *Ibid.*, p. 37

109. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

110. *Ibid.*, pp. 209-10.

B. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as Dance

Enid Welsford understood the influence of dance upon *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She would lay it alongside John Milton's *Comus*:

The influence of the dance has affected not merely isolated songs and speeches, but the whole structure of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Again a comparison with *Comus* is helpful. The difference in style between *Comus* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* depends upon a difference of spirit. *Comus* is a criticism of life, it springs from an abstract idea: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a dance, a movement of bodies. The plot is a pattern, a figure, rather than a series of events occasioned by human character and passion, and this pattern, especially in the moonlight parts of the play is the pattern of a dance.

Enter a Fairie at one doore, and Robin Goodfellow
at another....Enter the King of Fairies, at one doore,
with his traine; and the Queene, at another with hers.

The appearance and disappearance and reappearance of the various lovers, the will-o'-the-wisp movement of the elusive Puck, form a kind of figured ballet. The lovers quarrel in a dance pattern: first, there are two men to one woman and the other woman alone, then for a brief space a circular movement, each one pursuing and pursued, then a return to the first figure with the position of the women reversed, then a cross-movement, man

quarreling with man and woman with woman, and then, as finale, a general setting to partners, including not only lovers but fairies and royal personages as well.¹¹¹

When Welsford thus looks to “the whole structure of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,” remember that Pennell outlined (literally) a detailed, patterned structure of reciprocating action in *John a Kent and John a Cumber*.¹¹² Was this latter, pioneering, play really *sui generis* after all? And what kind of playwright would witness *John a Kent and John a Cumber* alert to the dance structure therein? Just maybe a man who, during Queen Elizabeth's Progress of 1578, had been solicited by her to dance for foreign emissaries. That figure was identified by the Spanish ambassador, as “the earl of Oxford, who is a very gallant lad.”¹¹³

Anyway, why should the workingclass Munday's 1590 *John a Kent and John a Cumber*, with its hapless Turnop, still have been breaking news (eliciting so extensive a rejoinder) to a snooty playwright-competitor at the gestation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

111. Enid Welsford, in William Shakespeare, *supra* note 52, pp. 143, 151 (*from* Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque* [New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927]).

112. Arthur E. Pennell, *supra* note 7, pp. 29-30. *Cf.* Christopher R. Wilson and Michela Calore, *Music in Shakespeare: A Dictionary* (Thoemmes Continuum, 2007).

113. Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, at 181.

VI. JOHN A KENT AND JOHN A CUMBER IN 1594

A. *The Revival of December 3, 1594*

In 1923, Muriel St. Clare Byrne produced for the Malone Society an excellent reprint of Munday's work.¹¹⁴ Byrne recounted: "It has been suggested that there is some connection between *John a Kent and John a Cumber* and the *Wise Man of Westchester* and *Randal Earl of Chester*."¹¹⁵ Finds Pennell: "It is quite possible that *The Wise Man of Westchester*, one of these multi-disguise plays produced by the Admiral's Men, may have been an adaptation of John a Kent."¹¹⁶ (Munday's play is set in Westchester.¹¹⁷) *The Wise Man of Westchester* was produced by the Admiral's company on December 3, 1594.¹¹⁸

Professor Baldwin suggested that a prompter at the Globe named Vincent was the party who signed his name in the middle of the title page of *John a Kent and John a Cumber*¹¹⁹:

Who then was the prompter Thomas V? Taylor, the water poet, tells us in 1638 "I my selfe did know one *Thomas Vincent*, that was a Book-keeper or

114. Arthur E. Pennell, *supra* note 7, p. 4.

115. John a Kent & John a Cumber, p. x (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1923) (The Malone Society Reprints).

116. Arthur E. Pennell, *supra* note 7, p. 197.

117. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 27. Celeste Turner agreed that *The Wise Man of Westchester* was a 1594 revision or imitation of Munday's 1590 play. Celeste Turner, *supra* note 50, p. 108.

119. *Ibid.*, p. 52 (citing T. W. Baldwin, 43 *Modern Language Notes*, p. 329 (No. 5) (May 1928)).

prompter at the Globe play-house neere the Banck-end in Maid Lane." If Taylor is accurate, Vincent was the prompter at some time after the building of the Globe, in 1599. He appears as a musician in the plot of *Seven Deadly Sins*, made by him for Strange's men in 1592. Since he was working for the company by 1592 and as late as 1599, we should expect that he had remained continuously with the company. But his writing the fragment of *Fortune's Tennis* for the Admiral's, seemingly not earlier than 1597, as well as his work on *Kent*, which Sir Edmund Chambers dates about December 1594, would seem to indicate that he had really been attached to the Admiral's and not Strange's during the amalgamation, had remained with the Admiral's for a time after the separation, but had eventually gone to the Shakespearean company, presumably before June 3, 1597, when another prompter writes the plot of *Frederick and Basilea* for the Admiral's. It is thus desirable to identify the prompters of the Admiral's men, since facts concerning them may give further clue as to Vincent's service. The present evidence as to Vincent's connection with the Admiral's seems contradictory and must await some more decisive fact to clear it up.¹²⁰

According to Pennell, as to the title page signatory being this Vincent: "If so, then the connection between *John a Kent* and *The Wise Man of Westchester*, produced by the

120. T. W. Baldwin, Book Review, 43 *Modern Language Notes*, pp. 327, 329-30 (No. 5) (May 1928) (footnote omitted), citing Taylor's *Feast*, Spenser Society, 3rd Coll., pp. 70-71.

Admiral company, becomes much firmer.”¹²¹ Yet how significant is moving the date of a revived or adapted *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (as *The Wise Man of Westchester*) from 1590 to December 3, 1594? Brooks stipulated that if one could be certain that *John a Kent and John a Cumber* and *The Wise Man of Westchester* are one and the same, then “we could be all but sure that it is a source of Shakespeare’s play.”¹²²

B. A 1595 Premiere

Suggestive of a January 1595 premiere of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is that story’s snarled chronology. The story supposedly opens on April 27, to conclude with Duke Theseus’ wedding on May 1. Critics including Pope, Hanmer, Warburton,¹²³ and Fleay begin a new scene at the First Folio’s Act I, scene 1, line 137.¹²⁴ This scene F.G. Fleay allots to April 28.¹²⁵ The lovers flee to the wood on April 29, when the First Folio concludes Act III with the stage direction: “They sleepe all the Act.”¹²⁶ The next scene Oberon

121. Arthur E. Pennell, *supra* note 7, p. 53.

122. Harold F. Brooks, *supra* note 4, p. lxvi. Of course, T. W. Baldwin’s old theory of “acting lines” ran that one could reconstruct the casting of each Shakespearean play through identifying recurrent characterization. Bart van Es, *Company Man: Another Crucial Year for Shakespeare?*, *Times Lit. Supp.*, February 2, 2007, pp. 14, 15.

123. A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *supra* note 40, p. 17n.

124. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

125. *Ibid.*

126. Mr. William Shakespeare’s Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies, p. 157 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955) (facsimile ed. prep. Helge Kökeritz).

pronounces to precede the day (“to-morrow”) of Theseus’ May 1 wedding.¹²⁷ In this April 30 scene Titania’s music strikes the lovers “more dead / Than common sleep.”¹²⁸ Then arrive Theseus and Hippolyta, on the morning of May 1.

Fleay fancies that the lovers (fled to the wood on April 29) magically have slept like the dead through April 30, to awaken in the dawn of May 1: “If any one would ask why make them sleep during this time, I would answer that the 30th of April, 1592, was a Sunday.”¹²⁹ Fleay seemingly sees the Sunday sleep like the dead as a sort of ultimate day of rest. Coincidentally, the 1594 author of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, glancing ahead at his calendar, could perceive that, too, April 30, 1595, was to fall on a Sunday. But April 30, 1595, fell on a Sunday under the Roman Catholic Gregorian calendar, not under England’s Julian calendar. How conceivably could the playwright denominate the *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* April 30 as a Roman Catholic Sunday? That kind of trick had been pulled-off before.

Comparably salient yet correspondingly scrambled was the chronology of *Romeo and Juliet*. Therein are the starcrossed lovers wedded on Monday, to consummate their marriage on Monday. The next day (Tuesday) Old Capulet commands his daughter to marry Paris on Thursday (two days thereafter). Recalcitrant Juliet drinks her potion in the Wednesday predawn, then to be encrypted. Balthasar on Thursday reports Juliet’s

127. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act IV, scene i, line 88 (Bevington 1988).

128. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act IV, scene i, lines 80-81 (Bevington 1988).

129. A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *supra* note 40, p. 298.

seeming death to Romeo in Mantua. Immediately Romeo goes to an apothecary's shop. Yet, it "Being holy day,"¹³⁰ that apothecary's shop is shut. How can this Thursday be the day-of-rest ("holy day") Sunday?

Steve Sohmer explains that in such somber moment as this the author still chuckles, barely perceptibly, over the 10-date jump in the Gregorian calendar from the Julian. Ten days from Thursday would be Sunday.¹³¹ (Apparently the Mantuan apothecary is a Gregorian calendar-man). The playwright, by subtly looking toward Sunday, April 30, 1595, asks his audience whether it had been wide-awake for *Romeo and Juliet*, and whether it remained alert to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I did it before, and I can do it again!

C. The Premiere of January 26, 1595

i. The Wedding of January 26, 1595

A Midsummer Night's Dream must, from topical allusions, have been composed either in late 1594 or early 1595. Critics almost universally concur that it was created for a private performance, attendant upon an aristocratic wedding.¹³² To a certainty were plays performed for Elizabethan-era lords, in their country mansions.¹³³ Meanwhile,

130. Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, *supra* note 126, p. 673.

131. Steve Sohmer, *Shakespeare for the Wiser Sort*, p. 48 (New York: Manchester U. Press, 2007).

132. Maureen Grice, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*, p. 540 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1966) (Oscar James Campbell ed.).

133. P. V. Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, p. 223 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968). "In 1596, for example, Sir John Harington had a professional London Company come up to his house in Rutlandshire to put on a private performance." *Ibid.*, p. 223, n. 2, citing G. Ungerer, *An Unrecorded Elizabethan Performance of Titus Andronicus*, 14 *Shakespeare Survey*, pp. 102-09 (1961).

Peter Holland addresses *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to trumpet the want in that period of any instance of a full-length play, to become part of a professional theater company's repertory, that originally was composed for a wedding celebration.¹³⁴ How can those critics' concurrence and Holland's skepticism can be reconciled?

Reconciliation is rendered by hypothesizing a playwright who was not part of a professional theater company but an aristocrat actually embedded in the wedding celebration. Sure enough, Bevington submits that among the three chief marriages suitable for such a performance was that of William Stanley, Earl of Derby, to the aforementioned Elizabeth Vere, daughter of the Earl of Oxford.¹³⁵ James L. Calderwood concurs (likewise listing three weddings).¹³⁶ And Brooks narrowed the range of possibilities to two,¹³⁷ as did John Russell Brown,¹³⁸ and Jay L. Halio.¹³⁹ All included Elizabeth Vere's wedding.¹⁴⁰ That wedding took place on January 26, 1595.¹⁴¹

134. Peter Holland, Book Review, *Times Lit. Supp.*, August 12, 2011, p. 9.

135. William Shakespeare, *supra* note 3, p. 81.

136. James L. Calderwood, *supra* note 82, p. xvi. Calderwood's favored coupling (at least hypothetically) is that of Thomas, son of Lord Berkeley, and Elizabeth, daughter of Sir George Carey, on February 19, 1596. *Ibid.*, pp. xvi and 137. Ms. Carey was the granddaughter of the Queen's Lord Chamberlain (Henry, Lord Hunsdon): "What more likely than that the Lord Chamberlain's Men should be asked to provide a play to celebrate the wedding of the Lord Chamberlain's daughter?" *Ibid.*, p. xvi. Answer: That (at least hypothetically) the Lord Chamberlain's Men should provide a play for Shakespeare's daughter.

137. Harold F. Brooks, *supra* note 4, p. lvi. 137.

138. John Russell Brown, *Introduction*, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pp. x-xi (New York: Applause Books, 1996) (John Russell Brown ed.) (The Applause Shakespeare Library) ("Elizabeth Vane").

139. Jay L. Halio, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 10 (Manchester: Manchester U. Press, 1994).

140. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written on the occasion of the marriage of some noble couple—possibly for the marriage of the poet's patron Southampton with Elizabeth Vernon, as Mr. Gerald Massey supposes; possibly at an earlier date to do honour to the marriage of the Earl of Essex with Lady Sidney. Edward Dowden, *Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art*, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 34 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1918) (William J. Rolfe ed.).

141. Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, p. 349. "As was customary at all important weddings, the occasion was marked by feasting and revelry. It is of particular interest that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was probably performed during these celebrations." B. M. Ward, *supra* note 91, p. 318.

Brooks finds it extremely likely that the author of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was aware of a 1594 episode at the court of Scotland. At a baptismal feast a chariot originally proposed to have been drawn by a lion was not, from anticipation that the lion would frighten those nearby.¹⁴² Bottom and the mechanicals, correspondingly, worry that introducing a lion among the ladies would elicit fear¹⁴³: “But here it is not a question of some passing allusion the audience may have been expected to pick up: indeed, it is not primarily a question of them at all, but of the dramatist: for the boggling over the lion is organic to the play.”¹⁴⁴ A Scottish lion in the playwright’s mind’s eye renders, for the perhaps overenthusiastic Brooks, “a *terminus a quo*: the *Dream* could not have been earlier than the baptismal feast of Prince Henry, August 30, 1594, and probably not than the account of *A True Reportarie*, registered with the Stationers on 24 October.”¹⁴⁵

Professor Roger Stritmatter objected to this Brooks line of thought:

This “highly probable” conclusion is, however, contradicted by comparative evidence, available to [Horace Howard] Furness in 1895 but unaccountably passed over in silence by Brooks and the tradition on which his conviction is based: Reginald Scot’s *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), a well-acknowledged source for the play, includes prominent reference to the lion motif:

It is a common saeing: a Lion feareth no bugs.

But in our childhood our mothers maids have so

terrified us with an ouglie divell having hornes on

142. Harold F. Brooks, *supra* note 4, p. xxxiv.

143. *Ibid.*, pp. xxxiv-xxxv.

144. *Ibid.*, p. xxxv.

145. *Ibid.*, p. xxxiv.

his head. ... and a voice roaring like a lion, whereby

we start and are afraid when we heare one crie

‘Bough’” (in Furness 289).

This evidence casts serious doubt on the notion that the Prince Charles baptism incident has any utility for establishing the play’s *terminus a quo*.¹⁴⁶

At any rate, the lion-baptism incident material of August 30, 1594-October 24, 1594, arose as if to render more receptive to scary lion humor the fertile mind of a playwright busy immediately post-October 24 (especially if his mind already had been seeded by Stritmatter’s Scot source).

ii. The Want of Proof for a Pre-1595 Mechanicals-Subplot

Bevington explicates *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as merging four individually analyzable strands of action. These are: the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta; the romances of the four young lovers; the quarrel of the fairies King Oberon and Queen Titania; and the mechanicals, and their play of *Pyramus and Thisbe*.¹⁴⁷ So detachable is

146. Roger Stritmatter, *On the Chronology and Performance Venue of A Midsummer Night's Dream*, IX The Oxfordian, pp. 81, 87 (2006), citing Harold F. Brooks, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: Routledge, 1979), and Horace Howard Furness, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1895) (New Variorum). Here Stritmatter drops a footnote, adding: “Surprisingly, this contradiction has not to my knowledge been previously considered by students of the play’s chronology.” *Ibid.*, p. 89 n.3.

147. William Shakespeare, *supra* note 3, p. 85. Tyrone Guthrie created a critical stir in 1952 with his production of the play for the Old Vic by revealing to audiences that, given the right actors and the right direction, the lovers could be at least as entertaining if not more so to today’s audience than either the fairies or the mechanicals. This possibility, once recognized, raises the question of where artistic unity is to be found in a play compounded of such diverse elements or, indeed, if any exists: for in addition to the three strands of narrative already mentioned there is a fourth, the story of Duke Theseus and Hippolyta. It is normal to couple the Duke and his bride with the lovers in critical discussions, but this assumption is not born out by the actual shape of the plot since their story provides a distinct frame within which the other three threads of the plot are set, rather than a third pair of lovers to make the confusion between the other two couples the worse confounded.

Glynne Wickham, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage: Collected Studies in Medieval, Tudor and Shakespearean Drama*, p. 181 (New York: Barnes & Noble, Incorporated, 1969).

the mechanicals' strand of action that in 1661 Francis Kirkman and Henry Marsh, Jr., would publish *The Merry Conceited Humors of Bottom the Weaver*. *As it hath often been publikely acted by some of his majesties comedians, and lately, privately presented, by several apprentices for their harmless recreation, with great applause.*¹⁴⁸ That “droll” text is a brief farce composed of the mechanicals' scenes. In 1662 Marsh published *The Wits*, a compilation of 27 drolls from pre-Commonwealth plays.¹⁴⁹ Marsh justified this publication with: “He that knows a play, knows that Humours [i.e., clowning scenes] have no such *fixedness* and indissoluble connexion to the Design, but that without injury or forcible revulsion they may be removed to an advantage, which is...demonstrable,....”¹⁵⁰

Recall that it was Bevington who determined *John a Kent and John a Cumber* to be, perhaps, “the most suggestive possible source for Shakespeare’s clownish actors.”¹⁵¹ What proof for a pre-1595 mechanicals-subplot?

iii. An Ample Interval for a January 26, 1595, Response-Subplot

Was a 54-day stretch sufficient for a playwright’s elaboration of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream’s* mechanicals, and their play-within-the-play? Remember that Schalkwyk found the mechanicals’ play superfluous to the strict plot demands of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. It has been reported:

Certain textual inconsistencies indicate that the play as we have it has been revised and that the lines which deal with the fantasy form only one of two

148. James J. Marino, *supra* note 90, p. 150, citing *English Short-Title Catalog*, The British Library and ESTC/ North America, 1981-2010, R208092 (<http://eureka.rlg.org/Eureka/zgate2.prod>) (hereinafter ESTC).

149. *Ibid.*, citing ESTC R38726.

150. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

151. William Shakespeare, *supra* note 3, p. 86.

textual layers. It has been suggested that the lower and older level largely consists of the dialogue of the lovers and other passages of wooden rhymed verse that Shakespeare must have written near the beginning of his career as a dramatist. The later and upper level would thus contain the lines written in celebration of the allegorically described wedding. It is filled with bursts of verbal music that Shakespeare hoped would charm the cultivated wedding guests. The upper level of the text may also have contained the half-buried topical allusions and personal satire.¹⁵²

Yes, the fantasy is the later level. Elizabethan plays were copied into separate portions for each actor, embracing his lines (his part) and cues.¹⁵³ Is a 54-day push to create, and incorporate, the mechanicals’ strand of action into *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* advertised by the number of jokes and references therein to the performers several parts?¹⁵⁴ (See, e.g., section IV B and C, *supra*.)

Philip Henslowe (d. 1616) was a theater owner and manager.¹⁵⁵ Henslowe’s *Diary* is a folio memorandum account book of 1592 to 1603.¹⁵⁶ Henslowe’s *Diary* constitutes an essential information source regarding the work practices of Munday’s contemporaries.¹⁵⁷ Found John C. Meagher of the time when Munday composed Munday’s two 1598 Robin

152. The Reader’s Encyclopedia of Shakespeare, p. 543 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1966) (Oscar James Campbell ed.).

153. James J. Marino, *supra* note 148, p. 88.

154. *Ibid.*, citing at p. 170 n. 36, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act II, scene 1, lines 55 and 80-81, and Act III, scene i, lines 86-87.

155. *Henslowe, Philip*, in The Reader’s Encyclopedia of Shakespeare, *supra* note 152, p. 356.

156. *Ibid.*, p. 358.

157. Tracey Hill, *supra* note 40, p. 121.

Hood (“Huntington”) plays. “Few of the plays recorded in Henslowe’s *Diary* during this period seem to have taken longer than three weeks between their initial approval and their final delivery.”¹⁵⁸

In fact, during 1606 Ben Jonson’s Prologue to *Volpone* boasted of having penned *Volpone* by himself in five weeks. Jonson dismissed those who were envious, and might heckle that he writes slowly:

To these there needs no lie but this his creature,
Which was two months since no feature;
And though he dares give them five lives to mend it,
‘Tis known, five weeks fully penned it, . . .¹⁵⁹

A play on the shorter side might have been preferred for private entertainments.¹⁶⁰ *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is a shortish text.¹⁶¹ However, it would be lengthened in performance by dances and songs.¹⁶² (The custom of interact music spread to public theaters from private playhouses only about 1609.¹⁶³) Consequently, there was ample interval for a December 3, 1594, *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (even if disguised as *The Wise Man of Westchester*) to elicit a January 26, 1595, Nick Bottom/mechanicals subplot-

158. John C. Meagher, *Hackwriting and the Huntington Plays*, in *Elizabethan Theatre*, pp. 197, 212 n. 10 (London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1966). Gioachino Antonio Rossini sometimes had a mere month wherein to compose an opera prior to its already-scheduled premiere. Charles Rosen, Book Review, *N.Y. Rev. Bks.*, October 5, 2006, p. 36.

159. *Volpone*, Prologue, lines 13-16.

160. Harold F. Brooks, *supra* note 4, p. liv.

161. *Ibid.*, p. lv.

162. *Ibid.*

163. *Ibid.*, pp. xxxii-xxxiii, citing *The Playhouses and the Stage*, in Richard Hosley, *A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, p. 33 (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1971) (Kenneth Muir and Samuel Schoenbaum eds.).

response thereto, in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (at the wedding of Elizabeth Vere).

And Elizabeth Vere’s (but not another bride’s) uppercrust wedding eliminates an otherwise insoluble problem.

VII. THAT PROTOCOL PROBLEM

A. The Psychology of Paternalism

Scott McCrae discounted emphatically any probability that *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* was written with an eye to Elizabeth’s 1595 wedding: “But it’s just as likely the play was written as a commercial comedy and chosen to be presented at the marriage of the Lord Chamberlain’s granddaughter in February 1596.”¹⁶⁴ *Contra* McCrae, long previously had Hermann Ulrici clarified why this comedy could not have been chosen for presentation at the marriage of the Lord Chamberlain’s granddaughter. See how Ulrici fretted reasonably that *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* cannot have been *composed* for the Earl of Southampton’s marriage:

But, in fact, it would, in any case, be a strange and almost impertinent proceeding to present a noble patron with a wedding gift in the form of a poem where love—from its serious and ethical side—is made a subject for laughter and represented only from a comic aspect, in its faithlessness and levity, as a mere play of the imagination, and where even the marriage feast of Theseus appears in a comical light, owing to the manner in which it is celebrated. And it would have been even a greater want of tact to produce a

164. Scott McCrae, *The Case for Shakespeare: The End of the Authorship Question*, p. 242n. 31 (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005) (McCrae’s emphasis).

piece, composed for such an occasion, on the public stage, either before or after the earl's marriage.¹⁶⁵

From Ulrici one learns why *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, written as a commercial comedy by William Shakespeare of Stratford on Avon, could not be selected to be presented at an earl's (e.g., Southampton's) marriage.

Especially must this have been so if such earl's (e.g., the 6th Earl of Derby's) new father-in-law: (1) had been incarcerated in the Tower of London for his adulterous impregnation of a teenaged Maid of Honor to the Queen; (2) had known his erstwhile lover and their baby also to be incarcerated in the Tower for giving herself to that Earl; and (3) had known their bastard was named Edward Vere by his mother. Along such lines had run Earl Edward's biography.¹⁶⁶ Most particularly must such have seemed the case because, as Alfred Leslie Rowse reminds one,¹⁶⁷ the author of the fairytale-romantic comedy as it comes down to us was explicitly sensitive to what entertainment decoriously could comport with a wedding celebration. For Duke Theseus reads a list of prospective entertainments wherefrom to pick: "That is some satire, keen and critical,/Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony."¹⁶⁸

That said, how could the play have been presented for Lady Elizabeth's wedding?

165. A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *supra* note 40, p. 260, *citing* H. Ulrici, *Shakespeare's dramatische Kunst*, p. 539 (1847); 2 Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, p. 81 (1876) (L. Dora Schmitz, trans.). Schmitz translated Ulrici's third (1874) edition. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermann_Ulrici).

166. Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, pp. 231-32 and 266-70; Scott McCrae, *supra* note 164, p. 161. According to an ancient custom, to which allusion is twice made in the plays, a prisoner, even when he was innocent, had to pay a fee to his jailer on being discharged from custody.At least five of Shakespeare's contemporaries referred to it [the discharged prisoner's fee]; and Shakespeare alluded to it twice. Sir Dunbar Plunket, *Shakespeare and the Law*, p. 97 (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929). Vere refused to pay. Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, pp. 269-70.

167. A. L. Rowse, *supra* note 32, p. 207.

168. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene 1, lines 54-55 (Bevington 1988).

The searing temerity of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* safely is drawn, if the irreverent jesting therein remains all in the family. And so would it be had the play been written by the bride's self-deprecating father: Pater knows best, if only thorough sad experience. (Just ask your adolescent half-brother, my bastard.) That a presentation was workable for Elizabeth's wedding is the clearer because the University of Munich's Wolfgang Clemen shared insights beyond Ulrici's apprehensions. Clemen's insights demonstrate that this play could succeed at a wedding *if* its message were all in the family.

For Clemen apprehended:

It has often been stressed that in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare wanted to portray the irrational nature of love, the shifting and unstable "fancy" that continually falls prey to illusion, regards itself as being playful and short-lived, and is accompanied by a certain irresponsibility; whereas in *Romeo and Juliet*, written during the same period, love appears in quite a different shape, as a fateful and all-consuming force making claims to absolute authority and demanding that the whole of the self be yielded up to it.¹⁶⁹

Bullseye.

The mischievous author of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* therein suggested that the fateful and all-moving momentum of absolute authority is the paterfamilias (or at least an exerciser of his state's sovereignty, as were both Theseus and Elizabeth's grandfather: William Cecil, 1st Lord Burghley, Master of the Wards and Lord Treasurer). Emphatically

169. Wolfgang Clemen, *Introduction*, in William Shakespeare, *supra* note 52, pp. xxiii, xxx.

is it not amour, as found in Romeo and Juliet. The marital-irony preclusive of the premiere presentation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the wedding of alternative couples emblemizes, simultaneously, its perfect fitness for the venue of the Stanley-Vere wedding were Oxford telling its story himself.

Moreover, Maurice A. Hunt reviewed a longstanding speculation of James Bednarz: Nick Bottom is a parody of Edmund Spenser's Prince Arthur.¹⁷⁰ Amply evidenced is Spenser's sharp literary satirization of Lord Burghley. And William Cecil disliked that poet.¹⁷¹ The ridiculing of Spenser in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (as understood by onlooker Burghley) would have been a friendly wink to Burghley by Burghley's son-in-law (were Lady Elizabeth the bride in the aristocratic wedding alluded to at the conclusion of the comedy).¹⁷² Lord Burghley, unaware of Munday's translation, could beam that it all was about *him*. Meanwhile, a condescending Vere could imagine *himself* an Olympian, ideal figure giving their true proportions to mere mortals: a puppeteer boastfully blazoning Theseus's "not sorting with a nuptial ceremony" line as an inside-joke about a venture Vere, alone, could win.

B. The Sociopolitical Dynamics of the Vere Family Circle

In that paterfamilias-authority light, consider what Hardin Craig found of the fiction under inquiry: "The major plot, an Italianate story whose immediate source is

170. Maurice A. Hunt, *Shakespeare's As You Like It: Late Elizabethan Culture and Literary Representation*, p. 8 (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), citing James Bednarz, *Imitations of Spenser, in A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 14 *Renaissance Drama* 79-102 (1983).

171. *Ibid.*, p. 151 n. 8.

172. *Ibid.*, citing James Bednarz, *Imitations of Spenser, in A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 14 *Renaissance Drama* 79, 80-84, 93-95 (1983).

not known, is also an affair of a proposed marriage."¹⁷³ Find Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen: "The main plot is apparently without a direct source, which is unusual for Shakespeare."¹⁷⁴ Concur David Bevington: "The plot of the four lovers appears to be original...."¹⁷⁵ Added Craig: "This major plot is in itself highly intricate."¹⁷⁶

Highly intricate is plotting-out Elizabeth Vere's road to the altar. The aforementioned Earl of Southampton had declined the importunities of Burghley to marry Lady Elizabeth (at, perhaps, a hefty financial cost to that recalcitrant).¹⁷⁷ Thereafter, Elizabeth Vere appears to have objected to a successor could-be husband. In 1592, this successor had been Henry Percy, the 3rd Earl of Northumberland.¹⁷⁸ Each of these two prospects had arisen through Lord Burghley: Elizabeth's mother, Anne Cecil Vere had died on June 5, 1588.¹⁷⁹ Anne's father, Lord Burghley, had assumed the responsibility of rearing Anne and Edward's three daughters.¹⁸⁰ So Elizabeth lived under Cecil's guardianship.¹⁸¹

Elizabeth might have fallen in love with William Stanley while she was a Maid of

173. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, p. 183 (New York: Scott, Foreman and Company, 1951) (Hardin Craig ed.).

174. William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, p. 368 (New York: The Modern Library, 2007) (Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen eds.).

175. David Bevington, in William Shakespeare, *supra* note 3, p. 85.

176. Hardin Craig, *supra* note 173, p. 183.

177. Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, p. 323; B. M. Ward, *supra* note 91, pp. 313-14.

178. Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, p. 337; B. M. Ward, *supra* note 91, p. 314.

179. Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, p. 309

180. *Ibid.*, p. 322.

181. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

Honor at Court in 1590 or 1591.¹⁸² Yet Burghley had decided upon raising Elizabeth to prominence at Court.¹⁸³ As a landless and untitled younger brother of Ferdinando Stanley, himself the 5th Earl of Derby, William plainly was an unworthy suitor.¹⁸⁴ Fortunately, Ferdinando died on April 16, 1594.¹⁸⁵ That resulted in Burghley's agreement upon Elizabeth's January 1595 wedding date with the new, 6th Earl.¹⁸⁶ Thereupon, what did witnesses of the Stanley-Vere wedding know? All knew that by a somewhat ironic twist of events (at cost to luckless Ferdinando) Burghley's earlier resistance to William-Elizabeth vows had been rather vindicated. Paterfamilias (as Elizabeth's guardian) Burghley somehow knew best.

That *A Midsummer Night's Dream* somewhat comports with the father knows best-atmosphere (or, anyway, an authority somehow elicits the best-atmosphere) enveloping the Stanley-Vere wedding of the 6th Earl of Derby to Elizabeth Vere on January 26, 1595; that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* must smack of indelicacy if regarding any other aristocratic wedding; and that the Stanley-Vere vows of January 26, 1595, so closely follow the December 3, 1594, production of *The Wise Man of Westchester*; are matters combining to imply that this latter play contributed to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They sum into substantial evidence for the proximate influence of Munday's forgotten (or

182. B. M. Ward, *supra* note 91, p. 317.

183. Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, pp. 344-45.

184. B. M. Ward, *supra* note 91, p. 314.

185. Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, p. 345.

186. *Ibid.*, p. 349. How old is that story? "Who was ever approved as a son-in-law if he was short of cash, and no match for the money-bags of the young lady?" The Satires of Juvenal: Satire III, lines 160-61 (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/juv-sat3lateng.asp>).

belittled) John a Kent and John a Cumber upon the famed and cherished *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

C. And Royal Protocol

Teasing about dizzying romantic love would have been particularly tolerable at the Stanley-Vere wedding attended by Queen Elizabeth. In the opening scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Duke Theseus challenges Hermia whether:

You can endure the livery of a nun,
 For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
 To live a barren sister all your life,
 Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon,
Thrice blessed they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
 But earthlier happy is the rose distilled,
 Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
 Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.¹⁸⁷

The bridal rose, Elizabeth Vere, can be rendered earthly happiness thanks to her welcomed marriage. Yet all present at the wedding acknowledge that it is (instead) such as the Virgin Queen who are "thrice blessed." Of Queen Elizabeth's words of 1559, addressed

187. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act I, scene i, lines 70-78 (emphasis added) (Bevington 1988).

to Elizabeth's initial parliament, has much been made¹⁸⁸: "And in the end this shall be for me sufficient: that a marble stone shall declare that a queen, having reigned such a time, lived and died a virgin."¹⁸⁹ Elizabeth Tudor has mastered her blood, even, perhaps, at cost of her own greater happiness. Good Queen Bess is royally complimented.

On the other hand, the renowned Rowse in his 1963 biography of William Shakespeare snorted against the interpretation of this passage as complimentary to Elizabeth.¹⁹⁰ Rowse's dismissal doubtless was facilitated because he overlooked the lines ("Thrice blessed they...") herein italicized. Rowse reiterated his scorn for the interpretation of this passage as complimentary to Elizabeth in his subsequent edition of the works of Shakespeare. And in that august work, Rowse's quoting from this passage again overlooked the lines ("Thrice blessed they...") herein italicized.¹⁹¹

And just in case anyone present missed the reference in that passage, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* later adds Oberon's well-known¹⁹² homage to the Virgin Queen:

That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all armed. A certain aim he took
At a fair vestal thronèd by the west,

188. John Cooper, *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I*, p. 66 (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2011).

189. *Ibid.*

190. A. L. Rowse, *supra* note 32, p. 205.

191. A. L. Rowse, *The Annotated Shakespeare*, p. 230 (New York: Greenwich House, 1988) (distrib. by Crown Publishers, Incorporated) (A. L. Rowse ed.).

192. Helen Hackett, *Shakespeare and Elizabeth: The Meeting of Two Myths*, pp. 1, 3-4 (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 2009).

And loosed his love shaft smartly from his bow
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial vot'ress passèd on
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.¹⁹³

The noun 'votress' (or 'votaress') means a woman who had dedicated herself to a virginal lifetime (not unlike a never-wedded nun).¹⁹⁴ This certain reference to Elizabeth probably links to a 1591 fete in her honor at Elvetham.¹⁹⁵

D. And a Matter of Taste

At the close of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the fairies sprinkle a kind of holy water about the house to bless the recently-wed couples,¹⁹⁶ this at Oberon's ordinance:

Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create

193. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II, scene i, lines 155-64 (Bevington 1988).

194. Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare: Upstart Crow to Sweet Swan: 1592-1623* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2011) (Arden Shakespeare Library).

195. Phebe Jensen, *Religion and Revelry in Shakespeare's Festive World*, pp. 105-06 (New York: Cambridge U. Press, 2008).

196. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, p. 157 n. to line 158 (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Incorporated, 1992) (4th ed.) (David Bevington ed.).

Ever shall be fortunate.
 So shall all the couples three
 Ever true in loving be;
 And the blots of Nature's hand
 Shall not in their issue stand;
 Never mole, harelip, nor scar,
 Nor mark prodigious, such as are
 Despised in nativity,
 Shall upon their children be.¹⁹⁷

Neil Freeman reflects of “Nor mark prodigious, such as are despised in nativity” that “it is fascinating that as the serious afflictions are faced, the magic pattern is momentarily broken.”¹⁹⁸

The close of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* indicates two different endings: Puck's epilogue for the public stage and the fairy masque for a private performance (e.g., a wedding feast).¹⁹⁹ What playwright (but the bride's aristocratic father) dare dispel the sweet atmosphere of the nobles' wedding with such grimness? The language befits, rather, the grisly scene in *Richard the Third* wherein Lady Anne mourns the corpse of Henry the Sixth by cursing his killer:

If ever he have child, abortive be it,
 Prodigious, and untimely brought to light,

Whose ugly and unnatural aspect

197. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene i, lines 396-409 (Bevington 1988).

198. Neil Freeman, *supra* note 30, p. 85 n. 3.

199. Jay L. Halio, *supra* note 139, p. 10.

May fright the hopeful mother at the view;

And that be heir to his unhappiness!²⁰⁰

What could Oxford have been thinking, to write so for his own daughter's nuptials?

When Edward had been 33, Anne had borne their Elizabeth a younger brother. Circumstances suggest that her brother survived but two days, dying unnamed, before his baptism.²⁰¹ (Customarily was the sacrament of baptism administered within days of birth. So critical was its administration that it was a punishable offense to postpone the sacrament for over a month following birth.²⁰²) And the very existence of another son of Edward and Anne would be unknown but for his unnamed mention on her tomb: Anne and Edward moreover had suffered the loss of a daughter aged between 12 and 32 months.²⁰³ Was Elizabeth's otherwise-unknown brother never even whispered of, being prodigious, ugly, unnatural and untimely brought to light? Did a family of noble line and its wedding-guests recognize Oberon's speech as Edward's open prayer, for Edward's Elizabeth, that she be spared grim griefs that had been visited upon Edward's Anne?

VIII. CONCLUSION

The preceding discussion has reviewed the longtime supposition that key to the outline of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was Anthony Munday's play, *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. The dramatic work *John a Kent and John a Cumber* has been adjudged, over a lengthy reach of time, to be deficient. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* marks something of a

200. The Tragedy of *Richard the Third*, Act I, scene ii, lines 21-24.

201. Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, pp. 289-90.

202. Leslie Hotson, *Anthony Monday's Birthday*, Notes and Queries, January 1959, p. 2.

203. Alan H. Nelson, *supra* note 76, pp. 306 and 309.

rejoinder to *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the Munday-Turnop character is reconfigured as Bottom the weaver. Duke Theseus, the representative of authority in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, discounted the play-within-the-play performed by Bottom (Munday) and Bottom's associates. Thereby reviled as inadequate is *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. Bottom in particular is demeaned as bidding to spoil his company's stage performance with an extempore fiasco. Bottom, famously, is affixed magically with the head of an ass. Yet this takes place with language ("translated") so pinpointedly framed as to pertain to Anthony Munday personally.

Simultaneously, however, could other other motives have inspired the creator of the classic stageplay. In 2006, the University of Miami's Professor Colin McGinn realized: "Bottom is the most clearly delineated and distinctive character in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the most likable."²⁰⁴ Why well-might Bottom clearly prove both the most distinctive, and the most clearly delineated, character therein? Because the author of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* personally had been acquainted with Bottom/Munday—in the flesh—since 1567. Why well-might Bottom prove the most likable of the subject play's characters? Because that comedy's condescending author already publicly had patronized Bottom/Munday, literally, for years. So Bottom's characterization entails a highborn Earl's smug affection for his upstart ex-secretary, as well as communicates Edward's open reproof of Anthony's own literary effort.

John a Kent and John a Cumber is dated *circa* December 1590. Why might the playwright of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have proved still heedful of Munday's 1590

creation, over the 1594-1595 interval of the writing of that subsequent, famed romantic comedy? Evidence suggests that a version of *John a Kent and John a Cumber* was presented in December 1594, and that the premiere of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* followed in January 1595. That proximate *John a Kent and John a Cumber* was in the air. Again and again, critics of English literature have apprehended how constituents of *John a Kent and John a Cumber* inspired, and thus became reflected in, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Nevertheless, no more than paltry attention hitherto can have been paid to the sharp coincidence in the dates thereof. In one form or another, *John a Kent and John a Cumber* was presented, perhaps, a fleeting 54 days preceding the first performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. And these pages have attested to the prospect that such January premiere was a performance presented at the wedding of the daughter of Edward de Vere. Munday is the living link between the former play (as its author) and the latter play (particularly were it a creation of Munday's old employer, the 17th Earl of Oxford). Consequently, herein has been shared speculation: (1) over how intimately connected could have been 1594 and 1595 developments; and (2) regarding how closely related therein, personally, could have been this pair of then high-profile playwrights.

204. Colin McGinn, *Shakespeare's Philosophy: Discovering the Meaning Behind the Plays*, p. 34 (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006).

APPENDIX

Professor Emeritus in the University of Exeter's Department of Classics and Ancient History Peter Wiseman recently recalled attention to a too little-noted 1979 pamphlet by F. W. Clayton.²⁰⁵ That derived from Clayton's 10th Jackson Knight Memorial Lecture, delivered at the University of Exeter on June 13, 1977. Professor Wiseman rightly holds that the classicist Clayton's contribution "seems to have escaped the notice of Shakespearean scholars."²⁰⁶ Understandably could such be so, inasmuch as the 1986 annotated bibliography of the instant Shakespearean comedy lists Clayton's paper under Criticism, but not under Sources, Background, Date.²⁰⁷

The merits of Clayton's study justify the detail in Wiseman's recapitulation thereof:

Of course, Ovid was the main source for Pyramus and Thisbe, but the phrase he used for the "crannied hole or chink" through which the lovers converse (*tenuis rima*) also occurs in two other Latin poems, Juvenal's third satire^[208] and Claudian's In Eutropium II. In the passages where the phrase is used (Juvenal lines 93-100 and Claudian lines 376-89) we find a mask (as worn by Flute), "all things plain" (Quince in the Prologue), Demetrius, the name of one of the lovers in the main plot, a man called Leo ("well

roared, Lion"), starving (for Starveling), roaring, and a weaver. Claudian also uses colos, "distaffs", and Clayton noted that any sixteenth-century reader who looked up that unfamiliar word in Elyot's Latin dictionary of 1538 would find "colos—fundament" (a mistake for culus). Bottom, thou art translated"!

Elsewhere in the Claudian poem (line 440) is the "lion's dam", as in Snug's speech; a little earlier in the Juvenal (80-83) is Daedalus, glossed by Elyot as "an excellent carpenter of Athens", and also quinces (by another Elyot mistranslation, this time of cottona), and at the end of it (286-8), in the scene of a poor man threatened by a mugger, we have Moonshine and the lantern Flute himself, as Thisbe, hints at the Juvenal source ("most briskly juvenal" MND 3.i.88); but Claudian is much more unexpected,....²⁰⁹

Are Juvenal and Claudian the proximate source for the circa 1595 comedy of lovers? If only one, at today's distant remove, could peer into the head and heart of the playwright!

Or maybe one can. Some say they do. Weighty authority is Colin Burrow's 2013 academic study of that comedy's creator, and classical antiquity.²¹⁰ For it is adjudged a "splendid book"²¹¹ by Professor Wiseman. In the considered judgement of Burrow:

In analysing Shakespeare's classicism, it is necessary to be as sensitive to theatrical contexts as it is when analysing any other aspect of his plays.

Classical sources tend to be adapted to their theatrical situations. The really

205. F. W. Clayton, *The Hole in the Wall: A New Look at Shakespeare's Latin Base for "A Midsummer Night's Dream"* (Exeter: U. of Exeter Press, 1979).

206. Peter Wiseman, Letter to the Editor, *Times Lit. Supp.*, March 21, 2014, p. 6.

207. D. Allen Carroll and Gary Jay Williams, *A Midsummer Night's Dream: An Annotated Bibliography*, p. 175 (New York: Garland Publishing, Incorporated, 1986).

208. Juvenal: Satire 3, in *Juvenal and Persius* (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press) (with English trans. by G. G. Ramsay) (The Loeb Classical Library 91) (transcribed for the internet by Frank Shaer) (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/juv-sat3lateng.asp>).

209. Peter Wiseman, *supra* note 206, p. 6.

210. Colin Burrow, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 2013).

211. Peter Wiseman, *supra* note 206, p. 6.

big point that follows from these examples, indeed, is that for Shakespeare, “knowledge” of the classics tended to be situational. That is, a particular scene or setting might recall some more or less dim memory of a classical text: a reference to “Aristotle” could come to mind in a scene or in a play about imitation if it was associated with literary imitation in the work in which Shakespeare came across it; a piece of pastiche “Juvenal” might seem right for a scene in which a younger character is being rude to an older, partly because Juvenal is sometimes rude about the old, but also because Juvenal’s name means “juvenile”. Allusions to Lucan, who wrote an epic poem about Rome’s civil wars, occur most frequently in historical works about England’s civil wars, the Wars of the Roses. What Shakespeare “knew” about classical literature is inseparable from the ways he used it, and he often used his knowledge in ways that create complex implied dialogues between characters onstage, and between his own writing and his reading. These effects all suggest that we should think of Shakespeare’s knowledge of classical writing dynamically, as a changing and theatrically inflected resource....²¹²

Had the December 3, 1594, production of a revived Munday play caught the 1595 playwright’s eye, the Burrowian cause-and-effect would flow: The theater-sensitive later author’s knowledge of the Munday revival now informed the theatrical situation surrounding his own, forthcoming work. The more or less dim memories of Juvenal and Claudian texts awakened, insofar as the hour seemed to call for onstage ludicrous

workingmen. That imperative, itself, sparked the writing-dynamic. What the playwright knew of classical literature was being theatrically inflected. Thereby, Munday’s play was the proximate source of the subsequent production: Juvenal and Claudian number among its more remote sources.

212. Colin Burrow, *supra* note 210, p. 30.



Silver Slippers

Photo: Sue Matheson

The Clothes Make the (Wo)man: Nineteenth- Century Female Literacy, Subversive Sartorial Codes & Tabitha Tenney's Cross-Dressed Novel

by Courtney C. Jacobs, Colorado Mountain College, Edwards, Colorado

We have political novels, representing every variety of political opinion—religious novels, to push the doctrines of every religious sect—philanthropic novels, devoted to the championship of every reform—socialist novels, philosophic novels, metaphysical novels, even railway novels... The opponents of novel writing have turned novelists.

- Excerpt from *Graham's Magazine* (1854), Qtd. in *Novels, Readers and Reviewers* by Nina Baym

But, when you compare [Female Quixotism] with the most extravagant parts of the authentic history of the celebrated hero of La Mancha, the renowned Don Quixote, I presume you will no longer doubt its being a true uncolored history of a romantic country girl, whose head has been turned by the unrestrained perusal of Novels and Romances.

- From the Preface of *Female Quixotism* by Tabitha Gilman Tenney

Tabitha Gilman Tenney's *Female Quixotism* (1801) presents a problematic image of the early American novel, an image duly shaped by Gilman's own political agenda, and her modern audience's retrospective and historically attentive readerly perspectives. As a genre that gained notable popularity but received mixed criticisms by the early to mid-

nineteenth century, the novel became a literary vehicle for of myriad of causes—political, social and religious—that sought to define and shape a fragile and mutable American national identity during the Revolutionary and Early National periods. Although its acceptance as a legitimate literary form was not universal, it is an unarguable fact that the novel became a multifaceted means of petitioning, of protesting, of condemning, of questioning, and of re-instating American social norms. Tenney’s novel was certainly no exception. Having mainly been read as one of two literary forms of commentary, *Female Quixotism* seems either to enter into a social discussion, using its genre and form as means to satirize the then current state of American literacy, or, to perpetuate “continuity of the novelistic genre through... ‘repetition with a difference’ as a parody (Hutcheon qtd. in Miecznikowski 35). A satirical reading of the text provides an adequate elucidation of Tenney’s veiled social agenda, that is, her desire to condemn the social stigmas attached to differing modes of literacy, as demonstrated by “those enemies of female improvement” (Tenney 3). Reading the novel with an eye for parody, on the other hand, allows the contents of the text to function both mimetically and ontologically (14). Structuring her novel as a parody may have allowed Tenney to, ironically, embrace the value of a burgeoning genre by mocking it. Though scholars like Cynthia Miecznikowski, in her article “The Parodic Mode and the Patriarchal Imperative,” favor this parodic reading of *Female Quixotism* in lieu of a more direct and simplistic satirical reading, I would argue that Tenney’s novel is neither one nor the other, but an amalgam of the two molds: a satirical parody.

Even as the text is seemingly dressed and equipped to perform a destined role (a role

outlined by Tenney’s narrator, “the compiler,” in the novel’s preface), *Female Quixotism* entertains a number of readings, including one that is very much in contrast to its prescribed interpretation. Upon first reading, the novel serves a satirical purpose in that it is undoubtedly a piece that explores female readership. Unlike her Spanish predecessor Don Quixote, Dorcasina Sheldon (Tenney’s fanciful protagonist) must be a domestic adventurer; she is physically restricted to her home space with only the imagined settings, plots and characters that she has gleaned from her novels as consolation. She is doomed to suffer a passive role as she awaits the arrival of her own ventures and exploits. As Miecznikowski purports, and I certainly agree with her here, “[*Female Quixotism*’s] story is primarily that of woman as reader, not simply as ‘woman’ (36). Dorcasina is a flawed reader because she cannot interpret and code her “real-life” experiences objectively, that is, without the narrative framework of her favorite novels as key code. Dorcasina’s character re-inscribes the typical ill-conceived image of the flawed and flustered nineteenth-century female reader: “being young, [ladies] were liable to be strongly impressed and possibly lastingly influenced by their reading. Being ladies, they were *per definitonem* romantically inclined, that is, open to suggestions and appeals to the imagination, the fancy, the feelings” (Petter 47). This image stood in contrast to the worldly, impartial interpretive prowess of male literary audiences. Though she may seem to serve a mere didactic function, Dorcasina performs a surprisingly subversive role as director to the performance of the novel as social satire.

In an often comedic attempt to synthesize all her cherished romantic fictions into a functioning narrative reality, Dorcasina outfits herself and her servants in the proper

‘costumes’ to perform their functions as archetypal characters. Performative cross-dressing becomes a reoccurring theme in the text—a subversive pattern revealing the arbitrary nature of the very roles and stigmas that “the compiler” reinforces before the novel even begins. As Frederick Jameson purports in his treatise of the *Political Unconscious*, we must read in order to unmask “the cultural artifact as socially symbolic act” (Jameson 20). Thus, a motif such as the boundary-shattering concept of cross-dressing becomes a social signpost.

Dorcasina’s faithful but superstitious maid Betty, and John Brown, the servant turned temporary gentlemen, both participate (although not voluntarily) in a sort of absurd recital, sheperded by Miss Sheldon herself. Using the core proponents of Jameson’s argument as a springboard, Dorcasina’s absurd performances leap into the category of the carnivalesque. Mikhail Bakhtin, in his study of the term, highlights the political potential of the literary carnivalesque by asserting that even the most entrenched hierarchical order can be shattered and reinvented in a moment of masquerade. If, according to Marjorie Garber in her more recent book *Vested Interests*, “dress codes function in the social world and the world of social hierarchy as structures that simultaneously regulate and critique normative categories like rank and gender”, then Dorcasina’s sartorial eccentricities (and those that she imposes on others) should point toward the novel’s satirical social under-currents (Garber 25).

But that satirical angle accounts for only one half of the analysis that reveals the import of Tenney’s work. How might *Female Quixotism* function also as a parody? More specifically, how might an occasion of cross-dressing function symbolically, this time, in

service of a parodic reading? Rather than situating the novel in direct dialogue with a set of social values (as the satirical reading does), an interpretation of *Female Quixotism* as parody would, according to Miecznikowski present a mimetic dichotomy that “forces an awareness of the difference and the distance between art and experience” (Miecznikowski 35). What we see is a realist, didactic, essentially anti-novel text masquerading as a romance. Or, was it the other way around? Henri Petter, in his *Early American Novel*, purports that, although Tenney’s text conforms to many of the typical requirements for a romantic novel of the period, it actually holds hostage the agreed upon significance of said requirements. The presupposition of truth, for example, is a contextual device employed by many early romance writers to reinforce the gravity and plausibility of whatever ideologies they were reinforcing through their narratives. Tenney too has utilized this method, but to what end? Petter posits that, in respect to this presupposition of truth, “Mrs. Tenney did not miss her opportunity of making fun of the pretense” (Petter 47). Scores of novel reviews were published in contemporary periodicals—*The New York Review*, *Graham’s*, *The Christian Examiner*—displaying the proper etiquette surrounding how novels should or shouldn’t be purchased, read and interpreted. While Tenney’s novel may seem to harbor a singular agenda, like the costumed characters of Betty and John Brown, *Female Quixotism* as a literary artifact is at times a “transvestite text.” Such an artifact exists in a liminal space—a space between what a nineteenth-century novel was expected to achieve using a canon of established characteristics, and what it could prospectively achieve by reflecting the implications of those traits back on themselves and potentially subverting them. “Tenney’s genius is to tie the form that most emphasizes freedom from society back to limitation (read: female limitation) and society (read: patriarchal society)”

(Davidson 275). Thus, we read *Female Quixotism* as a mimetic study, a novel bent on mocking the very genre that birthed it; it is a petition for social awareness in costume, playing the role of a romance.

“To me he appears in every thing the very reverse of a gentleman...”¹

While the eclectic images of cross-dressed servants and soldiers in Tenney’s novel may seem only to function as embellishments of the protagonist’s absurd and fabricated existence, these sartorial trends actually betray the intricacies of socio-historical values, beliefs and restrictions common to the Revolutionary era. Since the U.S. was still reeling from its newly won independence from the British monarchy at the time of the novel’s publication, Early Americans were consistently seeking out ways to solidify a sense of unique nationhood. Although the remarkable outcome of the Revolutionary War created a precarious sense of national unity, distinct echoes of British influence still infiltrated the “new” American mindset. Many of the ideologies and customs (not to mention reading styles) that were born across the Atlantic in Britain still maintained authority over the social and political etiquette of the masses-- authority that particularly impacted the categorization of gender spheres, class status and economic mobility. Surprisingly, the sumptuary laws created in Britain during the Renaissance period, particularly the restrictions placed on dress and public appearance, flourished during the following centuries, and continued to resonate with an American people floundering to demarcate boundaries within a newly mobile population. The laws, as Garber points out, “appear

to have been patriotic, economic, and conservatively class-oriented,” as they publicly restricted the wearing of regulated fabrics, silk, furs and accessories (Garber 25). Certain fashions and styles were reserved only for those of title and rank, or at the very least elevated economic standing, in order to ensure social legibility and hierarchical distinction.

“Cloth of gold, sylver tissue, silke of purple color” [sic] were sartorial markers allowed only for “earls and above that rank” (26). Women were not allowed to don “cloth of silver,” excepting of course “knight’s wives and above that rank” (26). Intricate proclamations dictated proper dress and appearance for both men and women (separately, of course) in each distinct class category: earls and countesses, knights and members of the court, gentlemen’s wives and men with income of over 500 marks, etc. (26). Elaborate dress, vibrantly colored fabrics and accessorizing became a privilege of the elite, and soon fashion became signifier of the intricate details of social, political and sexual preference. These sophisticated dress codes became extensions of monarchical power, and thus to ignore or augment them meant a direct challenge to god-given authority. Power was exercised through conformity and public categorization; there was little room for ambiguous sartorial representation. “Clothing—and the changeability of fashion—is an index of destabilization, displeasing to the monarch as the sermonizer, since it renders the Englishmen *illegible*, incapable of inscription” (27). Far from mere attempts to create uniformity or re-instill a sense of British identity, the English sumptuary laws formulated, policed and maintained the definitions of class restrictions and gender roles that dictated social life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is regulations such as these—regulations that, in some form or another, traveled across the ocean to

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the then British colonies—that molded and shaped the social strictures of the American Early National period.

Fashion continued to evolve as an essential expression of political, religious and cultural belief in the United States. Thus the subtle advent of cross-dressing allowed revolutionary wearers to traverse those boundaries that authoritarian figures so blatantly struggled to demarcate. What was it about this act that was so threatening? The sartorial implications in biblical law reveal the dogmatic repercussions of such actions. A passage in Deuteronomy-- “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment; for all that do so are abomination until the Lord thy God”-- functioned as a sort of divinely mandated sumptuary law (Deut 22:5). Based on both these man-made, and supposedly “divinely ordained” regulations, the anxiety about cross-dressing undeniably seems to originate in the fear of the authoritarian powers that were slowly being made obsolete and arbitrary by increasing public attention to more fluid definitions of gender and class. But, rather than operating as a strictly subversive act aimed at undermining an already established patriarchal order, I would argue that cross-dressing signifies a much more self- sustaining air of protest and freedom. The cross-dressed character, then, does not merely destabilize the current authoritarian ideology, he creates an entirely new order.

Mikhail Bakhtin claims that the “carnival and the grotesque function to consecrate inventive freedom... to liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths... The carnival spirit offers the chance... to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things” (Bakhtin

34). Thus, the value of the carnivalesque is both subversive and performative; meaning and signification are achieved both in resistance to a patriarchal aggressor and in a strictly unique and creative landscape. With Tenney’s protagonist, Dorcasina, in mind, I quote Bakhtin once more: “one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions... It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed” (10). Similar in function to both satire and parody, the carnivalesque motif deploys common symbols in subverted form in order to question common forms of legitimation.

Dorcasina, as ringleader of her carnivalesque reality, is fueled by the romantic delusions outlined in the novels that she read and treasured. As Bakhtin surmises, the carnivalesque is “hostile” to the irrefutable nature of social stricture and stigma. Dorcasina refuses to confront her own waning attractions, aging appearance and social improprieties. Her actions and contentions seem ludicrous, almost desperate, to the reader; we might even agree with Miss Sheldon’s final suitor, Mr. Seymour, when he rebukes her as a “credulous old fool” (Tenney 315). Dorcasina reproaches proper social etiquette, ignores the advances of the solid but ‘cold’ and ‘dispassionate’ Lysander (suitor number one), and merrily concedes to not one, but two kidnappings, all in order to sustain the on-going theatrical performance that is her existence as “heroine.” Tenney’s hyperbolic portrayal of Dorothea’s courtship speaks to a larger critique of courtship mores in American society.

Tenney’s protagonist acts as a “director;” she solicits numerous actors and actresses to play the other roles in her carnivalesque narrative. Who better to begin with than her

faithful maid, Betty? Although she is superstitious almost to a fault, Betty is a sturdy and reasonable member of the working lower class; so much so, that when juxtaposed against her wealthy “learned” mistress, Betty is ironically judged the more rational. When Dorcasina, following her first thwarted love affair and in her ‘heartbroken state, proposes to fashion her own appearance exactly as it was the “day she beheld her love” (we’re referring to her second lover, O’Connor, at this point) Betty is skeptical (97). Yet, as Dorcasina continues to outline her plan, Betty realizes that she herself must play a part as well. Upon hearing that she is commanded to dress herself in the late Mr. Sheldon’s suit and then “personate O’Connor,” Betty is flabbergasted (97). But being a servant, and perhaps unused to refusing any request made by her mistress, the lady stubbornly concedes. Tenney is careful to document both Betty’s hesitation in dressing herself as such, and Dorcasina’s utter lack of ‘rational’ comprehension concerning the implications of her command. “With the utmost reluctance, [Betty] pulled off her own clothes, and dressed herself in those of Mr. Sheldon, in which she made a most grotesque appearance... Dorcasina observed that the clothes, to be sure, did not suit quite so well as if they had been made for her; but that was of little consequence...” (98). With her blushing female servant standing before her, costumed as a wealthy gentlemen, Dorcasina can do no more than comment on the loose, unattractive fit of the jacket and pants. Not only has Betty’s appearance now superseded her rank (a fact that makes her visibly uncomfortable), but she has also taken on the visage of a man. Her mistress remains insensitive to Betty’s plight (even though Betty is “ready to die with shame and vexation”) because Dorcasina’s own costumed identity—that of a young, vibrant lady being courted by a wealthy gentlemen—is only justifiable when it is symbiotically in dialogue with Betty’s

assumed identity as ‘hero’ (98). Without her ‘O’Connor,’ Dorcasina’s status as young, romantic heroine is incomplete.

But what is implied by the fact that Betty is a reluctant performer? Unlike the cross-dressed individuals that Garber studies in *Vested Interests*, Betty’s ‘final performance’ as O’Connor was un-planned and unwelcome. While I would argue that the image of a female servant impersonating a wealthy gentleman in the nineteenth century is, by nature, subversive, as it calls into question what exterior qualities signify “gentlemen” or “servant,” and even, what for us defines “female” and “male,” Betty is simply not a willing vehicle for such a message. Before shimmying up a tree to escape, she attempts to ensure her place as mere spectator to, rather than performer in Dorcasina’s theatrical exhortations. “Betty, determined to act her part in the worst manner possible, that she not need again be forced into so disagreeable a situation, began another speech more outré, if possible than the former...” (99). Regardless of her reluctance, both Dorcasina and Tenney force Betty into the position of social symbol, and I would argue that Betty’s indisposition to her gender and class re-categorization calls into question the gender roles that Dorcasina (and the ‘romantic heroine’) represents and perpetuates. Because Dorcasina’s ‘lie’ is essentially only culpable when paired with and reflected against Betty’s, Betty must in turn surrender her true identity in order for Dorcasina to maintain her fabricated persona. Not only does this instance of cross-dressing dispute the gender and class parameters that Betty’s character represents, but it ripples outward to encompass Dorcasina and all that her character embodies as well. As Garber states, in the case of the cross-dressed individual, “to transgress against one set of boundaries was to call into

question the inviolability of both, and of the set of social codes—already demonstrably under attack—by which categories were policed and maintained” (Garber 32). The cross-dressed moment serves as a site of class critique. Betty’s performance (and consequently Dorcasina’s as well) is in direct dialogue with the socio-political strictures of nineteenth-century American society. A servant would not likely dare to adorn herself in fashion that disrupted the hierarchical structure of her community. Both Betty and Dorcasina seem to create a new order during their carnivalesque performance in the grove, an order that requires a servant to relinquish the characteristics that circumscribe her selfhood in order to maintain the contrived identity of her mistress. And, perhaps not surprisingly, Dorcasina’s casting call does not end with Betty.

In a similar satirical mode, *Female Quixotism* directly addresses the tensions surrounding social mobility in nineteenth-century America. In light of Dorcasina’s close companion, Mrs. Stanly’s, admonitions, Betty’s worrisome inquiries, and the entire household’s hushed contempt, Dorcasina decides that one of her hired hands, John Brown, is in fact a gentleman in disguise. Using *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, a novel by Tobias Smollet, as literary inspiration, Dorcasina attempts to flush out the “true” gentlemanly constitution that John so fluidly conceals beneath his common and simple-minded exterior. Only relatively literate, John does not possess the skills that would allow him to read and enjoy the novels that Dorcasina so treasures, nor does it allocate him the ability to “read” Dorcasina’s uncouth appeals for affection. After wrenching a hesitant declaration of love from his lips, Dorcasina assigns to John the role of her lover—a role that of course comes with appropriate costume and script. She

outlines his communal obligations, assigns him new living quarters and arranges his wardrobe. “She now told him it was not proper that he should any longer associate with the servants...She then gave him the key of her father’s chamber, which she said should henceforth be his, together with all the wearing apparel...adding, ‘as you are very near my father’s stature, the clothes, I presume, will suit you tolerably well’” (Tenney 240, my emphasis). Although Mr. Sheldon’s clothes may be more appropriate to John’s size and body type than they were to Betty’s, Mr. Brown is nonetheless unsuitable, according to societal standards, to be wearing them. The word “stature” here injects Dorcasina’s statement with an air of ambiguity. On one hand, it could simply allude to John’s frame: it is typical to the male species and will therefore fill the clothing as it was intended. But, taken to signify economic stature rather than physical, the sentence reinforces Miss Sheldon’s delusions concerning John’s disguise. By offering John her father’s household, room and clothing, Dorcasina has placed the hired hand on the same social plane as her respected father (which again, would seem ludicrous to a nineteenth-century audience). O’Connor is gone. Dorcasina has aged, and her stylish, blond wig and loud, fashionable attire are not disguise enough to sustain her romantic performance. By elevating John’s repute to the level of her respected father’s, by parading him as an educated gentleman, she once again invents a “hero” to mirror her waning role as “heroine.”

Yet the other, less tactful members of the household are not as confident in John’s ‘true gentlemanly nature’ as Miss Sheldon. “As soon as John made his [first] appearance, he had such a torrent of ‘Mr. Brown’s’ let loose upon him that it quite overpowered him; and he could not hold up his head or say a single word all breakfast-time; and

he was glad to take refuge from their persecutions in Dorcasina's chamber...." (240). John's newly fabricated status is clearly only legitimate in Dorcasina's eyes. The other servants, including Betty and Scipio (a new servant), maintain and exude the tenets of a patriarchal hierarchy. They reinforce the very disdain for social mobility that Dorcasina's cross-dressing experiment seems to destabilize. Akin to Betty's humiliation at her own unfortunate transformation, she, Scipio and the household act as a grounding mechanism to Dorcasina's wild attempts to re-define status (both within the larger society and within the confines of the household). In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin discusses similar historical implications in his definition of the carnivalesque. He claims that during the medieval carnival, "all were considered equal" (Bakhtin 10). While "the extreme corporative and caste divisions of the medieval social order were exceptionally strong," within the carnivalesque environment lived, not only a new order, but universal equality acting very much in contrast with the hierarchical distinctions of the outside world (10). By attempting to forge an equivalence between John Brown and herself, Dorcasina irritates the hierarchical conventions supported by the other characters. An obsessively literate woman attaches herself to a mildly literate servant. In order to compensate for the inappropriate connection, John must at least signify gentleman by adjusting his appearance and social etiquette; because that, Tenney might argue, is what essentially makes a gentleman according to the traditions of early American culture.

Even though, according to the respectable Mrs. Stanly, Mr. Brown seems very much the "reverse of a gentleman," with some sharp clothes, a proper dining partner and a new bed chamber, Dorcasina fancies him a chivalric hero (Tenney 243). Perhaps

this is why John, after he is frightened out of his bed by Scipio's devious prank war call, must escape through his window in the nude. Clothed neither in his own garments or Mr. Sheldon's apparel, he wraps himself in a sheet and therefore becomes fashionably neutral, neither servant nor gentlemen. He wanders, a man with seemingly no identity, until the next morning. Upon returning to Miss Sheldon's house, he receives pity and compassion from Dorcasina, but only to the extent that his appearance is sullied: he is no longer sporting his gentlemanly attire. She "only desired him to go to his chamber and dress himself and then come and breakfast with her" (244). The clothes very obviously make the man. Brown's authenticity lies only in his successful and willing performance. Without his apparel he cannot fulfill the role that Dorcasina has awarded him.

Female Quixotism can certainly boast more than two instances of satirical cross-dressing. The quirky Miss Stanly, later to become Mrs. Barry, dresses as the boisterous and violent soldier Montague in order to redirect Dorcasina's misspent affections; Scipio and his girlfriend Violet (both African) are, under the shade of night, mistaken for O'Conner and Dorcasina respectively; and, the clown-like barber Mr. Puff assumes the identity of a woman in order to secure Dorcasina when she is first kidnapped. By considering the innately political nature of cross-dressing purported by Garber, and reading within the parameters of Bakhtin's definition of the carnivalesque, Tenney's cross-dressed characters become satirical allusions to the transient nature of social and hierarchical definition. Jameson states that, "the aesthetic act is itself ideological, and the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal 'solutions' to irresolvable social contradictions" (Jameson

79). The social definitions upon which the nineteenth-century American public based its lifestyles around were heavily reliant on sartorial choices. Tenney's narrative often revolves around the absurdity of Dorcasina's social and political masquerades—masquerades that seek to tease out the ambiguities in the then contemporary social order. Clothes made the man...the woman, the gentleman and the servant. Dorcasina becomes the instigator of such revolutionary amalgams by employing these conventions in her designation of costume; yet she herself is not safe from the omnipresent authority of such definitions. Miss Sheldon is an exemplary manifestation of sartorial distinction. Her flamboyant wigs and dresses, headscarves and tawdry make-up seem as necessary to her survival as food, water and shelter. Betty and John Brown both become gentlemen in order to reinforce Dorcasina's wavering youthful vitality. And, the confusion, mockery and hilarity that follow each instance of cross-dressing either disassemble or seek to restore some element of the social order.

“Have you a system of religion or politics or manners or social life to inculcate? Write a novel!”²

A novel cannot adorn itself with hairpieces, hats, powder and headscarves in order to signify its categorization. The text instead relies on other cosmetic means to define and consequently redefine itself. The title, preface and other structural elements of a novel act in place of the sartorial signifiers that lead us to a satirical reading of Tenney's cross-dressed characters. The parodic component of my reading of *Female Quixotism* lies

2. from *Putnam's Magazine*, 1854 qtd. in Baym.

in the text's cosmetic make-up and its dialogue with the genre to which it belongs. If *Female Quixotism* is meant to represent one half of the dialectical pairing necessary to its categorization as a parody, as Miecznikowski suggests, then an investigation of the “other half”-- the genre that it belongs to-- is in order. What was a novel worth to the nineteenth century reader? The female reader? The critic? It is clear that Tenney's preliminary narrator, “the compiler,” desired that audiences approach and interpret the text in a very particular didactic fashion. But what do the novel's “cosmetic” components suggest to us about the function of *Female Quixotism* within the larger world of a flourishing literary genre?

Although Tenney's novel was published in 1801, the genre itself truly reached its critical peak in the mid nineteenth-century. In July of 1840, a writer for the *New York Review* asserted that “for every single reader of any work purely didactic, a popular story counts its hundreds” (Baym 28). The novel's popularity surprised and stunned many critics. The concept of personal literary taste was ‘novel’ in that literary discrimination and analysis had previously been recognized as a prerogative of the elite. Yet reviewers and critics altered their appraisals in light of “the emergence of a large class of new readers” and tended to approach the novel's rising celebrity “if not as cultural improvement, at least as cultural opportunity” (29). Even the most devout religious publications considered the mass influence that the genre held over the public with tolerance. The *Christian Examiner*, in 1860, began an extensive review with this summary statement: “novel reading may be misused, but argument for or against it is quite worn out and superfluous” (27). It seemed that the literate American public had succumbed to the power of the

novel as not only a source of trite entertainment, but as a political, social and religious force. “We know not what we could do without them!” exclaimed a writer for *Putnam’s Magazine* in 1854, “Do you wish to instruct, to convince, to please? Write a novel! Have you a system of religion or politics or manners or social life to inculcate? Write a novel!” (32). It seems that the growing American literary audience would agree, loosely, with Jameson’s proposed ideology concerning the innate political nature of the narrative form.

Yet all critics did not embrace the subversive ideals that this growing literary audience inculcated. Within the very cultural phenomenon that seemed to promote the status of ‘reader’ as one who exhibits interpretive agency, a seed of classist discrimination still germinated. Nina Baym points out in *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers* that the early novel was a rather nebulous item (very few rules existed to restrict its form). Thus, it seemed to those ‘privileged literary connoisseurs,’ that “anyone could write one” (35). In fact, *The Literary World* published an article in 1847 that blatantly communicated this disdain for a bourgeoisie literary community. “Novel writing, a field that lies open to all and whose fruits may be gathered with less of labor and previous tillage than any other kind, is so overrun with the poorest sort of laborers, that it seems impossible to set much store by it” (35). Thus the novel seemed to simultaneously become a vehicle for social mobility, and an instrument of repression.

But from where did this obvious influence stem? What was so appealing about the seduction plots, wavering heroines, treacherous libertines and religious morals that characterized many early novels? What granted them such authority? I would like to focus on a strategic feature that is rather particular to the early novel and elucidates

the genre’s uncanny ability to seize the attention of even the most skeptical reader: the presupposition of truth. Tenney herself is guilty of exploiting the strategy (though she concurrently equivocates her novel to its narrative prototype *Don Quixote* by borrowing the fantastical term for her title) in her preface. Placed opposite an engraving that depicts a melancholy Dorcasina speaking to a lavishly costumed O’Connor, the preface speaks directly to “All Columbian Young Ladies, Who read Novels and Romances” (Tenney 3). Both the image and the direct salutation appeal to a female reading audience-- an audience that is assumed to be well versed in the language of the romantic heroine. Claiming to have resided in Philadelphia, and to have met both Miss Sheldon and her companion Mrs. Barry (previously Miss Stanly), “the compiler” declares that she is merely re-iterating a “minute account of [Dorcasina’s] adventures” (3). We could assume that this supposition, as it is advertised, would work as a reinforcement of the morals, ethical suggestions and maxims promoted in the following text. While “fiction” may have been interchangeable with terms like “falsity” or “fantasy”, a *true* story held a certain hypnotic significance.

While the novel seems to be adorned with a yellow and black striped “warning” sign, I would agree with Henri Petter when he surmises that *Female Quixotism’s* preface was written in jest. It is true that many early novels were often purported to be based on ‘the truth,’ yet Tenney specifically testified to the authenticity of her narrative by comparing it to a fictional precedent: Cervantes’s novel. “In other words, her book is as little a report from life as the writings of other authors who rely patently on literary models or on pure invention” (Petter 47). Hence we have a major example of Miecznikowski’s

parodic “doubleness of form’ that arises out of its ‘transcontextualization’ of aesthetic norms in a text that always implies its original (Miecznikowski 35). Tenney employs the traditional strategies of the genre in a way that is similar to a majority of novels but marked by a difference of intent. Dorcasina’s misadventures are simply too ludicrous to be encoded as truth. As Jameson instructs, and as the various instances of cross-dressing in the text suggest a satirical reading, we cannot interpret *Female Quixotism* without a political horizon in sight. The novel may be dressed flagrantly as a didactic treatise, but in reality prefers a more inventive wardrobe. By infiltrating the constructs of the genre and replicating them on a Bakhtinian carnivalesque stage, the novel becomes a threat to the patriarchal norm. The innate deception created by the costuming effects of the title, preface and engraving plate create an artifact that at once superficially re-inscribes the genre’s criterion and calls into question the conventional belief that novel readers are frivolous, de-politicized beings.

Jameson, finally, inquires: “Is the text a free floating object in its own right, or does it reflect some context or ground, and in that case does it simply replicate the latter ideologically, or does it possess some autonomous force in which it could also be seen as negating that context?” (Jameson 38). When analyzing a text such as *Female Quixotism*, the reader comprehends two forces at work—two forces that seem to answer, ‘yes’ to Jameson’s query; ‘yes, a text can at once replicate an ideology and subvert that same ideology all in the same go.’ Tenney’s novel, when read as a satirical parody, acts within a vein of social commentary that confronts the patriarchal misconceptions concerning

definitions of gender and class, and especially wishes to reinvent the image of female readership. Both Tenney’s characters and the novel itself seem to cross-dress as a way to inquire “what if?” Dorcasina Sheldon parades both Betty and John Brown in costumes that force them to undertake unnatural identities and supersede the ranks that their genders, and economic standings permit. Miss Sheldon herself is the perpetually cross-dressed character, refusing to acknowledge a waning beauty and instead masking it with the latest youthful fashions. The patriarchal order is turned upside down in these satirical scenes. The text itself is disguised beneath its didactic preface and traditional engraving plate, yet it hijacks the meaning attached to the familiar façade. The novel merely caricaturizes the cosmetic parameters of its genre and by doing so successfully challenges the legitimacy of didactic literature, a majority of which was aimed at the ‘fragile’ minds of female readers. During a period where identity, both on a national and personal level, was fluid and undefined, Tabitha Tenney’s novel takes the opportunity to cross-examine the sartorial markers that not only socially designated gender and class, but also built boundaries in the literary world. It is only natural then that we would categorize such a disguised text as a hybrid by nature, a hybrid that achieves the goals of both satirical and parodic literature. Rather than prescribing an image of the ‘appropriate’ female reader to a growing American readership, Tenney’s novel disputes the legitimacy of fixed identity in any context. *Female Quixotism* seems to pose an essential ontological question: if it is not the clothes that make the man (or the woman, the servant, the gentleman etc.) and, if it is not the clothes that consequently designate the more objective readerly audience... than what does?

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a love poem

margery kempe went to
jerusalem

and

sylviaplath stuck her head
in an oven

there
are better places
i know

with you looking
for
the trail of cookie
crumbs
dropped yesterday

I can always find my way
home.

—Anne Jevne



Writing for rights: how Caroline Norton sugared the pill of radical reform

by Kiri Walden

I abjure all other writing till I see these laws altered. I care not what ridicule or abuse may be the result of that declaration. They who cannot bear ridicule and abuse are unfit and unable to advance any cause; and once more I deny this is my personal cause – it is the cause of all women of England.¹

Caroline Norton was a Victorian writer who, by unlucky chance, discovered first hand the legal injustices endured by married women of her time. Her campaigns to change the laws that had ruined her own life had a lasting influence both in legal and literary terms. In this essay I shall look at the way Caroline Norton used her skills as a writer to manipulate public opinion, win support, and ultimately influence changes in the laws relating to the power and rights of married women. I will show how Caroline Norton's positioning of her case within a literary tradition of which she had ample experience as a novelist is crucial to her influence. By exploiting contemporary ideals of motherhood

1. Norton, C. *A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth's Marriage & Divorce Bill*. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855. p154

and appropriating existing literary genres to paint herself as a hapless victim rather than a manipulative or powerful woman (which, through her connections and education, she undoubtedly was), she succeeded in selling the idea of a change in the law in terms designed to appeal directly not only to the political ruling class but also to a public who were more willing to support the rights of women when repackaged as melodramatic fiction. Her mastery of different genres - the novel, the newspaper letter, the courtroom plea, the political pamphlet - all contributed to her remarkable success. In her book *Uneven Developments*², Mary Poovey comes to the conclusion with regards to Caroline's writing, that, 'To the extent that she formulated her complaint in terms derived from the prevailing ideology, her challenge actually reinforced the idealised domesticity she seemed to undermine'. I intend to argue that in fact the opposite is true - that Caroline consciously exploited ideals of motherhood in order to argue for a radical programme of reform in terms acceptable to her audience.

Caroline Norton was far from a typical Victorian woman of her class. In order to understand her character and motivation it is necessary to know about her background, and the details of her own marital conflicts. Caroline, the granddaughter of the playwright R. B. Sheridan, was born in 1808. Her father died when she was a child, leaving the family with serious financial problems. It was a financial necessity that Caroline and her two sisters should marry well, and so when George Norton, Tory MP for Guildford, asked her to marry him, Caroline accepted, although she knew very little about him. The marriage took place in 1827 when Caroline was nineteen. Norton was the younger

2. Poovey, M. *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988. P81

brother and heir of Lord Grantley, and came from a hard-line Tory family. The Sheridans by comparison supported the Whigs, and backed social reform and radical policies, so from the start, the couple were unlikely to agree on the main political issues of the day.

When the marriage had been proposed, Caroline's family had been assured that Norton had a sufficient income to support a family – but it became clear once the couple were married, that the representations made to the Sheridans about Norton's financial position had been false. Quarrels over money were to become a feature of the Norton's marriage. The couple had three children, Fletcher (1829), Brinsley (1831) and William (1833), but neither Caroline nor George was happy in the marriage. Caroline found her husband to be manipulative, mean and lazy. George was constantly upstaged by his quick-witted and outspoken wife. He frequently turned to violence and beat Caroline.

Caroline had always been interested in writing and in 1829 published *The Sorrows of Rosalie*. This was followed by *The Undying One* in 1830. Caroline subsequently became the editor of *La Belle Assemblee*. Writing provided the couple with a much-needed extra income. In fact, Caroline later claimed to be capable of earning well over £1,000 a year with her writing and editorial positions. George was a trained barrister, and at the time of his marriage, a Tory MP. In the 1830 General Election the Whigs won and Norton lost his seat. He asked his wife to use her family's long-standing Whig connections to get him a well-paid new job. The new Home Secretary, Lord Melbourne, had been a friend of Caroline's Grandfather and he arranged for Norton to be appointed as a magistrate in the Metropolitan Police Courts, with an annual salary of £1,000.

Lord Melbourne subsequently became a close friend of Caroline's and with

George Norton's knowledge and permission began to visit her regularly. Melbourne was a widower with a reputation as a womaniser, and rumours soon began to circulate about his relationship with Caroline. Caroline's relationship with her husband became increasingly difficult. In 1835, when she was pregnant for the fourth time, Caroline was badly beaten by Norton and miscarried. Increasingly, she sought refuge by taking her children to visit her relatives, while Norton became suspiciously close with a wealthy cousin of his, Margaret Vaughan. The climax of the Nortons' quarrels was reached when, in the Easter of 1836, George Norton sent the children away to Margaret Vaughan, and barred Caroline from the house. This action was to be the starting point of an argument and separation, which started as a simple marital tiff but ultimately went to the courts.

With her children taken from her, Caroline learnt that as a married woman she had absolutely no legal power to get them back. Under the terms of the law at that time, the children were George's property, and he could dispose of them as he wished, regardless of Caroline's wishes. If Caroline left the family home, he had the power to deny her access to her three sons. Legally, the house and all its contents, even Caroline's personal correspondence, clothing and manuscripts, were Norton's.

Caroline turned to her friendship with Melbourne (who had become Prime Minister in 1835) for comfort and George Norton saw an opportunity to attack Caroline's reputation, and also the political standing of the Whig government. He began to leak stories to the Tory press suggesting that Melbourne was having an affair with his wife. Norton also had a financial motive. He had serious debts and hoped to gain financially by suing Lord Melbourne for 'criminal conversation'. Norton approached Melbourne and

suggested that he should be paid a financial settlement to avoid a politically damaging court case. However, Melbourne, who denied he had been having an affair with Caroline, refused to settle out of court. The court-case took place in June 1836. It was rumoured that Norton and his Tory supporters were bringing the case against Melbourne partly for political reasons. The jury was not impressed with the unreliable evidence George Norton presented in court and his lawyer's constant demands for payment of damages. The jury returned a verdict against George Norton before even hearing Lord Melbourne's witnesses.

This made life no easier for Caroline though. Despite Norton's defeat in court, as her husband, he could still deny Caroline access to their children. Under the laws of coverture, a married woman had no rights to her children, her money or her belongings, because as a wife she and her husband were legally one – she had no separate legal personality. Caroline argued that under these laws a wife had no rights at all, whatever the behaviour of the husband. Caroline realised that as she had no legal recourse, the only way she could change her situation, was by changing the law. She began a campaign to get the child custody laws changed in favour of the Mother. Caroline wrote a pamphlet explaining the unfairness of the situation which she suffered entitled, *Observations on the Natural Claim of a Mother to the Custody of her Children as affected by the Common Law Right of the Father* (1837)³. This was followed by another, *The Separation of Mother & Child by the Law of Custody of Infants, Considered*⁴ (1838).

____ Although she published these pamphlets privately and distributed them only
3. Norton, C. *Observations on the Natural Claim of a Mother to the Custody of her Children as affected by the Common Law Right of the Father*. London: John Murray (Printed for private circulation), 1837.
4. Norton, C. *The Separation of Mother & Child by the Law of Custody of Infants, Considered*. London: Roake and Varty, 1838

among a limited list of people, Sir Thomas Talfourd, MP for Reading, was impressed by the arguments she put forward and agreed to Caroline's request to introduce a bill into Parliament which would allow mothers, against whom adultery had not been proved, to apply for the custody of children under seven, with rights of access to older children. Unfortunately this first attempt failed, and the House of Lords rejected the bill. Caroline wrote another pamphlet, *A Plain Letter to the Lord Chancellor on the Law of Custody of Infants*, a copy of which was sent to every MP. In 1839 Talfourd tried again and the Custody of Children Act became law. It has subsequently been interpreted as one of the first pieces of feminist legislation to pass into law. This is because it identified a mother's rights to her children as separate to that of her husband. It gave women the legal identity within marriage that they, within the conventions of coverture, had previously not held. The effect of CNs attacks on the institution of coverture is discussed more fully later on.

However, the law Caroline had helped to change did her own situation no good at all. George Norton took advantage of a loophole and sent the children to a school in Scotland, outside the jurisdiction of the English Courts. In September 1842, Caroline's eight-year old son William died following a fall from his horse. Caroline was called too late for her to reach him before he died. Following this tragic event George allowed the couple's two remaining sons to return to England and live with their mother.

Although this particular argument had been settled, the quarrel between Caroline and Norton continued to gain pace. The financial focus to the couple's arguments had not changed. George Norton was affronted by his wife's literary success and financial independence. He decided to employ people to look into her activities and discovered

that when Lord Melbourne died in 1848 he had left a small legacy to Caroline in his will. Legally, this money belonged to Norton, and so did the £480 a year that Caroline's mother had left when she died in June 1851. Norton used this information to blacken Caroline's name by resurrecting his claims in the Times that she had had an affair with Melbourne.

When Caroline refused to hand over her legacies to her husband, he refused to pay the sum they had previously agreed for the upbringing of their two sons. Caroline now returned to campaigning for a change in the laws that discriminated against women. She wrote the pamphlets *English Laws for Women in the Nineteenth Century*⁵ (1854) and *A Letter to the Queen on Lord Cranworth's Marriage and Divorce Bill*⁶ (1855). Partly as a result of her efforts, In 1857 Parliament passed the Marriage and Divorce Act. Mary Poovey notes that, "If changing women's position in society has entailed both making women of all classes conscious of their situation and winning concrete economic and political rights, then Norton has been as important a figure in the complex history of feminism as have more obvious protagonists like Barbara Bodichon or Elizabeth Blackwell."⁷ Most historians agree that Caroline Norton played a significant role in the early history of feminism, but the reasons for her influence, both in her own lifetime and afterwards, are complex.

Before I discuss the influence of Caroline's writing, it is important to note two

5. Norton, C. *English Laws for Women in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Norton, C. (Published for private circulation), 1854

6. Norton, C. *A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth's Marriage & Divorce Bill*. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855.

7. Poovey, M. *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988. P21

factors that were significant in enabling Caroline to campaign successfully for change. The first of these is timing. Caroline was very lucky, in that her marital problems and subsequent campaigns for justice occurred at a point in British history when for many reasons people were ready to listen her and willing to back her demands for justice. Her fights, first for child custody, then for changes in divorce law, succeeded partly because they tapped into political undercurrents already growing in strength.

In 1832 the Reform Act was passed and groups such as the Chartists and Quakers gained ground in Parliament under a Whig government. Caroline's family had long-standing connections with the Whig government and she would have found far fewer MPs willing to support her had she campaigned while a Tory government was in power. Lord Brougham founded the Law Amendment Society in 1844. The purpose of the society was to accelerate the rationalisation of the legal system, and this included ending the Church's jurisdiction of matrimonial causes. The Norton's marital discords were headline news for much of the 1830s, 40s and 50s, so it is not unreasonable to speculate that the case had some influence on the aims of the society.

Caroline's case also came up shortly after Left-wing campaigners succeeded in abolishing slavery with the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1833. The anti-slavery campaign had led to the creation of several Women's action groups, and many of these women (and male campaigners too) were ripe to fight for more wide-scale reforms when their anti-slavery campaigns were satisfactorily concluded.⁸ Much of Caroline's success can also be put down to the fact that she was rich and well-connected. She was also well

8. Women such as Elizabeth Pease and Anne Knight transferred their campaigning skills directly to the fight for women's rights.

educated and a talented writer. By the time she was married she was already earning money as a poet. In later years her annual earnings equalled and sometimes surpassed those of her husband. Caroline was in a much better position to fight for her rights, and those of women in general, than many other married women who suffered the same injustices, but were powerless to help themselves. Caroline herself eloquently makes this point, 'I do not consider this as MY cause: though it is a cause of which (unfortunately for me) I am an illustration. It is the cause of all the women (...) If I were personally set at ease about it tomorrow, that would not alter the law. The same injustice might happen next day to some woman who could not struggle, or earn, or write; for whom no one would come forward.'⁹

Caroline was an established and popular writer by the time she turned her talents to campaigning for the rights of married woman. Although the main thrust of her campaign was carried out in political pamphlets, articles and letters, she none the less also traded on her talents and a writer of fiction. As an established and popular writer, Caroline already had a literary audience to whom she could vent her legal frustrations, 'Norton won great popularity among the readers and editors of literary annuals; in 1836 she won a plum commission to edit that year's 'Keepsake', a clear mark of her prominence'.¹⁰

Caroline's fictional work can be just as politically focussed as her non-fiction. Fiction was a genre in which she was freed of the constraints that were placed on her in the reality of upper class society. In novels such as *Stuart of Dunleath* (1851) and *Lost and*

Saved (1863) she is able to express her feelings of anger and impotence, and also appeals

9. Norton, C. *A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth's Marriage & Divorce Bill*. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855. P89

10. Chase, K and Levenson, M. *Spectacle of Intimacy: A Public Life for the Victorian Family*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. P31

to the reader to sympathise with her heroine, and by extension, with women (such as herself) in similarly difficult circumstances.

Melodrama was a popular genre of fiction throughout the span of the Norton case. Caroline recognised that her own story reflected the plot lines of popular contemporary fiction, and she sought to encourage comparison with the heroines of these popular books, both in her fiction, and her non-fiction writing. Caroline used her skills as a writer of melodrama to purposefully fictionalise (by this I mean that she makes her own story sound like one of popular fiction. I do not mean that she lied or expanded upon the truth) her own experiences in order to make herself heard, and importantly, to appeal to the lower classes. As Barbara Leckie notes, 'The message of melodrama is vividly displayed in terms readily understood by even the most untutored reader. The sheer leisure of melodrama, it is argued, derives in part from the genre's accessibility.'¹¹ This is important, because in order to make any real political impact, Caroline needed not only to convince the upper classes and MPs, but to raise 'grass roots' support from the less literate or politically-minded masses. Poovey makes the point that

When Caroline Norton dramatised her history in the form of a melodrama, she capitalised on the greater latitude granted literature to explore these matters and she sought to enlist her readers' sympathies by appealing to the investment they shared in domesticity and an image of female dependence and vulnerability.

But Norton also recognised that to remain within literary discourse was to be excluded from the political realm where legislation that could define and punish

11. Leckie, B. *Culture and Adultery: The Novel, the Newspaper, and the Law, 1857-1914*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999, P.128

the transgressions that disrupted domesticity was formulated.¹²

So, while Caroline's fiction enabled her to appeal to her readers' sympathies, it could only be by approaching the problem from a legal angle that she could affect real change. Because the case which Norton originally brought was one of criminal conversation against Lord Melbourne, although accused of adultery Caroline had been offered no opportunity to defend herself in court from the allegations.

Expressing herself in fiction was never going to enough for Caroline, because she wanted the laws changed so that other women would not suffer the same injustices she did. With this purpose she abandoned fiction in favour of political pamphlets and articles. A contemporary review of Caroline's *Letter To The Queen*¹³ notes how she has now taken on new genres and challenges as a writer, 'We must take some time, as it were to cool, before we find out what we think on the subject, as distinguished from what we feel: we have to separate the logician from the poetess, the law-reformer from the woman'.¹⁴

In her book *Victorian Feminists*¹⁵, Barbara Caine acknowledges the influence of Mary Wollstonecraft's 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women', but focuses on the difference between Wollstonecraft's argument for the 'natural' rights of women, and the emphasis later feminists placed on legal rather than natural rights. 'Wollstonecraft's philosophical radicalism and her belief in natural rights were both rejected by many later feminists,

12. Poovey, M. *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988. P83

13. Norton, C. *A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth's Marriage & Divorce Bill*. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855.

14. The Law Review and Quarterly Journal of British and Foreign Jurisprudence Vol.23, London: Owen Richards, 1855. P334

15. Caine, B. *Victorian Feminists*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. P23

who stressed that it was legal and not natural rights that were at issue.’ A philosophical argument for women’s rights had always existed, but perhaps it is this change in focus that marked the start of the fight, which would eventually succeed in getting votes for women. In that context Caroline Norton’s case can be seen as an important step in the women’s rights movement because it shows actions rather than theories, and demonstrates that in order to battle injustice one has to attack it at its legal source. Like the Anti-slavery campaigners, Caroline fought for very specific changes to be made, to particular laws. Whereas Wollstonecraft and other early feminists put forward theories and opinion, Caroline applied herself to actually making things happen.

Although it is hard to find contemporary references (in personal correspondence for example) which demonstrates the direct influence Caroline had on other women, she was early on in the Victorian period, so the high profile coverage of her child custody and divorce cases would very likely have been read by many of the women who emerged later in the century as writers campaigning for social and political change. This supposition is backed up in the Pam Hirsch’s biography of Barbara Bodichon,

In 1854 Caroline Norton produced another pamphlet, “English Laws for Women in the Nineteenth century”, in which she reviewed her own case... This pamphlet and the consequent publicity inspired Barbara, who knew that in political campaigning timing was crucial. She felt moved to enter the fray.¹⁶

Barbara Bodichon subsequently raised a petition in support of the Married Women’s Property Bill, which was drawn up in 1855. The petition boasted 26,000 signatories

16. Hirsch, P. *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon: Feminist, Artist and Rebel*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1998. P86

including such notable women as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Martineau, Jane Carlyle and George Eliot.

In order to understand the difficult legal situation Caroline found herself in it is necessary to understand a little about the laws of coverture. When Caroline was married she found that English wives had virtually no rights under the common law. Upon marriage they entered into a legal condition called “coverture” in which they could not own property (even the wages they earned if employed), neither make a contract or a will, nor sue or be sued. Wives had almost no legal protection against abuse by their husbands.

A married woman in England has no legal existence: her being is absorbed in that of her husband. Years of separation or desertion cannot alter this position. Unless divorced by special enactment in the House of Lords, the legal fiction holds her to be “one” with her husband, even though she may never see or hear of him. She has no possessions, unless by special settlement; her property is his property.¹⁷

It was the underlying principal of coverture, which meant that when Norton sent his children away, Caroline had no legal right to custody or access. Both she and the children were legally Norton’s possessions. It was this law which also meant that when Caroline was accused by Norton of adultery, she had no opportunity to defend herself in court. Caroline had, as she put it ‘no legal existence.’ Instead the case was between Norton and Marlborough, with Caroline taken out of the equation despite being the centre of the case. When the case was dismissed it meant that although Caroline’s name was cleared, Norton

17. Norton, C. *A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth’s Marriage & Divorce Bill*. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855.p8

was then unable to divorce her on grounds of adultery (which had been disproved). So in effect the outcome of the case was to legally trap them into continuing the marriage.

In arguing her case, Caroline touches upon the subject of married women's legal rights with regards to property and divorce, pointing out the many anomalies in the existing laws, and backing up her argument with quotes from respected and also with legal precedents, in the manner of a Lawyer arguing a point in front of a judge and jury. In fact, she treats her subject (the Queen) as Judge and the reader in role of jury.

A woman may bear cheerfully the poverty which anomalies in the laws of property may entail upon her; and she may struggle patiently through such an unjust ordeal of shame as Lord Brougham described; but against the inflicted and unmerited loss of her children she cannot bear up; that she has not deserved that blow, only adds to its bitterness: it is the master feeling of her life; the strong root of all the affections of her heart; and, in spite of the enumeration of every real or fancied grievance incidental to her position, she will still hold that injustice to stand foremost, distinct, and paramount above them all.¹⁸

In 1853 Caroline and Norton fell out again over the non-payment of a bill. The couple used the opportunity to dredge up old arguments, but this time Caroline was subpoenaed to appear in court, and decided to speak not only about current, but also past wrongs. In speaking to the assembled company of the Court, Caroline sought (and succeeded) to paint herself as a powerless and wronged woman.

18. Norton, C. *A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth's Marriage & Divorce Bill*. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855. P11

Rather than answering the questions put to her, Caroline used this opportunity to make a series of quite theatrical speeches about the circumstances of her marriage breakdown, and the miscarriage of justice as she sees it. It is a powerful demonstration of her ability to paint herself as a tragic heroine, and judging by the cheers from the public gallery reported in the piece, she succeeds in her aims. Caroline is meant to be answering questions about the non payment of a carriage repair bill, but manages in the first few minutes of her testimony to make the following statements;

'I am here for justice, and as this is a court of justice, I insist on stating what I have to say.

'We are not residing together, and have lived apart for some years, by my wish and choice, because I consider that I have sustained an injury that no woman ought to submit to.

'He [Norton] stipulated that I should give up my children, and I said that I would rather starve than lose them; and I did starve for a time.'¹⁹

Just as she felt powerless to defend herself in the previous court case, Caroline takes advantage of having a captive and legal audience, to say many of the things she may have liked to have said in the past. Ironically it is now Norton who is powerless to interrupt, although he does try, standing up to exclaim, 'God forbid! (To the Court)– Is it regular for me to say one word?'²⁰ The notoriety of the Norton case is verified by the large number of people apparently present to watch what should have been quite a mundane

19. "The Hon. G. C. Norton And The Hon. Mrs. Norton." *Times*, 19 Aug. 1853. 10. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 6 Dec. 2013.

20.. Ibid

case. The article notes that, 'At this stage of the proceeding there was a burst of applause from some two or three hundred-persons in the body of the court.'²¹

As with her written campaign, on this Caroline cleverly combines forceful and determined delivery with a vocabulary and turn of phrase which paints her as a powerless victim. There is no sentence which demonstrates this better than when she casts herself in the third person to proclaim, "This young woman" – young enough, and more than young enough, to have been his [Melbourne's] child – would, on account of such accusation, undergo the great suffering, the great misery, the loss of a home, and the wreck of her whole life'.²²

This court testimony demonstrates Caroline's talents for verbal as well as written self publicity. Caroline's witty, impassioned eloquence is in direct contrast to George Norton's silence, except for his occasional rather stilted outbursts. In looking at the Nortons case over the years, it is impossible to make an unbiased judgement of George. Caroline flooded contemporary newspapers and periodicals with articles which argued her own point of view, and one has to search quite hard to find George's own published comments on the case.

Caroline's talents as a writer gave her an advantage over her husband here. George had more power in court, but outside it he either published enraged replies to his wife's (published) letters and articles, or left his lawyers to argue his case. So when it came to protesting his innocence of claims made against him in public by Caroline, he failed to

win public support. This also means that in the passing of time Caroline's point of view has been accepted as being an accurate and truthful account of events, although of course this may not be so.

Mary Poovey comes to the conclusion with regards to Caroline's writing that 'To the extent that she formulated her complaint in terms derived from the prevailing ideology, her challenge actually reinforced the idealised domesticity she seemed to undermine'.²³ But this is an opinion I think is mislead. In fact, I would argue that the opposite is true. By framing her argument as she did, Caroline succeeded in undermining the idealised domesticity which she seemed at first glance to reinforce. Caroline won by virtue of a very sophisticated approach. In a policy which might seem perverse, she took care to make sure that her campaigns were not seen as being too radical or too far-reaching. She used her writing skills and eloquent speeches to target particular issues, rather than challenging accepted notions of femininity.

She said that as a woman (and especially a mother) it was the duty of the male-run judiciary to protect her from harm. So she superficially reinforced the accepted stereotype of women as the weaker sex. But this argument masked her real aims, which were quite subversive. She was calling for married women to have legal rights, and in doing so was attacking the laws of coverture. In gaining a legal personality for married women Caroline instigated a change which greatly contributed to the general erosion of a judiciary operated by and for the benefit of men.

21. Ibid

22. Ibid

23 Poovey, M. *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988. P81

There were female activists both before and after Caroline Norton who were far more direct in their approach and radical in their aims. Caroline in actual fact spoke out against universal women's suffrage. But I would argue that she pitched her argument in the manner most likely to succeed at the time. Radical women and their causes were largely marginalised, because they proposed wide-scale and extreme changes in uncompromising terms. Because Caroline was attacking an unfair system without outwardly attacking accepted notions of femininity, she managed to garner main-stream public support.

The way that Caroline actively sought to represent herself within the social stereotype of Victorian womanhood (as a wife and mother), is of course also directly at odds with the ideology of the later women's liberation movement. For this reason it is not surprising to find that until recent (and one could argue post feminist) historians and literary critics reappraised her influence, Caroline Norton was passed over by feminist writers in preference to more radical women (such as Bodichon, Martineau and the Pankhursts) who more closely appealed to the 1970's ideals of radical feminism. The relationship between Caroline and her more radical contemporaries, who criticised her, is similar to the later dialectic between feminists such as Betty Friedan and Shulamith Firestone.

Just as Caroline manipulated opinion in the court case documented above, she sought to manipulate the way she was represented in the press. Caroline was a shrewd and intelligent woman who quickly realised that her notoriety made her case more interesting. She had no control over what was said about her in court. But if she could in some measure control what was written about her in the popular press, she could engage

public sympathy and garner support for the causes she was fighting.

It may seem a trite comparison, but in order to understand the way that Caroline represented herself in the press, it is useful to look at the way Diana, Princess of Wales manipulated her public personality. Caroline was faced with a situation where, outside of her control, the press was reporting on her case and reiterating accusations that dragged her reputation through the mud. Caroline chose to use her notoriety to help her own cause. Where it suited her, she painted herself as a tragic heroine, calling on the public to sympathise with her position. Diana's Panorama interview with Martin Bashir was an example of exactly the same ploy.

Caroline's name was frequently published in the daily papers. Caroline herself refers to the frequency of newspaper mentions that she has attracted;

It is one of the many falsehoods in that long abusive article, that I have courted publicity, or sought and sympathy but that of my family and friends, and the proof is, that to this hour no explanation of the very strange events which have cursed my name with painful notoriety, has been given to the world.

I did not "court" the gross and public slander by which four or five unworthy plotters hoped to obtain a temporary political triumph. I did not "court" the advertisement which day by day went forth in the public papers; nor the abuse and ribaldry which, by means of law reports and comments upon law reports, has clung to my name wherever English newspapers are sent.²⁴

24. "Mrs. Norton And The British And Foreign Review." *Times* [London, England] 29 Aug. 1838: 5. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 6 Dec. 2013.

In fact, the ideas put forward by the article that she courts publicity and seeks sympathy are exactly right, and are largely the key to her success.

Caroline's tactic to identify herself as the heroine of a melodrama was so successful that she became the inspiration for more than one contemporary fictional heroine. LG Mitchell notes in his biography of Lord Melbourne, 'Like Caroline Lamb, Mrs Norton would provide novelists with lively copy. She has been identified as the model for characters in a number of novels, most famously as Meredith's Diana of *The Crossways* (1885).'²⁵In her introduction to Dickens' *Hard Times* Karen Odden says:

During the period when Dickens was serializing *Hard Times* in *Household Words*, and after years of wrangling over her trust money and their children, Caroline Norton published the pamphlets *English Laws for Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1854) and *Letter to the Queen* (1855). These writings in turn provided fodder for the public's fascination with married women's property and divorce, which drove the plots of the very popular "sensation" novels of the 1860s, including Wilkie Collins' *Law and The Lady*, Mrs Henry Woods' *East Lynne*, and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Aurora Floyd* and *Lady Audley's Secret*. And these novels helped fuel public support for the laws in the 1870s and 1880s that would begin to establish married women's right to property and protection.²⁶

The legal aspects of the case also proved inspirational. It is a happy coincidence that one of that period's most significant writers, Dickens, spent his younger years as a

reporter on *The Morning Chronicle*, and witnessed and reported on the Norton's case.

In his introduction to the Penguin Classics edition (2000) of *Pickwick Papers*, Mark Wormald notes this direct influence, 'In late June [1836], still combining court work for *The Morning Chronicle* with his other more extended writing, he covered one of the most notorious civil cases of the nineteenth century, in which the estranged husband of Lady Caroline Norton attempted to sue the former Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, for damages relating to Melbourne's improper relationship with his wife.'²⁷

Dickens' report of his day in court and the absurdly hostile line of questioning employed by prosecution council ran to twenty-three newspaper columns. But these central public and private acts also fed directly into *Pickwick*. The behaviour of counsel in the Norton versus Melbourne trial helped provide an anarchic miscellany with a central cause, and was instrumental in turning narrative by numbers into novel with a plot...²⁸

Just as Caroline used the language of melodramatic fiction to paint herself as a powerless heroine, in order to be taken seriously by politicians and members of the judiciary, she needed to use the correct legal terminology. She would step beyond the accepted remit of a female writer and take on the male preserve of legal/political writing.

Within the gender polarity of Victorian society, Caroline broke yet another taboo by choosing to step outside the accepted literary style and genre of female writers. Women writers had by this point been around a long time, and were generally accepted. However,

25. Mitchell, L.G. *Lord Melbourne, 1779-1848*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. P220

26. Dickens, C. *Hard Times*, Odden, K. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2004. P21

27. Dickens, C. *The Pickwick Papers*, London: Penguin Classics, 2000.

28. Ibid.

although the writing of novels, poetry, or women's periodical articles was accepted as a profession which respectable women could practice, this lassitude was not universal. As Poovey argues,

Women were granted the authority to write and publish literature, which had become "feminised", by mid-century, but they were largely denied access to "masculine" discourses like medicine law and theology. In articulating her emotional plea in legal rhetoric and in levying political charges to defend her cause, Norton therefore collapsed both sets of distinctions: she mixed emotions and legal rhetoric in a defence that collapsed political and personal wrongs, and she spoke as a woman in a genre in which men were the primary authors.²⁹

She appropriated a legal language used exclusively by men, fought them using their own language. Given that George Norton was a Barrister, by couching her demands in legal language Caroline was also making a more personal challenge to her husband.

Caroline ably demonstrates her ability to assume a legal literary style on page 1 of her *Infant Custody* pamphlet, 'My Lord, while the recess still affords comparative leisure for the consideration of such questions as may be brought forward during the approaching Session of Parliament, permit me respectfully to solicit your attention to a brief notice of the objections which have been made to the passing of the Infant's Custody Bill--a measure which, from its being introduced with the hope of remedying a defect of power in the courts under your Lordship's immediate jurisdiction, as well as from the fact of your acting as *Parens Patriæ* for the Sovereign of these realms, would seem

entitled to your especial consideration.'³⁰ In terms of direct legal influence Caroline's campaigns lead to and directly influenced (some clauses being based entirely on her own pamphlets) the 1839 Child Custody Act and the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act. The latter enabled divorce through the law courts, instead of the prohibitively expensive and lengthy business of a Private Act of Parliament.

The two laws Caroline influenced, like many laws, have since been superseded by new legislation. However, what these laws did do was recognise the separate legal identity of a woman within the marriage. For women to be treated fairly, the law of coverture itself had to be attacked and changed. Caroline realised that, as Hirsch comments 'To be recognised as having a legal personality was the necessary first step towards being recognised as a citizen.'³¹ By seeking to end a husband's ownership of his wife, and by trying to win a woman's right to speak for herself in court, Caroline contributed to the erosion of male dominance in the Law courts. While her campaign was focussed in its aims, the implications were far wider (and long lasting). The changes which Caroline petitioned for opened the door to more radical changes within marriage law later on.

Caroline devoted much of her life to campaigning for women's legal equality, financial equality, and freedom within marriage, when up to that point marriage entailed women giving up their freedom in the most literal sense. Throughout her own difficulties she identified herself primarily as a woman amongst other women, (rather than by class for example). She identified women as a sisterhood and community to which she belonged. She came across laws that she perceived as being unfair towards women, and used her

²⁹ Poovey, M. *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988. P81

³⁰ Norton, C. *The Separation of Mother & Child by the Law of Custody of Infants, Considered*. London: Roake and Varty, 1838. P1

³¹ Hirsch, P. *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon: Feminist, Artist and Rebel*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1998. P87

writing to campaign for change. The fact that she succeeded in her aims showed female writers that their writing could make a difference - that, if properly done, political articles could educate the readership and win enough support to put pressure on Parliament. Although this could be widely applied, the importance for women in particular is that it enabled them to indirectly have influence at the highest levels, even if they didn't actually have the vote, they could influence those that did. They, like her, could write their way to success.

This lasting influence can be summed up by the following quote, which demonstrates that almost 100 years after her death, the picture of herself which Caroline herself painted in the *Times*, was still taken to be true. The June 15th 1953 *Times* "In Memoriam" states:

The council of married women to-day remembers with loving gratitude the memory of Caroline Norton, who by her appalling sufferings heroically endured both as a mother and as a wife, built up the case through her brilliant pen, for the vast reforms in the English laws concerning married women passed from 1857 onwards. The Council, in homage to her splendid memory, pledges itself to work for the completion of those reforms.³²

Gretel's Sestina

Thin rain falls on the spiny grass.

Inside, we play

chess and make chocolate,

floating marshmallows flaky white

foam. A clock marks its minutes.

Caught, held, seconds drop past

my mother's shoulder. It's past

Three. We talk about the wet grass

waiting while it rains. The seconds, minutes

hours, moments bounce, rehearsed, their play

on a stage the neighbor wrapped in white

splashes through chocolate-

tea-colored puddles. In puddles raindrops make more chocolate

Ripples. A marshmallow drops. Another...past

the ginger then to my mother's cup. White,

stale, bobbing sugar. First foam then spun into grass

grown at the cup's edge...a play

ground...for afternoon minutes

ticking by in the half light. The minutes

of the kettle now chocolate

³² "Deaths." *Times* [London, England] 15 June 1953: 1. The Times Digital Archive. Web. 6 Dec. 2013.

richness in my mother's voice dissolving, the play
of steam turned sweet and solid returns present to past
to white stucco, the hedge, green glass glinting the grass,
her Japanese peonies and white

walls washed warmer glowing like an oven, the white
kitchen ceiling, then gingerbread, magic slowing time, the minutes
projected, dropping, reflected on a liquid surface. Spun like grass,
the sugar should be savoured. Don't drink your chocolate
so quickly. Make it last. It's past
four. More to eat? Your play.

The rain is good for flowers. It's my turn to play.

Sweetened, soft water falls whiter

Rapidly into then past

her peonies. Inside, her easy minutes

are fine chocolate.

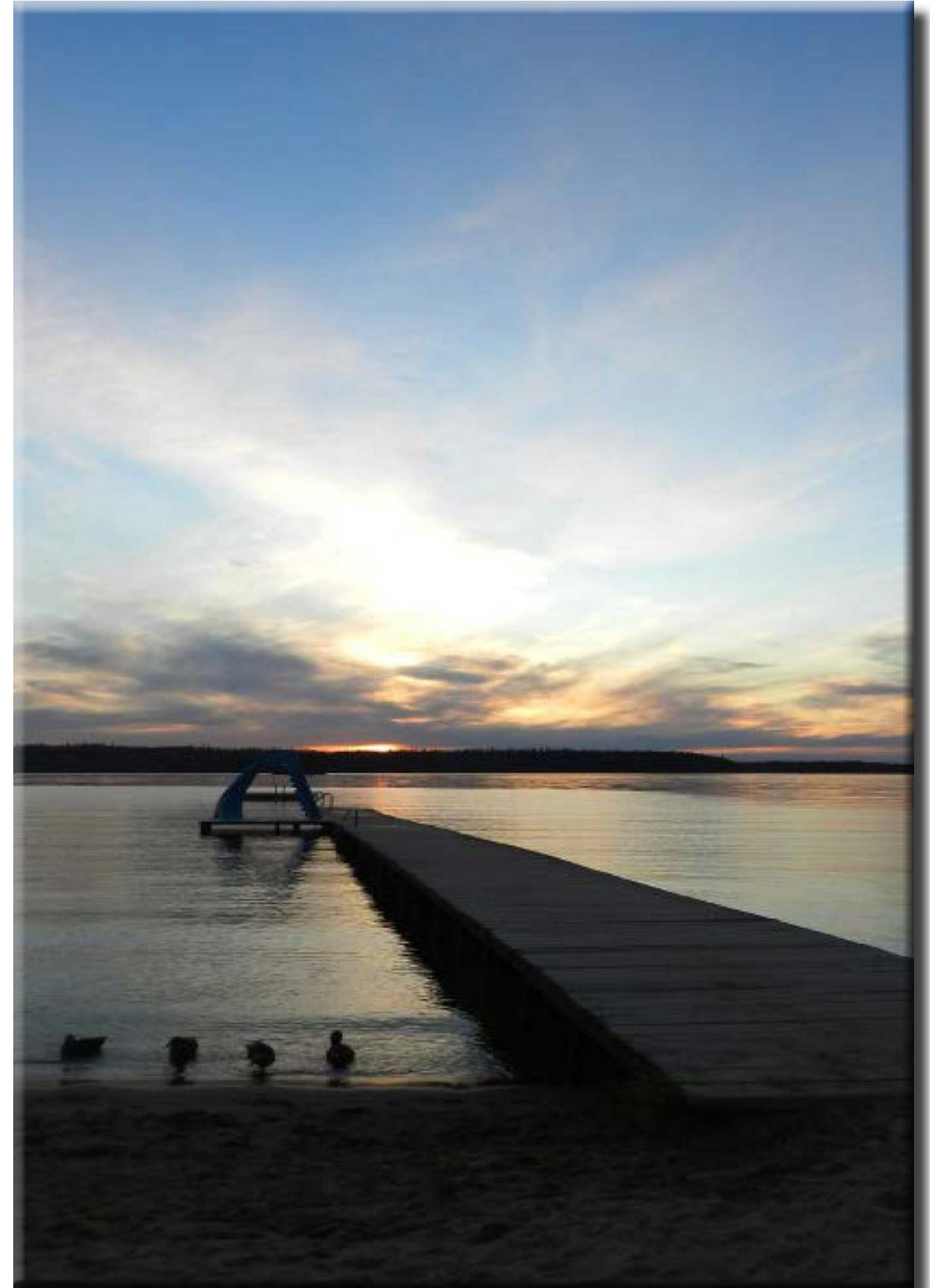
Outside, the afternoon melts. A wind breathes. The grass

shakes itself awake. Minutes

later the sun reveals my brother

fingerprints— milk and cocoa smeared at the window's edge.

—*Anne Jevne*



Bloodlines: The Poetical Genetics of Sylvia Plath,

Louise Gluck & Sharon Olds

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Writing poetry is a solitary experience. As writers we join workshops and talk to other writers about our work; however, when we sit down to write that first line, we are alone with the blank page. That being said, we do not write in a void. Those who have come before us influence us all; we cannot say that what we have read has had no effect on our own writing. The fact that Sylvia Plath died at the age of thirty, before her seminal work, 'Ariel,' was published, leaves so many questions. How would she have evolved? What would she be writing if she were still alive? Although we will never truly know the answers to these questions, we do have her poetical descendants, women such as, Louise Gluck and Sharon Olds. These two women have been influenced by what has preceded them. By studying what Plath helped to shape, perhaps we can know what kind of writer she would have become. Through theme, density, and image Plath pushed the confessional boundaries because of her we have poets like Louise Gluck and Sharon Olds who have come to define confessional poetry in its contemporary form.

The Poetry Foundation defines Confessional Poetry as, "Vividly self-revelatory verse

associated with a number of American poets writing in the 1950's and 1960's, including Robert Lowell, W.D. Snodgrass, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and John Berryman. M.L. Rosenthal first used the term in a 1959 review of 'Life Studies,' the collection in which Robert Lowell revealed his struggles with mental illness and a troubled marriage. When looking at the poetry of Louise Gluck and Sharon Olds we can see the connections beginning to form. By the revelation of personal matters Gluck and Olds fall into the category of the confessional poet. Density is yet another aspect that binds together the work of Plath, Gluck, and Olds. Density deals with the multiple layers of meaning, emotion and mental exertion it takes to gather the true voice of the poem. There is a richness of texture that evolves when poets are able to delve deeply into themselves. This ability means that a reader will see the parts of herself the poet is trying to reveal. The third, and most important aspect that draws these women together is theme. All three of these poets deal with themes that are close to them emotionally. This sometimes makes the reader want to look away. Themes like loss and death are dealt with deftly and sublimely in the following poems. Gluck and Olds' work is different than Plath's in that it doesn't try to be coy or hide behind metaphor. Their work is blunt and to the point. They speak of life in the contemporary world. Perhaps the main difference is in the time periods in which they lived. However, if Plath had been a contemporary writer she would have still been seen as ground breaking. Her craftsmanship cannot be rivaled.

SYLVIA PLATH

On February 11, 1963, Sylvia Plath turned her oven on, blew out the pilot light and killed herself. This is one of the most famous suicides in the poetic world. It has been

mythologized and written about for decades. To understand Plath's place in literature we need to understand everything that she missed; there is so much that would have influenced her as a writer. Plath missed The Beatles invasion of America, America's invasion of Vietnam and the surge of the Woman's Rights campaigns that took place in first world countries. These are events that shaped the women who would write after Plath's death. Not only was a Plath an influence, but also world events influenced these modern poets. What is important to note is that she was brilliant even without all of the experiences those who came after lived through. Because of Sylvia Plath, women began to have a freedom in their writing. The confessional style, which is so often attributed to Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton, also has a champion in the work of Plath. Plath's most well known work, 'Ariel,' was published after her death. In it we see the confessions of a woman who was dealing with her husbands philandering, impending divorce and the mental illness that would eventually be her downfall. There is such craft to what Plath has to say. The density is amazing. At first glance you think you are reading about the moon; the second time you read it you see a whole world bubbling under the surface of her poem.

One of the poems that sticks with the reader when looking through a copy of 'Ariel' is the poem 'The Rival.' Anyone who knows the history of Plath's marriage immediately thinks of Assia Wevill, the woman Plath's husband left her for. There is a darkness in theme and image just from the title of the poem. There is also so much more going on than meets the eye.

THE RIVAL

If the moon smiled, she would resemble you.
You leave the same impression
Of something beautiful, but annihilating.
Both of you are great light borrowers.
Her O-mouth grieves at the world; yours in unaffected,

And your first gift is making stone out of everything.
I wake to a mausoleum; you are here,
Ticking your fingers on the marble table, looking for cigarettes,
Spiteful as a woman, but not so nervous,
And dying to say something unanswerable.

The moon, too, abases her subjects,
But in the daytime she is ridiculous.
Your dissatisfactions, on the other hand,
Arrive through the mailslot with loving regularity,
White and blank, expansive as carbon monoxide.

No day is safe from news of you,
Walking about in Africa maybe, but thinking of me (Plath 72).

The theme of this poem seems easy enough to figure out, especially if the reader knows what is going on in Plath's life at the time she was writing 'Ariel.' However, it is interesting to note that Plath wrote this poem one year before Assia Wevill and Ted Hughes, Plath's husband, began having an affair. Hughes had always been a tremendous flirt. There had been rumors of flirtations and affairs when Plath taught at Smith College (Alexander 276). When this poem was written, Plath had already been through the embarrassment of rumors and innuendo. In this poem Plath has a mortal enemy, one she compares to the moon. One of the most striking lines is: "you leave the same impression/ Of something beautiful, but annihilating," the other woman was beautiful, and probably,

to the outside world, someone to be trusted (Plath 72). The idea of her presence in Plath's life has destroyed what Plath holds dear. Plath's world would soon be obliterated; she was to be involved in one the most tragic love stories of the literary world. The other woman, or, the rival, was about to infiltrate and take Plath's place in the love story. In some ways Plath is getting her revenge with this poem. She calls the other woman ridiculous and dissatisfied. One also sees the hurt that Plath is experiencing, "No day is safe from news of you,/ Walking about in Africa maybe, but thinking of me"(Plath 72). Plath seems to be setting up a drama in which each woman is obsessed with the other. This adds to the density of the poem; Plath takes her reader from the moon, to the mausoleum, to the plains of Africa. There is a lot of layering that needs to be reread and explored when a reader first discovers this poem. 'The Rival' seems to be Plath's premonition of what would happen in her marriage to Hughes. Hughes would later have an affair with Assia Wevill whom she and Hughes met when Wevill and her husband sublet Hughes and Plath's London apartment. Who knows how long the undercurrent of feeling had been going on (Alexander 276)? The density in Plath's poem is masterful. In the second stanza she speaks of the rival making everything in to stone "And you first gift is making stone out of everything./ I wake to a mausoleum, you are here"(Plath 72). Plath is not only speaking of everything around her turning into something hard and dangerous, but she is speaking of death in a very real and tangible way. There are so many things made of stone that she could have compared her rival's gift to. Instead, she goes to the mausoleum and the darkness that it implies. Plath is in the depths of despair at this point in her life. Everything has fallen apart; she is accepting death as a real possibility. The moon is also a shadowy figure. In all of Plath's poems in which she invokes the moon, (think of

The Moon and the Yew Tree), there is nothing light and happy about it. The darkness of the night sky invokes the darkness in her heart. The moon is a character in this poem, just as the rival is a character. The moon "abases her subjects," and is a "great light borrower"(72). The moon takes what she wants and doesn't feel a bit of shame about it, much like the rival. Plath is not just talking about the moon as a solitary object; she sets it against her rival to prove her point. At first glance this poem could be taken as a sort of nature poem. However, once it is read through a few more times, it is obvious the poem is about hopelessness and loss. There are layers to this poem and the reader sinks a little further down with each reading. It is almost as though the reader is stepping into an elevator. When the poem begins the reader gets into it on a top floor, so to speak, but as the poem is read there is an almost physical feeling of dropping into the sadness or despair of the poem. This happens frequently with Plath. As she is falling, sinking, dying, she is taking her reader with her. She wants someone to feel this great torment with her. She does not want to be alone in her suffering. Writers are never truly alone; they will always have their readers, people who are willing to go wherever the writer leads. An example of this effect in 'The Rival' is the first stanza. Plath talks of a "smiling moon," then goes deeper with lines like, "You leave the same impression/Of something beautiful, but annihilating./ Both of you are great light borrowers./ Her O-mouth grieves at the world; yours is unaffected (Plath, 73). Plath takes the reader in with a smiling moon and then leaves them with a person who doesn't care how much pain they are causing. When getting on this poetic elevator the reader is unaware of how quickly Plath will move emotionally in this poem.

One of the greatest talents of Sylvia Plath is her use of image. So much can be shown to a reader by a simple image. In the second stanza of 'The Rival,' Plath demonstrates her full power when she speaks of the mausoleum. But notice the lines following the use of that image, "Ticking your fingers on the marble table, looking for cigarettes." What an amazing use of image. What is being said of the rival? She is being shown as impatient; she seems be oblivious to those around her; she doesn't care about what she is doing to others. In the third stanza the reader comes to the lines, "Your dissatisfactions, on the other hand,/ Arrive through the mailslot with loving regularity,/White and blank, expansive as carbon monoxide/" These lines raise so many questions. What is the rival dissatisfied with? Why is she mailing letters to the speaker? Of course, this probably is not literal. Is the rival dissatisfied with Plath's existence? The idea that they "arrive through the mailslot," is an image the readers can picture in their mind; it is familiar. Then, once again, Plath brings the image back to death with the "carbon monoxide." There is an undercurrent to this poem that is dark and sad, especially when the method of Plath's suicide is considered. This poem is a look into her soul and private thoughts. Things Plath would probably not say to a stranger on the street she puts into her poem. Did Plath sit down and plan this all out, or did it bubble up like a spring when she wrote? Plath lays her soul bare. The "I" is very strong, which is common in all confessional poetry. There is never the feeling, however, that Plath is creating a character. It is thought to be gospel truth; Plath is currently, or has recently, been in this situation. Readers of confessional poetry must remind themselves that the poet may very well be creating a character and fantasizing an aspect of life that never happened, or could have happened to someone in their circle of friends. With Plath there is never a feeling of disconnection; her poems are

intimate and close.

"The Rival,' is sublime. The images, density and theme interweave to make a statement about Plath's headspace during this time. If readers had read this book in full, before she killed herself, they might have seen that she was troubled and needed help. Because of Plath's truth in her art and to herself the women who came after her, her literary daughters, are much braver and much more brash in their observations.

LOUISE GLUCK

It is difficult to speak of Louise Gluck and not think of the confessional movement in poetry. When William Logan reviewed Gluck's most recent book for the *New York Times* he said: "Louise Gluck's wary, pinch-mouthed poems have long represented the logical outcome of a certain strain of confessional verse—starved of adjectives, thinned to a nervous set of verbs, intense almost past bearing, her poems have been dark, damaged and difficult to avert your gaze from...Gluck learned much from Plath about how to make a case of nerves central to poetry." Does this sound familiar? Can the same also be said of Plath and her book 'Ariel?' Gluck's book 'Ararat' is a collection of poems that deals with Gluck's family and the losses and tragedies that have befallen them. There is still pain, as with Plath, but there is a brashness with Gluck. Plath is so subtle in her description of turmoil; Gluck lays it on the page and invites the reader in. She does not hide behind simile and metaphor. She is brave and states her version of the truth. Gluck's work is dark and brutal. It is almost like driving past a horrendous car accident, and not being able to look away. This is the mark of poet that is brave, strong, and unsentimental.

Someone who can go into herself and the lives of her family is someone whose poetry a reader will want to revisit. Everyone has darkness in them, but to be able to talk about it in an intelligent, detached way, as Gluck does is the mark of a gifted, insightful woman. Somehow Gluck is able to remove herself from these intimate poems. In the poem 'Ararat' Gluck is observing her mother and aunt in a cemetery, but so much focus is put upon the two elderly women you almost forget Gluck is there telling you the story. Confessional poetry is all about the 'I.' If a confessional poet can remove the 'I,' as Gluck does, and is still confessional, the readers know they are reading something powerful. The poem is so powerful the readers forget that there is an 'I' present in the piece.

Gluck was born in 1943, just eleven years after Plath. The difference between these two women is time and experience. Gluck lived through all of the events that Plath missed. Vietnam, the Women's Movement, and the bulk of the Cold War would have had an effect on any writer who was smart enough to pay attention. In 'Mount Ararat,' Gluck tells the experience of being a woman and a mother. She also shows the reader what it is like to have aging parents. These are all milestones in any woman's life, and Gluck is a master at pointing out what is most important to her. While highlighting what is important in her life, Gluck is also showing what is important in any woman's life. There is an idea of sisterhood here. Not all women live through the same experiences, but there are certain moments, which are shared. All of us are daughters and have some sort of connection with our mothers.

MOUNT ARARAT

Nothing's sadder than my sister's grave
unless it's the grave of my cousin, next to her.
To this day, I can't bring myself to watch
my aunt and my mother,
though the more I try to escape
seeing their suffering, the more it seems
the fate of our family:
each branch donates a one girl child to the earth.

In my generation, we put off marrying, put off having
children.
When we did have them, we had one;
for the most part, we had sons, not daughters.

We don't discuss this ever.
But it's always a relief to bury an adult,
someone remote, like my father
it's a sign that maybe the debt's finally been paid.

In fact, no one believes this.
Like the earth itself, every stone here
is dedicated to the Jewish god
who doesn't hesitate to take
a son from a mother (30).

When first reading through this poem the theme of loss is palpable. The readers feel the loss more deeply as they read. With each stanza some new idea or some new snapshot of the devastation of loss is presented. The reader eavesdrops on the aunt and the mother in the first stanza. The next stanza speaks of Gluck and her siblings marrying later in life and family building being a precarious thing. Then there is the glimpse of the relief

that is felt when an adult dies. Notice, readers also get a glimpse into what kind of man Gluck's father was; he was remote. Then, in the last stanza the reader comes face to face with the question of: What kind of God allows this to happen? Gluck actually answers this question. The type of God that allows this to happen is one that allows his own Son to be killed and taken from his mother. The elevator effect of this poem is masterful. After getting into the poem in the first stanza there is a sinking as the poem goes on. The third stanza illuminates this point: "We don't discuss this ever./ But it's always a relief to bury an adult,/ someone remote, like my father/ it's a sign that maybe the debt's finally been paid (Gluck 30). Notice how the reader steps into the poem not talking about certain things, like all families do, and ends with a debt being paid off. However, this isn't just a debt paid by money, it is paid with human beings. By the end it feels as though there has been a journey; the emotions are like a punch in the stomach. This also shows the density of Gluck's writing. There is so much of her life packed into four stanzas. She is layering each loss, so all of the loss is compounded. When reading the book, 'Ararat,' which this poem is taken from, the reader sees that Gluck takes the theme of loss and carries it throughout the entire book. Each poem builds upon the previous poem and leads to a book that is dense and rich in theme. The ability to draw the reader into her world of loss is attractive at the emotional core. She has the ability to take readers on a journey through theme and in the end hit the reader with an amazing truth, something that makes them see their world in a different way. On the other hand, when looking at Plath, it is hard to imagine that Plath would state so plainly the effects of these deaths. She would have used metaphor and kept herself hidden. However, the link is there in theme. Plath did tackle subjects close to her heart; Gluck seems to take it a step further.

Gluck comes to poetry from a different direction. Gluck tells the truth point blank. She doesn't wrap it in simile, metaphor, or even adjectives. Plath approached poetry with subtlety. This isn't to say that Plath held back and didn't speak the truth, as well. She was a craftsman who styled her poems with an astounding complexity.

Gluck's 'Ararat' is written more simply than 'The Rival,' but it does have the same density as Plath. There is a brashness and straightforwardness with Gluck. She isn't taking any prisoners. She is almost a reporter in this poem. This is what happened, this is what I have seen, this is what it means. That being said there are wonderful layers to this poem. Where Gluck starts the poem and where she is when she ends it are so different. As readers we are taken to the cemetery, where we watch two sisters mourning over the deaths of their young daughters. This poem leads to places that would frighten anyone. Readers are then taken into the lives of this family and see how grief has effected the life decisions of people loss has touched. Then there are the funerals of the elderly and joy that it is not one of the young. Gluck asks what the reader thinks of God. She is trying to get to a deeper truth; she is trying to gut-check whoever is reading this poem. If all of these horrible things are allowed to happen to little children and their mothers, what kind of God is in charge of this world? The answer is in the poem: "Like the earth itself, every stone here/ is dedicated to the Jewish god/ who doesn't hesitate to take/ a son from his mother" (Gluck 30).

Image is an important tool for any poet. Gluck could teach every poet something on this matter. It is difficult to separate all of these points, theme, image, and density in regards to Gluck because they all work together so well. If any of these points were lacking,

the poem would not work on the whole. After reading this poem through, however, there are images that stick in the reader's mind. These images are not forgotten once the book is closed, and readers will find themselves wanting to read it over and over again. From the beginning of the poems there is a glimpse into Gluck's world. The readers are with her in the cemetery, watching her mother and aunt. They can picture these elderly women still grieving over their little girls. The second stanza is not as strong from an image standpoint, but it is a gateway pushing the poem forward to the third stanza where you can see the family at the casket of an elderly man, sighing in relief that he has lived a full life. In the fourth and final stanza you see the rocks on the headstones in the Jewish cemetery. Readers can see this in their minds eye and can hear the question about the "Jewish god". This also brings the reader back to the beginning of the poem, the rocks on the headstones of two little girls. Plath was just as masterful with her images—if not more so. Plath and Gluck's images are so full and pregnant with possibility. Plath's images may have a more hidden meaning. This is to say that Gluck is so straightforward; she wants to understand the pain she is dealing with. Plath, on the other hand, is subtle and perhaps shies away from her inner turmoil in her work. According to The Academy of American Poets, "The confessional poetry of the mid-twentieth century dealt with subject matter that had not been openly discussed in American poetry." Plath was on the cusp of major changes in the world of poetry. There is such a wide difference between Plath's books *The Colossus*, and *Ariel*. Readers of both books have come to understand the leaps Plath makes. Because of these leaps, women like Gluck have been allowed to write in an intimate way. Gluck is a modern woman in a modern world who has come through the women's rights movement and refuses to be hidden away. Her thoughts and

her feelings are on display for the world to see and she is not ashamed of it.

Everything Gluck writes in this poem creates theme, density, and image. Gluck has learned from her predecessors and gone beyond what they did. Plath would have been astonished with the truthfulness and transparency of these poems. Plath would have shied away from declaring her inner life and why she married when she did and what the death of her father truly meant. Gluck, on the other hand, seems to be emboldened by her family's experiences and the effects that they have had on her. She needs to speak of the tragedies and the hardships. She needs to question God and His relation to her family and the horrors of the world. Gluck is a brave woman who says what is on her mind. There is no blushing.

SHARON OLDS

If there is one poet who has gone far beyond anything Plath could or would do when it comes to subject matter, it is Sharon Olds. One can think of no other female poet who is as free in her subject matter. While to the rest of the world it seems obvious that Olds is a confessional poet, Olds herself seems to deny this. In an interview with Laurel Blossom for 'Poets & Writers Magazine she says of Plath..." [she] was a great genius, with an IQ of at least double mine their [Plath and Sexton] steps were not steps I wanted to put my feet in." It is interesting that women, such as Olds, want to distance themselves from the legacy of Plath. In the same interview with Blossom, Olds tries to distance herself even more by saying that "...I have written two or three confessional poems. I would use the phrase apparently personal poetry for the kind of poetry that I think people are referring to as 'confessional'" In the Poetry Foundations biography of

Olds she says that she was raised a “hellfire Calvinist” but she realized when she was 15 that she was an atheist. That dichotomy is fascinating. There must have been some great turmoil with her parents and those she grew up around when she discovered this about herself. It must be difficult to find yourself at odds with those who raised you. This must be where so much of her poetry comes from, all of the conflict, emotions, and the need to say what must be said. Perhaps keeping everything bottled up until the age of 15 led to Olds needing to let it all out in such a powerful way. Olds has cut her own broad path. She didn’t need to take the same road as Plath; she had all the power she needed. Where Plath seemed to be powerless against the memories of her father, and her destructive marriage to Hughes, Olds is bold and aggressive. Olds book, *The Father*, is written entirely about her father’s death. If Plath had lived, perhaps she would have written a similar book. Plath’s father, Otto, died because of stubbornness; he was a diabetic who did not get a cut on his foot taken care of. Otto Plath died of an infection in his big toe. It could have been avoided; he did not have to die young and leave his wife and children to fend for themselves (Alexander 30). On the other hand, Olds does not hold back her feelings about her father or their relationship. She talks about not only his illness, but also everything that surrounds the dying process. Of course, Plath was only eight years old when her father died. Olds was an adult living on a different coast than her parents. It seems that Plath was stuck being the little girl victim who could do nothing but be traumatized. Olds is a woman who faces the death head on. Olds knows the problems in her relationship with her father. She understands the world and his death as an adult woman would. The poem that most clearly shows how far confessional poetry has come with Olds help is, ‘Last Acts.’

LAST ACTS

I wish I could wash my father’s face,
take the cotton from the dirt of the earth
and run it over his face so the loops
lick in his pores before he dies. I want
to be in him, as I was once inside him,
riding in his balls the day before he cast me-
he carries me easily on his long legs up the
hills of San Francisco in war-time, I am
there between his legs where I belong,
I am his flesh, he can love me without
reserve, I will be his pleasure.
Now I want to feel, in the roweling
of the cloth, the contours of his pitted skin,
I want to wash him, the way I would scrub
my dolls’ face thoroughly
before any great ceremony (Olds 21).

‘Last Acts’ does what any great confessional poem does; it brings together emotion and intimacy in a surprising, almost disturbing, way. It is hard to imagine that any of the confessional poets of the 1950’s or 60’s speaking of their father’s balls in any way, shape, or form. It is hard to imagine Sylvia Plath would have never dared to write about something so private, even if she had thought about it. There are few poets who would dare to be so intimate. There is something too personal about that topic. This is why Olds has gone far beyond what any other confessional poet has done. In this poem the reader sees her need for intimacy with her father. By this point in the book the reader realizes there is some great disconnect between Olds and her father. She wants to do something so simple, “I wish I could wash my father’s face,/ take cotton from the dirt of the earth/ and run it over his face so the loops/lick his pores before he dies (Olds 21). However, this

simple act brings to her mind something even more intimate. She thinks of her father as a young man during World War II. He must have been stationed in San Francisco and he has no thoughts of her; he's only thinking of his life stretching out before him. Still, she is there, cradled between his legs, waiting for her chance. "...I want/ to be in him, as I was once inside him,/ riding in his balls the day before he cast me-" (Olds 21). Olds has taken the old saying, "before you were a twinkle in your father's eye," a whole step further. As if talking about his balls wasn't intimate enough, she talks about being his pleasure. So, when she is "cast," the release of her into her mother will bring him sexual satisfaction. At the end of the poem, when Olds talks about wiping his face like one of her dolls getting ready for a great ceremony, the reader cannot help but think of the funeral. "I want to wash him, the way I would scrub/ my dolls' face thoroughly/ before any great ceremony" (Olds 21). The thought of the father being an inanimate object and being prepared for something makes one think of his impending death. Olds has this ability to lead her reader wherever she wants them to go. Readers of this poem go places they probably do not think the poem will take them. She starts with just the simple act of washing his face and then moves us to her conception, and then takes us to his death. There is so much movement here. This movement makes the poem very dense. There is a layering effect that adds to the construct of the poem; all poets should strive for this in their poems. The fact that it is free verse and does not rely on form to force reader into any way of thinking is, not only powerful, but also masterful. There is a freedom in it, which Olds takes full advantage of; as a reader, there is a feeling of being on a twisting journey. When first reading this poem a reader may say, 'you've got to be kidding me!' It feels as if we have walked in on our parents having sex. However, this ability to make

the reader look away, and then come back to the uncomfortable poem again and again is a gift. Notice, this is the poem that is being written about. The intimate nature of the poem is what makes a reader come back to it. A reader feels that Olds is communicating something important and secretive; it is as though she only wants whoever is reading it to understand it.

The images that Olds uses are unique. I can see her father carefree in the city of San Francisco with his balls between his legs just thinking about how his life will be. This thought sounds disturbing, but this image of a young, virile man sticks with the reader. Another image that sticks with the reader is the washcloth and Olds washing her father's face. The act itself is lovely and the reader can picture her doing this. This is an act of love and fidelity between two people who often butted heads. Olds' family was deeply religious and there was tension because of her non-belief. The fact that Olds wants to perform this task shows her deep respect for her dying father. The last image that really affects the reader in this poem was the doll image. The image is of Olds washing her father's "pitted skin" as she would her dolls before "any great ceremony" (Olds 21). In the South it is typical at most of the funerals that the family goes to the funeral home the night before to prepare the body. Daughters often do their mother's makeup or their father's hair. They want to take care of them one last time before they are buried. It is an act of great love and deep respect. So, Olds image of her dolls immediately makes one think of an elderly family member who has passed. The great ceremony is the funeral; Olds is preparing the body. This adds to the density of the poem. It is just one more layer added to the relationship of this man and his daughter.

Even though Olds would like to distance herself from Sylvia Plath there is no doubt that Olds is her poetic daughter. The themes, images and density are all there, and there is a direct link back to Plath. Without Plath women such as Olds may have never been able to write the kind of poetry they do. Plath helped to break open the door to the confessional style for women. Writers such as Olds may have never been able to get published if it were not for Plath. Although they are so distant from each other, the bloodline is there. It can be traced back like a vein to the time of Plath. Olds is bold in a way Plath never got a chance to experiment with. Through Olds poets like Sylvia Plath live on.

One of the most important things we can do as human beings is to honor those who have come before us. These men or women have influenced the way in which duties are performed, or the way in which dreams are created. Sylvia Plath is the grandmother of female confessional poets. Without her influence and her ability to write, not only with technical perfection, but also with a new openness, there would not be poets such as Louise Gluck and Sharon Olds. Plath's ability to bend theme, density and image to her will are genius. She has passed her genes down the hypothetical line to the women who write today. Had Plath lived, she may have changed her approach to poetry, but there would be no need for her to do so. Plath has been an inspiration for generations of poets. There was a brazenness to Plath that had not been seen before; a mastery of craft that inspires women to not only write better, but to be courageous. It is undeniable where the ability to go to the deepest, darkest places comes from. In confessional poetry the "I" is the most important part of the poem. Sometimes the "I" is not the main speaker, but

sometimes it is the only voice in the poem that opens up and reveals a truth. The truth in Gluck and Olds' poems is undeniable. They bring the female experience to the forefront and show the world what it means to be a woman, daughter, mother, and wife. Plath was well on her way to breaking open a window, not only in her personal life, but also in her poetry. 'The Rival' reveals the intense sadness and anger that comes with the idea of a third person in her marriage. Also it shows that she was willing to face it head on and let the reader know how she truly felt about this intrusion. It can be argued that without the women's right movement there would not have been an acceptance of this type of poetry from women. However, Plath was coming into her own before all of this was happening. She was in England; therefore, she was far away from America and any movements that may have started to rumble beneath the collective consciousness. She had a bravery that was passed down to those who came after her. Plath's theme, density, and use of image are obviously in play when reading Gluck and Olds. Without Plath the great awakening of female poets may not have happened for another decade or two. It is now Louise Gluck and Sharon Olds who are influencing the next generation of female poets. It is doubtful they would have had this opportunity without Sylvia Plath.

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One of the Lads



Photo: Sue Matheson

The Dystopian Future of the *Terminator* Saga and the Battle that ‘would be fought here, in our present’

by Antonio Sanna, University of Caligari, Italy

The *Terminator* films have introduced viewers to a dystopian future that could be avoided only through the actions and sacrifices of present human beings. The first film in the quadrilogy, James Cameron’s *The Terminator* (1984), begins with a sequence set in the year 2029 A.D. in which machines and humans fight against each other. The opening sequence of the second film in the saga – Cameron’s *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991) – reproduces the same scene (with updated special effects), adding a threatening army of cyborgs on the battlefield, their death-like faces and red eyes scanning the area. The film’s main titles roll over the great fire of Judgement Day, the nuclear war that Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton) repeatedly sees in her nightmares, in which she and many children are burnt alive after the impact of an atomic missile. According to the fictional universe portrayed in the films, the earth of the future has become sterile, barren, all uniform and very unnatural. The landscape is indeed inorganic, the only hallmarks of the territory being the concrete and metal forming the twisted ruins of the building. Further

sequences set in 2029 – experienced as flashbacks by Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn), the soldier coming from the future to stop the Terminator (Arnold Schwarzenegger) – offer some glimpses of the brutal war raged by the machines and the desperate situation of the remaining human beings. Several establishing shots present the enormous machines that occupy the skies or rumble over the soil, while humans running among the ruins of the buildings are massacred. [Image #1] In these nocturnal sequences, the only visible lights are emitted by the machines’ beacons, their lethal lasers and the fires of the explosions they provoke. Close-up frames linger on the patrol machine’s caterpillars crushing the human skulls that were scattered on the ground after the nuclear holocaust exterminated half of the planet’s population. The huge machines are mainly framed with low angles, demonstrating the smallness of flesh and bones against metal. Sweat, blood, scars, dirt, starving and suffering are the defining elements of human beings, who now reside mainly underground with no comforts and under the constant threat of annihilation.¹¹

1. The earth pictured in *Terminator Salvation* (set in postapocalyptic 2018 and, therefore, before the first Terminator was sent back into the past) is not as desolate as the one that Kyle Reeves dreams of/remembers in *The Terminator*. Certainly, in the sequences set in the deserted areas near California, the landscape appears desolate – actually, it is similar to the exterior settings of George Miller’s *Mad Max* (1979) and Russell Mulcahy’s *Resident Evil Extinction* (2007). However, contrary to Roger Ebert’s argument that “there is nothing visible in this world but a barren wasteland. No towns, no houses, no food, no farms, no nothing”, many buildings still stand, the vehicles scattered in the streets are almost intact, plants partially cover the ruins and some wooded areas surround the cities. Human beings are depicted as hopeful and, although they are continually hunted down by the machines, they can still manage to survive in a dignified way. Director McG offers a less negative portrayal of both humanity and the landscape in the future than the previous cinematic representations belonging to the saga.

Photo: courtesy
of Metro Goldwyn
Mayer

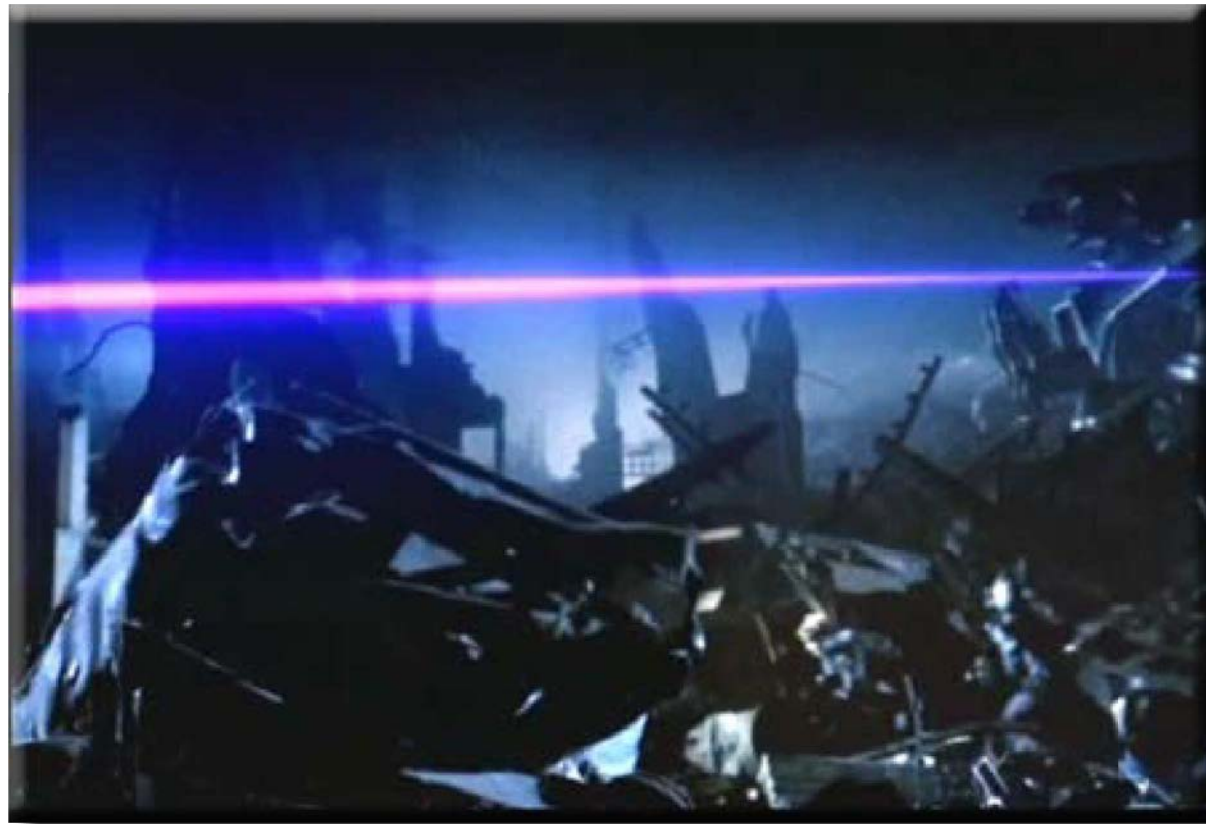


Fig. 1: one of the
gigantic machines
causing destruction
in a devastated
2029 Los Angeles
in James Cameron's
The Terminator.

As the narrative unfolds, viewers discover that such a tragic future has been caused by Skynet, a computer program developed as a militarized artificial intelligence during the 1990s, which acquires self-consciousness, decides not to be “turned off”, and exterminates more than three billion people by launching atomic missiles as soon as it perceives humankind as a threat to its own existence. Apart from clearly warning us that the moment in which artificial intelligence could exceed human capability could be nearer than we thought, the films thus suggest that human beings themselves are responsible for the destruction of nature, the radical extermination of humanity and the terrible war against the machines. The saga is a cautionary tale about the end of humankind, should we lose control of our own creations, should our own products rebel against their producers, as Jeffrey Ewing has suggested when arguing that “Cameron shows us that the developments emerging from the capitalist system quickly spiral out of human control

and into catastrophic consequences that could end human life and civilization altogether” (98). Ewing specifies: “Cameron holds technology itself to be neutral, but its development, control, and use in the capitalist system make it dehumanizing rather than liberating” (102-03).

In a certain respect, the saga seems to follow also the argument by German philosopher Martin Heidegger, who affirms in the 1927 work *Being and Time* that technology has been gradually corrupted since Ancient Greece, when it was conceived of as art and craft. During that time, the primitive technological experience was “ready-to-hand”: tools were experienced as extensions of the human body and as revealing their nature through their use (211). Humans were then still at home with the world, and lived an “authentic” existence. The “present-at-hand” experience of technology is instead based on the belief on the part of human beings to be “lords of beings”: the possession and mastery of high-tech tools has detached them from the world (155). Similarly, in the *Terminator* saga it is over-confidence in the mastery of high-tech tools that determines the creation of Skynet and the subsequent nuclear war devastating the planet and decimating its population. The confidence in mastery over the natural world as well as in the production of more and more advanced technology is specifically epitomized by the fetishization of the first Terminator’s robotic arm in *Terminator 2*. Indeed, the arm – the only component of the cyborg that could be salvaged after the fight against Sarah – is secretly guarded in a remote and heavily-guarded area of the company Cyberdine, and preserved behind a protective glass like a precious work of art or a very dangerous weapon. The scientist Miles Dyson (Joe Morton), who has access to such a restricted area because he is studying

the artefact of unknown origin and attempting to extract useful and advanced technology from it, observes the arm as if it were a fetish (although, not in a Marxist sense, according to which the consumer fetishizes the commodity he/she has bought, forgetting that it has been created by people like him/her). A two-shot evidences the personal link he has with the arm through his expression of admiration for it and the alternation of focus respectively on his face and on the mechanical hand open towards him.

The *Terminator* films thus fictionally demonstrate the argument that technology is developed in a social context that may affect its utilization in unforeseen ways. Indeed, some of the technology we are (currently) forging will probably give us unprecedented power to enrich and better human life. Should it be used in a prudent way in favour of its potential to eliminate poverty, eradicate disease and insure a prolonged life? On the other hand, technology could fall into the wrong hands, be misused or abused and could lead to the destruction of the earth and the eradication of the human species. According to Bill Joy, chief scientist at Sun Microsystems,

the 21st century technologies – genetics, nanotechnology, and robotics (GNR) – are so powerful that they can spawn whole new classes of accidents and abuses. Most dangerously, for the first time, these accidents and abuses are widely within the reach of individuals or small groups. They will not require large facilities or rare raw materials. Knowledge alone will enable the use of them.

Joy believes that the most prudent course of action would be not to develop such technologies in the first place because they have the potential to destroy the human race: “the only realistic alternative I see is relinquishment: to limit development of the

technologies that are too dangerous by limiting our pursuit of certain kinds of knowledge”. Should we then act before it is too late, as Sarah decides to do when she attempts to kill Dyson before he creates the basic program that leads to the creation of Skynet?

After realizing that she is not able to kill another human being, Sarah destroys all of the scientist’s files and the chip from the first Terminator at Cyberdine. Apparently, she thus saves the world from a ruinous end. However, this does not stop future events from occurring, but only postpones them. The films thus follow Justin Leiber’s argument that “in today’s technology-rich culture, the law of the conservation of reality seems to lend itself to the truth of the idea that if a technology can be invented (especially a weapon-usable technology), it will be invented” (131). Such an argument is developed in Jonathan Mostow’s *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (2003), which basically narrates about Skynet’s acquisition of self-consciousness and its “declaration” of war against humanity. The film begins with the voice-over words of John Connor (here interpreted by Nick Stahl) on the black screen: “The future has not been written. There is no fate but what we make for ourselves”. The first scene depicts however the impact of a nuclear missile on a metropolitan area, which is immediately annihilated. This image seems to contradict John’s previous statement, which is then corrected by the affirmation “I wish I could believe that”. The next scene depicts John as the future leader of the resistance while exulting among his numerous soldiers. The first sequences thus retrace the fictional history of the entire saga and summarize the contents of the third film at large, anticipating also its conclusion, that is, John’s inability to prevent Judgement Day and the consequent war against the machines from happening. Indeed, by simulating the existence of a virus

on the global network Skynet manages to distract the humans controlling the system, while simultaneously spreading itself as a software into millions of computers worldwide and obtaining control of nuclear weapons and communication on a global level. Could we not interpret this as a cautionary warning to contemporary viewers that computers should not be developed up to the point of surpassing human intelligence, that they should not even become as clever, selfish and self-preserving as we are?

It is then legitimate to wonder whether it would be possible for Connor to fail his destiny and not to become the saviour of humankind: is he predestined to become the powerful warrior who opposes and apparently defeats the machines? The films suggest that his destiny seems to have been set for him since before he was even born and he cannot avoid his future, even though he does not accept or desire to become a great leader. Specifically, *Terminator 3* demonstrates that the future cannot be altered: although Cyberdine has been destroyed, Judgement Day is inevitable. This is further evidenced by the fact that the Terminator knows ahead the precise date and even the exact hour of the end of the world – a particular which seems to point to the inevitability of destiny. At the end of *Terminator 3*, John explicitly admits such a truth: “I should have realized our destiny was never to stop Judgement Day. It was merely to survive it together”, while the images of the global catastrophe are shown on a greater and greater scale.

The thematic concern over the development in the present of certain technologies that could undermine the future of humanity is developed also through the depiction of the physical and behavioural similarities and differences between cyborgs and human beings. On the one hand the four films frequently utilize the theme of humanizing technology,

defined by Jerome Donnely as “treating the mechanical products of technology as if they possessed life, a capacity for thought and feeling, and rational and emotional interaction with people” (181). This occurs particularly in *Terminator 2* and *Terminator 3* by means of the characterization of the T 100 cyborgs as father-like figures who, independently of their superhuman abilities and scarred appearances, are seen as human and “cool” because they pronounce sentences such as “no problemo”, “hasta la vista, baby” and “talk to the hand”. John becomes personally attached to and emotionally involved with both of them, thus offering the positive perspective that technology is a product of the human intellect that can still be controlled.

On the other hand, humans and machines are constantly set against each other in this cinematic quadrilogy and the differences between them are constantly evidenced.²² Such a contrast is evident from the initial sequences of *The Terminator* in which the T 100 and Kyle Reeve appear. The muscular perfection and massive build of Schwarzenegger are immediately set against the thin and scarred body of Biehn. The cyborg easily assumes an erect position whereas the human being lies on the ground and suffers from the pain of time travel. Later, coldness, lack of pity, remorse and fear are described as the characterizing

2. In the saga some human beings are represented as untrustworthy and ruthless as the machines. In *Terminator 2*, for example, Dr. Silverman (Earl Boen), does not hesitate to intern Sarah Connor in a psychiatric asylum, because he believes that her tales about the future are mere delusions caused by a deranged mind. The two guards of the asylum are very violent and abusive towards her and the other patients. In *Terminator Salvation*, the stubborn General Ashdown – Michael Ironside, an heroic Resistance fighter in Kenneth Johnson’s TV mini-series and serial *V* (1983-85) as well – refuses to believe that Connor is the prophesied saviour of humanity and thus condemns his men and the movement’s headquarters to a ruinous end in the battle against Skynet. Moreover, in its competitive race to the production of sophisticated goods and in its attempt to gain a considerable financial profit from the creation of an artificial intelligence, Cyberdine could be compared to the greedy Company represented in the *Alien* films (1979-98).

traits of the machines: Kyle affirms that a terminator “can’t be bargained with, it can’t be reasoned with”; it is a killing machine with no scruples, no remorse, immune to ethical concerns and therefore excluded from the human contract, an “Other” that is alien to it. Such an extreme difference from the human individual is made visually explicit when the cyborg is finally revealed in its true appearance, when the flesh, skin, hair and blood constituting the shell of its metallic body are revealed to be only an illusion of humanity, when the human mask is taken off and its apparent being is uncovered as an artifice.

Such a difference is all the more exemplified by the advanced prototype introduced in the second film. The T 1000 (Robert Patrick) even seems to be colder than the T 100: it is made of liquid metal and savagely kills its victims, observing with curiosity the last moments of their lives while priding of its own shape-shifting weapons. In Terminator 3, instead, after the benevolent cyborgs interpreted by Schwarzenegger have been firmly established in the mind of the spectators as friendly figures, the juxtaposition is created between the Terminators themselves with the arrival of the model T X, which is defined by Connor as “an anti-Terminator Terminator” or the “Terminatrix”. Both the name of the new cyborg and its physical appearance are definitely set against the previous models, it being the only female Terminator of the entire quadrilogy, the only one that emits blue light from its eyes as much as the most dangerous adversary hitherto portrayed. The T X possesses the behavioural characteristics of a ruthless and vain woman (admiring itself in the mirror in the middle of a fight), and is dutifully employed in the destruction of her male rivals, all of whom it approaches in a very seductive manner, exploiting the sexual attractiveness of the actress who interprets the character (Kristanna Loken). Indeed, the

T X kills Katherine Brewster’s fiancé while he is lying in bed and subsequently “penetrates” from behind a policeman by piercing his chest with her arm with a gesture of phallic aggression. Moreover, when fighting against the T 100 near the end of the film, it tightly hugs its masculine body in a sort of sensual embrace, almost simulating a sexual intimacy that is used to “her” advantage when “she” manages to re-programme the male cyborg.

The difference between human beings and machines is finally epitomized by the character of Marcus Wright (Sam Worthington) in McG’s *Terminator Salvation* (2009), a film which has been amply acclaimed for its use of realistic and impressive special effects but also largely criticized for the lack of an entertaining story and for the absence of Schwarzenegger (La Salle, Puig). Marcus is a convicted fratricide who donated his body at the beginning of the twenty-first century (according to the story’s timeframe) before his death sentence took place. He has then been reconstructed and resurrected decades later by Skynet as a cybernetic infiltration unit. Nevertheless, even after being injured and having discovered the metallic components of his body, he still thinks of himself as a human being: his external appearance does not determine his true nature.



Photo: courtesy of Columbia Pictures

Fig.2: Marcus (Sam Worthington) painfully discovers that he is a cyborg in McG’s *Terminator Salvation*.

Later, Marcus infiltrates the enemy's headquarters, where his biological components are repaired and he confronts a holographic spokesperson of Skynet, in an explanatory scene which closely recalls Neo's encounter with the architect in the Wachowski Brothers' *Matrix Reloaded* (2003). The interactive reproduction of Dr. Serena Kogan (Helena Bonham Carter), the very person who convinced Marcus to donate his body to Cyberdine Systems for postmodern scientific research and experimentation, coldly explains that he has been used in order to infiltrate the Resistance and capture John Connor. As the image on the screen specifies, his uniqueness is due to the implantation of a human consciousness on a cybernetic body. During the whole scene a series of close ups gives us access to Marcus' reactions of denial: viewers clearly see his expressions of frustration, anguish, pain and anger, which are definitely juxtaposed to the detachment of Dr. Kogan's projection explaining the plan to annihilate all human beings. The latter also asks Marcus: "What else could you be if not machine?" In a medium-close shot emphasizing his indignant reaction, he replies: "A man", thus reiterating that living as a human is better than being a machine. His rebellion to Skynet officially begins when he tears his own microchip off the flesh of his neck and affirms "I know what I am. I'm better this way".

Most significantly, as we discover in the following sequence, in which the intervention of Marcus prevents John's death and allows the hero to annihilate Skynet's entire base, the subjective shot representing the vision of the T 100 – interpreted by Roland Kickinger but ingeniously endowed with the CGI-created facial likeness of Schwarzenegger (digitally re-assembled, we could say, for the occasion) – reveals that Marcus actually has a human heart inside his robotic skeleton. This is interpreted as a

weakness by the T 100, which manages to severely wound Marcus. The metaphorical and literal importance of the human heart is further established by Marcus' voluntary sacrifice through his donation of the organ to a dying Connor. In the final scene of the film, during the surgical operation his voice-over affirms: "What is it that makes us human? It's not something you can programme. You can't put it into a chip. It's the strength of the human heart. The difference between us and machines". Contrary to Roger Ebert's argument that this is a "movie that raises many questions about the lines between man and machine. Raises them, and then leaves them levitating", Terminator Salvation is quite explicit in its choice between humans and machines.

The importance of human life is emphasized also by the film's frequent focus on physical and metaphorical births. According to John Anderson, for example, after the rebels' intrusion in the subterranean and dark base "Marcus reawakens [. . .] in a howling allegory of birth" by emerging from the soil naked and completely covered in mud while screaming in pain. Subsequently, he is regenerated and reborn inside Skynet's headquarters in a sterile and bright environment. In the final fight sequence John Connor (Christian Bale) and Kyle Reeves (here interpreted by Anton Yelchin) fall into the area where Terminators are assembled, into the uterine womb of Skynet – the real adversary of this instalment of the quadrilogy, never physically present but perennially lurking as a mortal menace. Connor and Reeves are surrounded by the dark skulls and chests of the cyborgs being produced by the complex machinery around, but they finally manage to destroy the area by activating the nuclear weapons located nearby and thus (momentarily) terminating Skynet's reproductive abilities.

In the end a positive message seems to be suggested by the films of the saga. This is firstly implied by the many references to the Christian religion (in the initials of John Connor and the titles of the second and fourth films) alluding to the final salvation and victory of humankind. According to Peter S. Fosl, in *Terminator 3* “John’s rebirth as a leader is signalled by his symbolic resurrection at his mother’s pseudo-grave (the empty tomb, recalling Christian symbolism, and a uterine symbol) with the help of a pseudo-father (the T-101) sporting a massive pseudo-phallus (the machine gun)” (230). Moreover, various characters allude to a happy conclusion of the narrative. Indeed, in *The Terminator* Kyle specifies that “The defense grid was smashed. We’d taken the mainframes. We’d won”, informing viewers that the revolution of human beings against the machines is going to be successful in the end. Similarly, *Terminator Salvation* concludes with John’s words “There is no fate but what we make”, indicating that history can be modelled according to the actions taken in the present. Although, according to the timeframe of this fictional universe, the war with the machines is still going to last for at least another decade, John appears to be confident and hopeful that human beings will emerge victorious from the conflict.

As the films clearly indicate, then, the battle to be fought is here, in our present, when we can still prevent tragedies to occur and we can ensure a safe future for the next generations. As Jesse W. Butler has pointed out, “our relationship with technology is actually one of continuity, mutuality and integration. We need to realize that technology is, for better or for worse, a natural extension of human activities. The machines and computational processes that pervade our lives are not in essence something different

from us—not an ‘Other’” (53). The fact that machines are an extension of human activity is undeniable, although we should remember from the evidence of Hiroshima and Chernobyl that the machines that we create can pose very real and significant threats and ethical concerns for the well being of humanity should always have priority. Should we share Sarah Connor’s belief that a storm is inevitably coming, as she affirms at the end of the first film, alluding to the forthcoming nuclear war? Or should we listen to Kyle when arguing that “the future is not set” and we can decide in the present what is best for us?

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Language onto Landscape — Floating Form Less

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NOTHING....

WILL HAVE TAKEN PLACE....

BUT PLACE....

·Stéphane Mallarmé, Un Coup de des...

Situation One: In Stéphane Mallarmé’s essay “The Book: A Spiritual Instrument,” a copy of the new but now decidedly old (and clearly dying) medium of the printed newspaper is lyrically presented by the poet as blowing from a park bench and unfolding itself around what are described as “whispering” roses. Mallarmé distinguishes here between the flimsy, ephemeral pages of his newspaper, now limp down on the ground, and those more weighty, secured ones of a book that have remained beside him on a bench; he watches as the book’s pages are opened by a passing gust, causing them to flutter in the wind but certainly not fly away into the flowers. For, as Mallarmé writes, “...the foldings of a book, in comparison with the large-sized, open newspaper, have an almost religious significance....their thickness....piled together...form a tomb in miniature for our souls” (81).



Yet it is with the open newspaper that, almost in spite of himself, Mallarmé’s daydreaming eyes seem to return that day, seeing its variously-sized letters and words moved about by the wind, obscured by and yet interacting with the flowers around it—shadows cast, pages torn by thorns; the roses “whisper”...but whispering what, one wonders? All the noise that’s fit to print, perhaps? Less a “tomb...for our souls,” that newspaper there, what Mallarmé describes further as “good wrapping paper” (perhaps a “tomb” for fish

or the day’s purchased vegetables), and more a passing spectacle of, what he later calls, “words led back to their origin, which is the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, so gifted with infinity that they will finally consecrate Language” (82).

Sitting on the park bench that day, Mallarmé likely realized that it was mere chance, a throw of the dice even, the whim of the wind, as to which words, which of the alphabet’s twenty-six letters, would be seen upon that tattered newspaper; the material of language—consecrated or not—was to register but fleetingly, and as what the poet refers to elsewhere as a kind of “scattering of ornaments” (28), soon ruined, blown about in the breeze.



Situation Two: William Carlos Williams, in a poem found in *The Descent of Winter*, writes from the vantage of the new and still stubbornly enduring medium of a moving automobile where, as Williams elsewhere notes, “the inevitable flux of the seeing eye” has finally met its match, the perfect machine for the machinery of his poetry. Seen through the windshield, in motion, at night, is that other new medium of its era, the

“illuminated” billboard, upon which the monumentally reproduced images of “two / gigantic highschool boys / ten feet tall” are described by Williams as “leaping / over printed hurdles,” alongside the large words: “1/4 of their energy comes from bread.”

This billboard, its bright lights so powerful as to diminish those of the starry night, even perhaps the “Pleiades” by which the poem begins, has here returned its pedestrian words and its gigantic image of leaping boys back down to earth, its commercial purpose—selling bread, offering energy—rendered almost as a kind of illuminated consecration, one that finally overshadows and outshines the heavens above.

Situation Three: In both of the above described situations, we see detailed within them, on lit billboards and scattered newspapers, instances where language in the landscape is presented—writ large and in motion—as a place-bound, time-determined event, prefiguring and literally locating off of the page something of Giorgio Agamben’s assertion that “The place indicated [by a poem]...is a place of language. Indication



is the category in which language refers to its own taking place...to the very event of language” (25). And now, as my own modest response to Williams and Mallarmé’s well known situations of language, let me begin again by speaking of a recent situation of my own that, veering from the printed page and in the wake of those described above, also engage and indicate varied elements of

time and space, their taking place.

For today, instead of asking the more familiar and time-honored question of what is a poem, a better, more fitting one might now be: where is a poem, and when? For poetic language, set loose, no longer necessarily settles solely into the kinds of solutions once fixedly bound in books, printed on published paper, but today—whether we like it or not—floats fluidly, promiscuously even, into an ether of more ephemeral, fragile form, while offering a rich and unsettling disorder of now new, and newly mediated, beginnings.

Such dislocations of poetic language have arisen, or have been made to arise, in relation to a series of my own “writing on water / writing on air” installations, site-specific and short-term projects that I have undertaken at various locations around the world. Now, though, I want to focus upon one of these installations, entitled “Floating Form Less,” that I completed in and around



the library of the University of North Florida, in Jacksonville, Florida, in 2009, the third of five such installations. This multi-dimensional, large-scale writing on the landscape was installed for a period of fifteen days in three linked locations: on the

surface of a pond adjacent to the university's library; on the large windows of that library's four story stairway overlooking the pond; and, finally, within the library's two main elevators situated at the center of the building.

With its multiple (moving) vantage points, this tripartite installation—each of its component parts pointing equally to the other—performatively enacted the dispersions of this particular poem's time, of its particular place, through its variously constructed temporary spaces:

its words floating upon the surface of the pond, seen through the library's stairway, or heard, hidden, within the library's own elevators. In this multi-directional manner, a spatial layering of languages was presented in which a person's own real-time progressions through the installation



were then largely to determine the poem's shifting and short-lived locations and where, echoing Mallarmé in *Un Coup de des...*, his own words dispersed across four pages: "Nothing.... will have taken place but place except perhaps a constellation," a constellation constituted, and dissolved, in space, by time. Seen in motion, the installation and its multiple readings were thus arranged, and re-arranged, by the self-directed bodily movements of those moving through it, with the where of the poem converging with the when, its time and place entangling.

To begin with a bit of background: to date, there have been five different such installations completed on and around this Florida pond since the spring of 2007. What wasn't realized at the time was that, with this first "writing on water" installation, I had begun something that would remain open-ended. For as it turns out, that first, tentative installation was but the beginning of an on-going project that has been returned to annually, a piece written very, very slowly, and very, very largely—each letter gigantic, around eight feet by eight feet, cut from thick plastic and, with the aid of a kayak, clipped onto lines of twine stretched across the pond and attached to a row of wooden stakes pounded into opposite shores.

One of several vantages for reading these installations has always been within the library's four-story stairwell, its tall stairway overlooking the adjacent pond



upon which the words are placed. The library's stairway, like most stairways, is an often overlooked architectural site, in part because it is, if thought about, a kind of non-site, or quasi-site, in which one is neither here nor there, but always already (on the way) elsewhere. After all, libraries in particular are mostly imagined as made up of sedentary spaces designed for reading, writing

and thinking; an individual

sits still within the library's furnished rooms, immobilized, in order—one hopes—to concentrate [consecrate] and study. Still, the library's stairway functions, in fact, as a liminal zone of mobility and transition from one floor to the next, for movement up and down the stairs, from one real space to another; one does not stop on the stairway, but instead, in accordance with gravity (exertion going up; ease going down), keeps moving, like Marcel Duchamp's descending nude painted as if seen in perpetual motion.

The stairway in the university's library is no different in its functional capacity as a space intended primarily for passage. Though with its wall of tall windows facing directly out onto the adjacent pond, this normally neutral, or pragmatic space has been made quite dramatic, offering even a moving site for seeing (a seeing in perpetual painterly motion). In direct response to its uniquely aesthetic qualities, for the 2009

installation, the stairway's use was expanded further to include what I was to describe, in conjunction with the "writing on water," as a "writing on air," with various large words printed onto transparency and attached within the thickly gridded,



Donald Judd-like metal frames of the stairwell's windows.

Once in place, the words on the window were then seen, and seen through, in relation to the words simultaneously seen on the water, the lines of language shifting their locations, read in their indeterminate conjunction, inside and out, moving onto and alongside one another, in alignment with one's own movement up or down the stairs. Through the poem's own

parallactic displacements, spectators to the installation thus found themselves reading in various directions and dimensions at once, depending upon their passage within it — moving vertically, either from the first floor to the fourth, the fourth to the first (or entering somewhere in the middle); and seeing horizontally, through the transparent surface of the window and out onto to the pond below. An additional entry point into this piece was through the library's two central elevators which, like the nearby stairway, offered another non-space, another liminal zone of mobility through the building, through the poem. As its doors closed, a prerecorded sound installation was immediately,



but discreetly heard, already in progress, a looping mp3 player hidden within clocks hanging from the elevators' shiny metallic walls. While, beneath each clock, affixed to a Mason jar filled with water, a small, living goldfish swam about, accompanying viewers on their ride through the building.



The sound installation heard during the short elevator ride was taken from many interviews conducted several weeks before, outdoors, directly in front of the library, as people were asked to describe that which they saw before them. In part, the point of this sound collage within the elevator was to transport, through the muzak of language, something of the sensual experience of being directly in front of the library into the confined (sarcophagal) space of the transporting elevators, to transfer linguistically described aspects of the library's open exterior—the people, the trees, the buildings, the water...the fish—into its contained, controlled interior.



Also, the elevator was being conceptually paired with its architectural partner in mobility, the nearby stairway. In the elevator's case, though, instead of us making the determined bodily movements up or down stairs, reading in relation to them, such movements were made mechanically for us, as we were moved from one floor to the next, standing still, listening to the language hidden within the ticking clocks.

Upon entering the library, a first choice had to be made: do I take the stairs or ride the elevator, a decision that would also determine one's initial entry into the poem. Going one way, the stairway offered its windows opening grandly outward onto the pond, a palimpsest of language seen floating from them; while, going the other, the elevators, with their heavy doors closed tightly inward and onto the collage of voices describing that same scene, that same exterior space from which one has just passed (with the goldfish talismanically present as a floating reference to the pond just outside the building, its big eyes now seeing us, seeing it).

In a final reconfiguring point to this poem, after the first week, I returned to the stairway and, like the year before when, out on the pond, the installed line of language “murmur of words” had discreetly shifted through a rearrangement of letters to become the “murmur of wounds,” several of the words in the stairwell were also ever so slightly

adjusted, altering further the tone of the poem and the locational alignments allowed both from within and without.

With the completion of this installation, the “writing on water/ writing on air” project had grown into its latest, if fleeting formation, floating formlessly, with additions continuing in the following years. Of course, those words on the water and windows have long since vanished and are now no longer anywhere, light/less.... sight/less, having taken place as but a temporary



constellation, remaining now as the remembrance of an event of language, one that has long since been liquified, liquidated, but which is nevertheless photographically recreated here, made even almost to resemble the old medium of a poem on paper, which it never was, nor did it want to be. For this project endures now only in the form of its documenting images, a liquid light, a viole[n]t sight, illumined like a billboard, flat images still that—eliding the poem’s temporal and spatial dimension, its animating breath of intended self- destruction—now offer a limited after-life of their own, a trace of the event, a whisper around roses.

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Vanishing

Photo: Sue Matheson

Michael Jackson, Apartheid, and Me

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Michael Jackson's untimely death in June 2009 elicited a variety of responses and reactions. Some remembered Michael for the music he created, for the beauty and power of his voice and the sublimity of his dance moves. Others chose to focus on the allegations, the law suits and the less positive aspects of his life. This memoir-commentary does not concern any of these issues. Rather, it is a personal response to the way in which Michael Jackson's musical corpus demonstrated music's ability to transcend racial and social boundaries deeply entrenched in a repressive regime. Michael Jackson's death elicited, for me, a far different response to the ones under consideration in the media. His death evoked a memory that transported me back from life today, in twenty-first-century America, to apartheid South Africa of the 1980s where blacks and whites were separated by strong and harsh social and constitutional laws and where it was illegal to socialize and interact with people of a different color from oneself. The lesson that Michael Jackson taught me, a white young woman trapped in apartheid South Africa, is

a remarkable one of healing, transcendence, and the daring power of hope.

Let us consider, for a moment, the historical background to this memory which surfaced, startlingly, on hearing of Michael Jackson's passing. In 1652, Jan van Riebeeck and his Dutch cohorts colonized the southernmost tip of Africa, setting up a refreshment station in what is today modern Cape Town, South Africa. Although the San and Khoikhoi people had lived there for thousands of years prior to van Riebeeck's 1652 landing, South Africa was dominated politically after the original Dutch settlement at various stages by the British (in 1795), the Dutch, and the French. The Cape Colony finally passed permanently into British hands in 1806 with the second and final British occupation. This second occupation was eventually buoyed by the arrival of some 5,000 English settlers in 1820, whose presence in the eastern part of the colony was an attempt to bolster British culture and authority in the fledgling colony. When the Afrikaners (descendants of the original Dutch colonists) assumed power in 1948, the South African government crafted a series of harsh laws designed to segregate the white minority from people of color. Nelson Mandela, in his 1995 autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, explains in easily accessible terms the demonic and deprecating laws designed by the South African government to create, in the words of former South African Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, "hewers of wood and drawers of water" of the South African people of color (quoted in Davis 74). "There is," Verwoerd claimed in 1953, "no place for the Bantu in the European community above the level of certain forms of labor" (quoted in Mandela 167), an idea Mandela himself recognized that would place people of color "in a position of perpetual subordination to the white man" (167). An examination of all

apartheid legislation listed on the South African History On-line project highlights the many laws passed to maintain the racial divide in South Africa. Amongst many dastardly laws, the most unkind of all were the ones deliberately crafted to alienate and reduce the people of color to the status of lesser-citizens. In 1950, the South African government under Dr. Daniel Malan instituted the Group Areas Act. This act was deliberately created to impose geographic restrictions on people of color and to limit the areas in which they could reside. Such a limitation also served to curb social interaction between the races. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949), and the Immorality Amendment Act (1950), put a final seal on any future interracial relations, as the government made it illegal for whites and people of color to date or to intermarry. And the Population Registration Act of 1950 deliberately demarcated people as White, Colored, Black, or Indian, effectively ensuring that members of each of these four racial groups were assigned a specific place within the legally endorsed hierarchy which stated where people could live, whom they could marry, and what kinds of opportunities were available to them. In Mandela's words, "in the past, whites took land by force; now they secured it by legislation" (113). These repressive laws were designed to assert the authority and power of the white oligarchy and, at the same time, they maintained the majority population in a position of subservience. It was under those conditions that South Africans of all races lived and I, a white person in Africa whose ancestors had been expelled from Eastern Europe in the early twentieth century because of religious persecution, was cut off from interacting with the majority of the country's population because of "a pernicious program" (Mandela 113) and archaic notions of race and ethnicity. But, if growing up white presented some difficulties, imagine – for a moment – how fraught with conflict

and pain growing up black in South Africa must have been. Denied equal opportunities under the law, people of color were marginalized, treated with contempt by many, and were given limited access to basic human services like healthcare, education, and social opportunities. Such was the country I grew up in, a country burdened with distrust, anger, sadness and pessimism. Yet, in 1984, as a young student at the University of Cape Town, I experienced a remarkable, life-altering event that heralded the beginning of hope.

Growing up, until I went to university, the only interaction allowed between South African whites and their black counterparts was in the economic arena. People of color were not allowed to attend white schools, they were not allowed to go to white cinemas or restaurants, and they could not frequent white hospitals or clinics. My encounters with people of color were limited to the people who cleaned our homes, the people who sold us goods in stores and restaurants that they themselves could not afford, and the people who maintained our medical and educational facilities that they themselves were not allowed to attend. Of course, there were those brave souls who defied the government's edicts and who championed the rights of those who were denied access to basic human rights. But, for many, the fear of retaliation by the police and of the resulting brutality inflicted on those whose stories were somehow able to be heard, somehow kept alive in the foreign press, proved to be a crippling force.

And thus it was until I entered university in 1979, as a young student hoping to see change in her society. Now, while elementary and secondary educational facilities were reserved for specifically designated racial groups, and while the universities in South Africa were not "open institutions," these tertiary educational spaces did admit people

of color according to a quota system. Thus, for the first time ever, I encountered people of color on an equal educational footing to myself. The students of color, the white students quickly learned, were as diligent, as motivated, and as brilliant as the brightest and best of us all. Many students of color were faced with the almost impossible task of having to prove themselves equal to their white counterparts as they confronted the underlying and often overt racism expressed by many professors and white students. The courage exhibited by these young men and women of color was enormously inspirational and brave. Indeed, Mandela himself noted the negative reactions of some of the white student body at the University of the Witwatersrand: "Despite the university's liberal values, I never felt entirely comfortable there. Always to be the only African, except for the menial workers, to be regarded at best as a curiosity and at worst as an interloper, is not a congenial experience. My manner was guarded, and I met both generosity and animosity" (90), a situation not uncommon at the time for many students of color.

One afternoon, in 1984, while I was studying for my Higher Diploma in Education, a colleague and friend excitedly said she had something to share with me. "Cut class," she implored, "and meet me in one of the small classrooms on the second floor of our building." The very notion of cutting class, of absenting myself from a classroom that others were forbidden to attend, was something entirely unheard of and remote. I was training to be a teacher and frowned strongly on those who did not take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them, especially when people of color were denied similar opportunities. Still, my colleague's uncontained excitement over this secretive afternoon proved to be too much for me and I, rather reluctantly, skipped class

and found myself in the designated classroom that afternoon.

Now understand too that, because of the quota system, only very few students of color were granted the opportunity to attend this particular institution. The majority of students of color attended institutions of color where educational opportunities were hampered by a lack of funding provided by the state. Some ingenious young men and women of color, desperate to attend the white university, took cleaning jobs in the university as a way to place themselves in the midst of the learning the institution provided. Others took cleaning jobs simply because cleaning was the only job opportunity open to them at that particular time. Whatever their reasons for being there, there were young men and women of color who were eager to befriend the white students on our campus and specifically in the Education Building. And there were white students, such as myself, who were equally eager to befriend those people of color with whom the law had forbidden us to interact.

When we entered the classroom, that late afternoon in 1984, I noticed eight or nine young men and women of color sitting there too. Some of these young people were students in our class; others were workers at the university. One of the people sitting there was a university worker, a man with whom we had discussed on many occasions the political issues confronting apartheid South Africa. The surprise, he informed us, was a videocassette copy of Michael Jackson's *Thriller* which he had somehow procured and which he was willing to share with us.

Of course I had heard Michael Jackson's music before. The Jackson Five was a staple in my own home, and I recall many childhood afternoons singing to records of their music. But nothing prepared me for the grace of the *Thriller* video, the beauty of the dancing, and the power of Michael Jackson's voice. I was transfixed. And then something remarkable happened. Everyone present in that little room, privately ensconced away from the South African authorities, began to hum, then to sing, and then finally to dance to Michael Jackson's music. Together we danced, black and white, away from the searching eyes of those in authority, of those who had the power to report one to the police and possibly to question and/or incarcerate us. Michael's music had the power to transform us all – to help us to forget that we were trapped in an abnormal situation where blacks and whites could not be together and where they were not permitted to share together all that South Africa had to offer. In that transforming moment, I realized that music had the power to unite people. And as we swayed to the music, moving together to the harmonies Michael sang to us, I felt a surge of hope that it would not be too long before blacks and whites would overthrow the shackles of apartheid to create a society where they would share together all the bounty that the country had to offer.

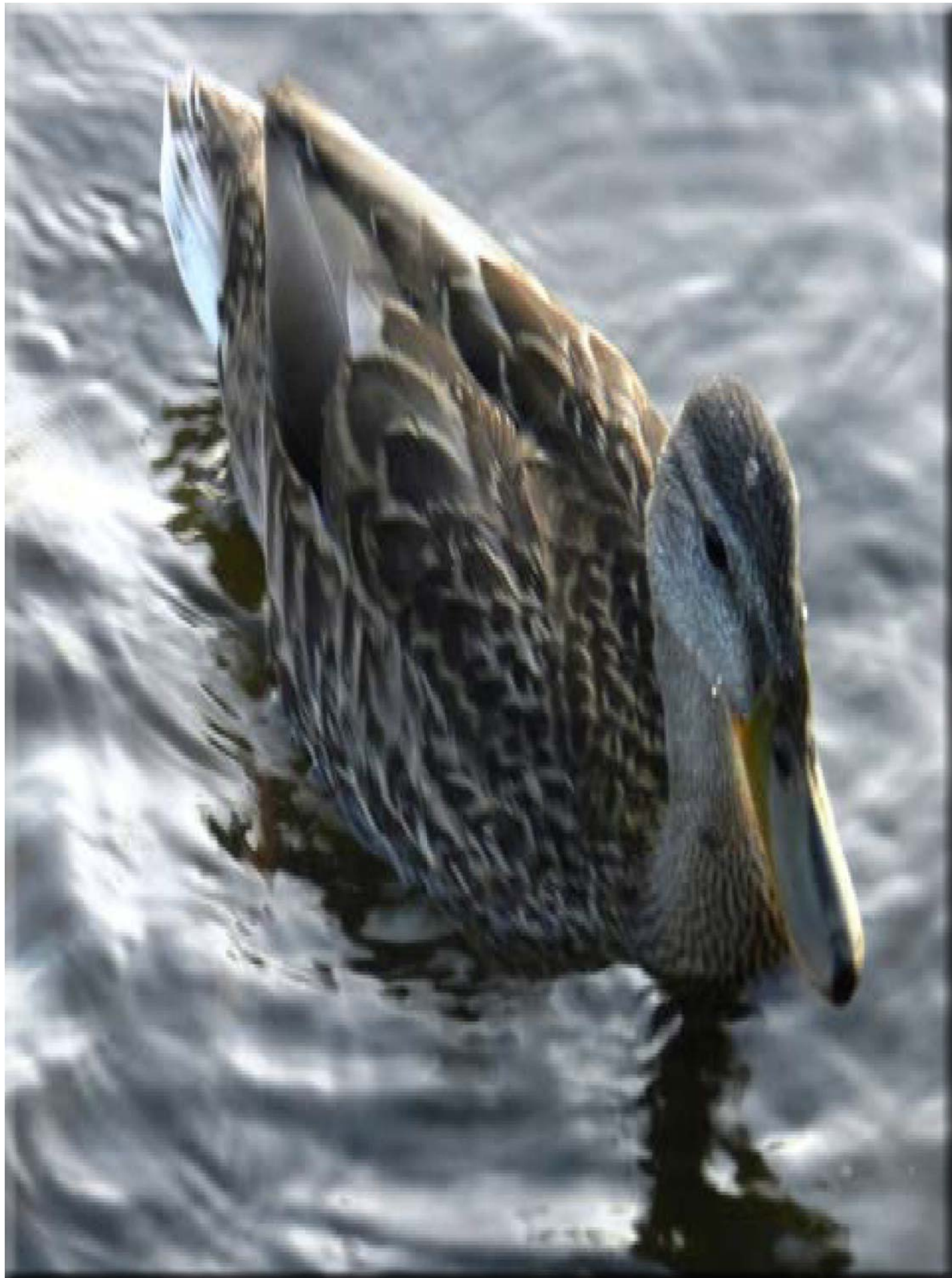
It took another nine years for such a vision to be realized – nine years fraught with danger and sadness and bloodshed for some – before the birth of the rainbow nation was finally achieved. Yet for me, that moment in 1984, represented the hope that the dignity of all could be restored once the chains of the apartheid system were removed. Michael

Jackson's music was the catalyst for me – and that afternoon in 1984 was my epiphany as I danced to the music with men and women with whom the law expressly prevented me from associating and yet who shared the same beliefs, values, ideals and hopes as I did. And the feeling was overwhelmingly good. Indeed, Ike Mboneni Muila's words seem appropriate now, as I reflect back on that moment some 28 years ago: "Across the churchyard/ in a country's/ dirty laundry/ we buried our differences/ singing go well/ sleep well" (quoted in Chapman 433).

Michael Jackson's music that afternoon made all of us in that little room cognizant of the shared humanity we all possessed. His music allowed a dozen or so young South Africans trapped in a bitter situation to hope and dream. His voice foreshadowed the end of the long years of harsh apartheid policies and provided a vision of something more positive to come. Michael Jackson's music made possible, that long-ago afternoon in 1984, the notion of such a political dream and realization. The thrill that afternoon was all ours.

Recommended Readings

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BOOK REVIEWS...

Fatima Bhutto, *Songs of Blood and Sword: A Daughter's Memoir*. New York: Nation Books, 2010.

John Butler

Like Hardy's darkling thrush...

Fatima Bhutto is described in the end-papers of her book as a Pakistani poet (her first book was *Whispers of the Desert*, written when she was fifteen and published in 1998) who was educated at Columbia University and the University of London. There is little that is remarkable about these facts until one notices her surname. Since the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the Bhutto family has played a major part in

its tumultuous and violent political scene, and that part has often been tragic. Her grandfather Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was executed in 1979, her uncle Shahnawaz was murdered in 1985, Fatima's father Mir Murtaza was assassinated (by the police, it would appear) in 1996 when she was fourteen and her aunt Benazir, a former Prime Minister, was also assassinated in 2007. All this makes the Bhuttos sound more like a Mafia family than a distinguished political dynasty, especially when the reader learns that Fatima believed Benazir Bhutto had ordered her father's killing. By the end of the book the reader sees Pakistani politics for what it is—violent, corrupt and often deadly; “as I finish this book,” Bhutto concludes, “I feel as though the world around me is slowly collapsing.” She goes on to tell us that at times “I have no more place in my heart for Pakistan. I cannot love it any more.” Yet, after these sombre and sad words, Bhutto's poetic imagination takes over; she remembers the sound of mynah birds singing, “And I know I could never leave,” ending the book on a very small glimmer of hope, much in the vein of Thomas Hardy's “Darkling Thrush” heralding the new century or Vaughan Williams's “Lark Ascending” early one morning in the First World War when the guns were silent for a time. Bird-songs seem to bring hope for many writers, and Fatima Bhutto is no exception.

The curious thing about this book is that Fatima Bhutto was not a witness to so many of the events described in it, although she was present when her father died in hospital following heroic attempts by doctors to save

his life, an event she describes in simple yet harrowing prose.. Ever the admiring daughter, she presents a curiously uncritical account of her father's career, and indeed seems to mirror him in major ways; for example, as Mir Murtaza spent his life seeking revenge on the man he considered had murdered his father, his successor General Zia ul-Haq, so does Fatima want to find out how deeply her aunt Benazir Bhutto was implicated in her father's death. Even more curiously, perhaps, is that both Zia and Benazir Bhutto "escaped" exposure by sudden death; the general was killed in a plane accident and Benazir herself died at the hands of an assassin. To achieve her end, Fatima Bhutto has to delve into the short history of Pakistan as an independent country and that of her own family, with its origins in the old feudal and tribal system, its warrior tradition, and its apparent lust for power to the extent that the Bhuttos began to see themselves as the "natural" leaders of Pakistan, with the Zias and Pervez Musharraf of the

world as mere usurpers in a line of Bhuttos. It must be said, however, that Fatima herself does not display any such sense of entitlement, and it can be quite easily argued that the Bhuttos are the history of Pakistan in the same way that the Nehru-Gandhi family are the history of India. Indeed, Fatima Bhutto has made it abundantly clear that she does not want to be involved in what she calls "dynastic politics," and channels her activism into more general social causes, having written a very moving book on the plight of the victims of the Kashmir earthquake, 8.50 a.m. 8 October 2005 (2006). She does, however, seem to cordially dislike Benzair's husband, the present Prime Minister Asif Zardari, who is characterised in the present book as "oleaginous," and her attitude towards Benazir Bhutto herself sometimes borders on the pathological, which is probably excusable if you think that Benazir was responsible for the murder of your greatly-loved father and that her husband colluded later on when those responsible were pardoned under his watch.

At the same time, however, Fatima deplores the violence in Pakistani politics and certainly does not condone her aunt's assassination.

The impression the reader gets from this book is that the author is deeply-divided. As we have seen, she states clearly that she cannot love Pakistan, yet she lives now in Karachi. In her book she splits her family into good Bhuttos (her father and grandfather) and evil Bhuttos (Benazir and Zardari) on the personal level, but her summation of Pakistani history during the period is judicious and as objective as it could be under the circumstances; one can sense the author doing her best to be fair-minded, but she is a passionate person and her poetic sensibilities often break through in her relation of the events. To understand the confused and violent history of modern Pakistan, the reader could do much worse than read this book, and to read about an interesting, intelligent and sensitive person living through these awful events is an education and a tribute to a real survivor.

Pearce, Joseph. *The Quest for Shakespeare: The Bard of Avon and the Church of Rome*. Ignatius Press, 2008. 216pp.

Sue Matheson

More on the Bard that's well worth reading...

The Quest for Shakespeare: The Bard of Avon and the Church of Rome by Joseph Pearce is one of the most entertaining books of criticism that I've read in years. In fact, this book is so entertaining that I read it on the plane, eschewing the delights of Marilyn Munroe and Laurence Olivier in *The Prince and The Showgirl* (1957). I also passed over the opportunity to see Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1966). And I kept reading despite the truly terrible tantrums of screaming and kicking by the five-year-old girl who entertained herself by bullying her parents all the way from Toronto to Winnipeg on Air Canada. Joseph Pearce is such a good writer that I may



William Shakespeare.

pick the book up again in the near future.

One would think that surely enough has been written about Shakespeare. After all, his works have been studied for hundreds of years. I remember slogging through tomes about the Bard as an undergraduate. I even checked before writing this review and Modern Library assured me that thousands of books and tens of thousands of

articles have been written: with apologies to F. Scott Fitzgerald, in the twenty first century, readers have been Greenblatted, Duncan-Jonesed, Grossed, Nutalled, Shapiroed, Hadfielded, Blaked, Palfreyed, Rodenburged, Edmondson-and-Wellsed, Emed, Rosenbaumed, Walled, and Jacksoned. It's been quite a party...and the guests show no sign of leaving. In

many ways, Shakespeare really is a bit like Jay Gatsby. Almost everyone has been to a party of his but as yet no one has been able to come to grips with its host. Famous and yet almost unknown he, like Gatsby, is an elusive figure. There is very little information about his life that is available. Unlike Ben Johnson who publically converted to Catholicism, Shakespeare kept his private life well out of the public eye for reasons that will shortly be discussed.

First, however, I really need to emphasize what I like most about *The Quest For Shakespeare*: Pearce's sensible, rational, and generally well-balanced approach to his subject, the Bard. Throughout *The Quest for Shakespeare* there is no Bard-bashing and certainly no Bard-idolatry found in so many treatments of Shakespeare's life and work. Grounding his argument in Elizabethan culture, Pearce also does not (as so many critics do) impose his modern ideas and values upon the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After becoming better acquainted with the Renaissance mind, it is difficult not to agree with Pearce when he claims that other authors and their books about the Bard have got him totally wrong. They, the feminists, postmodernists, deconstructionists, postcolonialists, psychoanalysts, and binarists, have all misread the man and misread his work. The



Elizabeth I c. 1600

true Shakespeare has eluded them, because they have overlooked what Pearce believes to be an inescapable conclusion: Shakespeare was a believing Catholic living in very anti-Catholic times.

Pearce makes an excellent argument for his case throughout *The Quest for Shakespeare*. Indeed after considering Pearce's contrasting of Milton with the Bard it seems very odd that Shakespeare had not been noticed as a Catholic

author sooner by his readers. When compared with Milton, Shakespeare is glaringly, obviously Catholic in his approach to the world.

In Shakespeare's case, it seems that hindsight is not 20/20 after all. It is easy to forget (nearly 700 years later) that it does take hundreds of years for a culture to truly respond to a shift as deeply and profoundly radical as the Protestant Revolution. As Pearce very sensibly points out, England

could not have become Protestant overnight. Indeed, after reading *The Quest for Shakespeare*, the popularity of the Bard and his place as England's *most* representative playwright and *most* English poet centuries and centuries after his death makes one wonder if the process of Protestant acculturation is still ongoing.

Divided into fifteen thoughtful chapters, Pearce's argument examines the behavior of Shakespeare's family and neighbours (recusants everyone), his father's will, Shakespeare's schooling and schoolmates who ended their lives as Jesuits drawn and quartered by Elizabeth I and her counsellors, his precarious existence entertaining the Elizabethan court, his retirement and return to Anne Hathaway and Stratford-on-Avon, his purchase of the infamous Blackfriars House, and all the other overwhelming evidence that he died as he lived, a papist.

Even more interesting than Shakespeare's reticence about his life are the lives and unhappy fortunes of those recusants with whom he was acquainted and who found themselves at the mercy of the powerful anti-Catholic party at Elizabeth's court and "sordid spy network" which revolved around and was controlled by the frightening figure of William Cecil, Lord Burghley (129). The lives of Shakespeare's patron Southampton and the

Catholic martyrs, Southwell and Edmund Campion are extremely instructive examples illustrating why one would not want to become embroiled in court life and its intrigues. Counselling by Burghley, Elizabeth I made her kindly husband to Anne Boelyn and Katherine Howard and a solicitous and caring friend of Thomas More. Like others arrested and condemned to death for their beliefs, Southwell and Campion were tortured for months before they were finally executed by being drawn and quartered in the most gruesome manner possible.

Putting the thumbscrew and other unsavoury practices that took place in the Tower of London aside, Pearce's treatment of Shakespeare will also certainly interest those who are concerned about the study of Shakespeare's works. *The Quest for Shakespeare* unabashedly serves as Pearce's attack on the current critical climate of Shakespearean (and literary) criticism. A refreshingly forthright historicist, Pearce ends his argument satisfied that he has presented more than enough material to convict Shakespeare of "his Catholic convictions in the eyes of any right-minded Jury in the venerable court of common sense" (172).

At the conclusion of *The Quest for Shakespeare*, I believe that any reader with common sense would have to agree with

Pearce that "[i]t is only because we live in an age of uncommon nonsense that Shakespeare remains misunderstood and misconstrued by the 'silly asses' of academe" (172).

Published by Ignatius Press in San Francisco and selling for only \$13.42 on Amazon (Its kindle is currently \$10.75), *The Quest for Shakespeare* is a handsome hard cover book that I will be buying for my friends and recommending to to my students. This book I will not be giving away.



CONTRIBUTORS

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