Connotations

A Journal for Critical Debate

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Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate

Connotations wants to encourage scholarly communication in the field of English Literature (from the Middle English period to the present), as well as American and Commonwealth Literature. It focuses on the semantic and stylistic energy of the language of literature in a historical perspective and aims to represent different approaches.

Each issue consists of articles and a forum for discussion. The forum presents, for instance, research in progress, critical hypotheses, responses to articles published in *Connotations* and elsewhere, as well as comments on recent books (instead of the traditional reviews), and authors' answers to reviews. Contributions will be published between one and five months after submission so that a true exchange of ideas and knowledge can be effected.

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ARTICLES

DISCUSSION

Lively, Dynamic, but Hardly a Thing
of "rhythmic beauty": Arthur Golding's Fourteeners*

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In their response to "Arthur Golding and the Elizabethan Progress of
Actaeon's Dogs," Charles Martindale and Sarah Annes Brown provide
a useful perspective on Shakespeare's use of Ovid, Golding, and the
exegetic tradition with an attractive argument that the adventures of
Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* represent a "comic reworking of
the story of Actaeon."[1] When in a brief closing section they turn to
Golding specifically, however, they make two surprising claims. They
maintain his approach to Ovid's poem is unorthodox, irreverent, and
amusing; and then, taking issue with my general estimate of his metre
as inflexible and ungainly, and asserting that "Golding is more than
a wayward, if engaging, original—he is a poet," they focus on examples
of "rhythmic beauty" in his work (65). As it is my intention to deal with
his approach to the *Metamorphoses* at length elsewhere, the question here
is whether epithets such as "ungainly" and "lumbering" which have
been applied to Golding's fourteeners in the past, are mistaken, and
whether the translator really does deserve to be acclaimed as a poet for
his handling of his metre.

*

More than most works, early Elizabethan verse translations need to be
set against the background of their time. They were produced in the
fifteen sixties and seventies when, in the opinion of men of taste and

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learning, "English poetry was in a sorry state,"[2] its general malaise reflected in a basic technique that consisted of "counting the number of syllables in a line," and the production of verse that had a dreary, "monotonous," rhythmic "regularity."[3] And to an observer like Ascham, there was no better example of the "barbarous and rude Ryming" by which the country was afflicted, than Golding's chosen metre, the fourteener; it was a metre for "rash ignorant heads, which now can easely recken vp fourten sillabes, and easelie stumble on euery Ryme." Yet, although it was held in contempt in educated circles, the fourteener, which had long been familiar to the "rude multitude"[4] through its association with ballads and hymns,[5] was enormously popular with English poets. A versatile metre, it was currently used, for example, in narrative, pastoral, contemplative, and love poetry. Its basic features can be seen in these lines from an example of one of the most popular lyrical genres of the day, the lover's complaint:

> What cause, what reason moueth me: what fansy fils my brains
> That you I minde of virgins al, whom Britan soile sustains
> Bothe when to lady Mnemosynes dere daughters I resort,
> And eke when I ye season slow deceaue, with glad disport:
> What force, what power haue you so great, what charms have you late found,
> To pluck, to draw, to rauish hartes, & stirre out of ther stownd?[6]

As is apparent here, it was written as a line of seven stresses (four and then three) with a rising (iambic) rhythm, a pronounced pause (caesura) after the eighth syllable, and strong end rhyme.[7] It had a propensity to decline into sing-song; to modern ears, it is also jarring because of its disrupted syntax, words and phrases being regularly displaced to ensure stresses falling on the required syllables or to secure end rhyme. Today such displacement seems very unnatural and rather chaotic but for mid-Tudor poets it represented a way of elevating their verses by imitating Latin syntax. In this passage, for example, while this is apparent in examples like "virgins *al*" and "seasons *slow*" where the adjective follows the noun, it also explains "to lady Mnemosynes dere daughters *I resort*" where the English word that corresponds to the nominative, and the verb are placed at the end, and also "when I *ye*

season slow deceaue" where what corresponds to the accusative is placed immediately before the verb.[8]

The fourteener was popular with translators like Golding for the practical reason that it was capacious enough to be regarded as the English equivalent of Latin hexameter.[9] But there were also idealistic considerations which related to the ethos of what is now often referred to as the translation "movement." The unprecedented spate of translations which constituted the main literary activity of the opening decades of the new queen's reign, was inspired by national pride. Englishmen had suddenly become aware that their country was lagging badly behind its European neighbours, and a small army of translators from all walks of life, set out to remedy the situation by making available to the many the learning that had been available only to the few.[10] They also set out to show that the English language, which was widely condemned as "barbarous" and "gross," was as capable of scaling the literary heights as French or Italian. And the verse translators of the classics, while subscribing wholeheartedly to this belief in their language, were equally determined to prove the capabilities of their despised English metres. It was in such circumstances that, as the Age began, the first of the translators, Thomas Phaer, introduced "a more cleane and compendious meeter, than heretofore hath commonly bene accustomed"[11] into the realms of epic poetry when he took up the traditional English fourteener to translate Vergil's *Aeneid* in 1558.

The result can be illustrated by the opening lines of his version of the Laocoon episode:

> For as by chaunce that time a priest to Neptune chosen new,
> Laocoon a mighty bull on the offring altar slew:
> Behold from Tenedos aloofe in calme seas through the deepe
> (I quake to tell) two serpents great with foldings great do sweepe.
> And side by side in dragons wise, to shore their way they make.
> Their heads above the stream they hold, their fiered manes they shake.
> The salt sea waves before them fast they shoven, and after trailes
> Their ugly backes, and long in links behind them drag their tailes.
>
> (2.199-206)[12]

Phaer's metrical strategy is to make the fourteener a strong, stately line; he does so by scrupulously observing its natural imperatives, the heavy,

regular beat, the pause after the eighth syllable, and end rhyme, and by slowing its pace by placing the majority of stresses on long vowels as in:

> And *side* / by *side* / in dra/gons *wise*, / / to *shore* / their *way* / they *make*.
> Their *heads* / *above* / the *stream* / they *hold*, / / their *fie*/red *manes* / they *shake*.

Given his fondness for long vowels, a preponderantly monosyllabic vocabulary, in which "d's," "k's," and hard "g's," and "c's" feature prominently, and frequent repetition enhance the desired effect. And as we see in this passage, he often supplements the slow pace of his fourteeners by strengthening end rhyme with periodic punctuation. With the focus very much upon the individual line, therefore, enjambement is used sparingly; its incidence in this passage is above average but it is characteristic of Phaer that on the first occasion he impedes one line's running on into the other with parenthesis, "(I quake to tell)," and on the second, having referred to the snakes driving the waves "before them *fast*," he is not concerned with rhythmic "flow" but with slowing his lines down with a succession of long stressed vowels, "and after *trailes*," "and *long* in links be*hind* them drag their *tailes*." His vocabulary is reasonably dignified for his day,[13] and a desire for dignity underlies his moderate use of alliteration.[14]

And to elevate the metre, as might be expected, he imitates Latin syntax. When the Elizabethans were taught to write Latin, they were trained to use both "grammatical or natural order" and "artificial or Rhetoricall order."[15] Although based on Cicero, the more elegant "artificial order" was specifically recommended for writing Latin verse.[16] Normally mid-Tudor poets imitated elements of both to give the occasional touch of elevation to their poetry—placing adjectives after nouns, for instance, was "natural," but placing object words immediately before verbs was "artificial." Where Phaer is different is that, while he does not entirely refrain from imitating "natural order," he is intent on heavy and consistent imitation of "artificial or Rhetoricall order." The first of its rules or "Precepts," for example, was that "The oblique cases (that is all besides the Nominative and the Vocative) are commonly placed in the beginning, the Nominative case in the midst, the Verbe

in the ende" as, for example, in *"Munitissimam hostium civitatem Caesar occupavit."*[17] This syntactical pattern is a constant feature of Phaer's translation; he regularly places what corresponds to "oblique cases" in the beginning, to the nominative "in the midst," with the verb at the end. In this passage, for instance, we have half-lines like "The salt sea waves before them fast they shoven" or "Their heads above the stream they hold," or lines like,

> And side by side in dragons wise, to shore their way they make.

Other precepts of "artificial order" explain other regular features in Phaer such as why adverbs and adverbial phrases are placed directly before "the Verbe or Participle which they declare" as in "Some storme them *headlong* drive" (2.523) or "His arrowes on his shoulders *clattring* hanges" (4.161) or "the deare *with bounsing leapes do flie*" (4.164). And subsidiary rules like "the word governed" appearing immediately before "the words governing" explain why words that would be in the accusative case in Latin appear directly before the verb as in "Then first the cruell feare *mee* caught" (2.564) or "Who shall *us* leade?" (3.95) or "hee *his fathers minde* obeyed" (4.256). By repeatedly writing English as if it were an inflected language and "placing words after the manner of the purest Latinists" in the "order of Tully," Phaer thus adds strange syntax to the slow, stately pace of his fourteeners in his attempt to give them "epic" elevation.

Phaer's "epic" fourteeners with their "artificial order," heavy beat, and relentlessly regular features, sound stiff and unnatural to modern ears. But to his contemporaries, still decades away from the music of Spenser, Marlowe and Shakespeare, and accustomed to thin poetic fare, they were a revelation; in their view, lines like,

> Behold from Tenedos aloofe in calme seas through the deepe
> (I quake to tell) two serpents great with foldings great do sweepe.

showed how Vergil's "haughty verse" had obtained even "greater grace" "in foreign foot,"[18] and in the opinion of one of his later admirers, in

the fourteeners of Phaer's *Aeneid*, English poetry had achieved "the verye maiesty of a ryght Heroicall verse."[19]

*

When Arthur Golding took up the fourteener to translate what his contemporaries saw as the second great Latin epic poem, although he must have been very conscious of Phaer, his basic approach was different. It can be illustrated by a somewhat similar passage which occurs when Cadmus' followers, newly arrived in Boetia, go to find water and accidentally disturb the monstrous Snake of Mars with dire consequences:

> No sooner had the Tirian folke set foote within this thicke
> And queachie plot, and deped downe their bucket in the well,
> But that to buscle in his den began this Serpent fell,
> And peering with a marble head right horribly to hisse.
> The Tirians let their pitchers slip for sodaine feare of this,
> And waxing pale as any clay, like folke amazde and flaight,
> Stoode trembling like an Aspen leafe. The specled serpent straight
> Comes trailing out in waving linkes, and knottie rolles of scales,
> And bending into bunchie boughts his bodie forth he hales.
> And lifting up above the wast himselfe unto the Skie,
> He overlooketh all the wood, as huge and big welnie
> As is the Snake that in the heaven about the Nordren pole
> Devides the Beares. He makes no stay but deales his dreadfull dole
> Among the Tirians. Whether they did take them to their tooles,
> Or to their heeles, or that their feare did make them stand like fooles,
> And helpe themselves by none of both: he snapt up some alive,
> And swept in others with his taile, and some he did deprive
> Of life with rankenesse of his breath, and other some againe
> He stings and poysons unto death till all at last were slaine.
>   (3.40-58)[20]

The pattern is set by the opening four lines. The casual, fluid sound produced by the opening couplet in which the Tyrians are performing an everyday task, is the result of the fact that the fourteener's natural imperatives have been disregarded. In the first line, the caesura is dispensed with, in the second, it is varied; and enjambement is used to de-emphasize rhyme and alleviate the iambic beat. This contrasts with

lines 2 and 4 where, as the serpent is awakened in its lair and its head emerges as it peers about, the lines become regular with a heavy, firm beat, a caesura after the eighth syllable accentuated by inverted syntax, and strong end rhyme. The rest of the passage confirms this initial pattern, and also Golding's preference for longish sentences in which small clusters of fourteeners sweep to a focal point. Where in Phaer, then, the focus is very much on the weight and cadence of each line, in Golding, the key unit is the sentence; this means the features and pace of the fourteeners are shaped more by the sense, and there is greater allowance for the inflexion and intonation of speech. But if Golding's basic approach to the fourteener is markedly different from Phaer's, when he wants to strike the necessary "epic" note on this, as on many another occasion in his work, it is on Phaer's strong line with its strange syntax, heavy beat, slow pace, and regular features, that he has his eyes. Thus, allowing for his greater partiality for alliteration, when the tension mounts in this passage, we find him following Phaer by placing the majority of stresses on long vowels, and imitating "artificial order," in lines like,

And *bend*/ing in/to *bunch*/ie *boughts* // his bod/ie *forth* / he *hales.*

or,

And *peer*/ing with / a *marb*/le *head*/ right *horr*/ibly / to hisse.

While there is nothing startlingly innovative about Golding's basic metrical strategy,[21] it does incorporate Phaer's strong line into a more flexible approach. However, if the encounter of the Tyrians with the Snake of Mars reveals Golding's more sensible attitude in this respect, it also reveals his metrical deficiencies. The quality of his fourteeners, for instance, is subject to sudden variation. This is illustrated by the climax of the passage which after promising to be exciting, proves curiously disappointing; once the snake has moved into explosive action with "he snapt up some alive, / And swept in others with his taile," Golding's lines immmediately lose momentum, declining into awkwardness and wordiness as they continue,

                                        and some he did deprive
    Of life with rankenesse of his breath, and other some againe
    He stings and poysons unto death till all at last were slaine.

The translator's tendency to pack out his lines with verbiage is also in
evidence; here we have two of his repetitive adjectival doublets ("thicke
and queachie," "amazde and flaight"), three pleonastic "did's" ("Whether
they did take them to their tooles," "feare did make them stand," "some
he did deprive"), and a redundant half line ("And helpe themselves
by none of both"). And, like the Snake of Mars amongst the Tyrians,
the fault that will inflict the most serious damage on his fourteeners
also raises its ugly head as words clatter against each other as Golding
maneouvres to accommodate rhyme in the passage's clumsiest line:

    And lifting up above the wast himselfe unto the Skie, ...

Syntactical clumsiness is the major fault of Golding's fourteeners; to be
found on every page of his Ovid, it constantly makes them ungainly.
It stems from two causes. Examples of the first, the struggle to
accommodate rhyme, to which reference has already been made, thread
the work; here, for instance, is a couplet in which the translator is obliged
to add a final meaningless rhyming word,

    Next rose up helmes with fethered crests, and then the Poldrens bright,
    Successively the Curets whole, and all the armor *right* (3.122-23)

and here lines where he has had to corrupt a verbal form,

    The mariage that her selfe had made the Goddesse blessed so,
    That when the Moone with fulsum lyght nyne tymes her course *had go*
                                    (10.321-22)

and here is an example where he is reduced to writing nonsense,

                                        Bothe her folke and people ran agayne
    Through all the woodes. And ever as they went, *they sent theyr eyes*
    Before them . . . .   (14.474-76, italics mine)

The second and more interesting cause relates to Latin. Phaer's use of "artificial order," which set an unfortunate precedent for other early translators, left its mark, as we have seen, on Golding. But his subscription was moderate because thankfully, for the greater part, he preferred to preserve "thenglishe phrase." But he was infected by the idea that imitating Latin syntax is epic; thus we find him occasionally doing so at the beginning of episodes to establish an initial lofty tone, as, for example, in the opening lines of the story of Achaemenides and the Cyclops:

> Too him thus *Achemenides,* his owne man freely now,
> And not forgrowen as one forlorne, nor clad in bristled hyde,
>   Made answer: . . .   (14.195-97)[22]

And occasionally, he simply picks up scattered details from the Latin text before him, as in these lines on Arethusa in flight before the river-god, Alpheus:

> But certenly he feared me with trampling of his feete:
> And of his mouth the boystous breath upon my hairlace blew.
> Forwearied with the toyle of flight: Help *Diane,* I thy true
> And trustie Squire (I said) who oft have caried after thee
> Thy bow and arrowes, now am like attached for to bee.
>   (5.758-62)[23]

Here *"oris"* is responsible for the superfluous and unfortunately placed "of his mouth" but what really does the damage is the imitation of the Latin text's separation of "Forewearied with the toyle of flight" from "(I said)"—*"Fessa labore fugae,* fer opem, deprendimur, *inquam"* (v.618, italics mine). Phaer, whatever one thinks of the transposition of "artificial order" to English verse, has consistency, but Golding, working at speed and with less experience as a verse writer, was, as these examples show, indiscriminate. And in both his imitation of Latin and struggle for rhyme, as in other matters in his translation, he was occasionally, as we have seen, plain careless.

As uninspiring examples like "Did make an irksome noyse *to heare"* (4.608) or the "ghostes *of persones deade"* (2.386) show, carelessness is also sometimes painfully evident when Golding is padding out his lines

with verbiage. Almost as constant a fault as syntactical distortion, this
breeds an habitual dependence on pleonastic "do's" and "did's,"
countless infinitives of the "for to be," "for to keep," "for to make"
variety, tautologous adjectival doublets such as "huge and big," "grim
and feerce," meaningless line-fillers such as "ywis," "and eke," "welnie"
and "besides," and needless repetition of every conceivable kind.[24]

    And if his fourteeners constantly splutter and stumble, they are in
an even more parlous state when sudden lapses in his concentration
occur, as happens from time to time. On such occasions, situations arise
in which his lines, no longer shaped or controlled by the sense, decline
into sing-song, as in:

> Too her made many wooers sute: all which shee did eschew.
> And going too the salt Sea nymphes (too whom shee was ryght deere)
> She vaunted, too how many men shee gave the slippe that yeere.
>   (13.871-73)

Even worse, perhaps, are occasions when Golding seems to forget he
is writing verse at all and rhythm drains away: one of many examples
is:

> The thing yee Romans seeke for heere, yee should have sought more ny
> Your countrye. Yea and neerer home go seeke it now. Not I
> *Apollo,* but *Apollos* sonne is hee that must redresse
> Your sorrowes. Take your journey with good handsell of successe,
> And fetch my sonne among you.   (15.714-18)

✦

To focus on Golding's shortcomings in this way, however, is to risk
pitching one's overall estimate of his work too low. If his metre flags
badly when interest or inspiration lapses, generally he finds Ovid's poem
inspiring. And if his metre is constantly plagued by ungainly syntax
and verbiage, despite its faults it is lively and spirited. Even in passages
where his metrical flaws are very apparent, Golding is able by virtue
of his sheer dramatic zest to achieve some quite remarkable results.
Consider, for example, the entry of Tisiphone, risen from hell to inflict
madness on Ino and Athamas:

The sonne withdrew him, *Athamas* and eke his wife were cast
With ougly sightes in such a feare, that out of doores agast
They would have fled. There stoode the Fiend, and stopt their passage out,
And splaying forth hir filthie armes beknit with Snakes about,
Did tosse and wave hir hatefull heade. The swarme of scaled snakes
Did make an irksome noyse to heare as she hir tresses shakes.
About hir shoulders some did craule: some trayling downe hir brest
Did hisse and spit out poyson greene, and spirt with tongues infest.
                                                            (4.603-10)[25]

The strange reflexive verb and the ugliness of the syntax as Golding engages in his unending struggle for rhyme in the first two and a half lines are forgotten the moment the Fury appears; here is a magnificent, small *tour de force* which makes it easy to understand Shakespeare's recalling the moment in *Othello* and Marlowe's doing so in *Edward II*.[26] And in the impressive lines on her snakes, one hardly notices the increasing word-fillers or the Latinate inversion of nouns and adjectives in the final line.

As we see here, Golding's imperfect fourteeners are sustained by a graphic and dramatic talent. This runs deep into his translation, and is liable to surface in any scene involving activity and movement. At one level, it shows itself in a response to natural vivacity which, while it may lack any sophistication or depth, is nonetheless infectious; here, for example, is Latona changing some peasants into frogs:

Hir wish did take effect with speede:
For underneath the water they delight to be in deede.
Now dive they to the bottome downe, now up their heades they pop,
Another while with sprawling legs they swim upon the top.
And oftentimes upon the bankes they have a mind to stond,
And oftentimes from thence againe to leape into the Pond. (6.472-77)[27]

And vivaciousness is also occasionally in evidence in the translation's rare highspots where for fleeting moments, Golding's fourteeners almost leave their faults behind. Here, for example, is the bustling scene where her nymphs attend the goddess Diana after hunting:

. . . *Crocale* more cunning than the rest,
Did trusse hir tresses handsomly which hung behind undrest.

And yet hir owne hung waving still. Then *Niphe* nete and cleene
With *Hiale* glistring like the grash in beautie fresh and sheene,
And *Rhanis* clearer of hir skin than are the rainie drops,
And little bibling *Phyale,* and *Pseke* that pretie Mops,
Powrde water into vessels large to washe their Ladie with.
                                        (3.198-204)[28]

But when Golding is at his best, it is more liable to be his response to
the powerful and violent drama in Ovid's text that is more to the fore;
this is nowhere more apparent than in what is arguably the best moment
in the work, when Jove takes action against Phaethon to save the world
from destruction:

Then with a dreadfull thunderclap up to his eare he bent
His fist, and at the Wagoner a flash of lightning sent,
Which strake his bodie from the life and threw it over wheele
And so with fire he quenched fire. The Steedes did also reele
Upon their knees, and starting up sprang violently, one here,
And there another, that they brast in pieces all their gere.
They threw the Collars from their neckes, and breaking quite a sunder
The Trace and Harness, flang away: here lay the bridles: yonder
The Extree plucked from the Naves: and in another place
The shevered spokes of broken wheeles: and so at every pace
The pieces of the Chariot torne lay strowed here and there.
                                        (2.393-403)[29]

Neither of these passages is quite perfect and yet metre and sense are
so in harmony that it is niggardly to focus on their slight blemishes.
What one carries away is a sense of charming vitality from the one and
of sheer dynamic power from the other. If this was the metrical norm,
his Ovid would be a hugely enjoyable work, but as always with Golding,
the metrical terrain is filled with bumps, dips, and hollows. Moments
before the lines on Jove taking action, for example, his fourteeners, sadly
blemished by repetition and verbiage, had lapsed into sing-song;[30] and
the lines immediately preceding the charming scene of Diana and her
nymphs are rather wooden.[31]

Golding's Ovid is thus an unsophisticated and powerful response to
the *Metamorphoses* encased in rough and uneven metre and produced
in an impoverished poetic landscape. It is the faults that bestrew his

fourteeners that make any extensive reading of his translation an uncomfortable experience. The work's metrical deficiency also does much to explain why Shakespearean critics, often exercising less patience than they should, have been so quick to throw up their hands in horror, even dismissing it on one occasion as "clownish."[32] And it accounts for that extraordinary feature of the most distinguished assessment of the work so far where Gordon Braden, in the face of his fourteeners' obvious and frustrating imperfections, produces conjectural revisions of Golding's lines.[33] The comments of the distinguished modern poet who was himself a considerable admirer of the translation, are relevant and illustrative:

> I imagine Golding has rarely been read from cover to cover. The reason for this, at least in my own case, is metrical. Even if one is careful not to tub-thump, and reads Golding's huge, looping "fourteeners" for "sense and syntax" . . . even then one trips; often the form seems like some arbitrary and wayward hurdle, rather than the very backbone of what is being said. One longs to change rhyme-words, cut superfluous filler-words, and reduce Golding to paragraphs.[34]

It comes as a surprise, therefore, to find Martindale and Brown focusing on the "rhythmic beauty" of Golding's metre. Of course, there are occasional moments of metrical smoothness in his Ovid, but with his proneness to syntactical ungainliness and constant tendency to pack out his lines with verbiage, they tend to be very small moments rarely extending beyond half a dozen lines. The Cyclop's song celebrating Galatea's beauty on which Martindale and Brown set such store, "More whyght thou art then Primrose leaf my Lady *Galatee*," really should be set more firmly in context. It is a very rare example in which Golding is picking up the simple and heavy parallelism of the corresponding lines in the Latin text. Indeed, if one ventures beyond the lines they quote, one finds that, as Polyphemus continues, now deploring the nymph for her obdurate nature, Golding persists so relentlessly with the same heavy patterning for twelve more lines, that the passage becomes, in Gordon Braden's view, "numbingly straightforward"[35] with a long succession of lines like,

> More prowd than Peacocke praysd, more feerce than fyre and more extreeme:
> More rough than Breers, more cruell than the new delivered Beare, ...
>   (13.945-46)

But the issue is not with any one particular example; it is with the very misleading impression created when a claim that Golding is a poet is supported by focusing on the "rhythmic beauty" of his fourteeners.

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NOTES

[1]Unfortunately, not all the evidence they produce is convincing. For example, they construe Pistol's response to his master, "Let vultures gripe thy guts" (1.3.81), as his wishing "Falstaff as bloody an end as Actaeon." But vultures are, of course, carrion birds and this is not a reference to a bloody death but a traditional punishment after death in the classical underworld. Pistol, who is fond of infernal imagery, is here recalling the plight of the giant, Titius, whose "bowels feede a Grype" or vulture (Golding 4.566) in hell because of his lechery. Given Falstaff's own huge size and the nature of his designs on Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, this is a particularly apt curse. (Quotation of Golding throughout is from *The .xv. Bookes of P. Ouidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis, translated oute of Latin into English meeter, by Arthur Golding Gentleman* [London, 1567], ed. W. H. D. Rouse [1904; London: Centaur P, 1961].)

[2]Derek Attridge, *Well Weighed Syllables: Elizabethan Verse in Classical Metres* (Cambridge: CUP, 1974) 92.

[3]See Attridge 91-92. It was the "monotonous regularity" of the poetry of the sixties and seventies that led to Gascoigne's celebrated complaint that "we vse none other order but a foote of two sillables, wherof the first is depressed or made short, and the second is eleuate or made long; and that sound or scanning continueth throughout the verse. . . . And surely I can lament that wee are fallen into such a playne and simple manner of wryting, that there is none other foote vsed but one" ("Certayne Notes of Instruction" [1575], rpt. in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith, vol. 1 [Oxford: OUP, 1904] 50).

[4]Roger Ascham, *The Schoolmaster, Elizabethan Critical Essays*, vol. 1, 30-31. (For a general review of the attitude of educated and scholarly Elizabethans to the impoverished state of English verse, see Attridge 89-113.)

[5]For a useful history of the origins and use of the fourteener or "Septenary," see Jakob Schipper, *A History of English Versification* (Oxford: OUP, 1910) 192-204, and George Saintsbury, *A History of English Prosody*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1906) 247-54 and 323-24.

[6]"To maistres D. A.," *Songes and Sonnettes (Tottels Miscellany) 1557* (Leeds: The Scolar P, 1966) s.p. Other examples of the fourteener are:

    Ah fie of fawning freends, whose eyes attentive bee,
    To watch and ward for lukers sake, with cap and bended knee:
    Would God I had not knowne, their sweete and sugered speach,
    Then had my greefe the lesser bin, experience mee doth teach.
  ("A gloze of fawning freendship" in *A Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions*)

    Wherewith beneath her pap (alas) into her breast she strake,
    Saying thus will I die for him, that thus dyed for my sake:
    The purple Skarlet streames downe ran, & shee her close doth lay
    Unto her love him kissing still, as life did pine away.
  ("The History of Pyramus and Thisbe" in *A Gorgious Gallery*)

and,

    Not he, whom poets old have feigned to live in heaven high
    Embracing boys (O filthy thing) in beastly lechery;
    Nor Juno, she (that wrinkled jade) that queen of skies is called;
    Nor sullen Saturn, churlish chuff, with scalp of canker bald;
    Nor fuming fool, with fiery face, that moves the fighter's mind;
    Nor Venus she (that wanton wench) that guides the shooter blind,
    Can thee defend . . . (97-102)
  (Barnabe Googe, "The Eighth Eglog")

(Reference is to *A Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, ed. D. E. L. Crane [Menston, Yorkshire: The Scolar P, 1972], and to Barnabe Googe, *Eclogues, Epitaphs, and Sonnets* [1563], ed. Judith M. Kennedy [Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1989].)

[7]The fourteener also often featured heavy alliteration and internal rhyme. In referring to the rhythm of the fourteener as iambic below, its pause as a caesura, and to enjambement, I follow the example of Osborne Bennett Hardison in *Prosody and Purpose in the English Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1989).

[8]See the discussion of Latin syntax in the section on Phaer's fourteeners below. The affectation of Latin syntax was among Gascoigne's targets in "Certayne Notes of Instruction" where he advised poets that "You shall do very well to vse your verse after thenglishe phrase, and not after the maner of other languages"; he goes on to use nouns preceding adjectives as a specific example (Smith I:53).

[9]As Hardison explains: "A line of dactylic hexameter has a theoretical maximum of seventeen syllables (the last foot is always two rather than three syllables), but the norm is lower because of the substitution of spondees for dactyls. A fourteener has, on the average, about the same number of syllables" (*Prosody and Purpose* 198).

[10]For the translation "movement," see, for example, Richard Foster Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language* (Oxford: OUP, 1953); Henry Burrows Lathrop, *Translations from the Classics into English from Caxton to Chapman 1477-1620* (1933; New York: Octagon Books, 1967); and F. O. Matthiessen, *Translation: An Elizabethan Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1931).

[11]"Maister Phaers Conclusion to his interpretation of the Aeneidos of Virgill," *The Aeneid of Thomas Phaer and Thomas Twyne: A Critical Edition*, ed. S. Lally (New York: Garland P, 1987) 296 (reference will be to this edition).

[12]Vergil's text reads:

> Laocoon, ductus Neptuno sorte sacerdos,
> solemnis taurum ingentem mactabat ad aras.
> ecce autem gemini a Tenedo tranquilla per alta
> (horresco referens) immensis orbibus angues
> incumbunt pelago pariterque per litora tendunt:
> pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta iubaeque
> sanguineae superant undas; pars cetera pontum
> pone legit sinuatque immensa volumine terga. (ii.201-09)

(Reference is to the Loeb edition, *Virgil*, ed. and trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, 2 vols. [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1965].)

[13]While Phaer occasionally uses words like "shoven" or "shog" which strike modern readers as coarse and undignified, he is a model of linguistic decorum in comparison with a translator like John Studley in whose translations of Seneca, it is not unusual to find lines like this description of Cerberus in the underworld:

> On Cerber black the Tartar Tike the sonne did shine with awe,
> And he with steaming Goggle eyes hath glyed upon the soone:

(*Hercules Œtæus, Seneca His Tenne Tragedies*, ed. Thomas Newton [1581], with an introd. by T. S. Eliot, vol. 2 [New York: AMS Press, 1967] 194). (For discussion of the language policy of the early Elizabethan translators, see my forthcoming book, *Shakespeare's Ovid and Arthur Golding*.)

[14]Golding, as we see in a line like, "And bending into bunchie boughts his bodie forth he hales," which is quoted below had a greater partiality for alliteration than Phaer, while the young translators of Seneca in the sixties were quite carried away with the device and in their work, one moves into an alliterative world of "Goblines grimme" and "pipling puffes."

[15]For details, see the Latin section, "Brevissima Institutio," in William Lily's *Short Introduction of Grammar*, ed. Vincent J. Flynn, rpt. of the 1567 ed. (Delmar, NY: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1945), and John Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius or the Grammar Schoole*, ed. E. T. Campagnac (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1917) 158-65; for discussion, see T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, vol. 2 (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1944) 256-70.

[16]Brinsley's view is that "the making of a verse, is nothing but the turning of words forth of the Grammaticall order, into the Rhetoricall, in some kinds of metre; which we call verses" (192).

[17]"Grammatical order" would read *"Caesar occupavit civitatem munitissimam hostium."* (All examples and "precepts" are taken from Brinsley 158-62.)

[18]Barnabe Googe, "An Epitaph on Maister Thomas Phaer," s.p.

[19]William Webbe, "A Discourse of English Poetrie" (1586) (Smith I:256).

[20]The relevant passage in Ovid reads:

> Quem postquam Tyria lucum de gente profecti,
> Infausto tetigere gradu, demissaque in undas
> Urna dedit sonitum, longo caput extulit antro
> Caeruleus serpens, horrendaque sibila misit.
> Effluxere undamque manibus, sanguisque reliquit
> Corpus, & attonitos subitus tremor occupat artus.
> Ille volubilibus, squammosos nexibus orbes
> Torquet, & immenso saltu sinuatur in arcum.

At media plus parte leves erectus in auras
Despecit omne nemus, tantoque est corpore, quanto
Si totum spectes, geminas qui separat Arctos.
Nec mora Phoenicas, sive illi tela parabant,
Sive fugam, sive ipse timor prohibebat utrumque,
Occupat hos morsu, longis complexibus illos,
Hos necat afflatu, funesta tabe veneni. (iii.35-49)

(Quotation of *Metamorphoses* is from a standard sixteenth century edition containing the notes of Regius and Micyllus, *Metamorphoseon Pub. Ovidii Nasonis* [Venice, 1547].)

[21]Focusing on the sentence as the key unit was by no means unusual; consider an example from Googe:

But wonder more may Britain great, where Phaer did flourish late,
And barren tongue with sweet accord reduced to such estate
That Virgil's verse hath greater grace in foreign foot obtained
Than in his own, who whilst he lived each other poet stained.
("An Epitaph on Maister Thomas Phaer")

[22]Cf. Talia quaerenti iam non hirsutus amictu,
Iam suus, & spinis conserto tegmine nullis
Fatur Achaemenides . . .   (xiv.165-67)

[23]Cf. Sed certe sonitusque pedum terrebat, & ingens
Crinales vittas afflabat anhelitus oris.
Fessa labore fugae, fer opem, deprendimur, inquam,
Armigerae Diana tuae, cui saepe dedisti
Ferre tuas arcus inclusaque tela pharetra. (v.616-20)

[24]Mid-Tudor poets regularly found the fourteener too capacious, of course, but Golding's lines are unusually wordy and his "devices" and the frequent repetition in his lines very noticeable.

[25]Cf. Solque locum fugit, monstris exterrita coniunx,
Territus est Athamas, tectoque exire parabant.
Obstitit infelx aditumque obsedit Erinnys,
Nexaque vipereis distendens brachia nodis
Caeseriem excussit, motae sonuere colubrae,
Pars iacent humeris, pars circum, pectora lapsae
Sibila dant, saniemque vomunt, linguis coruscant. (iv.488-94)

[26]See my "Notes on Marlowe and Golding," *NQ* 232 (1987): 191-93; and "Shakespeare and Golding," *NQ* 236 (1991): 492-99.

[27]Cf. Eveniunt optata Deae, iuvat esse sub undis,
Et modo tota cava summergere membra palude,
Nunc proferre caput, summo modo gurgite nare.
Saepe super ripam stagni consistere, saepe
In gelidos resilire lacus . . . (vi.370-74)

Golding's translation of these lines illustrates both the vivacity of his work, and also the severly limited nature of his response to Ovid's poetry. At this point, Ovid is presenting the weird spectacle of people behaving in a very strange fashion, delighting, for example, in submerging their limbs entirely in filthy marsh water (*"uivat . . . tota cava summergere membra palude"*). It is not until the very end of the passage, after the changes in their bodies have been described, that we are told the exact nature of the metamorphosis in the final word of the final line, "Limosoque

novae saliunt in gurgite *ranae*" (381, italics mine). In Golding, by contrast, Ovid's weird spectacle has disappeared without trace; the peasants are clearly frogs from the very first. Consequently, the mystery of metamorphosis which is at the heart of Ovid's poem with its complex, often unpleasant connotations, and paradoxical sense of life both ending and being created, has been entirely lost. Golding who seems generally oblivious to his poetry, also captures almost nothing of Ovid's brilliant style in his translation; like other early Elizabethan translators, what he gives us is the narrative, and what makes him outstanding in his day is that he does so graphically and dramatically.

[28]Cf.   . . . nam doctior illis
    Ismenis Crocale sparsos per colla capillos
    Colligit in nodum, quamvis erat ipsa solutis.
    Excipiunt laticem Nipheque, Hyaleque, Rhanisque,
    Et Psecas, & Phiale, funduntque capacibus urnis. (iii.168-72)
(Martindale and Brown rightly suggest that Diana's attendants in this scene "do not seem worlds away from Titania's fairy followers" [66]. For a full discussion on Golding's influence on Shakespeare's fairy world, see my book, *Shakespeare's Ovid and Arthur Golding*, to be published shortly.)

[29]Cf. Intonat, & dextra libratum fulmen ab aure
    Misit in aurigam, pariterque animaque rotisque
    Exuit, & saevis campescuit ignibus ignes.
    Consternantur equi et in saltu in contraria facto
    Colla iugo eripiunt, abruptaque lora relinquunt,
    Illic frena iacent, illic temone revulsus
    Axis, in hac radii fractarum parte rotarum
    Sparsa sunt late laceri vestigia currus. (ii.311-18)

[30]Jove takes action as the Earth finishes speaking:
    When ended was this piteous plaint, the Earth did hold hir peace:
    She could no lenger dure the heate but was compelde to cease.
        Into hir bosome by and by she shrunke hir cinged heade
        More nearer to the Stygian caves, and ghostes of persones deade. (2.383-86)

[31]The preceding lines read:
    She tooke hir quiver and hir bow the which she had unbent,
    And eke hir Javelin to a Nymph that served that intent.
    Another Nymph to take hir clothes among hir traine she chose,
    Two losde hir buskins from hir legges and pulled of hir hose. (3.194-97)

[32]The epithet is E. I. Fripp's (*Shakespeare Studies: Biographical and Literary* [Oxford, OUP, 1930] 98); his extreme assessment of the translation is condoned by the authoritative figure of T. W. Baldwin who was of the opinion that "Fripp does not think any more highly of Golding's translation than he ought" (*On the Literary Genetics of Shakspere's Poems and Sonnets* [Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1950] 99). Elsewhere specific irritation with Golding's metrical imperfections surfaces in comments like Dover Wilson's emphatic assertion that Shakespeare "did not . . . like Golding's verse" ("Shakespeare's 'Small Latin'—How Much?" *ShS* 10 [1957]: 18).

[33]See "Golding's Ovid" in *The Classics and English Renaissance Poetry: Three Case Studies* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1978) 28 and 36.

[34]Robert Lowell, "The Muses Won't Help Twice," *Kenyon Review* 17 (1955): 319.

[35]Braden 29.

Paronomasia in the Quip Modest: From Sidney to Herbert

JUDITH DUNDAS

There is a form of wit that explains itself quite readily to the modern reader. I refer to the so-called metaphysical conceit, the *discordia concors*,[1] which has affinities to our contemporary taste for the yoking together of unlike things through metaphor or simile. Less well understood is the attachment of such a poet as George Herbert, noted for his devotional simplicity, to patterns of sound that were deemed particularly witty. One of these, the figure *paronomasia*, bears a certain resemblance to the *discordia concors* of the metaphysical conceit in that it connects unlike things through similarity of sound. Beyond the goal of witty expression, however, both these forms of connection are designed to lead the reader toward a new understanding of the subject. Before turning to specific examples of *paronomasia* in Herbert's poetry, let us consider briefly the rhetorical purpose of this figure and the use to which it was put in the poetry of someone from whom Herbert learned a good deal about constructing a poem: Sir Philip Sidney.[2]

Instead of using a single word in a double sense, as the "pun" does,[3] *paronomasia*, using two words, emphasizes a resemblance but not identity of sound, as in the "O fate, O fault" of Sidney's sonnet 93. The effect is partly musical in somewhat the way that assonance is. Indeed, Cicero refers to *paronomasia* as what "the Greeks call 'assonance,' when the variation is in a letter or two."[4] Among the possible variations are the adding of letters, the omitting of letters, the transposing of letters, or the changing of letters. What is crucial is that "similar words express dissimilar things."[5]

The usefulness of this figure in repartee or retorts is explained, in guarded fashion, by Quintilian: "It does, however, sometimes happen

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that a bold and vigorous conception may derive a certain charm from the contrast between two words, not dissimilar in sound. . . ."[6] Citing one example that he finds worthy of commendation, he notes that "the sense is forcible and the sound of the two words, which are so very different in meaning, is pleasant, more especially since the assonance is not far fetched, but presents itself quite naturally, one word being of the speaker's own selection, while the other is supplied by his opponent."[7]

Sidney is fond of using this figure in passages of argumentation in his *Arcadia*. An example cited both by Abraham Fraunce in *The Arcadian Rhetorike* and by John Hoskins in *Directions for Speech and Style* occurs in Musidorus' plea to Pamela to understand his love for her: "But alas, what can *saying* make them believe whom *seeing* cannot persuade?"[8] Ironies abound in such echoes. Pyrochles reflects on his predicament of receiving the unwanted love of Basilius and Gynecia while loving Philoclea: "Truly, Love, I must needs say thus much on my behalf, thou hast employed my love there where all love is *deserved*, and for recompense hast sent me more love than ever I *desired*."[9] Later, speaking to Musidorus, he seems again to challenge or complain to the gods: ". . . . methinks the gods be too unequal to mankind if they suffer not good to come from one kinsman to another by a secret *infusion*, as we find daily evil doth by a manifest *infection*."[10] Satisfying both logically and musically, such sentences attest not only to the rhetorical skill of the speaker but to his moral convictions.

In the pastoral world of Sidney's shepherds, *paronomasia* proves useful for singing matches, where there is a direct need for answering back. Lalus, for example, in the first eclogues of the *Arcadia*, challenging Dorus to a contest of praise for each one's lady, asks: "Can I be *poor* that her gold hair *procure* myself?"[11] The contrast of meaning in "poor" and "procure" is pointed by the similarity of sound; the effect is of paradox. Another example from the eclogues that is cited by Abraham Fraunce is: "But *nameless* he, for *blameless* he shall be."[12] It is sometimes hard to say whether such echoes are reflective of real debate; the musical context gives priority to the repetition of sounds. As Cicero notes, "there is sometimes force and in other cases charm in iteration of words, in slightly changing and altering a word."[13]

But Sidney's use of the figure for musical and witty effect perfectly exemplifies what rhetoricians of the late sixteenth century had to say on the subject. Both Peacham and Puttenham cite him. Puttenham, for example, noting the "pretty sport" of playing with similar words, says: "Sir *Philip Sidney* in a dittie plaide very pretily with these two words, *Loue and liue*, thus. *And all my life I will confesse, / The lesse I loue, I liue the lesse*."[14] Quoting also an anonymous poet who used the words "prove" and "reprove," "excuse" and "accuse," Puttenham says that these words "do pleasantly encounter, and (as it were) mock one another by their much resemblance."[15]

Since such repetitions are consciously and deliberately used, all the rhetoricians warn against falling into affectation. John Hoskins notes Sidney's care not to overdo the figure and cites *Astrophil and Stella* for the sonnet in which Sidney refers to "'dictionary method' and the verses so made 'rhymes running in rattling rows,' which is an example of it."[16] If Sidney implicitly criticizes John Lyly, Hoskins is more direct in remarking that Lyly, "seeing the dotage of the time upon this small ornament, invented varieties of it; for he disposed the agnominations in as many fashions as repetitions are distinguished. . . . But Lyly himself hath outlived this style and breaks well from it."[17]

Interestingly, Scaliger says that this figure is "not to be used in serious poetry," that it is "appropriate for epigrams, satires, comedy, and is at its most graceful when from one word by a slight alteration, we extract the contrary."[18] Henry Peacham similarly refers to it as a "light and illuding [or mocking] forme" and says that it "ought to be sparingly used, and especially in grave and weightie causes."[19] How Herbert takes this "light and illuding forme" and makes it expressive of his religious faith is the immediate question before us.

The way *paronomasia* lends itself to argument makes it a figure that Herbert could use in his debates with God—a method of structuring his poems that may or may not be a revelation of personal conflict but that certainly bears a resemblance to Sidney's own fictitious debates in *Astrophil and Stella*, as in the already cited "O fate, O fault" of Sonnet 93. In his representation of a conflict between the claims of the world and the claims of the spirit, Herbert has a subject for which *paronomasia* is admirably suited, since it draws together opposed ideas through a

likeness of sound. He has deliberately chosen to put his wit in the service
of his faith: "If thou shalt give me wit, it shall appeare, / If thou hast
giv'n it me, 'tis here.[20]

Herbert's self-imposed requirement that his wit should serve his faith
and should have the effect of humbling the speaker, as well as the reader,
creates a tension stronger than Sidney's contexts assume. In using two
words similar in sound but opposite in meaning, Herbert underlines
the two perspectives of his poetry, that of man and that of God.[21] This
doubling back on what he appears to be saying, this criticism of his and
all human desires, turns his answering back to God into God's answering
back to him.[22] His poem "The Quip,"[23] a title that epitomizes the
theme of answering back in a clever fashion, has several examples of
paronomasia; here are some of them:

> The merrie world did on a day
> With his train-bands and *mates agree*
> To *meet* together, where I lay,
> And all in sport to *geere* at me.

> First, Beautie crept into a rose,
> Which when I pluckt not, Sir, said she,
> Tell me, I pray, *Whose* hands are *those?*
> But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

> . . .

> Then came quick Wit and Conversation,
> And he would needs a *comfort* be,
> And to be *short*, make an *oration.*
> But thou shalt answer, Lord, *for* me.

In the last stanza quoted, the refrain gathers new force from the
repetition of the "or" syllable that precedes it. Of course, "came," "Con-,"
"com-," and "make" are also related through *paronomasia*. Then, in the
final stanza, another sound proclaims the triumphant conclusion:

> Yet when the houre of thy *designe*
> To answer these *fine* things shall come;
> Speak not at large, say, I am *thine*:
> And then they have their answer home.

The words themselves answer back, as "designe" and "thine" sweep away "fine."

The pattern of quipping by means of the repetition of sounds is used to great effect in Herbert's poem "The Sacrifice."[24] Word-play in religious contexts has, of course, a long history.[25] To give just one instance, the Venerable Bede cites examples of *paronomasia* from the Psalms, such as "they *confided* in thee and were not *confounded*."[26] When Christ in "The Sacrifice" retorts to his enemies, he often makes his point more emphatic and ironical by pairing words of similar sounds but opposite significance. Here is one of the most notable examples:

> Some said, that I the Temple to the floore
> In three dayes *raz'd*, and *raised* as before.
> Why, he that built the world can do much more:
>   Was ever grief like mine? (65-68)

The effect is certainly witty, but the wit itself becomes an instrument of transformation.

It is a regular feature of Herbert's style to correct one word by another, similar in sound, but more exact from the religious point of view. Often the humbling of the human being in the face of the divine is shocking: "*Legs* are but stumps, and Pharaohs wheels but *logs*" ("Praise III"). The echo of the word "legs" by the word "logs" reduces human pride in physical attributes as well as in accomplishments, just as the man who "digs" for gold "falls in the ditch" ("Avarice").

Some of the contexts in which Herbert uses one word to mock another are more complex. He may even separate his pair of words so that the reader must be alert to sounds that reinforce meaning. But the very unobtrusiveness of the echo delights as well as teaches. His short poem "The Foil" has a play on "foil"/"foul":

> God hath made starres the *foil*
>   To set off vertues; griefs to set off sinning:
> Yet in this wretched world we toil,
>   As if grief were not *foul*, nor vertue winning.

Though grief is at first quietly described as the "foil" of sinning, when this particular foil attracts the adjective "foul," the point is brought home.

Used in this manner, *paronomasia* readily juxtaposes the values of two worlds, pitting one against the other and using the retorts of profane poetry in a contest already decided in God's favor. In fact, Herbert's presentation of rebellion is a rhetorical figure to dramatize two sets of values. The language of warfare fills such poems as "The Reprisall" and "Artillerie." In the former poem, the crossed parallels of "confession" and "conquest," "come" and "overcome" not only describe his going over to God's side but underline it by means of the reiterated syllables:

> Yet by *confession* will I *come*
> Into the *conquest*. Though I *can* do nought
> Against thee, in thee I will *overcome*
> The man, who once against thee fought. (13-16)

The syllable "con" moves from the "with" of "confession" to the "completely" of "conquest," as well as to the implicit confession that only thanks to these two "*con-s*" the word *can* makes sense for man, just as in the other pair, "come" turns victoriously, but gently, to "overcome."

But even in a poem so void of military imagery (though "striking" in its description of the Passion) as "The Thanksgiving," Herbert plays with the idea of threatening God. I cite a stanza here, not because it uses *paronomasia* but because it exemplifies his habit of representing himself as locked in a struggle with God, like Jacob wrestling with the angel:

> Nay, I will read thy book, and never move
> Till I have found therein thy love;
> Thy art of love, which I'le turn back on thee,
> O my deare Saviour, Victorie! (45-48)

In the beginning, God, not Ovid, wrote *The Art of Love*,[27] a method of conquest now used by the speaker-reader against the author himself. But both win when God wins, and the language of conflict is nothing if not factitious.

Pre-determined as the outcome of the battle with God is, Herbert, in "An Offering," gives a vivid portrayal of the divided heart:

> But all I fear is lest thy heart displease,

> As neither good nor *one*: so oft divisions
> Thy lusts have made, and not thy lusts alone;
> Thy *passions* also have their set *partitions*.
> These *parcell* out thy heart; recover these,
> And thou mayst offer many gifts in *one*. (13-18)

By relating the words "passions," "partitions," and "parcell," he draws our attention to divisions in the heart and the need to recover wholeness or rather "one"-ness.

Following the example of religious writers from the earliest times, Herbert chooses this "light and illuding forme" to describe the drama of sin and salvation as it is fought out in the human heart. Essentially, *paronomasia* allows him to mock human pretensions through a figure of deliberate ambiguity and irony. Thus, in "The Crosse," he judges himself as he complains to God: "These contrarieties *crush* me; these *crosse* actions / Doe winde a rope about and cut my heart." By relating the word "crush" of his lament to the word "crosse"—the cause of his lament—he finds, by means of a pun on "crosse," the answer to his problem. An apparent conflict reveals the action of divine grace:

> And yet since these thy contradictions
> Are properly a crosse felt by thy sonne,
> With but foure words, my words, *Thy will be done*. (34-36)

The "corrosive" has turned into a "cordiall," to use the paired words of "Sighs and Grones." It can be no accident that both these words contain the syllable "cor," the Latin for "heart," though "corrosive" of course has a different root. In the echo of the syllable, Herbert represents the essence of salvation as experienced by the revivified heart.

Fittingly, if at first glance, surprisingly, Puttenham gives *paronomasia* the playful name of "The Nicknamer," or one could say, "The Mis-caller."[28] Certainly Herbert likes to distinguish, as Sidney did, between the true name for something and the nickname. This is a rhetorical device that may simply use alliteration to contrast two things, as when the Princess in *Love's Labor's Lost* rebukes her suitor, the King of Navarre, for paying her the compliment of saying: "Rebuke me not for that which you provoke: / The virtue of your eye must break my oath" (5.2.347-50).

She retorts: "You nickname virtue; vice you should have spoke, / For virtue's office never breaks men's troth." But when Herbert contrasts like-sounding words, he calls attention even more forcibly to "nick-naming."

In his poem "The Rose," he doubles back on himself as he defines the pleasures of this world, represented by one kind of rose, in the light of the eternal, represented by another kind of rose.[29] To make the distinction clear, he proceeds to substitute the word "deceits" for the word "delights":

> Or if such *deceits* there be,
>   Such *delights* I meant to say;
> There are no such things to me,
>   Who have pass'd my right away. (9-12)

Answering an imaginary wordly friend, he then puts his choice more positively but with a rhyming *paronomasia* that carries its own message.[30]

> But I will not much *oppose*
>   Unto what you now advise:
> Onely take this gentle *rose*,
>   And therein my answer lies. (13-16)

Though recognizing that embracing the rose of this world brings its own scourge in the form of thorns, followed by repentance, the poet chooses another path to redemption. So important to the very invention of the poem is the pair "oppose"/"rose" that he repeats it in the final stanza, along with a new pair, "choose"/"refuse":

> But I health, not physick *choose*:
>   Onely though I you *oppose*,
> Say that fairly I *refuse*,
>   For my answer is a *rose*. (29-32)

Gathering up all the assocations in literature with a heavenly rose, including Christ and his Church as the Rose of Sharon, Herbert speaks in such simple words that, appearing almost to set aside the logic of

rebuttal, he makes one highly symbolic flower, in its contrasted significance, do the work for him.

Throughout *The Temple*, Herbert's quips become more pointed through the pairing of words of similar sound. But, like the old faith in etymology as enshrining the essence of what is named, his *paronomasia* brings to our attention resemblances in words that could be seen as a key to the truths of our existence.[31] What Puttenham, in his description of rhetorical figures, had treated under the rubric of ornament has, in Herbert's poetry, not only the appearance of everyday speech, but also the force of revelation: "heav'n" becomes the sinner's "haven" ("The Size"). Is there, after all, a divine *paronomasia*, with a consistent mocking of this world by the other? Such at least seems to be implied in Herbert's use of the figure. A passage in his poem "Assurance" may serve to sum up the place of *paronomasia* in his rebuttal of his "enemies'" arguments:

> But I will to my Father,
> Who *heard* thee say it. O most gracious *Lord*,
> If all the hope and com*fort* that I gather,
> Were from myself, I had not half a *word*,
>   Not half a letter to *oppose*
>   What is objected by my *foes*. (20-24)

It is the same kind of answer as "The Rose" offers but here stated in terms of language itself.[32]

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NOTES

[1]Samuel Johnson's definition of the wit of the metaphysical poets: "a kind of *discordia concors*; a combination of dissimilar images; or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike" ("The Life of Cowley," in *Lives of the English Poets*, ed. Peter Cunningham, vol. 1 [London: John Muray, 1854] 20).

[2]See, for example, Louis Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1962) 266.

[3]See *On Puns: The Foundation of Letters*, ed. Jonathan Culler (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988). See also Walter Redfern, *Puns* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).

[4]Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. E. W. Sutton, trans. and introd. H. Rackham, vol. 1 (London: Heinemann, 1942) II.lxiii.256.

[5]*Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan (London: Heinemann, 1954) IV.xxi.29-31. For anagrams and repetition of syllables in classical poetry, see Frederick Ahl, *Metaformations: Soundplay and Wordplay in Ovid and Other Classical Poets* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985).

[6]Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. H. E. Butler, vol. 3 (London: Heinemann, 1921) IX.iii.72.

[7]*Institutio Oratoria* IX.iii.73.

[8]Sir Philip Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985) 92. I have italicized the paired words here and throughout this essay. For Abraham Fraunce's citation, see *The Arcadian Rhetorike* (1588), ed. Ethel Seaton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1950) Bk. 1, chap. 24; for John Hoskins' citation, see his *Directions for Speech and Style*, ed. Hoyt H. Hudson (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1935) 15.

[9]*Old Arcadia* 85.

[10]*Old Arcadia* 149.

[11]*Old Arcadia* 53.

[12]*Old Arcadia* 217. For Fraunce's citation of the passage, see n8 above.

[13]Cicero, *De Oratore*, vol. 2, III.liv.206.

[14]George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, eds. G. D. Willcock and A. Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1936) 203.

[15]*The Arte of English Poesie* 203.

[16]Hoskins 15; he cites *Astrophil and Stella* 15.

[17]Hoskins 15.

[18]Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetices* IV.xxxiii, cited in Lee Ann Sonnino, *A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968) 26.

[19]Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (1593) (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1954) 56.

[20]"The Thanksgiving" ll. 43-44. All quotations from Herbert's poems are taken from *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. C. A. Patrides (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1974). In two articles, I discuss the relationship between Herbert's wit and his faith. See "Levity and Grace: The Poetry of Sacred Wit," *YES* 2 (1972): 93-102; "'All Things are Bigge with Jest': Wit as A Means of Grace," *New Perspectives on the English Religious Lyric of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. John R. Roberts (Columbia: U of Missouri P, forthcoming 1993).

[21]For discussion of the relation between man and God as it finds expression in language, see Heather A. R. Asals, *Equivocal Predication: George Herbert's Way to God* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1981).

[22]For the place of retorts in Herbert's poetry, see Harold Skulsky, *Language Recreated* (Athens, Georgia: U of Georgia P, 1992) chap. 6.

[23]According to the *OED*, the word "quip" may derive from the Latin *quippe*: 'indeed,' 'forsooth.'

[24]Though Rosemond Tuve does not refer specifically to the figure *paronomasia*, she emphasizes the "method of poignant but wittily sharp antithesis, of act set against act in the neat ironic balance of phrase with phrase" (*A Reading of George Herbert* [London: Faber & Faber, 1953] 81).

[25]For some examples from the Church Fathers, see Ruth Wallerstein, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic* (Madison: U of Wisconson P, 1950) chap. 2.

[26]"In te *confisi* sunt, et non sunt *confusi*." See Gussie Hecht Tanenhaus, "Bede's *De Schematibus et Tropis*—A Translation," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 48 (1962): 242.

[27]The allusion in "thy art of love" is to Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*.

[28]Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie* 202.

[29]On the two roses of the poem, see Don Cameron Allen, "George Herbert, 'The Rose'," in his *Image and Meaning: Metaphoric Traditions in Renaissance Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1960) 67-79.

[30]For further discussion of the relationship between rhymes and puns, see Debra Fried, "Rhyme Puns," in Culler, *On Puns* 83-99.

[31]See Ernst Robert Curtius, "Etymology as a Category of Thought," in his *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W. R. Trask (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953) 495-500. See also K. K. Ruthven, "The Poet as Etymologist," *CQ* 11 (1969): 9-37.

[32]This essay had its origins in a paper read at a symposium on *Paronomasia*, Münster, July 6-8, 1992. It has benefited greatly from Professor Inge Leimberg's criticism.

The Seasons of the Globe:
Two New Studies of Elizabethan Drama and Festival

THOMAS PETTITT

An aspect of the Elizabethan popular theatre that seems to have struck and concerned contemporaries was its independence of the traditional festive calendar. "I could wish," complains Samuel Cox in his much-quoted "Letter" of 1591, "that players would use themselves nowadays, as in ancient former times they have done, which was only to exercise their interludes in the time of Christmas," or at least within a clearly defined season of private, household revels with performances "at Hallowmass, and then in the later holidays until twelfthtide, and after that, only in Shrovetide."[1] The tendency to break out of the festive framework and the concern at it were both evident by mid-century, witness the proclamation issued in the spring of 1559 banning unlicensed dramatic performances, as "the tyme wherein common interludes . . . are wont vsually to be played, is now past until All Halloutyde."[2]

This being so it is extraordinary how many of us remain convinced of the residual but still vital significance of the festive calendar, together with the traditional customs and the customary drama that characterized its major festivals, for the nature, and hence our understanding, of Elizabethan popular theatre, including the plays of its most celebrated playwright. This scholarly and critical trend achieved something of a culmination in 1991 with the publication of books on the subject by two of England's most distinguished presses, François Laroque's *Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage* (Cambridge: CUP), and Sandra Billington's *Mock Kings in Medieval Society and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon). Against *this* background it is surprising that François Laroque should open his study with the comment that "The theme of festivity is clearly not a *topos* or a subject for which there already exists an established critical tradition" (3), and

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that he should, accordingly, anticipate exploring "paths still barely charted" (5). In view of the many studies quoted[3] or not quoted[4] in Laroque's book, it is easier to agree with Keith Thomas's foreword (xii) that "In exploring the contribution made by the popular culture of Elizabethan England to the themes and motifs of Shakespeare's plays François Laroque follows in a well-established tradition." Sandra Billington's attitude to the existing critical tradition is equally extreme but at the opposite pole, in that she is so aware and so respectful of earlier work in the field that she denies herself the opportunity of discussing plays, and denies us the opportunity of hearing her interpretation of plays, which she believes have been treated adequately from the festive perspective by others (121).

Moreover, as Keith Thomas later implies, there are in fact *two* distinct traditions of writing about Shakespeare (or Elizabethan theatre generally) in relation to festival, and the first step in assessing any new work in the field must be to determine its relationship to them. One of these two traditions begins with E. K. Chambers at the beginning of the century (in *The Medieval Stage* [London: OUP, 1903]) and is given a mid-century boost by C. L. Barber's *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*. This school of thought recognizes that the interpretation of festive elements in Elizabethan drama must be prefaced by at least some scholarly effort to establish the variety of forms, contents and purposes of that Elizabethan festivity either by direct analysis of the relevant primary sources, or by alert deployment of the best (and relevant) current work on the subject. The task is difficult, does not inevitably make for exciting reading, and is not always effectively executed, but it must be attempted if the interpretative sequel is to go beyond mere assertion.

Assertion, meanwhile, is what emphatically characterizes a second, currently more fashionable approach, in which historical scholarship (oddly for something which of late tends to regard itself as a form of historicism) is largely waived in favour of an immediate plunge into sociocultural interpretation of Elizabethan theatre and drama in terms of festive perspectives.[5] The paucity of independent historical information on actual festival is however appropriate to a tradition inspired by Bakhtin's *Rabelais and his World*, which detects in the works

of Rabelais a popular, subversive folk mentality largely pieced together from—precisely—the works of Rabelais.[6]

It is greatly to their credit that both of the works under review here are firmly in the Chambers-Barber tradition, with substantial and extensively-documented historical sections (close to half the work in each case) on contemporary festival prefacing the literary interpretations, and qualifying the latter for serious attention. Both acknowledge the diversity of customs (Laroque by covering many, Billington by consciously isolating a small cluster), and the variety of their functions; neither misuses "carnivalesque" as meaning something vaguely festive and hopefully disruptive of the established order. The interpretative chapters are expressed in an agreeably clear scholarly idiom which manages to communicate adequately by using familiar words in their familiar meanings. And plays are treated as such, rather than documents in the "formation" or even the "historical constitution" of some aspect of pre-colonial mentality.

It remains to assess to what degree the historical reconstruction of festival is accurate and reliable, to discuss how skilfully it is deployed in interpretation, and to ponder if this is all we need or want to do with the information available. If the following assessments of two extremely thorough and frequently perceptive studies focus predominantly on what are seen as their inconsistencies and shortcomings, the exercise is undertaken in this journal's spirit of prompting debate on significant issues in literary history and interpretation. The reviewer proceeds with the deference incumbent upon one who has for many years pursued without as yet achieving a similar quest for an historically informed and contextually alert appreciation of the role of festival and folk tradition in the emergence of the Elizabethan popular theatre and the shaping of its drama.

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François Laroque's review of festival is by far the broader, encompassing what the original French text (1988) called *la fête*, and which, as the translator notes (xvi), covers both "feast" and "festivity" and a good deal more. While the translation is altogether extremely idiomatic and

readable, whoever is responsible for the "seasonal entertainment" of the full English title has somewhat confused matters. The arrangement of the material within and between the chapters suggests, however, that there was already some confusion in the typology applied to *fête* in this historical reconstruction. For the coverage includes (and quite rightly) clearly non-seasonal festivities such as those prompted by births, marriages and deaths, in an odd chapter used as something of a rag-bag for traditons in some way not fitting the primary "calendary" picture. These also include the festivals accompanying the completion of agricultural tasks, which are of course seasonal if not (due to vagaries in the weather) strictly calendrical, alongside church ales and wakes (in the sense of patronal feasts), which certainly are calendrical (if varying between places), plus Dover's celebrated Cotswold Games, which although they "took place at Whitsun" (163) are grouped with fairs under the misleading heading, "Occasional festivals."

The arrangement should more effectively have pointed out *four* distinct types of festival which can be identified by their occurrence: the strictly calendrical (incuding the "movable" feasts linked to Easter and determined in part by the lunar calendar); the merely seasonal (like agricultural celebrations); the "biographical," prompted by significant occasions in the life-cycle, and the essentially sporadic responses to events unrelated to annual or biographical rhythms, such as bonfires to celebrate a political upheaval or a *charivari* to demonstrate disapproval of a husband-beating shrew. This last Laroque also treats, although predominantly because, as sometimes happened, it was "saved up" for performance at a calendrical feast (typically Shrovetide).

This awkwardness seems to stem partly from Laroque's need to provide a suitable background for the plays, in which naturally enough "biographical" festivals like weddings and funerals tend to loom large, coupled with a determination to construct a comprehensively systematic pattern for the Elizabethan festive calendar, a "balanced interlocking system of forty day cycles" (144), neatly summarized in list form in appendix 2 and diagrammatically in appendix 3. The neatness of the pattern has been achieved at some cost, however, most substantially in the arbitrary fixing of the movable feasts at their earliest possible occurrence. Other problems concern details, but may reflect fundamental

weaknesses. It is disturbing, for example, that in appendix 2 "Christmas—25 December" is confused with the winter solstice which, to the Elizabethans, who still adhered to the Julian calendar, did not fall on 21 December, either, but on 13 December. John Donne's "Nocturnal upon Saint Lucy's Day, Being the Shortest Day" confirms both this fact and an Elizabethan's awareness of the occurrence of the solstice almost a fortnight before Christmas.[7] The summer solstice, meanwhile, to achieve identity with St John's Day, is located on June 24, while the two equinoxes are allowed to remain on the 21st (of March and September). Less fundamental idiosyncracies include the uncertainty about the beginning of the summer season, clearly identified as 1 May in the diagram; in discussion we are informed however that Whitsun marks the transition from Winter to Summer (136), while Midsummer (24 June) marks the "Advent" (140) or the "beginning" (85) of summer. Similarly appendix 2 deals with a "Sacred or Ritualistic Half" of the year from 25 December to 24 June; appendix 3 has a "Festive Half" covering 1 November to 1 May, while the discusson of "The ritualistic half of the year" in Chapter 4 goes from 7 January to Midsummer.

An intricate pattern of relationships is threatened by these uncertainties, but the potential damage is limited, since surprisingly little of this laboriously constructed and copiously documented calendrical model is actually deployed in the subsequent interpretations of Shakespeare. We learn something, for example, about Accession Day, Ascension Day, the Assumption, Corpus Christi, Guy Fawkes, Holy Innocents, and Rogationtide, none of which figure in the discussion of Shakespeare's plays. The same applies to festive activities such as Whitsun Ales, the Twelfth Night King of the Bean, the Horn Dance, Beating the Bounds, and the feast of Fools, and to figures such as Maid Marion. Of the forty saints discussed in this part, 33 are heard of no more. Four pages of detailed investigation are devoted to the hobby horse, which reappears only in connection with a dubious reference in *Othello* (290), and there is a similar discrepancy between investment and return in the case of Lammas, Martinmas, Michaelmas, Plough Monday, and Robin Hood. Four pages of detailed and valuable documentation on maypoles remain without harvest: there are no maypoles worth discussing in Shakespeare's plays. Some extremely interesting observations are made on the

emergence of a new, national, Protestant calendar of "Elizabethan" festivals, but when it comes to interpretation, the old, traditional calendar of "pagan" festivals predominates.

The historical reconstruction of festival has evidently acquired a motivation and momentum of its own, effectively constituting an independent study of Elizabethan festival of the kind I shall call for in my concluding remarks, for the subject's significance goes way beyond its possible influence on Shakespeare and other dramatists. The value of the exercise here is undermined, however, by some significant weaknesses in the identification and treatment of the evidence. Elizabethans bent on enjoying themselves were not given to compiling informative accounts for the benefit of later historians, who consequently face a frustratingly incomplete and uneven historical record. In the case of custom and festival, as of other popular traditions, there is a particular temptation to supplement the historical records with the accounts of antiquarians and folklorists documenting much more fully the festive traditions of later times. The problem is, of course, that as living traditions rather than the mere "survivals" they were once considered to be, these customs have been subject to change and renewal, and are therefore not automatically qualified for the reconstruction of the past; the possibility of completely new traditions emerging in the social upheavals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (as Laroque indeed documents for those of the sixteenth and seventeenth) must also be countenanced. Laroque's declared response to this problem is strictly historical, determining (12) "to concentrate upon sources that are contemporary" with Shakespeare, except that this is at once qualified as meaning sources "that either fall within the Elizabethan period or, failing that, are manifestly connected with it." The latter criterion is applied with considerable tolerance to accept, as legitimate evidence, customs recorded only recently, notably the mummers' plays, whose Elizabethan connections are anything but "manifest." This is done of course on the basis of the assumption, long since abandoned by folklorists, that such folk plays are direct descendents of ancient pre-Christian rituals, and so must have existed in the Elizabethan period even though there are no records of them, and must have resembled the modern forms since the latter include action (like a death and revival)

believed to be a direct remnant of the original sacrifice of the ritual. Quite in accordance with this brand of survivalism we are treated to a substantial disquisition on witches and fairies (21-28) and their cultic connections, which is inspired by, if it claims not to follow, the ideas of Margaret Murray,[8] and to globalizing speculations on the relationships between ancient religions and their deities and ceremonies ("a possible conjunction . . . between the Greek festival of the Anthesteria, the Celtic festival of Dimelc and the Christian festival of Candlemas," 80) worthy of Sir James Frazer.[9]

It is not so much that all this speculation on ancient times may be wrong: it is simply irrelevant to the festivals as conducted and experienced by Elizabethans and to the form in which they will have influenced the dramatists, which must be established by contemporary historical evidence. It is indeed to avoid this danger from a geographical perspective that Laroque determines (12) to focus on the festive traditions of Warwickshire and London, to allow for regional as opposed to chronological variation, and to isolate the local traditions Shakespeare himself could have experienced. In the event, however, this restriction is not adhered to; the state of the sources making it virtually unattainable anyway, but in another ironic twist, as handled by Laroque, this particular restriction proves to be irrelevant. Now the "festival" that may have influenced Shakespeare is understood not merely as the customary activity which Shakespeare may have seen or even participated in, but also as the contemporary *literature* it gave rise to, and which he may have *read* (5-6).

As the reference to Bakhtin on Rabelais suggested earlier, another danger facing those who would establish the nature of a folk culture as a preliminary to exploring its impact on a literature, is the circular manoeuvre of reconstructing the folk culture out of that same literature, so that the identification of correspondences is virtually guaranteed. Laroque is aware of this problem, but handles it awkwardly. He resolves to distinguish systematically between the subject, Shakespeare, and the historical sources of the reconstruction, but the latter include, somewhat arbitrarily, other literary sources not deemed to be on an aesthetic par with Shakespeare (5), and in practice Shakespeare's plays themselves are sometimes appealed to as sources, for example when the behaviour

of the lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is offered as "a good illustration" of youth mores at the summer festivals (112; cf. 120, 133).

The survey of festivals and festive practices is also marred by several small shortcomings as regards the facts, interpretation or balance, for example: no documentation is offered for the surprising assertion that a "duel between different seasons . . . is a constant feature of folk plays" (102); is Jack of Lent destroyed on Palm Sunday (103) or Easter Sunday (104)? The Hock Tuesday play performed before Queen Elizabeth during her entertainment at Kenilworth in 1575 was performed—as the source quoted indicates, by men "of," not "in" Coventry (109); does it really matter (to Shakespeare research) whether 90% or merely 60% of the young maidens spending May Eve in the woods lost their maidenheads before they came home (113)? There is no reason why *tales* of Robin Hood should not be told at any time of year, as opposed to the performance of Robin Hood *plays* which would normally belong to the summer games (145). The belief that bears came out of hibernation at Candlemas is unlikely to have had much significance in Elizabethan England (48); there is no evidence that the sword dance was introduced into England by the "Danes and Saxons" (51) except to the extent that the latter simply means "English." The Revesby Sword Play is not "the best example" of a mummers' play (52)—it has a highly problematic relationship to the tradition as a whole[10]—and it is wrong to say (53) that the mummers' play, as opposed to the Sword Dance Play "includes no heroic characters": the major genre is called the "Hero Combat Play" precisely because it does. The Robin Hood plays are not "a summer version of the mummers' play," and there are no instances where Robin Hood is pitted against Guy of Warwick or George a Green (54).[11] If Shrove Tuesday "fell after the first new moon of February," how could it oscillate "between 3 February and 9 March" (81)? Do the fools accompanying the plough-trailing really *all* fight a hobby-horse or a dragon (94)—and are there *any* instances of a dragon accompanying a plough-trailing? When Machyn wrote in his diary that an event occurred on "Shroyff monday" by what procedure can he be taken to mean "Shrove Tuesday" (100)? Apart from the presence of the saint himself, the St George plays and ridings of St George's day in no way resembled the mummers' plays (110), and the plays performed at Manningtree fair

were morality, not mystery plays (165; cf. 105).[12] With these reservations Laroque's review of Elizabethan festival offers a substantial miscellany of often very useful documentation, and often quite perceptive commentary, a substantial vantage-point from which to explore these themes in Shakespeare.

Sandra Billington's approach to Elizabethan festival is in contrast extremely focussed, restricted as it is to the mock-king figure, although encompassing his manifestation in both winter revels (largely as the King of the bean or Lord of Misrule of aristocratic, institutional and royal households; ch. 2, "Kings of Winter Festive Groups") and summer games (mostly as the Summer King, sometimes alias Robin Hood, of rural communities; ch. 3, "Summer Kings and Queens"). The research offered on the mock king of custom is detailed, accurate, and apart from a slight tendency to digress (e.g. 37-38; 44-46) well-presented; in contrast to Laroque Billington sticks to early evidence, does not speculate on ancient origins, and only once (36) adduces as evidence a play (the anonymous *Timon*) which will later be the subject of analysis from the perspective of the customs here being documented. The confusion of names for the summer leader (king, lord, Robin Hood) and the confused and overlapping nature of the summer festivals (May Day, Midsummer, Whitsun) accurately reflect the historical reality. It is extremely salutary to be reminded that while we tend to see festive custom as something repeated, almost as a reflex action, year after year, it could be the subject of deliberate manipulation, as when the Christmas lord of misrule was revived at the court of Edward VI by the Duke of Northumberland "to take Edward's mind off the impending execution of his uncle Somerset" (40).

The main idiosyncracy of this exercise, reflected in the paradox of the book's title, is precisely the medieval focus of the documentation, given that this is all prefatory to an exploration of the mock-king figure in *Renaissance* drama. In contrast to Laroque's more logical juxtaposition of chronologically contemporary festivity and theatre there is no major effort here to establish the nature of the custom in the Renaissance period when the plays were actually written, or, conversely, to examine the impact on *medieval* drama of the medieval mock king. As other reviewers have observed this is at least a potential weakness, for the Elizabethan

dramatists may have learnt the way to handle the mock king not from a direct encounter with the custom itself, but from the procedures already achieved by late-medieval dramatists.

That the mock-king figure did have relevance for the late-medieval drama, and that contemporaries were aware of these and of its other implications, is effectively demonstrated in a quotation which Sandra Billington includes, but could have made more of (if she had placed it in its appropriate chronological context). Contemplating the public's acquiescence in the manifest theatricality of the Duke of Gloucester's reluctance to accept the crown, Sir Thomas More in his *Richard III* observes, "these matters be kynges games, as it were stage playes, and for the most part played upon scaffolds."[13] Custom ("kynges games") and regular drama ("stage plays") are here virtually equated, while the ambiguity of "king" and "scaffolds" signals the breadth of Billington's coverage on another axis, for in addition to exploring the influence of the customary mock-king figure on drama she also, in this historical section, explores its use by the leaders of rebels and outlaws, and in the real power-game of late-medieval and sixteenth-century politics.

These are interesting topics, but, I think, hardly apt to clarify the general picture: it is certainly confusing that we hear of the mock king as leader of rebels and outlaws (ch. 1, "Outlaws, Rebels and Civil War") before meeting what I presume is the original figure in customs (chs. 2 and 3). In contrast to the latter the available documentation for these supplementary functions is rather limited in quantity and quality. In chapter 4, "The Role of the Sovereign," the comment on Richard of Gloucester just quoted is one of very few convincing instances of the mock-king figure used in the discussion of real kings and kingship, and many of those appealed to, like "the most graphic example" (87) from Erasmus's *Moriae Encomium* are perhaps over-interpreted: a king who (as in Erasmus) is "a subject for mockery and derision" is not necessarily being equated with the "mock king" of custom. The French ambassador's reference to Lady Jane Grey as "nothing but a Twelfth-day Queen" (100) is rather more striking but not (presumably because not medieval) accorded much prominence.

The chapter on the mock king as outlaw and rebel leader is similarly disappointing with regard to convincing documentation. Billington

acknowledges herself (11) that there is only "one extant example of an outlaw setting himself up as such a king" (a Yorkshire gang-leader who in 1336 styled himself "Lionel, king of the rout of raveners"), and while John Gladman's insurrectionary parade as "King of Christmas" in Norwich in 1434 (19) is probably as well qualified, the meagre harvest of hints and vague surmises in between does not justify the conclusion (27) that "in the Middle Ages, . . . most of the *organized* disorder we know about was expressed through mock king analogy."

As a final complication, Sandra Billington devotes a substantial section of her chapter on the summer games (60-85) to exploring a fascinating and potentially very significant analogy between the custom of "midsummer competitions, games of physical prowess on a hilltop to decide a [mock-] king title" (60) and the figure of Fortune conceived of as reigning on a hilltop (or Fortune's darling so poised). Here again the direct evidence is explicitly acknowledged to be limited, and this time "the only medieval record" (63) of hilltop competitions for the mock kingship, a complaint of midsummer disorders in the *Speculum Sacerdotale*, is less than satisfactory, as there is no hill, and there are competitions only if the source's "commessationibus" is so translated rather than as "with immoderate feasting" as might be expected from the usage of the M.E. cognate, "comessacioun" (*Middle English Dictionary*). The main item of later evidence provided by Dover's Cotswold games is also undermined by its indirectness, as we have only a literary reconstruction (the *Annalia Dubrensia*) of Dover's consciously antiquarian seventeenth-century reconstruction of the traditional medieval Whitsun sports. It is in the face of this specific problem that Sandra Billington temporarily follows Laroque in relaxing her criteria on documentation: in the absence of direct historical evidence for these hilltop competitions they have to be reconstructed in reverse from literary evidence ("detected mainly through the use of allegory," 60) prior to being used to interpret literature. But even with this premature appeal to literary evidence the figure of Trowle sitting on his hill in the Shepherds' Play of the *Chester Mystery Cycle* (63) is acknowledged to be "The one complete medieval example of sophisticated interpretation of such sports"; the remainder are not so much unsophisticated as incomplete, and in later interpretation "Trowle-like" will be used as a device for hinting-without-quite-claiming

a character's similarity to the mock king (127; 136). There are many references to hills, to mock kings, to midsummer and to Fortune, but none to all of them at the same time and painfully few to any significant permutation of them. Sandra Billington may have identified here a significant literary *topos*, but its link to custom is extremely tenuous, and perhaps the main value of this pursuit of hilltop kings is its occasional reference to traditions of uncertain value to the immediate discussion but adding to our picture of the regular summer games in general: the play on the death of the summer lord at South Kyme, Lincolnshire, in 1601, for instance (72) and the analogous dying of the figure of summer (the analogy obscured by intervening discussion) in Nashe's *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (74).

This prefatory effort to assign to the mock-king figure literary and intellectual significance, partly prompted by the paucity of evidence for the variant applications (rebel, real king, fortune's minion), has diverted space and attention from the traditional mock-king customs, which in themselves are significant enough in regard to Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, and of which a good deal more could have been said. For example a whole class of documentation which is not deployed is provided by the texts currently miscategorized (and so receiving the wrong kind of attention) as "Middle English Lyrics" or "Carols." They include a number of songs clearly designed for performance at household winter revels (as distinct from the songs, noted by Laroque, which merely invoke or describe them), of which several, although from different sources, constitute a sequence or cycle marking the reign of a winter Lord of Misrule or Christmas King. Following the ceremonial expulsion of a figure representing Advent, "We will be mery, grete and small, / And thou shalt goo oute of this halle" (R. L. Greene, ed., *The Early English Carols*, 2nd rev. and enl. ed. [Oxford: Clarendon P, 1977] no. 3; and cf. no. 4), "My lord Syre Cristemasse" is formally welcomed (no. 5), lustily singing "Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell" outside the door to advertize his arrival (no. 6). He demands that "all be mere here" (no.10), and in his role as Lord of Misrule promulgates that no man be allowed to "cum into this hall / . . . But that sum sport he bryng withall" (no. 11). But as Candlemas passes and Lent approaches he is obliged sadly to take

his leave ". . . at the gud lord of this hall / . . . and of gestes all" (no. 141).

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There is a kind of balance between the two works under discussion. While Laroque attempts a comprehensive reconstruction of Elizabethan festival for a circumscribed aim—the explication of festival themes and references in Shakespeare alone—Sandra Billington deploys her narrow focus on the mock king across a broad range of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Laroque's more limited application permits a corresponding intensity of treatment, and whatever transpires in the following, the undeniable long-term value of the interpretative section of *Shakespeare's Festive World* will be as a near-definitive listing of Shakespeare's allusions to festival, feasting, and general merriment. Sandra Billington's coverage, in contrast, is as already noted explicitly and deliberately incomplete, in that she declines to discuss further a number of plays, including some by Shakespeare, which she considers to have been adequately covered elsewhere. But however perceptive and skilfull, the interpretations of Barber, Donaldson and others did not approach Elizabethan plays from the precise perspective of the mock king as constructed by Billington, and it is regrettable that we are thus denied a sustained discussion of the mock-king figure in say, *Macbeth, Twelfth Night,* or *Hamlet* (where Claudius is dismissed by his nephew as a vice-like "king of shreds and patches"), which to judge from remarks she makes in passing Sandra Billington was alert to as potentially rewarding objects of analysis.

Despite their near-comprehensive coverage of festival in Shakespeare, and their occasionally perceptive analysis of isolated moments in the plays, Laroque's interpretative chapters fail to achieve overall coherence and conviction. There is for example the same confusion between Shakespeare as the object of interpretation and Shakespeare as documentary source, as when we are informed (188) that "A whole body of Celtic or Teutonic rites and legends could be reconstructed from the clues provided by [specific features in] . . . *As You Like It,* . . . *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* or . . . *1 Henry IV.*" Unless there is reliable independent

evidence on these Celtic or Teutonic rites apart from these "clues" in Shakespeare we have here learnt something about the rites, not about Shakespeare's plays.

As in the historical section, modern traditions of unproven antiquity such as the mummers' play are still invoked as background to Shakespeare's plays, and a striking instance of the result is provided by the discussion of *Othello* (290-91). There is an interesting reference to the morris dance (a well-documented Elizabethan tradition), legitimately and perceptively prompted by this play's including "a Moor with a 'begrim'd face' . . . who repeatedly calls himself a 'fool'," combined with the less convincing relevance of a handkerchief and a possible reference to a hobby-horse, but it meanders through an inaccurate and muddled equation between morris dance, sword dance (of which two varieties are confused), folk play, Hero Combat Play and mummers' play, and into the following remarks on "the scene of Othello's fit of epilepsy" where "the general's blackout is followed by his revival at the hands of Iago":

> The general's ensign here masquerades as a healer/poisoner figure and this scene may be interpreted as a dramatic variation of the popular shows put on at Christmas and Easter in the villages of Elizabethan England. The Mummers' play ritually presented a battle between a Christian Knight (generally embodied by the figure of St George) against Beelzebub or a Turkish Knight, the latter being both endowed with blackened faces. After the first clash, St George was clubbed to the ground, where he lay unconscious, until he was revived by a miraculous Doctor who emerged from the crowd of spectators. So, according to the scenario imported from the Mummers' play, Iago would appear under the double persona of the medicine man and of the white Christian knight who defeats the dark, pagan African (291).

The parallels adduced here between the mummers' plays and *Othello* may or may not achieve assent but what has to be insisted on is firstly that the summary of the former is inaccurate (Beelzebub is not one of St George's usual opponents; St George is as often the victor in the combat as the defeated combatant requiring treatment by the doctor) and secondly, the mummers' plays—in the form recorded of late—cannot be documented with any certainty earlier than the eighteenth century. It has to be added that in much of this Laroque is in *very* good company,

and it is rare among theatre historians to find an awareness that the medieval, let alone the prehistoric, origins of the mummers' plays cannot be assumed. It is possible, perhaps even likely, that we shall one day be able to document their history to within reach of the Elizabethan theatre, even in something like their recent forms. It would help if just a few of the people bent on finding parallels to the mummers' plays in stage plays contributed to looking for such evidence in the historical record; without it all these parallels could just as well—may very well—prove that our recent folk drama is *gesunkenes Kulturgut* from the professional theatre (say via drolls, travelling companies, and local interluders).

The pagan origins assumed for many customs are similarly carried forward into the interpretation of the alleged allusions to them in the plays, as, for example, when festival in Shakespeare's tragedies is claimed to "revert to being . . . an occasion for sacrifice . . . it becomes a pagan High Mass of disorder . . . a cannibal feast" (304). On other occasions, independent of chronology and origins, the juxtaposition of multiple factors strains credulity. For example the discussion of *Othello* just glanced at continues (291), on the reflection that Iago is a Spanish name: "If we bear in mind this Spanish connection, we see that Iago torments Othello with cuckoldry, the nightmarish green-eyed and horned monster, just as a bull-fighter will bait and tame a savage bull. The fighting of bulls had long been a popular sport in the south of Spain where it was used as a test of strength between Christian knights and the Moorish chieftains."

This is one of a number of assertions which to this reviewer border on the eccentric. Under this heading I would also put the suggestion (205) that an audience, told by the Nurse that Juliet was born at Lammastide (1 August), would at once calculate that she must have been conceived at All Hallows (1 November), and from their understanding of the deeper significance of this festival conclude that this "constituted a covert hint as to her destiny." On the same level is the suggestion of significance in the fact that Julius Caesar, Jesus Christ, and Jack Cade share the same initials (281). Furthermore, I am not familiar with "psychoanalytical mythology" (276) but if its findings "converge" with the idea that in *Hamlet* the wedding feast of Claudius and Gertrude can

be seen as "an avatar of the cannibal banquet in which the king/father, sacrificed by the primitive horde which lusted after his wife, is ritually consumed by his subjects/sons," then I am happy to remain ignorant. This is "myth-and-ritual" interpetation of the kind that, a recent survey suggests, becomes fashionable in variant forms once every generation.[14] As literary appreciation it may be legitimate or it may not; it has nothing to do with Elizabethan festival.

Laroque's appeal for support from arcane disciplines such as psychoanalytical mythology may be a means of handling what seems to be a degree of disappointment or even bewilderment at the way Shakespeare, on the level of mere everyday reality, fails to make much use of the Elizabethan traditional calendar so carefully reconstructed. For while Laroque feels obliged to persist in his assertion that "the theme of festivity, treated from many different angles, seems . . . to occupy a place of central importance in Shakespeare's plays" (197), there are moments of doubt when he concedes that the way Shakespeare actually treats festival seems to reveal ". . . an attitude which, while not quite implying a desire to reject or repress popular festivals in the strict sense of the expression, nevertheless does lead to a certain marginalization of them" (244). Between these extremes of centralization and marginalization is the notion of the creative artist who will manipulate the received patterns to suit his purpose, so when we encounter ". . . allusions and references to festivity which are bound to appear atypical when compared with the working system of the calendar, as described in the first part of this study" (234), or if "there is nothing particularly systematic or orthodox about the way in which he . . . draws on tradition and the rites of folklore" (228), then this is the result of "Shakespeare's desire to shake free from . . . the constricting framework of strict reference to the unwritten laws of the festive calendar" (231). Not that this reduces the value of reconstructing these "unwritten laws" which Shakespeare "shakes free from," for it may be he thereby intended to give festival even greater prominence: "the dramatist may choose to conceal his subject, the better to reveal it" (306), or perhaps he wasn't really aware of the material's true significance (47). These citations are taken out of context from separate discussions, but they suggest

nonetheless a hesitancy in settling for a consistent response to Shakespeare's not entirely convenient manner of treating festival.

In Sandra Billington's interpretative chapters in contrast the problem is not so much the recalcitrance of the dramatists as the ubiquity of the figure or concept of the mock king. The custom itself is claimed to be so "volatile" (119), and the dramatists' use of it so characterized by "variability" and "creativity" that it sometimes seems that any figure potentially usurping power, or any figure with power who does not live up to its demands, is encompassed by the mock-king image, which if so general loses a good deal of its interpretative value. The sense of uncertainty is increased by the flexibility of the terminology, so that "king play/game" can mean (as carried over from the first part) the actual custom of electing a festive king, and in connection with what people do in plays both behaving like a king and playing a game (like chess) that kings often play (e.g. 249); "player king" (e.g. 128) acquires a similar ambivalence.

In most cases the validity of the parallel with custom will be a matter of critical judgement, and judgements may differ, but there are also instances of measurable overinterpretation, as in the case of Marlowe's Tamburlaine. In a narrative version of the story from 1571 Tamburlaine was indeed elected as a mock king (or at least chosen "in sport") by his fellow shepherds (160), but Sandra Billington proceeds to transfer this to "Marlowe's hero" who "begins as a summer king" (162) and to his play, which thus acquires "opening suggestions of a mock election" (165). In the case of Shakespeare's *King John* it is acknowledged that this play does not have the explicit mock-king elements in one of his sources, but saying they have been "removed" (129) seems to imply that they ought to be there, and it is suggested that this somehow gives more scope to less tangible implicit mock-king elements. There is an odd sideways injection of mock-king elements into Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI* with the observation that the rose-plucking scene in 2.4 takes place in the garden of one of the Inns of Court, which was "noted for its misrule traditions" (141); this may be true but its practical relevance is questionable, and hardly warrants equating the seven men involved (by implication) with a fool and six morris-dancers. Another form of awkwardness involves the identification of traditional features whose

status as such is questionable; thus *The Misfortunes of Arthur* has dumb-shows "such as could have been staged at a Whitsun gathering" (135), but I am far from certain how characteristic dumb-shows were of Whitsun customs or indeed of folk-drama in general—the point is not prepared for in the preceding review of customary traditions. The somewhat desperate quest for fools on hills continued from the first part has also led (219) to "uplandish" being taken to encompass "hillside" (as well as merely "rural").

The major impact of these problems however is not so much to undermine the value or integrity of Sandra Billington's interpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean plays as to detach them from her point of departure in the introductory review of customs. Just as Laroque's preliminary construction of the Elizabethan festive calendar acquired a motivation and momentum of its own, so Sandra Billington's interpretative chapters offer a series of complex, always fascinating, sometimes brilliant interpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean plays, which while they may ultimately in her own mind have been prompted by the notion of the mock king of custom, do not always reflect a convincingly organic relationship between custom and drama within the historical reality, despite the intrusion of key-words like "misrule," "mock," and "hill" whenever occasion permits (cf. the discussion of *Measure for Measure* 242-48). This sense of detachment from the book's title is reinforced by the recollection that many of these interpretations are not merely dubiously linked to custom, but as pointed out earlier the custom itself (like the midsummer hilltop games) has a somewhat dubious historical status. Hence there is much in this book, and much that is good, which is not truly related to the question of drama and festival and so not germane to the perspective of the current review.

The problem is largely one of focus. Having eschewed some of the more obvious manifestations of the theme the book ranges widely over Elizabethan and Jacoban drama in a somewhat breathless quest for (more or less convincing) mock-king figures. It is certainly refreshing to find festive themes in tragedies and histories as well as in the more predictable and more often treated comedies, and it is similarly highly informative to see the familiar Shakespearean works interpreted alongside less celebrated plays, but the overall impression is that too

little—and too little that is squarely in line with the book's title—is said about too many plays, and perhaps the wrong plays at that. *The Book of Sir Thomas More* is accorded an intense half-page of discussion (230) at the tail-end of a line of thought on subversion and censorship which has brought us far from the mock king; Peele's *Edward I* is accorded only a passing reference (120) which is just enough to suggest it has considerable potential for analysis from the mock-king perspective.

This is confusing and depressing, for when Sandra Billington turns the direct force of her interpretative skills on a play where the festive and mock-king element is clearly relevant, the result can be striking and extremely useful. This is predictably the case with Falstaff; it is with a shock of recognition, however, that in the analysis of *Troilus and Cressida* one sees Pandarus emerging with a clearly extra-dramatic function as an Inner Temple lord of misrule. Another enlightening surprise is Wolsey in *Henry VIII* ("While Wolsey is in control, all the pageants in the play are disordered," 251). It would have been more effective, in other words, to have dwelt at greater length on the more amenable plays, characters and scenes, some of which, one feels, might have been more rewarding: Lear with his crown of flowers, for example, or the mock kings or would-be kings in the *Henry VI* plays, Antony and Cleopatra enthroned in "the common show place" (210). The footnotes to these chapters also include truncated remarks and references warranting elaboration in the main text (for example on *King Leir* 209n47; on fools as executioners 244n18) if necessary—indeed preferably—at the expense of the less rewarding items that are there. There are also occasions when festive themes are downplayed to make room for less relevant matter; the discussion of *Woodstock* for example includes a substantial and detailed analysis of its contemporary relevance (perchance under the baleful shadow of new historicism) which dilutes the impact of the fascinating discussion of Richard as mock king; the latter meanwhile misses the parallel between Richard appointing his favourites to high offices of state (1.3.184-88, cited 224) and the Lord of Misrule, as described by Stubbes, choosing his cronies as officers.[15] The uncertain focus persists with the subsequent discussion of *Richard II*, which dwells on the link to the Essex rebellion but declines to explore the misrule

implications of the reference to a "mumming trick" in some lines quoted in this connection.

A more concentrated focus on the really convincing instances of the mock-king figure in drama would also have facilitated greater attention to the extra-poetic, contextual and dramaturgical factors heralded in Sandra Billington's forcefully-written "Critical Introduction" to her interpretative section, where she insists that the mock-king complex is not merely a source of themes and motifs, but *structural* to the drama, supplying "popular structures," "staged iconography," which facilitated the transition from medieval moralities to Elizabethan stage-plays: "these traditions were more than an ancient rag-bag of motifs, with which writers sprinkled their plays . . . they provided seminal and elastic structures for developing dramatic ideas" (118). Indeed: and it is perhaps the absence of much discussion of "staged iconography" that is most frustrating about this book, the rapid movement from one play to another giving more the impression that these are "motifs," "sprinkled" across Elizabethan and Jacobean drama.

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This last observation is equally valid for Laroque's discussions of Shakespeare, for despite some perceptive opening remarks about the residual festive nature of theatre as an institution, of going to the theatre as a festive experience, he seeks primarily, almost exclusively the festive traditions "echoed" in Shakespeare's texts as "themes," "images," "symbolism," and "metaphor" (303). Despite their many differences in focus, approach, and execution, these two books share an essential and essentially limiting quality as exercises in literary criticism, designed to enhance our appreciation of plays as literary compositions. They seek to render our appreciation of a body of poetic drama historically more informed and accurate by deploying in its interpretation knowledge and understanding of an aspect of contemporary life—festival and custom—which loomed large in the experience and mentality of playwrights, players, and audience. In this, with the reservations offered, Laroque and Billington are successful, but it is hard to repress the feeling that there should be something more, something deeper, to the relationship.

The analysis in the plays of these themes, motifs, symbols, and dramatic ideas from custom could equally well be applied to other significant features of contemporary life—say the legal system or disease and medicine—to which the drama also alludes. To this degree an earlier reviewer was right if mischievous to characterize Billington's book as being on the model of a "Yale dissertation" in "identifying a distinctive literary pattern" and tracing it "through several key texts, noting its permutations in each" (John D. Cox in *Comparative Drama*); and the same could be said, except that there are fewer key texts and many more "distinctive literary patterns," of Laroque's study.

Yet there could, and should, be more, for in relation to theatre festive custom is not just any literary pattern or any aspect of contemporary life and thought. As Laroque points out, the two are closely analogous, in that custom has many dramatic features, or could provide the auspices for fully-fledged dramatic performances. And the connection could be closer, in that in all probability the Elizabethan theatre partly emerged from the dramatic customs, or the customary drama, of the later Middle Ages (this is not the same genetic relationship as that once postulated betwen ritual and drama in western civilization as a whole, of which Laroque is rightfully wary). Either way, by analogy or inheritance, there are grounds to anticipate that festive customs and customary festival would be more deeply and more vitally embedded in (and so more significant in the interpretation of) Elizabethan theatre and drama than a matter of motifs, symbols, *topoi*, or even dramatic ideas: as action and dramaturgy, costume and properties, the shape and relationship of stage and auditorium, the interaction between players and audience, and the latter's composition, behaviour and mood. It would have been interesting and significant to learn, for example, whether such festive features loom larger in the drama of the private theatres—which may have remained closer to the private auspices of domestic feasts—than of the public theatres; or if the one form of theatre invoked a different set of festive motifs, moods and dramaturgical patterns from the other: a case could be made for seeing the private theatre as the inheritor of the indoor, domestic, household revels of the winter season, the public theatres as commercializations of the outdoor, community, summer festivals. The question of the relationship between festival and early English theatre

history remains to be fully confronted, and requiring as it does the deployment of material and methods from social and literary history, folklore, and theatre studies, may indeed be beyond the resources of a single scholar.

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NOTES

[1]Cited in E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 4 (1923; Oxford: Clarendon P, 1961) 237.

[2]*Tudor Royal Proclamations*, eds. Paul Lester Hughes and James F. Larkin, vol. 2, *The Later Tudors (1553-1587)* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1969) no. 458, p. 115.

[3]C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (1959; Princeton: Princeton UP, 1972); Alan Brissenden, "Shakespeare and the Morris," *RES* ns 30 (1979): 1-11; Douglas Hewitt, "The Very Pompes of the Divell: Popular and Folk Elements in Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama," *RES* 25 (1949): 10-23; Janet Spens, *An Essay on Shakespeare's Relation to Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1916); W. B. Thorne, "The Influence of Folk Drama upon Shakespearean Comedy," Diss. University of Wisconsin 1965; and Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theatre: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form*, ed. Robert Schwartz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978).

[4]E.g. Ian Donaldson, *The World Upside Down: Comedy from Jonson to Fielding* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1970); W. Montgomerie, "Folk Play and Ritual in *Hamlet*," *RES* ns 30 (1979): 1-11; M. B. Olson, "The Morris Dance in Drama before 1645," *Quarterly Journal of the University of North Dakota* 10 (1920): 423-35; and Richard Wincor, "Shakespeare's Festive Plays," *ShakQ* 1 (1950): 219-40.

[5]See for example Michael D. Bristol, "Carnival and the Institutions of Theater in Elizabethan England," *ELH* 50 (1983): 637-54, and his *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (New York: Methuen, 1985); Michael McCanles, "Festival in Jonsonian Comedy," *RenD* 8 (1977): 203-19.

[6]Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, transl. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology P, 1968); for this observation see Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, transl. Anne and John Tedeschi (Harmondsworth: Viking Penguin, 1982) xvii.

[7]*The Poems of John Donne*, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson (1912; London: OUP, 1963) 39.

[8]Margaret Alice Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1921); *The God of the Witches* (London: Faber and Faber, 1931); *The Divine King of England: A Study in Anthropology* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954).

[9]J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study of Magic and Religion* (Cambridge, 1890).

[10]See my guarded "English Folk Drama in the Eighteenth Century: A Defense of the *Revesby Sword Play*," *Comparative Drama* 15 (1981): 3-29.

[11]See David Wiles, *The Early Plays of Robin Hood* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1981).

[12]Much of the above, particularly with regard to the mummers' plays, reproduces my general animadversions on the field in "Early English Traditional Drama: Approaches and Perspectives," *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 25 (1983, for 1982): 1-30, and "Approaches to Medieval Folk Drama," *Early Drama, Art and Music Newsletter* 7.2 (Spring 1985): 23-27.

[13]Sir Thomas More, *The History of King Richard III*, ed. R. S. Sylvester (New Haven: Yale UP, 1964) 80-81; Billington cites (96) the derivative—i.e. Elizabethan—passage in Holinshed.

[14]Woodbridge, Linda, and Edward Berry, eds., introd., *True Rites and Maimed Rites: Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and his Age* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1992).

[15]Philip Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), conveniently quoted in Laroque 134.

A Comment on Robert Crosman, "The Pivotal Position of *Henry V* in the Rise and Fall of Shakespeare's Prose"*

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Robert Crosman's article does well to remind us of the importance of Shakespeare's prose, in the history plays as well as in the comedies. What follows here is less a criticism than a change of emphasis, away from the development of Henry V as shown by his prose style to the exploitation of a variety of styles, often involving a deliberate breach of decorum. Our interest is how Shakespeare constantly goes beyond the accepted view that, as Crosman expresses it, "prose is more appropriate for lower-class than for upper-class characters, and more suited to 'realistic' speeches than to 'idealistic' ones" (2). My reading is focused on a Henry who, from the beginning, knows full well what he is doing and for whom style is mostly a weapon.

Let me start with the question of Hal's style being modelled on Falstaff's. Crosman does not go quite so far as Brian Vickers, who sometimes seems to see Hal as little more than Falstaff's "straight man,"[1] but he makes the team Falstaff-and-Hal his point of departure for "discovering" the prose of *1 Henry IV* (3,4). It seems to me that there is more in this than Crosman has yet shown. Falstaff, though talking prose, sometimes does so in a deliberately stylized manner making fun of Euphuism and concluding with double puns on *countenance* and *steal*:

> Marry then, sweet wag, when thou art king let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty. Let us be 'Diana's foresters', 'gentlemen of the shade', 'minions of the moon', and let men say we be men of good government, being governed, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal. (1.2.23-29)[2]

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*Reference: Robert Crosman, "The Pivotal Position of *Henry V* in the Rise and Fall of Shakespeare's Prose," *Connotations* 2.1 (1992): 1-15.

Hal matches this with *his* pun about the hangman and *obtaining of suits*, but throughout Falstaff demonstrates his ability to use complex prose to equivocate, to attempt to wriggle out of his responsibility for drunkenness, debts and cowardice. He can easily outdo Bardolph and Mrs Quickly, and, later on, even silence the Lord Chief Justice. He has to admit defeat to Henry over the Gadshill robbery, although he does not go down without a struggle: "Was it for me to kill the heir-apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince?" In *1 Henry IV* there is more Falstaff than Hal—in prose, that is—since Hal necessarily has to talk of affairs of state in verse. When Falstaff plays the king he makes a fine rhetorical fist of it, as he does when the positions are reversed, rising to the crescendo of "Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world," only to be undercut by Hal's chilling rejoinder "I do; I will." Falstaff's soliloquies are in prose: the first, on recruiting (4.2) is not particularly rhetorical, the second, on honour, is marked by its catechetical construction, the third, as he rises up after shamming death near the body of Hotspur, is similarly a question-and-answer exercise. Hal's early soliloquy on "redeeming time" and his later one over Hotspur's body (although, strictly speaking, Falstaff is present) are both in verse.

From the close of 1.2 the audience knows that redeeming time is what Hal is doing, even though it may occasionally share some of King Henry's doubts. But Hal's method of undermining his opponent is that which he shows throughout *1 Henry IV* and on through *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*: he copies the style of his opponents—occasionally parodies it, as Hamlet was to do—and shows that he is better than they are at their own game. His prose has to be better than their prose, although in *1 Henry IV* it is a close-run thing. In any case, he always holds the trump card: he is the heir.

Just as in *1 Henry IV* the first prose scene between Hal and Falstaff provides a low-style contrast to the high-style verse prologue (spoken, unusually for Shakespeare, by the monarch), so in *2 Henry IV* Rumour's Induction and its immediate manifestation in the fears of old Northumberland and the news of his son's death are followed by Falstaff, his page, and the Lord Chief Justice in prose. Once again, Falstaff's prose is both balanced and witty:

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE Your means are very slender, and your waste is great.
SIR JOHN I would it were otherwise; I would my means were greater and my waist slenderer. (1.2.141-44)

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE You follow the young Prince up and down like his ill angel.
SIR JOHN Not so, my lord; your ill angel is light, but I hope that he that looks upon me will take me without weighing. (166-68)

A good wit will, indeed, make use of anything, leaving the Lord Chief Justice to lament, in 2.1 "your manner of wrenching the true cause the false way." Yet, in 2 *Henry IV*, there are, as is regularly remarked, only two scenes (one of which is the rejection) between Hal and Falstaff. Scene 2.2 is a strange one. Falstaff is not present and, obviously, the audience is to be reminded (in prose) of the true state of affairs, that Hal is still in the business of redeeming time. What appears to be the reality may be seen in another prose scene shortly afterwards (2.4) where Hal and Poins are disguised as drawers. Falstaff still has an answer but this time it sounds lame: "I dispraised him before the wicked, that the wicked might not fall in love with him," and Hal is recalled to court:

> By heaven, Poins, I feel me much to blame
> So idly to profane the precious time (2.4.364-65),

dismissing his companinon with a curt "Falstaff, good night." He has almost distanced himself from Eastcheap and the kind of behaviour, with its appropriate prose, that Eastcheap represents. Falstaff, although losing ground, apparently remains irrepressible, as appears in the prose scene involving the capture of Coleville and ending with the rhetorical encomium on sack. While Hal watches over his dying father and ponders the future of the crown (in verse), Falstaff is in Gloucestershire where Shallow and Silence are a much easier mark. For them Shakespeare has developed a different kind of prose in which repetition indicates senility but is interspersed with their own kind of "reality" ("How a score of ewes now?"). This is a situation which manages to be both funny and pathetic at the same time. Once he is king, Henry must reject Falstaff ("I know thee not, old man"), but in verse, indicating not only the public setting but his new public persona. Time has been redeemed.

Prose, however, is not done for yet, and I agree that it is in *Henry V* that Henry speaks his greatest prose (8). But the "every man's language" (6) of *Henry IV* in which Hal outplayed the other man now assumes a rather different style. There is no prose at all in Act 1, but Act 2 begins with the down-market style of Nym, Bardolph, Pistol, and Quickly—now lacking the rhetorical capabilities of Falstaff and Hal. The contrast between the opening line of 3.1: "Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more" (King Henry in verse) and that of 3.2, Bardolph's prose "On, on, on, on, on! To the breach, to the breach!" is surely deliberate. Henry is above all concerned to show himself as the complete ruler, incisive yet conscious of his soldiers' feelings, firm yet sympathetic when the situation requires it. We may argue whether this is the miraculous transformation the Chorus assumes or instead the kind of role-playing Henry has seemed to affect in the past. If, as I believe, it is the latter, it manifests itself in a prose that is still under firm control, but pared down, taut and logical. It appears briefly in the decision to execute Bardolph. Henry does not refer by name to his former Eastcheap crony, although Fluellen has just spoken of "one Bardolph, if your majesty know the man":

> We would have all such offenders so cut off, and we here give express charge that in our marches through the country there be nothing compelled from the villages, nothing taken but paid for, none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language. For when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner. (3.6.108-14)

But the key scene is clearly, as Crosman says, 4.1. On his walk round the English camp on the night before Agincourt, Henry first meets Pistol. The prose here is mostly single-line exchanges, not unlike a conversation—if any encounter with Pistol can result in a conversation. Bates, Court and Williams articulate something very different, the very real fears of ordinary soldiers before a battle, some of which Henry may himself share but which it is now his business to silence. His speeches to them are less conversational exchanges than a balanced, logical justification of his position:

> Now, if these men have defeated the law and outrun native punishment, though
> they can outstrip men, they have no wings to fly from God. War is his beadle.
> War is his vengeance. So that here men are punished for before-breach of the
> King's laws, in now the King's quarrel. Where they feared the death, they have
> borne life away; and where they would be safe, they perish. Then if they die
> unprovided, no more is the King guilty of their damnation than he was before
> guilty of those impieties for the which they are now visited. Every subject's
> duty is the King's, but every subject's soul is his own. Therefore should every
> soldier in the wars do as every sick man in his bed: wash every mote out of
> his conscience. And dying so, death is to him advantage; or not dying, the
> time was blessedly lost wherein such preparation was gained. (4.1.165-80)

This is an important sense in which Henry does *not* "treat his troops
as equals" (9). He may be in disguise but he has to play the king, and
his prose must be the more convincing, even if it does not always
convince the sceptical Williams. The situation is a world away from
exchanging rhetorical pleasantries with Falstaff. The meeting with the
soldiers is followed immediately by the soliloquy "Upon the King . . . ."
In his recent New Cambridge text, Andrew Gurr prints the beginning
of this as prose, pointing out that the Folio compositor shows some
difficulty with lineation here.[3] He may well be right in suggesting that
Henry starts by quoting the soldiers in prose and changes to verse to
express his own thoughts. And if Shakespeare *wrote* it like that (and
F1 shows signs of having been printed from the author's manuscript
submitted to the company) it is evidence of the degree of modulation
of which his style was now capable.

This play dabbles in the stage representation of language, from the
dialects of Fluellen, Jamy and Macmorris to the Franglais of Katherine
and Alice in the English lesson. I cannot share Crosman's enthusiasm
for the wooing scene between Henry and Katherine, nor can I imagine
her as yet capable of much beyond broken English. The scene is amusing,
certainly, often touching, but it is hardly Henry being "only a man,"
or, if it is, the assumption of soldierly bluntness is one more example
of role-playing to achieve the desired end, albeit for the good of England
too. After all, Henry once more holds all the cards and, whether
Katherine knows it or not, her hand in marriage is part of an already
agreed treaty:

KING HARRY Therefore, queen of all, Catherine, break thy mind to me in broken
 English: wilt thou have me?
CATHERINE Dat is as it shall please de *roi mon père*.
KING HARRY Nay, it will please him well, Kate. It shall please him, Kate.
CATHERINE Den it shall also content me. (5.2.242-47)

What Crosman has demonstrated is the suppleness of Shakespeare's prose and how he adapted syntactical patterns which we instinctively associate with comedy to the writing of histories. Prose in the histories is so much more than something for the plebs.

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NOTES

[1]*The Artistry of Shakespeare's Prose* (London: Methuen, 1968) 90-95 *passim*.

[2]References are to the New Oxford Shakespeare (*The Complete Works*, gen. eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor [Oxford: Clarendon P, 1986]).

[3]See his note to 4.1.203-10 in his edition of *King Henry V*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 158.

Hal, Falstaff, Henry V, and Prose*

JONAS BARISH

Robert Crosman's essay on "The Pivotal Position of *Henry V* in the Rise and Fall of Shakespeare's Prose" offers an admirably fresh look at a sometimes hackneyed subject. I wonder though whether it does not depend—more heavily perhaps than its author realizes—on certain received ideas that might benefit from an even more vigorous shaking than he gives them. Crosman marks out the territory thus: "Shakespeare's use of prose was linked to certain ideas of what was 'appropriate' to certain moods, characters and situations. In the stage conventions of the 1590s, which Shakespeare did more than anyone to establish, prose is more appropriate for lower-class than for upper-class characters, and more suited to 'realistic' speeches than to 'idealistic' ones." So much, in general terms, may be accepted. Very broadly speaking, prose does (after 1590) find itself more comfortable in comedy than in tragedy, among plebeian rather than high-born characters, and amid down-to-earth rather than elevated materials. It is true that following such plays as Gascoigne's *Supposes* (1566) or the court comedies of John Lyly (1584-c.1588-90), or popular history plays like *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (1586), in all of which prose constitutes the prevailing medium with no regard to the social level of the characters, or the degree of solemnity or jocosity of their utterances, or the familiar or exalted treatment of the materials, a rough working distinction between the two domains begins to emerge and then crystallize in the late 80s and early 90s.

But Shakespeare is from the beginning hard to pin down, as we learn from a scene quoted by Professor Crosman himself in *1 Henry IV* 5.3.39-

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61, where Hal meets Falstaff on the battlefield at Shrewsbury. This is a moment when Falstaff's selfcentered earthiness finds no answering echo in the prince, wholly focused as the latter is on the battle being fought just off stage, out of sight of the spectators, and on his own need of a weapon. The cross-purposes in the dialogue here find reinforcement in its contrasting rhythms. The oscillations between verse and prose are heard as fitting and natural, with Hal's "hard-breathing" blank verse (in Crosman's apt term) being set against Falstaff's jaunty refusal, in prose, to abandon his role as clown, his subversive insistence on making the saving of his own hide and the catering to his own creature comforts, along with his irrepressible jesting and dallying, even amid scenes of carnage, the only things his mind will entertain. But it is odd to hear it said that "Bevington [sets] up Hal's speeches as verse," as though this constituted an innovation on Bevington's part, when to set them as verse has long been standard practise with editors, since apart from the auditory evidence the lines have the authority of the First Folio, which also sets them as verse.

As for Hal, perhaps it is true for the most part that the principle governing his speeches is that he "speaks 'every man's language'," so that he "must continue speaking prose to characters not capable of speaking verse"—yet on the Shrewsbury battlefield, as we have just seen, he does *not* continue speaking prose to Falstaff, despite the latter's "incapacity" to respond in the more "elevated" medium. With Poins on the other hand, in their opening scene in *Part 2*, as Crosman points out, he does indeed move from prose as levity to prose as expressive of the private and sincere, and one therefore tends to react as if prose were "the medium, and perhaps the index, of his sincerity." But to make Hal's prose addressed to Poins the index of his sincerity would seem to ignore those occasions on which his *verse* self sets the highwater mark for sincerity. Was Hal *not* sincere or was he *less* sincere when he pleaded with his father (in *Part 1*, 5.3) not to misjudge him for his "wildness"?

Is he insincere or less sincere in the later interview (in *Part 2*, 4.5) when having removed the crown, he defends himself anew, this time against the charge of wishing for his father's death—arguing so eloquently as altogether to persuade the dying king (and us) of his loyalty and love? It seems to me that there are dangers in deriving a general *principle* from

a valid and useful insight that scarcely extends beyond the specific scene itself.

Something comparable occurs in the discussion of the scene in *Henry V* where Hal, now King Henry V, perpetrates "the apparent indecorum of doffing his royal garments in order to mingle with his social inferiors," which "enforces the further indecorum of speaking of serious matters in prose." But Shakespeare has always been ready to treat serious matters in prose when it suited his purpose, as in *The Merchant of Venice* (1596), for example, in Portia's tonally playful but nevertheless deeply serious exchange with Nerissa concerning the tyranny of her father's will and the shallowness of her suitors; or in Shylock's turning of the tables on his tormentors Salerio and Solanio with an impassioned affirmation of the moral parity between himself and the Christians.

As for the supposed indecorum of the king disguised as a commoner, this was by 1599 a well developed convention of the English stage, as also of printed romance and ballad,[1] much more likely to have been felt simply as conventional than as indecorous. In such cases, the question is: indecorous from whose point of view? Surely not that of an Elizabethan spectator caught up in the dramatic and human substance of the scene. That would be retrospectively to impose on the said spectator a pedantic notion of decorum that it seems highly unlikely he could have possessed. Probably the most one can say is that if such constraints did operate, they were lightly felt, since Shakespeare never treats them as constricting, but deals with each local situation on its own terms, as it arises, for whatever dramatic values it proves to contain or imply.

The truly unexpected features of the incident at the campfire in *Henry V* would seem rather to lie, first of all, in the soldiers' blunt cynicism about their plight, in answer to the king's patient courtesy in argument—their lack of deference, in short. They make no allowances, as other dramatic characters of other playwrights of the time might have made, for the fact that whether *they* know it or not, *we* after all know that their interlocutor is the king, who must therefore be addressed only with due respect. Rather, these commoners tax their king in harsh deflating terms: he may put on a brave countenance, but if truth were known he would rather be up to his neck in Thames; if he were alone on the battlefield,

he would be sure to be ransomed; if his soldiers do not die well, it will be a "black matter" for him; however the soldiers die, he may as well be ransomed, for all the good it will do the soldiers once they themselves are dead, etc. And they dismiss with contempt their visitor's effort to vouch for the trustworthiness of "the king's" word.

Even more disconcerting is the sequel to this on the following day, when Williams, having learned the identity of his nocturnal antagonist, stands his ground with respectful but dogged honesty, is rewarded with the glove filled with crowns, for which he offers no thanks, and at length scornfully rejects Fluellen's proffered shilling, as if to repudiate *anyone's* attempt to patronize or pacify him with a bribe. All this does indeed constitute a breach of conventional expectation, but whether in so doing it has much relevance to the specific choice of prose over verse is less easy to say.

In any case the king's unmistakable defeat in this encounter would be an exception—an important exception—to Crosman's sweeping claim that he "has language for every occasion, and for every audience," and that he is "equal to every rhetorical task that a King must deal with." On the other hand it is acute of Crosman to see that in the Act 5 wooing scene "Henry doesn't speak prose because the Princess speaks broken English; rather the reverse—she is given broken English so that their interview can be conducted in 'Franglais,' and in prose," and that the purpose in this case is "dramatic variety." King Henry, observes Crosman astutely, is at this point improvising, experimenting with fresh artillery of rhetorical tactics, and in the process concealing much of his thought from us and leaving it open to contradictory interpretations. "There are mysteries in this scene that we can guess at, but not know."

Yet the critic offers a clue: "the key to this scene is *mastery*," a mastery achieved "by being in control of the arts of language, of war, and of princely rule" and above all, of himself, adding to all these a final role to those he has already played so brilliantly, "that of loving, faithful spouse," in achieving which he "adds to his own unique accomplishments and yet merges with every one of us who have been or can expect to be spouses." This last is well said, and it doesn't at all conflict with the fact that in the scenes with Bates and Williams King Henry is *not* in control and comes off badly, since even the most masterful of heroes

can hardly show his kinship with lesser men more unmistakably than by being, like them, subject to such lapses.

Finally, it might be suggested that despite all the evidence of versatility in the figure of Henry V, Crosman takes him somewhat too readily at face value, accepts too uncritically the simply heroic version of him set forth by the Chorus, as against the more skeptical view held by numerous commentators of our own time—e.g., Harold C. Goddard, Mark Van Doren, D. A. Traversi, Roy W. Battenhouse, Karl P. Wentersdorf, Norman Rabkin, not to mention Kenneth Branagh, in his scathing movie—according to whom there is much to set down to this king's discredit, hero though he may be.

In his concluding paragraphs Crosman reopens, but then disappointingly drops, a matter he has earlier touched on: Elizabethan hopes for a popular monarchy followed by the death of those hopes on the accession of James I. It is at least a plausible hypothesis that during Elizabeth's reign Shakespeare "believed in kings who supported and were supported by 'the people,' kings who knew how to speak the common language when occasion called for it"—as Elizabeth herself demonstrated with her oration at Tilbury prior to the expected attack from the Armada—and whose love for her populace was so lavishly celebrated and lovingly reciprocated by that populace in poem and ballad. All of which contrasts sharply with the arrival of a different kind of monarch, one who openly espoused the doctrine of the divine right of kings, who ruled over a people to whom he had come as an alien, almost an occupying power, who preferred to dispense authority from the top down, caring little for the rites of mutual affection between monarch and subjects, and whose own shiftiness and manipulativeness may have foreshadowed such manifestations of rulers not merely disguised, but skulking in disguise and pulling strings behind the scenes, as is the case with Duke Vincentio in *Measure for Measure*. It may be that the falling off in the central position of prose in Shakespeare's later plays owes something to this changed milieu in which he found himself.

The Crosman essay in any case raises valuable questions, and in so doing welcomely spurs further debate. If there is one recommendation one might venture it would be that Crosman could apply more widely his own reference to "dramatic variety" in his discussion of Henry V's

verbal highjinks in the courtship of Princess Katherine. "Dramatic variety" explains much, and so does a principle I would call something like "local option." Despite the rough guidelines provided by rank, realism, and (shall we say) risibility, as criteria for prose, Shakespeare remains less bound to any formula than to his own freedom at every moment to pursue the destinies of his characters and to extract the optimum theatrical excitement afforded by a given situation. The web of his verse and prose is of a mingled yarn, its strands sometimes nearly impossible to disentangle by any simple rule of thumb.

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NOTES

[1]Anne Barton, "The King Disguised: Shakespeare's *Henry V* and the Comical History," *The Triple Bond: Plays, Mainly Shakespearean, in Performance*, ed. Joseph G. Price, publ. as tribute to A. C. Sprague (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1975) 92-117.

Maria's Riddle*

ALASTAIR FOWLER

The interesting discussion of Maria's riddle ("M.O.A.I. doth sway my life": *Twelfth Night* 2.5.106) in recent issues of *Connotations* fruitfully returned to Leslie Hotson's earlier insight, that there may be a 'true' solution to the riddle, different from that arrived by Malvolio. Hotson's own suggestion, that M.O.A.I. is an acronym of *Mare Orbis Aer Ignis*, has rightly been rejected, since (1) M.O.A.I. seems not to have been a conventional acronym; and (2) the Four Elements are not specially apt to Olivia. Similar objections, however, apply to other solutions proposed in *Connotations* 1.2, 1.3, and 2.1.

Whereas acronyms were rare in the Renaissance, anagrams on the contrary abounded. Indeed, so popular was the anagram form that in France it was thought worth while to maintain an *Anagrammateur Royal*. For any educated Elizabethan puzzle-solver, the letters M.O.A.I. would have had one immediately obvious meaning: namely, OMNIA. By customary abbreviation 'omnia' could then be intelligibly written 'omia,' 'oia,' 'oma,' or 'oi'; the *m* and *n* being superscribed as tildes or omitted altogether. In *Twelfth Night* Maria does not need the *m*, but retains it as a bait for Malvolio's vanity.

OMNIA was the incipit of many proverbs and tags. One might instance Virgil's OMNIA VINCIT AMOR, which is apt to the context, and to the

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*Reference: Inge Leimberg, "'M.O.A.I.' Trying to Share the Joke in *Twelfth Night* 2.5 (A Critical Hypothesis)," *Connotations* 1.1 (1991): 78-95; John Russell Brown, "More About Laughing at 'M.O.A.I.' (A Response to Inge Leimberg)," *Connotations* 1.2 (1991): 187-90; Inge Leimberg, "Maria's Theology and Other Questions (An Answer to John Russell Brown)," *Connotations* 1.2 (1991): 191-96; Matthias Bauer, "Count Malvolio, Machevill and Vice," *Connotations* 1.3 (1991): 224-43; J. J. M. Tobin, "A Response to Matthias Bauer, 'Count Malvolio, Machevill and Vice'," *Connotations* 2.1 (1992): 76-81.

letters AMO. But no other continuation was so familiar as VANITAS, alluding to Ecclesiastes 1:2. As it happens, there is a close contextual analogue. For the tag occurs, similarly abbreviated, in a copy of Primaudaye's *The French Academy* in the Bodleian Library. On the flyleaf of Antiq. e. E. 67 (27522. e. 3), written in a near-contemporary hand, appears the marginal inscription OIA VANITAS.

I do not for a moment mean to suggest that all the other solutions proposed—some of them very attractive—should be rejected *tout court*. It suits the riddle form, and the dramatic context, that several half-solutions should offer themselves. But it seems to me that the optimally relevant soulution is 'OMNIA (VANITAS).' Its aptness is manifold. "'All is vanity' does sway my life" fits Olivia's choice of celibate retirement harmlessly enough. Then, the pointed omission of 'vanity' impudently suggests that vanity in quite another sense sways Olivia, who, like her Steward Malvolio, is 'too proud'(1.5.254). Above all, there is delicious aptness in the solution's being a religious commonplace that Malvolio's vanity keeps him from recognizing.

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A Note in Reply to Alastair Fowler*

MATTHIAS BAUER

Many readers of *Connotations* will share my delight to find one of the undisputed masters in the field of literary hermeneutics putting his mind to the riddle of Maria's letter. Accordingly, if I beg to raise a few doubts concerning Professor Fowler's suggestion, this should be regarded as something like the contribution of a pupil who esteems his teacher no less for giving him a chance to disagree.

Professor Fowler takes exception with Leslie Hotson's answer to the riddle, extending his objections to "other solutions proposed in *Connotations* 1.2, 1.3, and 2.1" (269). This comes as a bit of a surprise since no suggestions about the riddle were made in *Connotations* 1.3 and 2.1. Professor Fowler may have been thinking of Professor Tobin's (aptly) quoting a passage from Gabriel Harvey's *Ciceronianus* which underlines the parallel between Harvey and Malvolio, both being entranced by capital letters. But Tobin expressly says that "here is not the key to unlocking the meaning of 'M.O.A.I.'."[1] In *Connotations* 1.2, John Russell Brown has indeed proposed a solution to the riddle,[2] but since he does not treat it as an acronym, Fowler's objections do not apply to him either.

On the other hand, Professor Fowler's own proposal does not fully convince. It is based on three assumptions, first, that "M.O.A.I." is an anagram because anagrams were more common than acronyms; secondly, that this anagram "for any educated Elizabethan puzzle-solver . . . would have had one immediately obvious meaning: namely, OMNIA"; and thirdly, that OMNIA implies the tag OMNIA VANITAS.

All these assumptions are purely conjectural. Perhaps anagrams were more common than acronyms, but this does not prove a particular

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*Reference: Alastair Fowler, "Maria's Riddle," *Connotations* 2.3 (1992): 269-70.

sequence of letters to be an anagram. Quite the opposite may be true. If, for example, the love of abbreviations was not a general phenomenon but characteristic of a particular type or group (lawyers, for example, or pedants like Harvey), this group might be satirized by using absurd abbreviations. In addition, Fowler's alternative is misleading: "M.O.A.I." hardly works as an acronym since *moai* does not read easily as a word. It may be an anagram, or an abbreviation with each letter being spelt out separately (a pronunciation suggested by the full stops). Professor Fowler's proposal, by the way, only makes sense if it is regarded as an abbreviation as well as an anagram, i.e. if OMIA is read as an abbreviation for OMNIA VANITAS. But then all other possible combinations of the two techniques may be equally correct.

If "M.O.A.I." is an anagram, we may wonder why Maria is using four letters when five are meant. The four letters might just as well be read as *moia*, an Italian exclamation translated by Florio as *"tush, fye, plough, gup, no no, what? and is it so? Good Lord. Also, let him dye."*[3] I do not think that this is an answer to the riddle, but it shows the arbitrary nature of this kind of solution. Moreover, OMNIA may, perhaps, be *seen* in "M.O.A.I.," but certainly not heard. The audience only knows Maria's letter from listening to Malvolio reading aloud, and even the most skilful of actors cannot pronounce a tilde over the M.

Perhaps the least convincing of Professor Fowler's assumptions is the third one. The fact that in a particular manuscript of Primaudaye's *French Academy* appears the marginal inscription OIA VANITAS does not suggest that this is meant by "M.O.A.I." in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Even if we grant that "M.O.A.I." stands for OMNIA there is no evidence that a continuation is alluded to, or that VANITAS was the most common continuation. (And even if it were, again we do not know whether the most common is the right one in this particular context.) A glance into Hans Walther's compendium of Latin *sententiae* and proverbs will remind us that there were hundreds of tags beginning with *omnia*,[4] many among them quite as common as "Omnia vanitas," for instance "Omnia mutantur" (from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) or "Omnia dat Dominus," "Omnia mors equat" "Omnia mea mecum porto," and so on. When it comes to the Bible, *omnia* figures at least as prominently, for example, in 1 Corinthians 9:22 as in Ecclesiastes 1:2. Lastly, OMNIA VANITAS

does not really fit into the context of the fictive letter. Vanity may be the dominant trait of Malvolio's character, and an embodiment of vanity may supposedly sway the life of the fictive writer of the letter. But "omnia vanitas" is a phrase *lamenting* the vanity of the world, and this does not quite make sense in Maria's "dish o' poison." What is required by the context is a name *exposing* Malvolio's conceit, his dream of being the beginning and the end of all things.

This leads us back to the "critical hypothesis" which started the discussion about Malvolio and Maria's letter in *Connotations*.[5] In Professor Leimberg's article, a solution to "M.O.A.I." has been offered which has the advantage of being simple, of requiring only the four letters given in the text, and of fitting the context. It requires no combination of techniques, being neither acronym nor abbreviation: the letters themselves, in their right order, are forming the message. They are spelt out most effectively by Malvolio, exposing his desire to become the Pantocrator of his little world, its A and O, while indeed, in Fabian's words, "'O' shall end" when his mockers "make him cry 'O'" (2.5.133-34). As an echo or overtone of this perverted tetragram or divine name of I'M A-O, an all-comprising OMNIA may well be included, but so may abbreviations like I.O.M. (Iupiter Optimus Maximus),[6] resembling the capitals cherished by Harvey, or the letters IAΩ as the Greek version of the name of Jahwe.[7]

Maria's "fustian riddle" works so well because it really allows Malvolio to try and discover his name in it, at the same time revealing the absurdity of his self-love. Malvolio's own words, however, tell us what makes it so difficult to read "M.O.A.I." as an anagram of his name: "'M'—But then there is no consonancy in the sequel; that suffers under probation" (130-31). He realizes that "every one of these letters are in my name" (141)—but not all the letters of Malvolio's name are in the riddle. Two consonants are missing, L and V, indicating what is really lacking in him who is neither lover nor beloved.

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NOTES

[1]J. J. M. Tobin, "A Response to Matthias Bauer, 'Count Malvolio, Machevill, and Vice'," *Connotations* 2 (1992): 77.

[2]"More about Laughing at 'M.O.A.I.' (A Response to Inge Leimberg)," *Connotations* 1 (1991): 187-90.

[3]John Florio, *A World of Words* (London, 1598; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1972) 229.

[4]In the medieval part of his work alone, mostly derived from Renaissance collections, *omnia* tags cover numbers 19949a to 20102. See Hans Walther (ed.), *Proverbia sententiaeque latinitatis medii aevi: Lateinische Sprichwörter und Sentenzen des Mittelalters in alphabetischer Anordnung*, vol. 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965).

[5]Inge Leimberg, "'M.O.A.I.' Trying to Share the Joke in *Twelfth Night* 2.5 (A Critical Hypothesis)," *Connotations* 1 (1991): 78-95.

[6]See Adriano Cappelli, *Dizionario di abbreviature latine ed italiane*, 6th ed. (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1987) 469, where a number of additions to "T.O.M." are given. "A." could mean "Augustus," "Aeternus" etc. The similar abbreviation "D.O.M.A." (probably "Deus Optimus Maximus Aeternus") was used, for example, by Andreas Libavius on the title pages of his works, e.g. his *Alchemia* (Frankfurt, 1597).

[7]See Franz Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1925) 39.

Connotations of Hamlet's Final Silence[*]

JOHN RUSSELL BROWN

I was very grateful to Professors Dieter Mehl and Maurice Charney for showing the short-comings of my paper on the multiplicity of meaning in the last moments of *Hamlet*. I had obscured what I was trying to say by my manner of argument and choice of words; and I failed to show how the wide range of meanings in the single last sentence was related to the whole of the play in performance.

The very phrase "multiplicity of meaning" was a mistake. It suggests that a critic's job is finished when every connotation of the words of a text has been nailed down. Professor Mehl had reason to complain that he "hardly knew what to do with so much meaning" (182). "Wordplay" might have been a happier means of identifying my subject. Hamlet's use of words is like a game—a vitally important one—played with others and with himself; and played, it seems, with language itself, so that he is not always in charge of the game or the play.[1] Neither actor nor audience, nor character, can be coolly conscious of the entire range of meanings that the words suggest at crucial moments in the action.

Hamlet is presented as a person with a boundless energy of mind that is not beaten, diminished, or satisfied at the point of death. He can fool us, even then. This wordplay is not a trivial flourish or quirk of fancy, but an essential quality of his nature and of his role in the play.

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[*]Reference: John Russell Brown, "Multiplicity of Meaning in the Last Moments of *Hamlet*," *Connotations* 2.1 (1992): 16-33; Dieter Mehl, "Hamlet's Last Moments: A Note on John Russell Brown," *Connotations* 2.2 (1992): 182-85; Maurice Charney, "The Rest Is Not Silence: A Reply to John Russell Brown," *Connotations* 2.2 (1992): 186-89.

Shakespeare had hinted at such a tragedy earlier, in *Romeo and Juliet*. So Romeo exclaims and questions:

> ·Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interr'd . . .
> How oft when men are at the point of death
> Have they been merry! Which their keepers call
> A lightning before death. O how may I
> Call this a lightning? O my love! my wife!
>   (5.3.87-91)

Mercutio had already demonstrated this succinctly, prefiguring a darker side of Hamlet's consciousness:

> Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a *grave* man.
>   (3.1.94-95)

After death there can be no lightning; but at death wordplay is a sign of imaginative life.

Once Hamlet knows he is dying, his mind is occupied with the varying possibilities of words, all the way to the end; "strict . . . arrest . . . o'ercrows . . . lights . . . dying voice . . . occurrents . . . solicited . . . rest . . . silence." With him we snatch hopefully at understanding, as speech attempts to make meanings and also outsoars comprehension; and as the fact of death becomes unambiguously and factually apparent.

I did not mean to imply that either Shakespeare or Hamlet was teasing the theatre audience by the use of recondite puns in order to withhold knowledge, but a further difficulty seems to have occurred by my use of the word "secret" to describe what remains unsaid behind the multiplying meanings. I had meant something that remains unknown or unspeakable; not a message that the speaker chooses not to communicate. Never for a moment did I wish to suggest, as I did for Professor Charney, that

> there is another esoteric play behind the public play that will reveal itself only to the initiated (187),

or that, for Shakespeare,

at certain crucial moments the dramatic character can't be trusted with enunciating points that have an important autobiographical clang (188).

I thought I was saying that Shakespeare's sense of his hero's predicament was not unlike his own position as a writer who dared to live at the very limits of his imagination and of his power over words. For both of them, truth—clarity and fullness of verbal expression—is fugitive not permanent, imminent not actual; a moment's reflection will always reveal limitations in any verbalization. Something remains stubbornly unsaid, *as if* it were a secret not yet identified. When an author thinks too much about the limitation of words, he or she will never write very much; but occasionally, the very experience of a disbelief in words can become part of the subject which engages a writer. I believe that this happened when Shakespeare wrote the brilliant, almost obsessively inventive, text of *Hamlet*.

But *Hamlet* is a play and in performance will always have an element which is incontrovertible, in which everything, for the limits of that performance, is implicitly present and accessible: that is the actor's presence on the stage. Something actually does happen on stage which is total. An actor of Hamlet has been stretched and taxed to the uttermost, and by the end of the play he can do only what he can do: his whole being is "on the line." If all goes well, that will be acclaimed, assimilated, and appropriated by the audience. So Hamlet has been alone, has met his father's ghost, has talked, soliloquized, pretended, taken action; he has encountered friends, mother, step-father, a whole court, a company of actors, the young Ophelia, Laertes her brother, a grave-digger, Ophelia's corpse; he has become "scant of breath" and then "incensed" (5.2.279 and 293); he has killed the king he calls "incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane" (317); and then he dies. So far the "bending author hath pursu'd the story" (*Henry V* 5.2, Chorus), and the enacting of all this contributes to the meaning of Hamlet's very presence during his last moments. In each performance it becomes unchangeable; not fully understood or verbally described, but there in flesh and blood, actual. Then after death, beyond all words and actions, the hero becomes an object, a "sight" for Fortinbras to view, a body to be lifted up by four captains. Although every single member of an audience will receive

Hamlet's death according to their own "business and desire" (1.5.130), there will be some degree of common response to the play when it fastens particularly on what Professor Mehl calls "the crude fact of the hero's death." Because of this assurance in performance, "so much meaning" does not confuse our minds; the hero has died at the end of the play, his every resource tested, and we "know" him now, even while we still do *not* know him fully or truly in the words he speaks. The "truth" we sense is in his physical and living presence.

In his last moments, Hamlet himself senses the clash between physical and mental experience: "The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit" (5.2.345). He has registered the physical as simply as he can: "I am dead, Horatio . . . . Horatio, I am dead . . . . O, I die Horatio!" (5.2.325, 330, 344), and continues to experience it.

Hamlet dies; that is the overwhelming, unambiguous statement of his last moments which I should have acknowledged much more strongly. It colours all other meanings; it is ground or base for every thought that goes on within his mind, and for all those words which give distinction to Hamlet's death and lift it into prominence before all the other deaths on stage and all the other persons who are "mutes or audience to this act."

*   *   *

In emphasizing the force of Hamlet's physical death, both responses to my article urge me to give more credence to the "O, o, o, o" which in the Folio text follows Hamlet's final speech. This wordless cry is said to focus attention on the fact of death. But I do not think Shakespeare wrote the four O's for Hamlet to utter. I can see no more certain authority for this addition to the text of the "good" second Quarto than that some person has tried to record what happened or might have happened on stage at the Globe Theatre some time in the twenty or so years between the play's first performance and the preparation of copy for the 1623 Folio. I had cited the study by Harold Jenkins of all sixty-five additions in the Folio,[2] and I still believe that this holds many of the facts needed for an assessment of the issue. Professor Jenkins shows that the four O's are one of several additions which disturb the metre

and repeat obvious small words to intensify a dramatic effect. Some of the full tally of sixty-five could possibly be authorial in origin, but the one in question is among those which inflate what has been already expressed in a manner which goes further in this direction than Shakespeare's custom elsewhere.

I should have argued my case more fully because recent editions have accepted the authenticity of "O, o, o, o." Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, editors of the Complete Oxford Shakespeare (1986), have argued on the strength of type-setting and textual peculiarities that the Folio was set from a copy in Shakespeare's own handwriting; this much now seems certain. But they also argued that this text represents the author's own second and preferred thoughts, expressed in cuts, additions, and alternative readings. So they accepted the four O's and printed them, along with other features of the Folio text which had been banished regularly from modern editions. George Hibbard, whose single-volume edition of *Hamlet* (1987) was also for the Oxford University Press, followed and amplified their arguments. Passages previously part of every person's *Hamlet* are now banished to an Appendix and the new text is based where ever possible on the Folio. Other scholars have accepted much of this, as if every detail of the Folio represents Shakespeare's preferred choice. So Professor Mehl tells me:

> The four O's have . . . as much right to stand in the text of *Hamlet* (unless the Folio is completely discarded) as any other addition in this version of the play. (183)

But granting that the printer's copy for the Folio was in Shakespeare's hand, there is still no call to accept all its readings without further thought.

Who knows that an autograph copy in possession of the King's Men was left untouched by other hands during the intervening years before 1623, especially after the author's death in 1616? The Folio cuts are now said to show a care for metre which is evidence for an author's involvement; but patching-up pentametres by running two half-lines together is not so very difficult for anyone to do, especially someone used to hearing (and perhaps speaking) blank verse almost every day

of his life. Besides, an author might be expected to cut regardless of doing so in neat metrical units and to have more care than is shown here for the larger questions of rhythm, pulse of utterance, and rhetorical weight. Rewriting is often the best way to cut a scene, not the simple excision found here. Even if Shakespeare did make the cuts, there is no certainty that he wished to do so. Not infrequently, texts are altered against an author's better judgement because an actor has failed to make certain lines work as they were meant to do. An author setting out to accommodate actors or make a play more acceptable to audiences or management, is not always working at his or her imaginative best. The cuts from the Quarto indicate to me a fairly lax approach to the problem of saving time in performance and simplifying matters; they do not amount to a re-imagining of the play. They achieve nothing that adds to the interest of the text, and some of them leave unresolved problems behind.[3]

Even if all the cuts were Shakespeare's, that would not mean that every other change must also be accepted. Each should be examined individually. In the case of the four O's, three reasons against their authenticity are found readily in the text itself. First, the repeated cry contradicts several of the most obvious meanings of the preceding words: if Hamlet continues by making four audible noises, the "rest," for him, is not "silence" in any immediate sense. Second, the cry is too vague in effect. It runs the danger of expressing regret or even guilt,[4] for which I can see no support in the rest of the scene. Or it might suggest that Hamlet's words are obliterated by violence, as mere sound expresses anguish, pain, frustration, madness or any other instinctive response. Professor Hibbard seems to recognize this difficulty, for instead of printing the four O's which he takes to be authorial, he translates them into a stage-direction: *"He gives a long sigh and dies."* A low exhalation would be less traumatic than other renderings, but the question remains of what *can* four exclamations express, equally or with growing emphasis, so that they add to the conclusion of the play? No clue is provided.

A third reason to believe that the O's are not Shakespeare's is that they contradict a stage-direction implicit in Horatio's very next words: "Now cracks [or "cracke," F] a noble heart." For Shakespeare, as for many of his contemporaries, a breaking heart was a nearly silent death,

not one accompanied with repeated exclamations: King Lear's, where the watchers do not know exactly when he dies (*King Lear* 5.2.311-15), is a clear example.[5] Elsewhere the breaking of a heart is opposed to utterance of any kind:

> My heart is great; but it must break with silence.
> (*Richard II* 2.1.228)

>   The grief that does not speak
> Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break.
> (*Macbeth* 4.3.209-10)

> But break my heart for I must hold my tongue.
> (*Hamlet* 1.2.159)

>   . . . this heart
> Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
> Or ere I'll weep.   (*King Lear* 2.4.283-85)

The most famous breaking heart in Jacobean tragedy, in John Ford's *The Broken Heart* (c. 1630), is both silent and to all appearances impressively calm.

Professor Charney argues in favour of the "O-groans" by saying that they "were a fairly conventional emotional gesture" in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays, occurring in *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. But four *wordless* exclamations placed extra-metrically after a death-speech are not at all conventional:[6] no hero dies with so much as one wordless cry in all of Shakespeare's plays. The Folio's ending for Hamlet is without parallel. Of course Shakespeare would have been capable of surprizing everyone, but it is hard to see why he did so here to uncertain effect, and leaving at least one unresolved contradiction in the text in consequence.

So long as we do not suppose that the King's Men would have treated Shakespeare's manuscript with scholarly fastidiousness, it is not difficult to see how unauthorized additions such as the four O's and simple cuts could have been added to a manuscript which was sent subsequently to the printer. Shakespeare could have made a fair copy of his own play, including some changes or variations, at his fellow's request, so that

it could be held in the playhouse as a precaution against loss of the original prompt-book—serious losses of this kind had been incurred with the burning down of the Globe in 1612—or because the prompt-book was temporarily unavailable. It may have been convenient to keep an extra clean copy from which to write out parts for actors who were about to take over roles at short notice or in recast revivals. Perhaps it was from this copy, and not the copy behind the earlier good Quarto, that the company's prompt book had been prepared. There are many ways in which it could have come into existence. Once the manuscript had been delivered to the theatre, a book-keeper could have added the four O's to represent what Burbage actually did on stage so that his successor (he died in 1619) could follow closely in his footsteps. (Other additions may be explained in this way.) Or the O's might have been added so that they would be copied into Horatio's "part" to prevent a replacement actor coming in too promptly as he heard the words "The rest is silence." But perhaps Shakespeare's manuscript was not modified until much later when a non-theatrical editor added various stage-directions, off-stage noises, and some exits to make the printed version more accessible and more exciting for a reader.

Recent editors have made little of the fact that the four O's in the Folio are printed "O, o, o, o," and not as all the other exclamations with all capital letters, or with "Oh"s. Nor do they pay attention to the fact that "Dyes," which is also added on the same line of type, is without the full stop which follows all the other stage-directions added to the Quarto on the same page.[7] It certainly looks as if "O, o, o, o. Dyes" has been squeezed into the space available as some kind of single afterthought, perhaps taken from a separate and identifiable addition to the main text in the manuscript copy. "They play," "Play," "In scuffling they change Rapiers," "Hurts the King," "King dyes," "Dyes," "and shout [i.e., shot] within," "with Drumme, Colours, and Attendants" are also additions to the Quarto on this page and all of them could have been added to the manuscript by a single annotating hand. It is hard to see why Shakespeare should bother to add this information. With the exception of the exchange of weapons and the off-stage shot all is clear enough to an experienced reader of the text; and these two directions can also be inferred with only a very little thought—there is no other way of

playing the scene so that its words make sense.[8] Had "Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh!" been part of the text as Shakespeare rewrote it in this manuscript, the compositors would have given it a separate line of type in the Folio, as they did other incomplete verse-lines in consecutive verse; lower-case o's need not have been used against all custom; and *"Dyes"* could have had its full-stop.

Before new status had been given to the Folio as a text set from a manuscript in Shakespeare's own hand, editors were all but united in rejecting the four O's as a ludicrous and impertinent addition; and I believe they were and are right. The O's inflate the drama in an undiscriminating way, so that the actor is forced to make a further, climactic expression of pain, horror, guilt, regret, hopelessness, grief, fear, or some other emotional response. They make demands on an actor without giving a clue as to what should be done. At best the cries might be sensational and puzzling; at worst they would devalue the effect of Hamlet's words and settle matters in some irrational and, probably, painful way. They could make the ending suddenly violent or, just as suddenly, confused. If they are translated into a comparatively quiet *"long sigh,"* this addition would risk sentimentality and restrict the effect of Hamlet's actual moment of death and his acceptance of it; and it would still obliterate the silence that would otherwise follow "silence." An inarticulate cry can have dramatic value, as most famously in Sophocles' *Oedipus*; but that cry is not preceded with words, and after it come explication, exploration, and further revelation.

Without a last cry to focus attention, Hamlet's physical death will make its own undeniable impact over a considerable period of time, while twenty-six lines of verse are spoken and much is being done. Guided by the words of the text, actor and audience will together discover what are its implications in each performance. His mind, the "discourse" of his reason (1.2.150), will not capitulate but accompany his death, still seeking to grasp the truth of the matter. The alternative is to suppose that the play's last "issue" is the "ultimate failure of language" (the phrase used by Professor Mehl, 183). Or to put this another way, to believe that Shakespeare wished to finish Hamlet off with something that was vacuous in comparison with his many words.

What happens to Hamlet's body in his last moments is part of the drama along with the words which are spoken, as it has been throughout the play. That sounds obvious, but to consider a character's words and then pay attention to his or her actions is a common device of a critic who is determined to keep the experience of reading and studying a play as manageable as possible. I was guilty of just that when I wrote about the multiplicity of meaning in the last moments of *Hamlet*. But this is a posture of mind not easily assumed in the theatre. In performance and in responding to a performance, words and actions are inseparable. The priority, if a disjunction must be granted, should be given to action. Any character has to *be* on stage before speaking; and *how* he or she is present will govern how any verbal message is given and received, and hence influence meaning and effectiveness. Perhaps we should think of a character as being imagined first, as an "airy nothing," and then being given a "local habitation" before he or she is ready for a "name" and the possibility of speech.

Shakespeare has ensured that what happens to Hamlet's body is frequently signalled by his words. Of course he is very aware of his "mind," "brains," "heart," "soul"—his inner consciousness—but he also speaks of his body, "each petty artery," "the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to," his "sinews" (1.5.82; 3.1.62-63; 1.5.94). His first appearance on stage is notably silent, so that *only* his stage presence speaks for him. "Oh that this too too solid flesh would melt . . ." (1.2.129) are his very first words on being left alone. Seeing his father's ghost, he realises that such sights can make us "shake our disposition / With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls" (1.4.54-56). His sigh, when he visits Ophelia alone in her chamber, seemed to "shatter all his bulk / And end his being" (2.1.94-96). His memory of Yorrick is of his jests, but also of riding on his back, kissing his lips, and laughing (see 5.1.179-86). Because Hamlet is palpably present to himself, he is the more so to his audience. No cries are necessary to draw attention to his physical suffering at the moment of death; his body has been a pervasive element throughout the drama.

As Hamlet begins to prepare for the end which he senses is upon him, he tells Horatio, rather conventionally, that he, a close friend, would "not think how ill all's here about my heart," but he caps that by

speaking of a particular physical experience—"it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman"—a change quite outside his previous experience. He then proceeds to compare his death to the "fall of a sparrow," an image also based in physical awareness, but referring now to the sudden fact of death as of the end of a flight through the air by a helpless, small creature (5.1.203-12). When he knows that the end does come, he says very simply, three times over, that he dies: indeed the physical fact continues to be in the forefront of his mind, throughout the twenty-six lines of speech that variously accompany his death.

Hamlet will always be what the actor makes of him. He is what has been thought, felt, imagined, done, and experienced by the particular actor before a particular audience. Always a stage reality—a personal presence—co-exists with the words, inspired by them, but also other than them and seeming to give rise to them. The solid flesh, every petty artery and sinew, the disposition of a passionate and distinctive person, all speak with the words, and seem to be beyond the reach of words. Being acutely aware of how this might be, Shakespeare dared to create in Hamlet a character who seems to carry within himself something unspoken and unexpressed; he did this throughout the play, right up until the moment Hamlet dies.

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NOTES

[1]I am indebted for the idea of *Hamlet* as a play to a lecture by Robert Whitman, delivered at the University of Bogota, November 1992.

[2]See "Playhouse Interpolations in the Folio Text of *Hamlet*," *Studies in Bibliography* 13 (1960): 31-47.

[3]As an example of creative authorial cutting, I would refer to Davies' speech of 8½ lines of type, beginning "Eh? Oh, well, that was . . .," on page 27 of the second (1962, 1967) edition of Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker*. In the first edition (1960), on pages 28-29, the speech had 16 lines and was broken by a "Hmmn" from Aston. The cut got rid of a longish excursus on Wembley Stadium and Kennington Oval. But at the same time the author supplied an entirely new short statement: "They

want an Englishman to pour their tea"; this takes the place of "I mean, that's what they're aiming at. That's one thing I know for a fact."

⁴A relevant analogy is *Macbeth* 5.1.48-53:

LADY MACBETH Here's the smell of blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

DOCTOR What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charg'd.

GENTLEWOMAN I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

⁵See also Enobarbus's quiet death after he had said his heart will break in *Antony and Cleopatra* 4.9; those who are watching and listening do not know when he dies. In the same play, Cleopatra also dies calmly in the middle of a sentence, following Charmian's "O, break! O, break!" (5.2.308-11).

⁶E. A. J. Honigmann found nothing similar in a trawl of Jacobean texts for his article, "Re-enter the Stage Direction; Shakespeare and Some Contemporaries," *Shakespeare Survey* 29 (1976): 121.

⁷I have relied on Helge Kökeritz's facsimile edition (introd. Charles Tyler Prouty [1954; New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1963]) 771.

⁸The "scuffling" might seem an over-colourful word for a book-keeper or editor to add; but it has a slightly deprecating tone which chimes with my sense of a modern stage-manager's or actor's way of describing some piece of complicated stage business which is too difficult to describe in short form. However it could be prompted from the next speech "Part them, they are incens'd"; perhaps the more easily if the person using the word had little or no knowledge of what actually took place on stage. As an explanation it is less helpful than an author could be, and less so than the reporter who provided the text of the "bad" First Quarto was: *"They catch one anothers Rapiers, and both are wounded, . . ."*

A Comment on the Naming of Characters in *The Winter's Tale*

KENNETH MUIR

Professor Leimberg's article on "'Golden Apollo, a Poor Humble Swain . . .': A Study of Names in *The Winter's Tale*" in the *Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft West Jahrbuch* 1991 (135-58) is a fascinating study of the names of characters in *The Winter's Tale*, and I have no quarrel with the general argument, nor with nearly all the particular examples. Indeed, Professor Leimberg discusses in a more learned and sophisticated way several of the topics on which I have written during the last fifty years. One example is the article I wrote on "The Uncomic Pun."[1]

Although it is true that "the sources transmitting the relevant mythological lore were easily accessible to every educated person of Shakespeare's time" (135), Ben Jonson would not have regarded his great rival with his "small Latin and less Greek" as fully educated. No doubt he would have conceded that Shakespeare made brilliant use of translations—of Golding's *Metamorphoses*, North's Plutarch, Holland's Pliny and others. He was, indeed, better educated and more widely read than the average graduate in England and America.

So we need not doubt that Shakespeare played with the sounds linking Hermione, Harmonia and Harmony. He may well have added Hermes to the chain. It is certain that he saw Florizel and Perdita in a mythopoetic light, as both Professor Leimberg and I have stressed.[2]

I am less convinced that in changing the names of his main source, *Pandosto*, Shakespeare chose names with similarity of sound because this would suggest similarity of meaning. The triads mentioned by Professor Leimberg do not appear to be linked by similarity of meaning. In the trio Camillo/Mamillius/Autolycus one name comes from Plutarch, one from Greene's *Mamillia*, and the third from Golding. The characters

have nothing in common, although Camillo does encounter Autolycus in Act 4.

Shakespeare knew where to look for appropriate names when dramatising *Pandosto*. Ten of his names he would have found in North's Plutarch, a book in which he had quarried since 1595.[3] There is no evidence that he took the names from Pausanias whose work was not available to him in translation. Few have credited I. A. Richards' belief that Shakespeare was familiar with Plato.[4]

Jonathan Bate's recent book[5] on the influence of Ovid on Shakespeare brilliantly demonstrates that Meres was right to regard him as essentially Ovidian: "The sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare." Even so, Shakespeare did not disdain to make use of Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses*, while correcting it by reference to the Latin original.[6]

My chief disagreement with Professor Leimberg is that she seems to imply, if I have not misunderstood her, that Shakespeare was consciously and deliberately doing what I suspect to have been largely unconscious or semi-conscious. After all, popular Elizabethan dramatists were busy people, continually worried by deadlines. Those who were also actors were even busier, lurching from crisis to crisis. There are many signs of haste and carelessness in the surviving texts, and not all these can be blamed on the printers. Even in his more relaxed years, after his retirement to Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare remained on call. Between 1608 and 1613 he wrote four or five plays, collaborated in four others, and probably did some revision of others.[7]

The community of poets and the commonwealth of scholars were both closely knit and, of course, they overlapped. The scholars all wrote verses and the poets were all scholars to some degree. Shakespeare had plenty of opportunity of picking up information from people more learned than himself. One such was Leonard Digges, stepson of the overseer of Shakespeare's will, who lived near Stratford-upon-Avon. He translated Claudian's *Rape of Proserpine* soon after Shakespeare's death. It is possible that his admiration of *The Winter's Tale* and Perdita's address to Proserpina made him feel that his translation was a suitable tribute to his friend. A year or two earlier he had compared Lope's sonnets to those

of "our Will Shakespeare"; and a year or two later he was contributing one of his tributes to Shakespeare in the First Folio of 1623.[8]

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NOTES

[1]*The Cambridge Journal* 4 (1950/51): 472-85.

[2]"The Future of Shakespeare," *Penguin New Writing* 28 (1946): 118-19; *Last Periods of Shakespeare, Racine and Ibsen* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1961) 48-51.

[3]When he wrote of the early sexual adventures of Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

[4]Ivor Armstrong Richards, *Speculative Instruments* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1955).

[5]*Shakespeare and Ovid* (New York: OUP, 1993).

[6]Bate 8.

[7]*Pericles, Henry VIII, The Two Noble Kinsmen, Cardenio*. I am not yet convinced that Middleton wrote part of *Timon of Athens*.

[8]Another tribute in which he speaks of Shakespeare's popularity as greater than Jonson's, may have been suppressed by the editors for fear of offending their chief contributor. I have suggested elsewhere that Digges may have introduced Shakespeare to some of Lope's works. See *Hispanic Studies in Honour of Geoffrey Ribbans*, ed. and introd. Ann L. Mackenzie, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, Special Homage Volume, 1992 (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1992) 91-96.

An Answer to Kenneth Muir[*]

INGE LEIMBERG

It is a great pleasure and a great honour to be offered a critical response by Professor Kenneth Muir whom, although not knowing him personally, I have always regarded as one of my teachers in English literature, and an especially congenial one at that. When, as an academic youngster, I dared to treat, in a sceptical vein, the paleo-historicism then in vogue (Lily B. Campbell *et alii*), his pleading for the individuality rather than typicality of Shakespeare's tragedies was a much needed and most welcome support. These memories give an added value to Professor Muir's general agreement with my views on paronomasia in *The Winter's Tale* as, on the other hand, they render even more inexcusable my overlooking his own contributions to the theme.[1] The loss is mine.

In his response, Professor Muir raises three points which I would like to take up: 1) Shakespeare's "small Latine," 2) his manner of composition and artistic perfection (considering the limited reliability of the texts), and 3) the range of paronomasia, especially as regards the grouping of names and characters in the plays.

1) As to the question, did Ben Jonson regard "his great rival with his 'small Latin and less Greek' as fully educated," I find T. W. Baldwin's answer perfectly convincing. Putting the aphorism in its context, Baldwin shows that the names serving as examples of "*Latine* and . . . *Greeke*" in these wholly laudatory lines are those of the great tragedians whose works, indeed, did not belong to the grammar-school curriculum of Shakespeare's day. After this initial statement come the two volumes

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[*]Reference: Kenneth Muir, "A Comment on the Naming of Characters in *The Winter's Tale*," *Connotations* 2.3 (1992): 287-89; Inge Leimberg, "'Golden Apollo, a Poor Humble Swain . . .': A Study of Names in *The Winter's Tale*," *ShJW* (1991): 135-58.

full of conclusive evidence that "Sixteenth century schoolmasters had a mountain of erudition"[2] though only "a mouse apiece" of it is claimed for Shakespeare as well as for Baldwin himself. To quote another revered teacher of mine: "What kind of readers do we make, whom circumstances have intervened to make ignorant of what every literate man once knew?"[3] And does not Jonathan Bate, implicitly, attribute that kind of literacy to Shakespeare when he accredits to him corrections of Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses* by reference to Ovid's original?

Though, of course, German as a mother tongue is a handicap for a student of English literature, there is perhaps some small compensation, for instance the surprise felt at discovering the enormous amount of Latin still alive in the English vernacular, even today, let alone in Shakespeare's England with the grammar school in full bloom and the Vulgate not yet fully replaced by any of the translations, to mention only the most popular sources of influence. Surely to any Elizabethan with a grammar-school education and an ear for languages, reading Latin was a mere matter of course. It was, to all appearances, different with Greek, and I agree that, if Shakespeare had any knowledge of Pausanias, it was probably derivative. But that there were sources for such a derivation is shown, for instance, by Nashe in *Pierce Pennilesse*.[4] And who can tell whether Sir Andrew Aguecheek's babbling of "Pigrogromitus" was not meant to be a satirical slur on snobs (like Nashe) quoting the *Periegesis* in the original Greek as well as on Barbarians (like Casca or the undersigned) to whom "it was just Greek"?

2) When it comes to Shakespeare's artistic production being intentional or unintentional, that question, to my mind, lies outside the domain of the literary historian because all he has to go on is the canon of texts. But even if this shows "many signs of haste and carelessness," it also contains the perfect poetry so enthusiastically admired by Goethe, to name only the best authority. Late in his life, in "Shakespeare und kein Ende," he attributed his love of Shakespeare to the wonders performed not by the great "Shake-scene" but by the master of poetic composition and verse-music:

> Shakespeare's works are not for the eyes of the body . . . [he] appeals, absolutely, to our inner sense . . . It is by means of the living word that

Shakespeare produces his effects . . . There is no higher and no purer delight
than listening, with closed eyes, to any Shakespeare play recited (not declaimed)
by a naturally congenial voice.[5]

Under what circumstances the masterpieces came into being which
produced this magical effect on the sternest of critics, we shall never
know. There are, of course, some poetological hints in some plays and
sonnets but none of them tells us whether a certain phrase sprang, like
Athene, out of the author's mind, or was patiently chiselled out. And
if it did come like a flash, who knows anything about "The fine delight
that fathers thought"[6] and about the, perhaps, long time of incubation
which followed? Surely such lines as "When to the sessions of sweet
silent thought / I summon up remembrance of things past" hint at poetic
processes undisturbed by the hustle and bustle of show business. To
add an example from a play (and a theatrically most effective one at
that): who can tell whether the phrase "Than on the torture of the mind
to lie in restless ecstasy" does not bear witness to the spiritual as well
as artistic toil which brings just such a phrase into being? Poets who
have commented on their own ways of poetic production have always
pointed in this direction. ". . . shéer plód makes plough down sillion
/ Shine, . . ."[7] says Hopkins, and according to Sidney a writer
unschooled and untrained as a craftsman will have to wait in vain for
the muse to come and whisper in his ear the words which will make
us all wonder. He just wouldn't know how to transmit them.[8]

If Shakespeare "Between 1608 and 1613 . . . wrote four or five plays,
collaborated in four others, and probably did some revision of others,"
Johann Sebastian Bach wrote the St. Matthew Passion in half a year (in
the spare time allowed by all his unloved commitments), from September
1728 to Good Friday 1729.

3) These general considerations hold true, too, for Shakespeare's use
of paronomasia in particular: all the literary historian has to go on is
that mythical canon of printed texts. The question: Is what seems an
artistic device intentional or not? is a psychological, not a philological
one. So, to paraphrase Sidney, let psychologists dispute. The question
concerning the literary historian is: What, considering that enormous
historical gap, have the words to say and what does the context,

spreading out from each detail like that famous "circle in the water," suggest to the reader-spectator-understander? In other words, the reading of Shakespeare is governed by Shakespeare's own rule "To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit." When a reader so disposed is struck with a chain of variations of a certain sound he begins to sense a connection. The names Apollo-Polixenes-Paulina-Camillo-Mamillius-Autolycus (ollo-oli-auli-illo-illius-oly) are a case in point, and this is where, apart from everyman's playing alphabetic games from the nursery onwards, Shakespeare's grammar school comes in again. In the chapters concerning *iocus et facetiae* in the *De Oratore* (II.liv-lxiv), Cicero makes it very clear how far we are supposed to go in our looking out (or listening) for the telling effects of similarity in single words and word-groups. We may go very far, indeed. One letter is sufficient, let alone such a striking motif as the ollo-illo-olli-sequence in *The Winter's Tale*. Was it intentional? I do not know. Is it effective? Certainly. Does it make for musical coherence? Yes. Is such a coherence considered to be meaningful? Yes. (Ask anyone from the *Cratylus* to Puttenham's *Arte* or from Aristophanes to Dylan Thomas.) However, the meaning is to be looked for on very different levels, beginning with the silly joke and reaching, *via* the flash of wit, to the magical or even sacramental formula. In my own onomastic context the similarity of names appeared to be an index of the constellation of characters.

In his last passage, it seems to me that Professor Muir himself bridges the gap between the psycho-sociological and the philological positions when he says that, in Shakespeare's day, "scholars all wrote verses and . . . poets were all scholars to some degree." How great poets manage to acquire their learning is a mystery. Thomas Mann, for instance, who was one of the most widely read men of the century and, admittedly, held his place with the best of philosophers, or theologians, or Aegyptologists, or, last but not least, musicologists, never took his finals in a school or university nor had any musical training to speak of . . . . And this is the light in which I see Shakespeare's knowledge of Plato or the Greek tragedians as known to his age. I am very glad that Professor Muir signals agreement in this respect.

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NOTES

[1]"The Uncomic Pun," *The Cambridge Journal* 4 (1950/51): 472-85; "The Future of Shakespeare," *Penguin New Writing* 28 (1946): 118-19; *Last Periods of Shakespeare, Racine and Ibsen* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1961) 48-51.

[2]Thomas Whitfield Baldwin, *William Shakspere's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, vol. 1 (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1944) vi and 1-18.

[3]Rosemond Tuve, *A Reading of George Herbert* (1952; Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1969) 42.

[4]*The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow, rpt. ed. F. P. Wilson, vol. 1 (1958; Oxford: Blackwell, 1966) 233, ll. 17-20.

[5]"Shakespeare und kein Ende," *Goethes Werke*, vol. 12 (1953; Hamburg: Christian Wegner, 1956) 287-98 (my translation).

[6]Gerard Manley Hopkins, "To R. B.," *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, fourth ed., eds. W. H. Gardner and N. H. Mackenzie (London: OUP, 1967) 108.

[7]Hopkins, "The Windhover," *The Poems* 69.

[8]See Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry or The Defence of Poesy*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (Manchester: Manchester UP; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973) 132.29-133.3 and *passim*.

From Paronomasia to Politics in the Poetry
of Stevens and Bishop: A Response to Eleanor Cook*

JACQUELINE VAUGHT BROGAN

Being asked to respond to Eleanor Cook, I would like to say at the outset that my overriding intent is to resound, affirmatively, both the general principles she lays out about the importance and the play of paronomasia and to their particular manifestations in the poetry of Wallace Stevens and Elizabeth Bishop (among others). For example, her meditation on the word "turn," when it occurs at the beginning or the end of a poetic line, has altered my reading—or, rather, added a new dimension to my reading—of Yeats' "Second Coming." With the particular *aesthetic* troping with which the word "turn" may be engaged, the opening line, "Turning and turning in the widening gyre," could well be speaking both to the chaotic world at the turn of the century *and* to the failure of modern poetics to accommodate or compose this chaos. Similarly, Cook's sense of the visual "half-moon ellipse" (39) in Stevens' "Six Significant Landscapes" has allowed me to "see" a crescent moon displayed visually at the end of Elizabeth Bishop's "The Shampoo":[1]

> The shooting stars in your black hair
> in bright formation
> are flocking where,
> so straight, so soon?
> Come, let me wash it in this big tin basin,
> battered and shiny like the moon. (EBCP 84)

In a somewhat similar vein, Cook's discussion of the way poets can use periods and ellipses to approach an orthographically visual poetry has made me ponder at length the possible complexities of the dotted

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*Reference: Eleanor Cook, "From Etymology to Paronomasia: Wallace Stevens, Elizabeth Bishop, and Others," *Connotations* 2.1 (1992): 33-51.

"i's" and the visually more *open* "o's" in Eliot's well-known phrase from "Four Quartets"—"At the still point of the turning world." (Or, from the same poem, consider a related phenomenon in the way that the line-break in

>   Words, after speech, reach
> Into the silence.

forces us visually and aurally to reach through a poetic silence on the page.) I have also been led to wonder whether the ellipsis following "We say God and the imagination are one . . ." (WSCP 524) in Stevens' "Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour" is intended to be a typographical subversion of the trinitarian unity evoked—a reminder that such communion occurs literally by way of our words, our signs, even our typography (and not by the Word). Even more intriguing are the visual possibilites of "The Worms at Heaven's Gate" (written during a period when Stevens was consciously flirting with visual poetry). Consider the following two lines:

> Here is an eye. And here are, one by one,
> The lashes of that eye and its white lid. (WSCP 49)

Is it possible that the first period, following the word "eye," is intended to be "seen" as the "eye"? If so, are those two commas, placed "one by one," the visual counterparts to the silhouetted eyelashes being described? More provocatively, are the seven dots which constitute the penultimate line of the poem intended to evoke the sight of emerging worms (suggesting that all there is of the "body" being exhumed is the worms themselves)?

> Here are the lips,
> The bundle of the body and the feet.
> .   .   .   .
> Out of the tomb we bring Badroulbadour. (WSCP 50)

However, if the latter speculations here threaten to move toward a kind of aesthetically detached self-indulgence, that fact points toward the supplement I want to add to Cook's otherwise rich reading of paronomasia in modern poetry. Stimulated by the intellectual and

linguistic pleasure Cook notes so well about the use of paronomasia in Stevens and Bishop, I would like to go a step further and try to comment the political implications of this apparently neutral formal wordplay. I should note, however, that in a different context, Cook does draw out some of the political implications of Stevens' wordplay,[2] and that at the end of the article to which I am responding, she does refer to the political situation Bishop is dealing with in "Brazil, January 1, 1502" (see 48-49). Nonetheless, Cook's meditations on paronomasia clearly emphasize the aesthetic rather than the political nuances possible in this trope.

To take, almost at random, one example—consider the paronomastic play at work in Bishop's "The Burglar of Babylon" when (among many other puns in the poem) she writes,

> The yellow sun was ugly,
>   Like a raw egg on a plate—
> Slick from the sea. He cursed it,
>   For he knew it sealed his fate. (EBCP 115)
>   ["He" is the character Micuçu discussed below]

Here Bishop draws upon the traditional connection between "eye" and "egg." For example, the flower we call daisy takes its name from an Old English kenning for the sun—the "day's eye" or *dæges eage*. And Bishop notably exploits this ancient pun in another poem of *Questions of Travel*, "Squatter's Children," when she writes that "The sun's suspended eye / blinks casually" (EBCP 95). As Micuçu (who will be hunted down and shot by the "army") "sees" the sun looking like an "egg," he also sees, with the etymological paronomasia at work in this word, an authoritative "eye"—even an "I"—which will not only see and silence Micuçu but also literally *con-script* him with the power to name him and then "erase" him as a criminal. It is much to the point of this ballad that the real "thief" in "The Burglar of Babylon" is the conflation of the so-called "moral majority" of society—the army, church, and government—rather than Micuçu, whose name, Bishop humorously informs us in a footnote to the text, means "the folk name of a deadly snake, in the north."[3]

Having chosen not so much the aesthetics of paronomasia or etymology, but rather the political implications of wordplay in general, I beg to add some considerations heading that way. In "Brazil, January 1, 1502" for example (in which Cook does find some appalling political and militaristic implications), I would argue that the word "fabric" resonates with the word "fabricate" with far more political consequences than with the musical pun Cook points to in her footnote to this word.[4] To illustrate my point, I cite both the lines Cook includes in her article and the concluding four lines of the poem (which she does not):

> Just so the Christians, hard as nails,
> tiny as nails, and glinting,
> in creaking armor, came and found it all . . . .
> Directly after Mass, humming perhaps
> *L'Homme armé* or some such tune,
> they ripped away into the hanging fabric,
> each out to catch an Indian for himself—
> those maddening little women who kept calling,
> calling to each other (or had the birds waked up?)
> and retreating, always retreating, behind it. (EBCP 92)

This is the story of rape—of the violence European Christians imposed upon a culture, a landscape, and women (who notably lose any discernable voice), Christians who not only "fabricated" a map of their "exploration," but also their right to impose such a vision and such violence by "fabricating" the native peoples of this hemisphere as "Indians." The history of this mistaken "naming," which continued to be imposed long after the mistake was known, is paramount to what is being "fabricated" here and elsewhere, to who and what was being "con-textualized" in this fabrication, and to all that was forced into "retreating, always retreating, behind it." It is a fabrication, of course, that would extend over the entirety of the Southern and Northern American continents. (It is interesting to compare "Brazil" to Amy Clampitt's recently published "Brought from Beyond," which concludes with these lines:

> O magpie, O bowerbird,
> O Marco Polo and Coronado, where do
> these things, these

fabrications come from—the holy places,
ark and altarpiece, the aureoles,
the seraphim—and underneath it all
the howling?[5])

Similarly, in his famous "Of Modern Poetry," a poem which has been, quite typically for Stevens, read in an exclusively aesthetic way,[6] Stevens uses the word "theatre" with a deft paronomastic turn to point out the devastating political and social reality of World War II. Like Bishop, Stevens is riveted by the power of language—to inscribe and conscript, as it were—and the poem begins with a meditation on "the script," including a pun on "scriptures" which had, historically, been the governing words or reference point for art:

> The poem of the mind in the act of finding
> What will suffice. It has not always had
> To find: the scene was set; it repeated what
> Was in the script.
>   Then the theatre was changed
> To something else. Its past was a souvenir.
>   (WSCP 239)

This is not merely a poem about aesthetic change—about, let us say, either the loss of or freedom from fixed forms and genres. Written in 1940, this is also very much a poem about political change, about a fundamental change in the actual world view of the *cosmos-polis* during the world wars of this century—a change which is figured, paronomastically, with the expression coined in 1914, during World War I, when Winston Churchill for the first time referred to the "theatre of war."[7] (By World War II, we should remember, it had become common to refer to the Pacific theater, the Asian theater, and the like, with the implication that this new connotation for the word "theater" was simply assumed by then.) No wonder Stevens writes of modern poetry that "It has to think about war / And it has to find what will suffice" (WSCP 240). He means this "thinking" seriously in a way that few critics have recognized.

Bishop makes an even more pointed and passionate indictment of the politics of World War II in a poem written the same year (1940) entitled

"The Roosters," in which, given the imagery of the poem, the word
"cock" is charged with three different, glaringly obvious meanings:

> At four o'clock
> in the gun-metal blue dark
> we hear the first crow of the first cock
>
> just below
> the gun-metal blue window. . . . (EBCP 35)

This poem, which itself would require a very lengthly article to unpack
fully the dense political indictments Bishop makes throughout, is built
almost entirely upon traditional paronomastic tropes and associations,
but from a distinctly critical, skeptical, and anti-aggressionist point of
view. Thus, in a poem written in Key West, a key military base during
World War II, these militaristic "roosters" are *not* so humorously married
to "the many wives / who lead hens' lives / of being courted and
despised." The cocks are then connected with St. Peter's, with the story
of Peter's three-time denial before the cock crows, and with the
emblematic scene Bishop creates, consisting of a cock "carved on a dim
column in the travertine" and of Christ, who "stands amazed," and of
"Peter, two fingers raised / to surprised lips, both as if dazed." Though
not overtly stated, there is definitely the implied etymological pun on
"petrified" at work here.

Cook writes that "a simple pun, one without further reverberation,
would be classified as a scheme. . . . But schemes can move toward
tropes when they begin to tell fables about themselves," adding that
"it is these fables" which interest her (37). My point, at least thus far
in this response, is that it is equally if not more interesting to attend
to the fables puns tell about themselves when they also record the
political histories made by those very "fables" in the real world. (As
an aside, and from a political angle, we find similar "histories" of brutal
possessiveness and aggression recorded in both Stevens and Bishop in
their use of the word "Florida" and again in the etymological play
between their use of "venerable" and/or "venereal.")

As the preceding should suggest, even if I read paronomasia in Bishop
and Stevens with more political import than does Cook, her work here

(and elsewhere) has taught me to regard this trope as serious, intrinsic, even critical (in all senses of the word) to the poetics of these two poets in particular—and to poetics in general.

I would like to offer one final disagreement with—or, more accurately, to make a qualification of—one of Cook's broad statements about the differences between Bishop and Stevens. Toward the beginning of her essay, Cook writes that

> one would want to begin by saying that Bishop's kind of word-play follows a Spenser-Herbert line (she was devoted to the work of George Herbert.) Stevens' kind of paronomasia occasionally does so . . . . But Stevens the witty and wicked paronomastic is the heir to Donne, to Byron, to Carroll, to Hopkins, and the like. (35)

While this may well be true of the overarching differences in what I believe ultimately amounts to tone, this generalization minimizes both the overt wit in Bishop and the rich mellowness of Stevens, in his later years in particular. In such poems as "The Gentleman of Shalott" (who has, notably, only half a body completed in a "mirrored reflection" [EBCP 9]), in "The Man-Moth" (footnoted as a newspaper misprint for "mammoth" [EBCP 14]), and in the sonnet appropriately entitled "The Wit" (which I cite in full below), Bishop, as daughter to "Donne . . . and the like," rather than daughter to Herbert, is reaping her poetic inheritance, but with a distinctly feminist over- or under-tone. Here is "The Wit":

> "Wait. Let me think a minute," you said.
> And in the minute we saw:
> Eve and Newton with an apple apiece,
> and Moses with the Law,
> Socrates, who scratched his curly head,
> and many more from Greece,
> all coming hurrying up to now,
> bid by your crinkled brow.
>
> But then you made a brilliant pun.
> We gave a thunderclap of laughter.
> Flustered, your helpers vanished one by one;
> and through the conversational spaces, after,

> we caught, —back, back, far far—
> the glinting birthday of a fractious star. (EBCP 199)

I leave it to Eleanor Cook's ear to hear all the puns and echoes at work in this poem, although we should note that from an ironic point of view, this new "fractious star" (when "fractious" carries a root meaning of "breaking bread") promises to tell a very different story of Eve and her apple from the "evil" one passed down, as it were, by the "Law" throughout the centuries.

On the other hand, despite the obvious wit in many of Stevens' lines, titles, and entire poems, I find a more "Spenser-Herbert" lineage to Stevens' "Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour" (where he not only reworks the Dantean conflation of the lover, light, and the divine, but also recasts, perhaps, the Miltonic lines, "It was no season for her / To wanton with the Sun her lusty Paramour" from "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity"), especially in the opening and concluding unrhymed tercets:

> Light the first light of evening, as in a room
> In which we rest and, for small reason, think
> The world imagined is the ultimate good.
> . . .
> Out of this same light, out of the central mind,
> We make a dwelling in the evening air,
> In which being there together is enough. (WSCP 524)

And, again, although "cock" and "cocks" appear wittily enough in Stevens' poetry, it would seem that Bishop's subversion of the biblical association of the cock and the divine in "The Roosters" exhibits a wit more nearly derived from Donne than from Herbert, especially when compared to Stevens' quieter subversion of that same association in "Montrachet-le-Jardin":

> Item: The cocks crow and the birds cry and
> The sun expands, like a repetition on
> One string, an absolute, not varying
>
> Toward an inaccessible, pure sound. (WSCP 263)

Not to see the "witty and wicked" Bishop, and *not* to see the "quieter" Stevens (a word Cook uses to describe Bishop [p. 41]) is implicitly to continue what I have argued elsewhere is an unfortunate and mistaken critical stereotype of these two poets.[8]

However, I would like to conclude by noting that despite my few disagreements with Cook, without her insights into the dynamics, even poetics, of the wordplay of paromonasia, we would fail to see, hear, or note how serious, fundamental, and pervasive this trope proves to be for both Bishop's and Stevens' keen abilities to resonate, even respond to, the world and words before them. In this regard I think Cook is mistaken to conclude that

> A decade ago, we would be considering the deconstructionist challenge to older views of paronomasia. Now we are more likely to be considering a historicist challenge. Both concur in limiting the functions of word-play, as of all formal effects. (49)

Although I do not consider myself an "historicist," *per se*, I hope the preceding response demonstrates how rich, rather than "limiting," an historicist placement of paronomasia in a writer's poetics can be. As Stevens says—and I agree—"It is a world of words to the end of it." And, as Bishop notes, albeit in a very different context, "'Well, we have come this far'" (EBCP 31).

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NOTES

[1] Quotations from Wallace Stevens and Elizabeth Bishop will be taken from their standard editions of collected poems, respectively. I will use WSCP for Stevens' *Collected Poems* (New York: Knopf, 1977) and EBCP for Bishop's *Complete Poems, 1927-1979* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983) in the text above.

[2] See, for example, Cook's *Poetry, Word-Play, and Word-War in Wallace Stevens* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988), particularly chap. 10.

[3] I have discussed this point at length in "The Moral of the Story: Naming the Thief in Babylon," *Ellipsis* 1.2 (1991): 277-86.

[4]Cook writes the following in her note 28: "To Professor Maria Elisabeth Brockhoff, I owe the persuasive argument that Bishop's word 'fabric' is punning musically, as in German *Gewebe* (fabric) in the musical sense" (51)—although Cook does also see a relation between a musical and militaristic meaning.

[5]Amy Clampitt, "Brought from Beyond," *New Yorker* 28 Dec. 1992 - 4 Jan. 1993.

[6]The overly-aestheticized Stevens, at least as he has been traditionally interpreted for years, has been recently challenged by a number of publications, among them the special issue on Stevens and politics of the *Wallace Stevens Journal* 13.2 (1989).

[7]Melita Schaum first discussed this meaning of the word "theatre" in "'Seemings of History': The Political Poetics of Wallace Stevens" (a paper delivered at the 1987 MLA Conference).

[8]See "Elizabeth Bishop: *Perversity* as Lyric Voice," *American Poetry* 7.2 (1990): 31-49, in which I discuss how Bishop has been erroneously read as an inferior Wallace Stevens, precisely because of her "reticence." I should clarify, however, that in no way does Cook imply that Bishop is inferior to Stevens.

In the Line of Wit: A Response to Eleanor Cook*

ANCA ROSU

Eleanor Cook's article is about a poetic device which many are inclined to consider minor. Although some definitions of the word 'paronomasia'—Cook cites the *OED*—tend to minimize its importance, not only does the word-play, as we most often call it, illuminate connections between writers situated at different points in history, but it also has a history of its own. In antiquity, Cook tells us, Augustine saw profound philosophical implications in the accidents of language. The Renaissance, in turn, exemplified both a lighter use of paronomasia, in Metaphysical poets like Donne, and a more serious one, in poets like Spenser or Herbert. The nineteenth century shunned the word play, and punsters like Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear were never accepted as serious writers.

  Modernists like Stevens and Bishop seem thus to revive a tradition as they inherit word-plays which have become commonplace and re-play them in full awareness of their history. This is why Cook sees in Stevens and Bishop a felicitous combination of the actions of both paronomasia and etymology. Bishop inherited a tradition of word-play different from that of Stevens—Cook places her in the line of Spenser and Herbert, whereas she thinks Stevens follows in the footsteps of Donne. However, Bishop seems to also have inherited Stevens and to meet with him in the domain where neologisms are played upon and integrated into a paronomastic treasury. The history of the words' usage enriches the meaning of the poems, lending them a depth and intricacy in which the educated reader can only delight.

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*Reference: Eleanor Cook, "From Etymology to Paronomasia: Wallace Stevens, Elizabeth Bishop, and Others," *Connotations* 2.1 (1992): 34-51.

Cook's article offers us a number of such delights, as she uses her own depth of literary knowledge to illuminate the poetic texts. However, the main import of the article lies, to my mind, in its implications regarding the nature and usage of language. On the one hand, these implications point to the history of words and their usages, to echoes from the past which persist in the present and influence our perceptions of nuance and allusion. This is the way in which etymology cooperates with paronomasia to create spectacular effects, which can be muted only by indifference to the language's past. On the other hand, Cook opens up an entire domain of signification which is normally obscured by the habit of concentrating on the semantic aspect of language at the expense of all other meaning. That domain includes not only word play but also sound effects, visual effects created by the arrangement on the page, as well as a whole rhetoric based on an awareness of the cultural context.

The argument has a quite evident, if barely acknowledged, historical dimension. At the end of her essay, Eleanor Cook foresees a historicist challenge to "older views of paronomasia" (49), but in fact, it is her argument which issues the challenge, since her use of history seems at once more appropriate and closer to the literary phenomenon as such. For while New Historicism seeks to relate literary works to contexts and events which have been deemed "historical" by historians, Cook searches for connections into the history of the language usage itself. As she declares her interest in poetics and in the quality of the word-plays as tropes, Cook actually evokes a history: "My own interest lies in the area of poetics. Here, I think that a simple pun, one without further rever-beration, would be classified as a scheme rather than a trope. But schemes can move towards tropes when they begin to tell fables about themselves. It is these fables, including their use of etymology, that interest me especially in the poetics of paronomasia" (37). It is the history, or fable that a word can tell about itself, which gives it value as a trope. Rhetoric is therefore built on a common cultural heritage, and its understanding and appreciation depend on participation in that history. If the reader is not aware of the history of a word, the word cannot tell its fable.

In this perspective, awareness of linguistic and literary history seems to be essential for both reader and poet. In the case of tropes with a

history, the poet has the choice of ignoring it or including it in his poetic act, and Cook definitely appreciates the latter: "It takes great skill to extend the fabling history of such words. New puns are a delight, Stevens' on 'inarticulate' and 'artichoke,' for instance. But re-capturing or re-dressing altogether an old fable offers more challenges and more riches" (37).

In her article, Cook illustrates the interesting evolution through which cultural phenomena tend to become self-contained. Once poetic usage establishes a history for a certain word, that word acquires a specific meaning within that history. Thus reading a poem implies an awareness of all the history of poetry. Although she does not openly consider the possibility that a reader may come from outside a certain history, and, consequently, read Stevens without having read the Metaphysicals or Dante, or read Bishop without having read Stevens, for instance, Cook is aware that a shared cultural background is not always available. When she speaks about allusion, she quotes James Merrill, and she agrees with him that culture changes may limit the effect of word play: "The lucky 18th century reader—having read *tous les livres*—could be trusted to catch every possible allusion. This is no longer the case; some of us substitute word-play to make our texts resound" (47). In fact, it was the eighteenth century writer who was lucky to find an audience so well equipped to catch allusion, but "resounding" remains important even in a culture where readers are less prepared to foray in the past of literature. One may criticize Cook's emphasis on the history of word usage, on the echoes of other poetic and philosophical texts, etc., as elitist, since it limits the readership of poetry to the knowledgeable few, but one also has to admit that, when a critic like her comes along and fills us in on all the fables we might have missed, we can only grow richer in our understanding of poetry.

The emphasis on the historical dimension of poetry is also important because it gestures towards aspects of language which we usually tend to ignore. Such aspects play a crucial role in the kind of approach represented by Cook. From the start, she points out a distinction between "the line of wit" and "the line of vision." In her introduction to an issue of *The Wallace Stevens Journal* dedicated to sound, she made a similar distinction between two kinds of mimesis: mimesis as depiction and

mimesis as enactment. One may suspect here the kind of dichotomic thinking that flourished during the forties and fifties among the representatives of New Criticism. Even as early as 1925, I. A. Richards distinguished between two functions of language—a symbolic and an emotive one—in *Principles of Literary Criticism*. The distinction became in the hands of American New Critics like John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, or Cleanth Brooks a tool for discriminating between poetic and non-poetic language. The same kind of desire for establishing distinctions between what is literary and what is ordinary language prompted the Russian formalists to form the notion of "literariness." One can naturally ask whether Cook has inherited these distinctions together with the desire to define literature as an isolated and self-contained phenomenon.

Her practice suggests, however, the contrary: when she quotes from Bishop's "Brazil, January 1, 1502," she points out how the language of ornithological guides has found its way into the poem. This shows that Cook does not necessarily want to distinguish the language of poetry from other discourses. Her distinction is of another nature and concerns rather two ways of perceiving language which she called "the line of wit" and "the line of vision." Why, one might ask, is the line of wit an opposite of the line of vision (or the conceptual)? The answer to such a question is pertinent not only to literature but to the way we perceive language in general. The line of vision, or the conceptual, implies that understanding anything written or spoken is a matter of decoding a message. The line of wit implies that language can signify beyond the message.

Poetry is far from being the unique occasion for the deployment of all the possibilities of language, but it is, nevertheless, the most inspiring in showing us the many ways in which language can function. Several such ways are amply illustrated by Cook in her essay. One wonders for instance, what could become of Stevens' "Domination of Black" if we read it exclusively for what it says. Stevens himself urged us not to do so: "I am sorry that a poem of this sort has to contain any ideas at all, because its sole purpose is to fill the mind with the images & sounds it contains. A mind that examines such a poem for its prose contents gets absolutely nothing from it" (L 251). Cook manages to make us see even beyond the images and the sounds of the poem. The

"turning" passage is interesting to her because the typographic turns double the effects of sound repetition or turning.

Among the many other effects she discovers are the suggestive shape of a stanza in "Six Significant Landscapes," the play with punctuation in Stevens' letters, and the disguise of words like "maculate" and "immaculate" by their less religiously connotative synonyms in Bishop. She also points out the innovative steps taken by both Stevens and Bishop in creating a kind of paronomasia which "works to make us aware of the possible paronomasia in all our words—for all that in our syllables, letters and punctuation marks as well" (45). As it becomes evident here, Cook's work urges us towards a more complete understanding of language both in and outside poetry. She devises a kind of phenomenology of reading, by suggesting that we divest ourselves of the acquired habit of reading for semantic meaning in order to reach the deeper understanding of language's power to signify. Such phenomenology is useful, I believe, because it does not bar, but rather encourages further critical consideration.

I hope to demonstrate that usefulness by offering my own reading of a poem which Cook has subjected to her phenomenology of reading in her book *Poetry, Word-Play, and Word-War in Wallace Stevens*. I have selected "The Snow Man" from the book, rather than a poem cited in the article, because it is treated in full. One of the shortcomings of the article is the fact that, given its more theoretical purpose, it does not complete the consideration of any of the poems it includes. What follows aims to answer the question: what happens to a poem when we read it beyond its message?

Cook's reading of "The Snow Man" focuses on the effects of the paradox which "plays with, and thereby criticizes, the limits of things by being a self-contradiction" (49). Such a reading seems more accurate to me than those that emphasize the poem's symbolic meaning (Bloom, Bové, etc.), since Stevens himself was inclined to favor the non-semantic aspects of language. Such inclination becomes evident in "The Snow Man" even beyond its paradox. The poem opens with a description of landscape, but the success of the description is doubtful. The opposition set up at the start, between the sight and sound, dissolves soon thereafter. This dissolution is the more interesting as it is performed with the aid

of the poem's own sound scheme—another non-semantic aspect of
language which acquires unexpected significance. The descriptive mode
and the reference to sight occupy the first part of the poem:

> One must have a mind of winter
> To regard the frost and the boughs
> Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;
>
> And have been cold a long time
> To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
> The spruces rough in the distant glitter
>
> Of the January sun; (CP 9-10)

Not only is the reference visual here, but there are a number of words
indicating the activity of the eye: "regard," "behold." The careful
composition of the images seems like the setting of a scene, where some
event is going to take place, and the presence of the "mind" leads us
to believe that this event may be of a cognitive nature: the landscape
will help us find out something. This suspicion is confirmed by the
poem's development in its second half, but a dissolution of semantics
also begins to take place:

>   and not to think
> Of any misery *in the sound* of the *wind*,
> *In the sound* of a few leaves,
>
> Which is *the sound* of the land
> Full of *the same wind*
> That is blowing in *the same* bare place
>
> For the listener, who listens in the snow,
> And, *nothing* himself, beholds
> *Nothing* that is not there and the *nothing* that is.
>   (CP 10; italics mine)

"Any misery" seems to be the referent, the reality with which the
landscape stands in a symbolic relation and, possibly, the target of our
cognitive interest. But in the absence of a larger context, this human

feeling appears to be abstract and generalized. Its relation to a desolate winter landscape is at best conventional, at worst a cliché. The intelligibility of the poem, at this point, is rather a matter of recognizing the convention than decoding a message. In such a context, the "sound of the wind," which can also be construed as a conventional representation of the same feeling, acquires the same value as the landscape. The possible opposition between an aural element and a visual one is thus erased, since both are nothing but reminders of a conventional way to express "misery." Cook also observes a lapse in the logic of the poem at this point: "Why does Stevens say 'misery' after such a pretty-winter picture? The logic calls for an 'also': and also not to think of any misery in the sound of the wind, the sound of a few leaves, at some other time and in some other place" (48).

Cook finds that this faltering in logic is the beginning of the poem's paradox, but it is not only the logic of the poem that falters. The speaker begins to hesitate, and his hesitation is marked by repetitions. In the following development, however, what was first perceivable as a hesitation soon becomes a pattern, a deliberate design of the sound whose intelligibility does not seem to go beyond itself. The repetitions foreground "the sound," "same," and "nothing," without achieving emphasis, simply because the repeated words look more like recoils in the advancement of the description than elements meant to stress a statement. Repetition seems thus to work against the sense, and to signal a failure of speech. But because a pattern emerges, the intelligibility of the poem is restored in something akin to music. The words acquire thus the power to signify beyond semantics.

Rhetoric contributes in a subtle way to this transformation of the poem into music. In the context of the last line, the word "nothing" becomes a pun reminiscent of the grace of a Renaissance master, of Shakespeare or Donne. The punning not only attracts our attention to the many meanings of a word that we would think univocal, but maybe shows us that we "use" the words, that we attach their meaning to them to suit our purposes. Stevens' repetition of the word is perhaps the only way in which "nothing" acquires its proper sense. Cook proposes another interpretation of "nothing" in this poem: "One 'nothing that is' is obviously the word 'nothing' as it appears on 'the same bare place' that

is the place of listening and beholding for the reader" (49). The poem's sound scheme and its typographic presence join to create the same effect which at once deepens and makes accessible the word's meaning. Beyond its semantic and symbolic meaning, the poem says something about language, about the way we use it, and about the ways we perceive meaning or derive pleasure from a poem. Cook's approach represents thus an invitation to discover new meanings with every new reading without having to detract the previous readings.

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