

# Connotations

*A Journal for Critical Debate*



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# *Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate*

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## Reason in English Renaissance Humanism: Starkey, More, and Ascham

Åke Bergvall

Thomas Starkey's *A Dialogue between Pole and Lupset*, written sometime between 1529 and 1532, is receiving increasing attention from scholars of political history, Renaissance humanism and literary criticism.<sup>1</sup> The *Dialogue*, although remaining in a unique manuscript until 1878 and therefore exerting virtually no contemporary influence, has been called a schoolbook example of "Christian humanism" in England.<sup>2</sup> The work deserves its high reputation, written as it is in a time of political and religious upheaval by an unusually interesting humanist with close connections to the centers of power. A follower and friend of Reginald Pole, Starkey complemented his M. A. from Oxford with "a thorough grounding in civic humanism, rhetoric and dialectic" acquired on the Continent, mainly in Italy but also in France.<sup>3</sup> But what does Starkey's humanism entail? More specifically, what is his view of human reason? Is he a follower, as some would argue, of the Florentine Neoplatonists, or has he been formed more by the evangelical movements (not necessarily Lutheran) that flourished both in England and on the Continent? Before trying to answer that question by investigating the *Dialogue*, it will be useful to draw a thumbnail sketch of the range of options available to Starkey. And we shall have to begin with an early patristic work that stands behind so much humanist thought: St. Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*.

### I

Soon after his consecration as bishop in 395 Augustine began writing the work that encapsulates his mature views on education: *On Christian Doctrine* (CD). The impact of this work on Western culture cannot be stressed enough; its shadow reached beyond both the Middle Ages and

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For debates inspired by this article, please check the Connotations website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debbergvall00303.htm>>.

the Renaissance. Erasmus, to take but one important example, depended heavily on it and constantly referred to it in his writings.<sup>4</sup> The work drastically modified Augustine's educational theories as expressed in the early neoplatonic dialogue *On Order*, but without dismissing the classical heritage as Tertullian had done. In contrast to his earlier work, *On Christian Doctrine* in effect desacralizes human learning. As in *On Order*, Augustine goes through the arts systematically, but they are no longer rungs on a metaphysical ladder. Each art has an independent value based upon its usefulness for earthly living, or its service as a handmaiden to faith by equipping the Christian with the tools needed to understand the Scriptures. Augustine still has room for mathematics, music, and astronomy (CD 2.16-18, 29, 38), but they are included for their practical utility and not as part of a progression towards the unity of the One. His new emphasis is on the mutable language arts. In a program that was to permeate both the humanists' and the reformers' educational outlook, he especially pushes the study of Greek and Hebrew in addition to his own Latin (CD 2.11, 14, 26). He also introduces new terrestrial disciplines which had not fitted into his earlier intellectual program: natural history, geography, and the practical arts (CD 2.29-30). His change of heart is particularly felt in the strong endorsement of a discipline that was to take center stage in the humanist curriculum: history (CD 2.28). The changed perspective is most strikingly seen in the new view of dialectics: instead of treating it as an art of exact logic, Augustine transforms it into a probabilistic language art placed next to rhetoric, a combination that was to be characteristic of the humanist reform (CD 2.31-37, and the whole of Book 4). To sum up, the arts for Augustine have a twofold function: either they are useful for this present life, or they are preparatory for the understanding of the Scriptures (which, however, they can never replace as the only way to salvation).

It was Augustine's mature view, as expressed in *On Christian Doctrine*, that informed most Renaissance educational theories, yet in Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), and to a lesser extent Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), we find prime examples of the choices inherent in the young Augustine. Under the influence of Savonarola, however, Pico moved towards the position of the mature Augustine before his premature death, and his nephew Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469-1533), by his

espousal of scepticism and fideism (the two almost always went together in the Renaissance), advanced even beyond the parameters of the aging Bishop of Hippo. Ficino was preoccupied with the same issues as the young Augustine, the twin concepts of "Soul" and "God."<sup>5</sup> The liberal arts were to both rungs on a metaphysical ladder: "Philosophy," writes Ficino, "is the ascent of the mind from the lower regions to the highest, and from darkness to light. Its origin is an impulse of the divine mind; its middle steps are the faculties and the disciplines which we have described; and its end is the possession of the highest good."<sup>6</sup> All along flashing his Christian credentials (and we have no reason to doubt his sincerity), he is at pains to show that nothing in his philosophy is contrary to the received dogma of the Church. Yet such is the power of his Platonic metaphors that they color every trait of his religion. Reason and Faith, like Philosophy and Religion, are simply different names for the same thing, since Plato, via Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistus, and the other ancient theologians had learned from Moses, and the later Neoplatonists in turn had learnt from Dionysius the Areopagite, the supposed disciple of St. Paul.<sup>7</sup>

Giovanni Pico is still primarily known as the youthful author of the *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, a work, however, much less read during the sixteenth century than its present day reputation would lead us to believe. Coming under the sway of Savonarola, Pico shows an increasing restraint in his encomium of human aspirations. Yet that is nothing compared to his nephew Gianfrancesco Pico's Savonarolan condemnation of philosophy in *An Examination of the Vanity of Pagan Teaching and the Verity of Christian Doctrine* (1520).<sup>8</sup> As Charles B. Schmitt explains:

Pico saw Scepticism as a service to Christianity; it could serve the function of destroying the claims of dogmatic philosophers, thereby allowing Christian doctrine to become recognized as the one valid source of knowledge. Understanding for him, as for [the old] Augustine, came through faith and not through reason.<sup>9</sup>

Yet on the whole one must conclude that Gianfrancesco moved beyond the Bishop of Hippo to the uncompromising stance of Tertullian, who had wondered what Athens had to do with Jerusalem. No place whatsoever seems to be allowed for philosophy or for human reason.



I have briefly outlined the two extreme Renaissance positions concerning human reason: Ficino, influenced by the young Augustine, virtually makes religion out of philosophy; while Gianfrancesco Pico, going beyond the doubts of the old bishop, seems to assign no value whatsoever to reason. To trace the developments of the first extreme one can turn to the influential love treatises and sonnet sequences, with their simplistic expositions of the cult of beauty, that followed in the wake of Ficino's *De amore*. The acme of this tradition are Giordano Bruno's writings, yet the syncretistic and neoplatonic impulse can also be seen in Symphorien Champier, Francesco Giorgio, Agostino Steuco, Guillaume Postel, Jacques Charpentier, and Paul Scalichius.<sup>10</sup> At the other end of the spectrum one finds a developing tradition of Christian scepticism that included in its ranks Cornelius Agrippa, Peter Ramus and his assistant Omer Talon, the publisher Henri Estienne, Montaigne, and (spilling into the next century) Pascal.<sup>11</sup> Yet if neoplatonism (with its reliance on reason) and scepticism (with its emphasis on fideism) define the extreme points of the intellectual spectrum, there was a broad middle ground that saw reason and faith as necessary though complementary categories, operating within distinct spheres. This was the mature Augustinian view, delineated not only in *On Christian Doctrine* but also in Book 19 of the *City of God*. Erasmus and his English friends More and Colet were strongly influenced by it. Yet the person that most successfully appropriated and spread this view of reason in northern Europe was not a humanist or a philosopher, but the reformer Martin Luther.<sup>12</sup>

In its broad outlines, Luther's theology was an elaboration of the mature Augustinian distinction between spheres. Luther's master distinction, according to Gerhard Ebeling, is that between "the law and the gospel."<sup>13</sup> Yet this is only the most basic of a whole range of dichotomies that touch all areas of life: reason vs. faith, freedom vs. bondage of the will, or the distinction between the two kingdoms (or regiments).<sup>14</sup> Each side of these dichotomies reflects the individual's position: before God (*coram Deo*) or before the world (*coram mundo*). *Coram Deo*, Luther is as suspicious of intellectual attempts to ascend to God as was his contemporary Gianfrancesco Pico. Grace is the key concept. Human kind has no free will, except to sin, and reason is "Frau

Hulda," the Devil's whore.<sup>15</sup> Yet the situation is totally different *coram mundo*. On the earthly level Luther even allows for free will,<sup>16</sup> and he waxes lyrical in his description of reason as "the best [of the things of this life] and something divine."<sup>17</sup> Reason, together with the liberal arts, has a limited function even within the sphere of faith. Following Augustine, Luther sees the arts as necessary for the understanding of the Bible. In the "Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen of all the Cities of Germany in Behalf of Christian Schools" (1524) he sets out the twofold use of the arts: "The languages and other liberal arts, . . . [are a great] ornament, benefit, and honor . . . , both for understanding the Holy Scriptures and carrying on the civil government."<sup>18</sup> Before God, the arts serve as a handmaiden to the gospel, but they have an equally important function *coram mundo*:

Society, for the maintenance of civil order and the proper regulation of the household, needs accomplished and well-trained men and women. . . . We have, alas! lived and degenerated long enough in darkness; we have remained German brutes too long. Let us use our reason, that God may observe in us gratitude for His mercies, and that other lands may see that we are human beings, capable both of learning and of teaching, in order that through us, also, the world may be made better. (Letter 68 and 73)

And this was no empty rhetoric. Spearheaded by Luther's co-worker, the humanist Philip Melanchthon, Wittenberg "far surpassed every other German university,"<sup>19</sup> and became a pattern for primary and secondary education throughout Germany, and the influence spread with the Reformation to England as well.<sup>20</sup>

## II

How does Thomas Starkey fit into this picture? Where along the spectrum from neoplatonism to scepticism should he be placed? For some, the answer has been simple: as close as possible to the Ficinian end.<sup>21</sup> On the face of it, there is much to recommend such a judgement. Starkey spent a large part of the 1520s in Italy, where he received a thorough humanistic training. Furthermore, the *Dialogue* abounds with references to the "excellent dygnyte" of man, reminiscent not only of

Ficino but of Pico's *Oration*. Yet does Starkey's *Dialogue* really fit the Ficinian bill? First there are the biographical complications. Starkey showed evangelical interests, as T. F. Mayer points out:

Starkey may well have come under the religious shadow of Colet in Oxford as well as other Pauline Christians in Italy. Although evangelical religion would make only a brief appearance in the 'Dialogue,' it became Starkey's major preoccupation in the last years of his life.<sup>22</sup>

Not that he was an outspoken or even crypto-Lutheran, but he was in favor of at least some of the ideas of the Reformation, such as the use of the vernacular in both liturgy and the Bible.<sup>23</sup> But if, as I will argue, Starkey had more in common with Luther's views on reason than with Ficino's, that can be explained as much by a general adherence to *On Christian Doctrine* as by any direct Lutheran influence. If Starkey came "under the religious shadow of Colet," as Mayer thinks likely, that only underscores my point. Colet corresponded with Ficino, and read some of his works with great interest. But as Sears Jayne concludes in his *John Colet and Marsilio Ficino*, Colet's annotated copy of Ficino's *Letters* reveals "the differences between the two men rather than their similarities." Colet's marginalia "emphasize his moral fervour, his Augustinian view of human frailty, and his acceptance of St. Paul as the pole star of his life."<sup>24</sup> It could be argued that this Augustinian (and Pauline) emphasis characterizes Tudor humanism as a whole, and that regardless of religious affiliation. Starkey, writing in the midst of the confessional and political turmoil of the first phase of the English reformation, and seemingly with one foot in each religious camp, will provide a good testing ground for these claims.

Starkey's *Dialogue* is not strictly a work on reason, nor an encomium of man; it is a political discussion of the best way to govern the English commonwealth. The fictional dialogue between Starkey's friends Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset takes place over three days, where the first day is given to a discussion of the ideal commonwealth, the second enumerates the multitude of ills that afflict any real commonwealth, while the third day provides practical suggestions on how to alleviate the particular ills of the English commonwealth.<sup>25</sup> Starkey's views on "man" must therefore be extrapolated from a work that has a different

focus; furthermore, only by limiting the discussion of the work to the first day can it be presented as an unqualified encomium. On the first day Starkey lets Pole and Lupset affirm man's "excellent dygnyte": "He hath in him a sparkul of dyvynyte, & ys surely of a celestyal & dyvyne nature" (*Dialogue* 9). While Starkey is open to the possibility that God may permit an alternative route to salvation for Jews and Moslems, who live outside the pale of the Christian religion, the laws of a Christian commonwealth provide the superior way:

Our lawys & ordynancys be agreabul to the law of nature, seying they are al layd by chryst hymselfe & by hys holy spryte, we are sure they schal bryng us to our salvatyon yf we gyve perfoynt fayth & sure trust to the promys of god in them to us made, . . . let us be assuryd that our lawys by Chryst the sone of god, & by hys holy spryte incresyd & confyrmyd, schal bryng us to such perfectyon as accordyth to the dygnyte of the nature of man. (*Dialogue* 14)

While one must agree that Starkey seems to conflate religious with civic values in this passage, one also notes that provisions such as "yf we gyve perfoynt fayth & sure trust to the promys of god in them" point to religious values beyond simply living a virtuous life. One should also note that the "dygnyty of the nature of man" in the last line acts as a *limit* on, rather than as a guarantee of, the perfectibility of man.

But more importantly, this picture of the *ideal* commonwealth must be balanced by the discussions of *actual* commonwealths found in the rest of the dialogue. When Starkey turns to "the state of chrystundome" he bluntly confesses that "hyt wantyth many thyngys requyryd to the most perfoynt state" (*Dialogue* 40). Starkey notes Plato's ideal commonwealth, conceding what orthodox Christianity had always taught: if it had not been for the fall, humanity would indeed have been able to follow right reason, which is God-given: "gud hathe made man of al creaturys in erth most perfoynt gyvyng un to hym a sparkyl of hys owne dyvynyte that ys to say ryght reson" (*Dialogue* 109). From a pre-lapsarian perspective, the attainment of moral excellence would be easy enough: "Yf man wold folow ever ryght reson & the jugement therof[,] remembryng alway the excellence & dygnyty of hys nature, hyt schold be nothyng hard to bryng man wythout many lawys to true cyvylyte" (*Dialogue* 97). Yet our post-lapsarian experience tells a different story:

Thys hathe byn tryde by processe of thousandys of yerys, thys hath byn concludyd by the most wyse & polytyke men, that *man by instructyon & general exhortatyon can not be brought to hys perfectyon*, wherfor hyt was necessary to descend to the instytutyon & ordynance of lawys cyvyl & polytyke that where as man blyndyd by affectys & vanytes therof wold not folow the trade of ryght reson, he schold at the lest by feare of punnyschment be constraynyd to occupy hymselfe & apply hys mynd to such thynges as were convenyent to hys excellent nature & dygnyte, & so at the last by long custume be inducyd to folow & dow that thyng for the love of vertue, wych befor he dyd only for fere of the punnyschment prescrybd by the law, thys ys the end & vertue of al law, . . . but forbycause the multytude of men, be so corrupt frayle & blyndyd with pestylent affectys, we must consydur the imbecyllite of them & wekenes of mynd & apply our remedys accordyng therto. (*Dialogue* 97-98; emphasis added)

As this passage shows, Starkey is apprehensive about the perfectibility of mankind. Plato had "imagynynd only & dremyd apon such a commyn wele as never yet was found nor never I thynke schalbe" (*Dialogue* 108).

Significantly, Pole and Lupset begin their third day of discussion, dedicated to the *remedies* for a sick commonwealth, by asking God to send the Holy Spirit, "wythout the wych mannys hart ys blynd & ignorant of al vertue & truth," "to yllumynate & lyght our hartys & myndys" (*Dialogue* 95). The remedy turns out to be the traditional Augustinian answer (culled from Book 19 of the *City of God*): the job of the civil magistrate, and of the civil law, is to *restrain* the "pestylent affectys" caused by the fall. Starkey had earlier alluded to the equally traditional Augustinian topos of "usyng" the things of this life in preparation for the enjoyment of God (*Dialogue* 44). The law, accordingly, "ys the pedagogue of chryst" that "preparyth mannes mynd to the receyvyng of vertue" (*Dialogue* 137). Yet the law "ys not suffycyent to bryng man to hys perfectyon, but to that ys requyryd a nother more celestyal remedy, the wych our mastur chryste cam to set & stablysch in the hartys of hys electe pepul, he cam to make perfayt man, & supply the defecte of the law, by hys celestyal & dyvyne doctryne" (*Dialogue* 138). Here we are surely much closer to the Lutheran/Augustinian distinction between law and gospel than to any Ficinian intellectualism. Starkey's use of the law, furthermore, is analogous to Augustine's (and

Luther's) view of the liberal arts: they are needed for civil life and are preparatory for the gospel, yet they cannot take its place.

### III

Starkey was a humanist with evangelical sympathies, even if we cannot class him as a Protestant. Yet when we consider the attitude towards faith and reason, no forced distinction between "humanist" and "Protestant" is tenable in Tudor England. In both groups, insofar as they can even be distinguished from each other, the mature Augustinian vision predominated. Of course, there were a few exceptions, like John Dee in a later generation.<sup>26</sup> Yet they remained just that: exceptions that proved the rule. To underscore this conclusion I shall end this essay by taking a brief look at two humanists that despite confessional barriers are united in a common Augustinian vision: the foe of Luther, Thomas More (1478-1535), and the Protestant educator Roger Ascham (1515-1568).

The basis for More's educational program is *On Christian Doctrine*. Given the work's centrality in the Renaissance, this of course should not surprise us, in particular when we remember what importance More's good friend Erasmus had given it. More's "Letter to Oxford" contains the clearest enunciation of these Augustinian tenets. Defending the study of classical languages from the attacks of the "Trojans," More begins by admitting the validity of their main charge: education is no guarantee of salvation: "Now then, as for secular learning, no one denies that a person can be saved without it, and indeed without learning of any sort."<sup>27</sup> He then turns around and explains what beneficial role education does have:

Not everyone who comes to Oxford comes just to learn theology; some must also learn law. They must also learn prudence in human affairs, . . . And I doubt that any study contributes as richly to this practical skill as the study of poets, orators, and histories. Indeed, some plot their course, as it were, to the contemplation of celestial realities through the study of nature, and progress to theology by way of philosophy and the liberal arts . . . , thus despoiling the women of Egypt to grace their own queen [i.e., theology]. But since theology is the only subject he [i.e., the

"Trojan"] seems to allow (if he actually allows even this), I do not see how he can pursue it without any skill in either Hebrew or Greek or Latin.<sup>28</sup>

While progressing "to theology by way of philosophy and the liberal arts" may at first sound like pure Platonism, the context shows that More is thinking rather of Augustine's Egyptian treasures (CD 2: 40): pagan learning as a handmaiden to faith, in addition to its utility in earthly matters.

The Augustinian stamp on the developing *Protestant* educational vision, on the other hand, is revealed in a fascinating letter that Roger Ascham wrote from Cambridge in 1545 to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. "If you would like to know how the University flourishes and what harvest of learning we reap," Ascham begins, "I shall give my opinion in a few words. Many pursue the road to a knowledge of sacred learning, but different men have different ideas."<sup>29</sup> He then contrasts those at Cambridge that follow the Catholic polemicist Pighius with those that "follow the right way with St. Augustine." He then delineates this "right way," which unsurprisingly turns out to be derived from *On Christian Doctrine*:

In connection with the daily reading of God's word, others follow Augustine's thinking above all, and go as far as they can in bringing to it the full range of their knowledge of languages, as though calling in the reserves. Everywhere languages are taught by those who are considered the best teachers of both knowledge and understanding, so that no thought is silent for want of speech and no language swells loquaciously for want of wisdom. We bring in Plato and Aristotle . . . ; from the throng of Latins Cicero is almost the only one we add to them.

Ascham is primarily interested in the training of the clergy, and is less favorably disposed than Luther to those who "use their thin and superficial knowledge to get themselves more easily into some government position."<sup>30</sup> Yet he confirms what was to become the pattern at Elizabethan Oxbridge: the faculty of arts functioned as the training ground for the later study of theology. In other words, the educational program of the mature Augustine had become English university policy. But what is most striking about Ascham's views on

education is how similar they are to those of More, or to those of More's arch-enemy, Luther. This congruence is caused not by any influence between the three (except perhaps from Luther to Ascham), but by the general acceptance of Augustine's synthesis of sacred and secular values.

Högskolan i Karlstad  
Sweden

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Most recently, T. F. Mayer has produced an authoritative edition of the *Dialogue* (Thomas Starkey, *A Dialogue between Pole and Lupset*, Camden fourth series, vol. 37 [London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1989]), complemented by a study of Starkey's life: *Thomas Starkey and the Commonwealth: Humanist Politics and Religion in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989). I shall cite Starkey from Mayer's edition (but without its detailed scribal apparatus), with page numbers given in the text.

<sup>2</sup>Robin Headlam Wells, *Spenser's Faerie Queene and the Cult of Elizabeth* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1983) 35.

<sup>3</sup>Mayer, Introduction to *A Dialogue*, vii.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Béné documents in great detail Erasmus' borrowings from *On Christian Doctrine* throughout his career, from the *Antibarbarorum liber* of 1494 to the *Ecclesiastes* of 1535 (*Érasme et Saint Augustin* [Geneva: Droz, 1969], esp. 59-95, and the appendices on 433-48).

<sup>5</sup>See Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. Virginia Conant (New York: Columbia UP, 1943) 204. For additional examples of Augustinian influence in such important areas as the will and esthetics, see Kristeller, 24, 206, 211, 213, 257, and 306. Yet as Michael Allen points out, "Ficino seems never to have been particularly inspired by the problems of sin, the infected will, the necessity of prevenient grace, and other dogmas associated with Pauline and/or Augustinian views on the Atonement and its theology" (*The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino* [Berkeley: U of California P, 1984] 182).

<sup>6</sup>Marsilio Ficino, "On the Platonic nature, instruction and function of a philosopher" *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, vol. 2, trans. by members of the Language Dep. of the School of Economic Science, London (London: Shephard-Walwyn, 1978) 31.

<sup>7</sup>See Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1964) 1-20, esp. 15-16 and 15n1.

<sup>8</sup>See Eugenio Garin, "Gian Francesco Pico della Mirandola: Savonarolan Apologetics and the Critique of Ancient Thought," *Christianity and Renaissance*, ed. Timothy Verdon and John Henderson (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 1990) 523-32. On Savonarola, see Donald Weinstein, "Explaining God's Acts to His people: Savonarola's



Spiritual Legacy to the Sixteenth Century," *Humanity and Divinity in Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. John W. O'Malley et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1993) 205-25.

<sup>9</sup>Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469-1533) and His Critique of Aristotle (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1967) 6-7.

<sup>10</sup>See Charles B. Schmitt, "Perennial Philosophy: From Agostino Steuco to Leibniz," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 27 (1966): 505-32.

<sup>11</sup>The standard work is Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1960), see also the two works by Charles B. Schmitt *Cicero Scepticus* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972), and *Reappraisals in Renaissance Thought*, ed. Charles Webster (London: Variorum Reprints, 1989).

<sup>12</sup>On Calvin, who followed Luther (and Augustine) in this, see my companion piece "Reason in Luther, Calvin, and Sidney," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 (1992): 115-27.

<sup>13</sup>Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought*, trans. R. A. Wilson (1970; rpt. London: Collins-Fontana, 1975) 111.

<sup>14</sup>On the two kingdoms, see my article "Between Eusebius and Augustine: Una and the Cult of Elizabeth," forthcoming in *English Literary Renaissance*.

<sup>15</sup>See B. A. Garrish, "Luther's Belief in Reason," *Luther: A Profile*, ed. H. G. Koenigsberger (London: Macmillan, 1973) 203. The article, an unsurpassed overview of Luther's views on reason, is excerpted from Garrish's *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1962).

<sup>16</sup>See *On the Bondage of the Will*, in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969) 143.

<sup>17</sup>Martin Luther, *Disputation Concerning Man* (1536), as cited in Lewis W. Spitz, *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1963) 247.

<sup>18</sup>Trans. F. V. N. Painter, in *Early Protestant Educators*, ed. Frederick Eby (1931; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1971) 57-58.

<sup>19</sup>Ebeling 18.

<sup>20</sup>See Lewis W. Spitz, "The Importance of the Reformation for the Universities: Culture and Confession in the Critical Years," *Rebirth, Reform and Resilience: Universities in Transition 1300-1700*, ed. James M. Kittelson and Pamela J. Transue (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1984): 42-67. On Melancthon's influence in England, see my "Melancthon and Tudor England," *Cultural Exchange between European Nations during the Renaissance*, ed. Gunnar Sorelius and Michael Strigley (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1994): 85-95.

<sup>21</sup>According to Wells, for example, Starkey's work was "the most complete statement by an Englishman of the central tenets of Christian humanist thought" before Hooker. By "Christian humanism" Wells means something very close to the Ficinian position: "The Christian humanist asserts, at the same time, the potential dignity of man and claims that, with divine assistance, he is capable of realizing an ideal of perfection through virtuous self-discipline" (35).

<sup>22</sup>Mayer, Introduction to *A Dialogue*, vii-viii.

<sup>23</sup>See *A Dialogue* 88-91.

<sup>24</sup>Sears Jayne, *John Colet and Marsilio Ficino* (Oxford: OUP, 1963) 77-78. See also Leland Miles, *John Colet and the Platonic Tradition* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1961).

<sup>25</sup>See Mayer's introduction to the *Dialogue*, xv. For my purposes it will not be necessary to distinguish between the two fictional speakers (their positions are not really at variance), and I shall throughout refer to Starkey as the originator of the statements.

<sup>26</sup>On Dee, see Nicholas H. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1988).

<sup>27</sup>Thomas More, "Letter to the University of Oxford," *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. 15, ed. Daniel Kinney (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986) 139.

<sup>28</sup>More 139-41.

<sup>29</sup>*Letters of Roger Ascham*, trans. Maurice Hatch and Alvin Vos (New York: Peter Lang, 1989) 68.

<sup>30</sup>Ascham 69.

## Shakespearean Tragedy: Its Christian Premises

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Because some thirty years ago I described Shakespeare's tragedies as written from Christian premises, I have been requested to review what those premises are, and to comment on their significance. Along the way, I shall relate some of the circumstances amid which I came to discover the presence of a Christian understanding in Shakespeare.

Let me begin by saying that literary theory is a topic whose importance caught my attention long ago. During my Graduate School days I chose for my doctoral dissertation a study of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, because the hero of this tragedy was at that time being interpreted as the author's mouthpiece for his revolutionary free thought. According to Una Ellis-Fermor, for instance, Marlowe was "on the verge of formulating the idea that the spirit and 'desire' of man are neither more nor less than God in man," an idea she welcomed.<sup>1</sup> To me, however, it sounded like the Prometheism of Shelley; and I disliked, moreover, its supposition that a drama is a canvas on which an author paints his aspirations. Yet that was the premise of a whole raft of theorists then dominating the study of Marlowe. John Bakeless, for example, likened Marlowe to Thomas Hardy, and went on to explain that for such authors the tragic hero falls not because of any flaw in his character, but because he comes into conflict with "forces that grudge to humanity all that mere mortals shall not attain."<sup>2</sup> This theory, it seemed to me, turned tragedy into a story of a universe hostile to mankind.

Such was not the understanding of tragedy I found voiced by Elizabethan theorists. Most of them regarded tragedies as providing the reader an object lesson in the vanity of worldly glory and the punishment of vice. I had the good fortune in the 1930s that the prevailing horizons of scholarship had begun to be challenged by a historicist named Lily

B. Campbell. Her book on *Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes* issued a call to return to Elizabethan standards of judgment and supported this with a display of evidence. So I followed her lead by reading widely in Renaissance authors, noting in particular the judgments they made of Tamburlaine and their understanding of history in general. And when I had assembled evidence that the premises of Raleigh, Nashe, Whetstone, Du Bartas, and other Renaissance humanists relied on premises that governed also Marlowe's dramas, I argued this thesis in a book titled *Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy*, published in 1941.

Marlowe scholarship in subsequent years has become, in the main, a contest between scholars who have continued to rely on Romantic premises, such as Paul Kocher and Harry Levin, and historicists using premises held by Elizabethan Christians. The latter group has included Douglas Cole, Charles Masinton, and R. M. Cornelius. Cornelius' book on *Marlowe's Use of the Bible* (1985) catalogs more than a thousand allusions to or echoes of the Bible in Marlowe's works. It points up, moreover, how his tragic heroes are characterized by vices that contrast with the virtues of Job and Christ. Earlier, in 1962, Douglas Cole's book concluded that "Marlowe's essential view of the causes of evil in human experience is no different from the orthodox Christian one," and that Marlowe "shares ultimately with both Dante and Shakespeare" his conception of tragic fate.<sup>3</sup>

I had not claimed quite that much. I had said that Marlowe's views are in tune with those of his Protestant contemporaries, but that Shakespearean drama seemed to me to belong to a somewhat different camp. I made at that time no attempt to name that different camp. But gradually, through subsequent study, I have come to realize that Shakespeare's art is more attuned to Catholic orthodoxy than Marlowe's and rests on premises in Augustine, Dante, and Aquinas, some of which Marlowe lacks. I shall try in the present essay to describe and illustrate the premises involved.

The moral philosophy of Elizabethan Protestants, my book on *Tamburlaine* indicated, was an amalgam of Bible lore, Platonism and Stoicism. Of central importance was belief in a God who punishes. The Almighty, so Du Bartas insisted, is not a "sleeping Dormouse"; rather,

he is "the Judge, who keeps continuall Sessions / In every place to punish all Transgressions."<sup>4</sup> Thomas Beard's popular *Theatre of God's Judgments* (1597) was filled with stories of the disasters visited on vicious men "by the prescription of God's will." Protestant followers of Calvin dismissed the concept of contingent events and regarded Fortune as simply "God himself disguised under another name."<sup>5</sup> Sir Walter Raleigh, in his *History of the World* (1614), goes so far as to call God "the author of all our tragedies." God has "written out for us," says Raleigh, "all the parts we are to play."<sup>6</sup> This metaphor comes from Plotinus, a Neoplatonist much admired in the Renaissance. He had likened God to a dramatist who assigns individual souls their roles in a stageplay. Plotinus was praised by Philip Sidney's friend, the Huguenot Philip Mornay, for having taught providence "as though he had meant to say the same thing we read in the Gospel." Mornay advises his readers, moreover, to turn to the opinions of Seneca and Epictetus and there note "how conformable the things which Christians teach, are to the wisdom of the best among the Heathen."<sup>7</sup>

Now this kind of apologetic, let me suggest, risks a scanting of what is unique in Christian belief, namely God's activity in redeeming mankind. When the Calvinist John Studley praises Seneca as "that . . . Most Christian Ethnike," and when Thomas Lodge says that Seneca's "divine sentences" and "serious exclamations against vices" might well put Christians to shame, these Elizabethans are forgetting to add that Christian teaching goes beyond a Senecan beating down of sin to emphasize God's intervening to rescue sinners. Calvin, of course, went beyond Seneca by teaching that God uses punishments not only to condemn sin but also to persuade sinners to flee to God's forgiveness; yet Calvin's doctrine that God forgives by imputing righteousness rather than enabling right action tends to dilute the traditional idea of conquering sin. Catholic theologians had likened God to the general of an army,<sup>8</sup> but the Plotinian metaphor of God as a dramatist assigning roles is rather akin to Calvin's idea of predestination. Calvin's version of double predestination, readers may recall, was supported by England's delegates to the Synod of Dort but was disapproved by theologians such as Lancelot Andrewes.

I am mentioning these subtle points because, it seems to me, Shakespeare's tragedies such as *Richard III* and *Macbeth*, involving as they do not only a punishing of the tyrant but also a deliverance of the nation by a God-serving captain, rest on premises that go beyond those of Marlowe. That is, Shakespeare relied on a more fully traditional understanding of human nature and destiny and of history in general. Let me illustrate this observation with some comparative evidence. Tamburlaine as depicted by Marlowe dies from God's visiting him with sickness, an internal heat. A physician calls it "the fury of your fit" (5.3.79),<sup>9</sup> and Tamburlaine exhibits this by threatening to storm heaven. A similar fury characterizes the dying Duke of Guise in Marlowe's *Massacre of Paris*. We see this wholesale murderer refusing a suggestion that he pray to God for forgiveness; instead, he keeps shouting "*Vive la messe!* perish Huguenots" (18.86). Such death scenes take their model from Seneca—for instance, *The Thebais*, which shows Oedipus punished with his own rage, and Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, in which the hero's mad passions reach a climax in his blasphemous proposal to invade heaven. Corroborating this view of tragedy, probably, was Calvin's teaching that ungodly persons are punished with an insane self-confidence and the headlong passions that plunge them into ruin.<sup>10</sup> In *The Jew of Malta* Barabas perishes when he boasts to the Governor of Malta how he will plunge enemies into a pot of boiling oil, whereby he prompts the Governor to turn this ruin on Barabas himself. Amid "intolerable pangs" of heat Barabas dies with the defiant cry, "Tongue, curse thy fill and die" (5.5.88-89).

The deaths of Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Macbeth* have a quality notably different. Richard, it is true, suffers torments, but they are pricks of conscience caused by ghosts who make him feel guilty of his sins. The Protestant historiographer Hall had described these visitants as "images lyke terrible develles which pulled and haled him"; the anonymous author of *The True Tragedy of Richard III* had depicted them as ghosts "gaping for revenge" and accompanied by a raven's croaking.<sup>11</sup> But Shakespeare presents them as human visitants rather than devils or croaking revengers. They simply consign Richard to despair, while for Richmond they offer prayers. They are referred to

by Richard as "holy saints and wronged souls," whose prayers betoken God's fighting on Richmond's side (5.3.241).<sup>12</sup>

They are indeed "wronged souls," but some readers may wonder why any of them can be called holy or saintly. Is it perhaps because each has had a contrite state of heart when dying? Henry VI, we may recall, died with the words, "O God forgive my sins" (3H6 5.6.60). Clarence we have seen blaming himself for oath-breaking and other injustices as he dies. We have seen Buckingham turn repentant and seek to join Richmond, and then accept his own death as God's just respite for the wrongs he has done. Very conspicuously, we have seen Hastings on his deathbed declare, "I now repent" (R3 3.4.88). What Hastings specifically laments is his having preferred the "grace of mortal men" (3.4.96) ahead of the grace of God. And when he later reappears in the Ghost scene, he is praying that Richmond "conquer for fair England's sake" (5.3.158). The ghost of Buckingham tells us, "I died for hope" (5.3.173), and we hear him praying to "God and good angels" (5.3.175) to aid Richmond. Since all these souls now pray for England's deliverance from evil, we may infer that this good will in them has come about through a conversion. Evidently, Richard's evil has been used by Providence to elicit a goodness in these victims.

There is a special significance, moreover, in Shakespeare's placing the ghosts on All Soul's Eve. For as Emrys Jones has pointed out,<sup>13</sup> medieval Christians believed this was a time when souls in Purgatory might be expected to appear to persons on earth who had wronged them and also to petition faithful folk to redress the wrong. All Soul's Day itself was a commemorating of the faithful dead through acts of almsgiving on their behalf. Is not such a commemoration shown us in Shakespeare's play? Henry Richmond, who has said on All Soul's Eve that he accounts himself a "captain" under God's "gracious eye" (5.3.108-09) now on All Soul's Day leads his "loving countrymen" (5.3.237) to put down the tyrant "in the name of God"—and in doing so refers to his body as a "ransom" (5.3.263, 265). Evidently, a medieval Christian understanding of God's remedy for sin underlies this scene. Also, apparently, a belief in Purgatory.

In Act 3 we heard Hastings identify the basic cause of human evil as a neglecting of the grace of God by preferring "the grace of mortal

men" (3.4.96). This point reappears in the reply Queen Elizabeth gives when Richard tempts her. Richard offers the graces of worldly honor and Fortune's favors in return for the hand of Elizabeth's daughter in marriage. The death of her princelings he ascribes to ill stars and declares fatalistically: "All unavoided is the doom of destiny" (4.4.218). A canny Elizabeth replies: "True, when *avoided grace* [emphasis added] makes destiny" (4.4.219). She goes on to say that

My babes were destin'd to a fairer death  
If grace had blessed thee with a fairer life. (4.4.220-21)

In other words, they have been deprived of a fair death by Richard's lack of divine grace, a blessing he avoided. To parry his present lures, Elizabeth goes on to point out that Richard has both misused himself and also wronged God. Her preferring of some other grace than Richard's is, for Shakespeare, the turning point in his defeat. The turning began when the imprisoning of her babes prompted Elizabeth to bid Dorset to flee to Richmond, who earlier had been prophesied as England's saviour in a heavenly inspiration given Henry VI. But the finalizing of Elizabeth's conversion takes place as she ponders what she has learned from Richard's Herod-like massacre of her Innocents.

Let us focus next on the role of Stanley, Earl of Derby. He has encouraged Elizabeth in her early decision; and, before that, he has tried to save Hastings by confiding to him a heaven-sent dream. Hastings in dismissing that dream was avoiding a gift of grace (in contrast, let us say, to the Bible's Magi, who escaped from Herod when warned from God in a dream). We may ask what Stanley has done to merit the dream given him. Earlier, he has knelt to beg King Edward to pardon a guilty servant; and, in a scene before that, we hear him ask Queen Elizabeth to "bear with" the arrogance Elizabeth perceived in Stanley's wife, to treat it as a "weakness" (1.3.28). My point is a theological one, namely, that Stanley by his act of gracious virtue has made himself a fit person for the gift of a saving dream. Though he has not earned it, he has merited it. Here we can see reflected the teaching of Augustine, that liberty of choice, human free will, can contribute to salvation.<sup>14</sup> Augustine would see nothing Pelagian, surely, when Stanley acts on



his dream by proposing to Hastings, "Come, . . . let's away" (3.2.94), nor when he soon afterwards practises this counsel himself by secretly seeking out Richmond. Interestingly, this action is taken without breaking with King Richard. We see Stanley maintaining a duty to both, yielding his son as a hostage to Richard, while at the same time maneuvering to save that hostage through a victory by Richmond. Stanley's giving his son as a hostage, let me suggest, participates by analogy in the theological concept of God's offering his son as a "ransom"—and in that respect Stanley's son collaborates with the Richmond who spoke of his body as a "ransom" offered for England's deliverance.

I may here remark that I began to be interested in ransom theory around 1946, the year in which I published an article on Atonement doctrine in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. I was then a teacher in the Vanderbilt Divinity School, where one of my assignments was a course on the history of Christian doctrine. When working on this I read theologians such as Irenaeus and Gregory the Great, and discovered in them a *Christus Victor* drama of the atonement. This drama, to my surprise, I found reflected in *Measure for Measure*, a play I was including at that time in a course on English literature I was concurrently teaching. That play's movement from an initially tragic situation to an ultimately happy ending was dependent, evidently, on a sinless ransom directed by a Christian Duke who thereby reformed his city. This discovery made me realize, as my earlier studies of Marlowe and Chapman and Calvin had not, that Christianity's distinctive answer to the problem of human sin is a ransoming of sinners.

But in Shakespeare's tragedies the ransomed ones do not include the play's protagonist (except in *King Lear*, of which I shall speak later). Usually the most that we see achieved in a tragic hero before death is an experiencing of remorse. Thus in *Richard III* the hero ultimately rejects repentance by disowning conscience; yet he is brought at least to an awareness of guilt and a regret that he will die unloved. In this respect Richard's ending resembles Macbeth's. In both cases we see the hero putting on a forced bravado to cover the gnawing of an inner despair. Richard has admitted, earlier, that he is "So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin" (4.2.64). And Macbeth has described himself as so far in blood that "returning were as tedious as go o'er" (3.4.137). Both these

men find themselves trapped by their choices into becoming like a poor player who struts and frets his hour. This kind of punishment is not that of a Senecan tragic hero, whose wicked aspiration burns him up with its excess. Rather, it is that of a hero whose misuse of himself has so hollowed out life's prospects that he can only hide from this truth with a spectacular flourish.

Marlowe has depicted no remorse in his Tamburlaine, or in his Duke of Guise, or in his Barabas. Although Barabas would seem to have much in common with Richard III—namely, a contempt for religion, a spirit modelled on Machiavelli, and a boasting of no brother and no pity, Barabas is never given a discovery of how terrible it can be to die unloved. Richard's discovering this is in accord with a premise of Aquinas, that even lost souls can experience a remorse of conscience, since sin cannot entirely destroy the good of human nature, only diminish it.<sup>15</sup> That is apparently Shakespeare's view, whereas Marlowe may be relying on the "total depravity" doctrine of Calvin. Calvin, we may recall, spoke of sin as a "deluge" of impiety,<sup>16</sup> and he described sinners as raging in their lusts and boiling within—language reminiscent of Seneca's.<sup>17</sup> Such a view accounts perhaps for Marlowe's Barabas, whose wickedness is so extreme that we hear him boast of going abroad at night to "kill sicke people groaning under walls" and to poison wells (*Jew* 2.3.175). But the villainy of Shakespeare's Richard is different. His desire, he tells us, is to glorify a lumpish body unshaped for love. On his deathbed, however, he glimpses underneath his crooked back a human nature that longs for love. That longing Augustine would say, is so ingrained in human nature that some trace of it always remains.

A related observation by Augustine is that an evil-doer has, really, a will divided against itself.<sup>18</sup> This plight is described in the Bible in Romans 7, where Paul speaks of doing "the evil I do not want." That is the situation of Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, when he declares: "Alack, when once our grace we have forgot, / Nothing goes right; we would and we would not" (4.4.33-34). Angelo here both wants and does not want Claudio's execution. Other instances of a divided will occur in many of Shakespeare's dramas. King Richard II, for instance, both desires and does not desire to have justice done at Coventry. Later, he both denounces and agrees to his being deposed. The new King, Henry

IV, both wishes for and disapproves the murdering of Richard. He then promises but at the same time evades going on a crusade. Othello, similarly, is in conflict with himself when he kills Desdemona; he finds himself desiring yet not desiring to "put out the light" (5.2.7). And Macbeth, when challenged by Macduff, does not wish to fight but does so. In short, nothing goes right when once grace has been forgot and one finds oneself caught in a double bind.

Augustine traces the beginning of evil to the human will's "falling away from the work of God to its own work," thus blemishing the will's own nature by unnaturally taking itself as its end.<sup>19</sup> In accord with this, Aquinas holds that a person's acts of sin consist of a neglecting of eternal good by preferring inordinately something temporal.<sup>20</sup> These Theologians see everyman as inheriting from Adam a sickness in the will which, unless healed by grace, makes us prone to commit actual sins of increasing gravity. I believe this understanding undergirds Shakespeare's dramas—alongside also an understanding of how grace becomes available to human beings. Medieval religious drama depicted Adam's son Abel as a seeker for God's favor by offering a firstling of his flock, whereas Cain made a niggardly offering, was angry when it brought him no benefit, and in envy of his brother slew him. For Augustine, two divergent tendencies within the human race were thus typified, one centering about a valuing of God ahead of self, the other a preferring to please the self.<sup>21</sup> Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet* seems to know this doctrine, when he soliloquizes about the two opposing camps of "grace and rude will" in human beings (2.3.28). This Friar, however, overlooks his duty to cultivate grace to prevent rude will from becoming predominant. Tragically, he stumbles "on abuse" by assisting what he himself has called a "doting" version of love, and thus he neglects Holy Order (2.3.20, 82).

Usually in Shakespeare's dramas a person's movement into tragedy is signaled by his neglecting or avoiding of divine grace. An invoking of night is characteristic of Lady Macbeth. She desires to prevent heaven from peeping through to cry "Hold" (1.5.54). And we hear Macbeth, similarly, beg to avoid light: "Let not the light see my black and deep desires" (1.4.51). In fact, he finds himself unable to proceed against the gracious Duncan so long as he remembers Duncan's daylight virtues.

Only after Lady Macbeth has lured him, with her false ideology of manhood, to forget Heaven's cherubin and consider only self-will, does Macbeth consent to crime. Othello, likewise, can proceed against Desdemona only when this heavenly "pearl" becomes disvalued by Iago's luring him to prefer the imagined "jewel" of a self-centered good name. Desdemona's plea for a penitent Cassio, spoken with the word "If I have any *grace* or power to move" (3.3.46), is then rebuffed. Later, he brushes aside her gracious action of pity for his headache, thereby directly causing the loss of the handkerchief for which Othello will blame her. And in a final scene, he rejects not only her testimony that "Heaven doth truly know" her honesty, but also her oath "As I am a Christian" (4.2.38, 82). Thus by a series of avoidings of divine grace Othello goes to his damnation.

A similar logic of downfall is evident in the tragic phase of Shakespeare's tragi-comedies. In *The Winter's Tale*, Leontes falls into sin when his self-centered imagination leads him to reject a gracious Hermione. And in that same play, Polixenes, because of a self-centered concern for courtly status, banishes a Perdita grown in grace, who models her behaviour on that of Whitsun pastoral. In *All's Well*, Bertram's sin is described by two French captains as a fleshing of his will in seducing a gentlewoman. And one of the captains comments: "Now, God delay our rebellion! As we are ourselves, what things are we!" To which the other captain replies, "Merely our own traitors" (4.3.19-21). In other words, Bertram is actually conniving against his own nobility by an act of rude will. But what Shakespeare's context makes evident, further, is that Bertram's rebellion against himself is caused by his running away from the grace of God offered him in Helena. That is the tragedy from which she rescues him gratuitously for the sake of their mutual welfare.

Regarding the punishment of sin, Augustine said that every inordinate affection is its own punishment; and Aquinas went on to explain that punishment consists of a "pain of loss," insofar as the sin turns one away from eternal Goodness, and also a "pain of sense" connected with the inordinate attachment to something temporal.<sup>22</sup> Shakespeare's tragedies depict both these kinds of pain. Pain of loss is evident in the cry of Richard III: "I shall despair. There is no creature [that?] loves me" (5.3.200). Painful loss is evident also in Othello's lament that, like "the

base Judean" Judas, he has thrown a "pearl" away—the pearl being here Desdemona's love (5.2.347). Macbeth voices a pain of loss when he laments, "I could not say, 'Amen,' / When they did say 'God Bless Us!'" (2.2.26-27). Soon afterwards he speaks of having lost innocent sleep, the "Balm of hurt minds" (2.2.36). When he declares that now "grace is dead" (2.3.94) he speaks truer than he knows, since his inner self suffers from his having given away "mine eternal jewel" (3.1.67). Macbeth's "real tragedy," Paul Jorgensen has commented, "consists in the meaning of all he has lost." "He is unquestionably damned," says Jorgensen; but his damnation is "manifested upon this earth."<sup>23</sup> I could restate the same point by saying that Macbeth is experiencing, here on the bank and shoal of time, what it means to have jumped "the life to come." He has made his life hollow by neglecting life's holiness. The pain of that kind of loss I nowhere find depicted in any of Marlowe's dramas.<sup>24</sup>

Shakespeare's depiction of a tragic hero's pains of sense is the subject of Jorgenson's chapter on "Pestered senses" in *Macbeth*. He notes Lady Macbeth's coming to feel pain at the smell of blood, and Macbeth's experiencing shakings of body. Macbeth is pestered also by hearing shrieks and screams, to which he reacts with fits and starts. These fits and starts are unlike the mad ragings of a Senecan or Marlovian tragic hero. Rather, they plague with a sudden fear, such as caused Richard III to get rattled and then confess a loss of alacrity. Sin is punished by an attrition, which I find strangely absent in Marlowe's dramas. His Doctor Faustus, after 24 years of pleasure-mongering, seems to have the enthusiasm of an undergraduate for Helen's lips. It's as if time has taught him nothing. But for Shakespeare, as *The Winter's Tale* tells us, truth is the daughter of time. This accords with the Bible's teaching, that time is God's creature made to glorify him, and it does so by exposing foolishness and by ripening goodness. Time is apocalyptic.

Since sin is against not only God but also the human self's welfare, Shakespeare's tragic heroes experience usually a feeling of wasted labor. This punishment Aquinas refers to by quoting Wisdom 5:7, "We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity." Weariness is voiced by Macbeth when he declares, "I gin to be a-weary of the sun, / And wish th' estate o' th' world were now undone" (5.5.48-49). A bit earlier he has told us he is "sick at heart" (5.3.19), because none of life's good things can he

hope to have. Only defective results have rewarded his labors of toil and trouble. A parallel to this is the weariness felt by the tragic hero of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. "Now all labor / Mars what it does," Antony laments (4.14.47), as he declares himself ready to lie down and stray no further. We may recall also the last words of Romeo, his reference to the "world-wearied" flesh and the "seasick weary" bark he is ready to make shipwreck of. A Christian theologian would explain such heartsickness as the inevitable result of sin plucking on sin in a series of defective actions, by which human beings diminish their natural goodness. Sin progresses as a deprivation that wastes. Thus we hear Richard II lament, "I wasted time, and now doth time waste me" (5.5.49). Those words echo Augustine's phrase, "wasting away time, and being wasted by time."<sup>25</sup> A similar sense of lost happiness is voiced by King Henry IV, when, amid his illness, he meditates on the mocks of Chance that make him want to "sit . . . down and die" (2H4 3.1.56). Also by Henry V, who on the night before Agincourt, tells us he has labored for empty titles and a loss of "heart's-ease" (4.1.236). Shakespeare's tragic heroes weary themselves.

In the Bible's teaching, the only effective answer to sin is grace. And likewise in Shakespeare's tragedies we see often, as an answer to the hero's abounding in vice, an abounding of gracious virtue in other persons. This is strikingly the case in *Macbeth*. The complete absence of pity in Macbeth's describing of Duncan's wounds alerts Malcolm to an "unfelt sorrow," from which he decides to "shift away" (2.3.136), as does also Macduff. Eventually these two meet in England, significantly in front of the palace of Edward the Confessor, a gracious king known for his healing of the sick. There Macduff is tested by Malcolm to find out whether he is motivated by genuine grace or semblance. Macduff passes the test when he cries out, "O nation miserable, / . . . / When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again" (4.3.103, 105), and invokes the saintliness of Malcolm's father and mother. Then news of the slaughter of Macduff's wife and children reinforces his resolve to serve with Malcolm as an instrument of "powers above." In the ensuing battle the tyrant is slain, and Malcolm, when hailed as king, announces he will mend disorder "by the grace of Grace" (5.9.38).

Something of this strange logic of grace overcoming sin can be seen in *King Lear*. This play ends with England delivered from the rule of a treacherous Edmund. An abused Edgar has returned in disguise as a knightly challenger who, in a trial by combat, kills Edmund. The anonymous Edgar has also intervened graciously to save his own father from despair. And meanwhile King Lear, whose selfish banishing of his daughter has been punished by hardships that cost him his wits, is sought out for healing by a Cordelia who has been prompted to graciousness by the King of France's rescue of her when outcast. Lear's story, as Christian commentators have noted, resembles that of the Bible's Prodigal son, who wasted his substance in riotous living. Unlike Shakespeare's other tragic heroes, however, Lear soon becomes repentant and undergoes with Cordelia's help a symbolic death and resurrection. The new life that then begins is marred only by the deep anguish he suffers when Cordelia is hanged. But this situation, for Christian readers, is analogous to the anguish of Christ's disciples when their saviour was crucified.

All of Shakespeare's tragedies tell of the downfall of the hero through his inordinate love of some self-pleasing good. Usually a temptation scene begins the story. In *Hamlet*, for instance, the hero is drawn into serving the excellence of courtly demeanor he idolizes in his father. Graciousness in this naturalistic sense is what we see young Hamlet preferring to Christian grace. Thus when the father's Ghost appears, although Hamlet's initial cry is the traditional Christian one, "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" (1.4.39), he soon breaks away from the restraints which Horatio and Marcellus attempt as ministers of grace. Declaring that his fate is calling him, he vows "by heaven" to kill anyone who hinders his following this Ghost (1.4.85). By the time the friends catch up with Hamlet, he has avidly heard the Ghost's story and pledged obedience to its revenge commandment.

The most damaging consequence of this commitment is Hamlet's acceptance of his father's interpretation of the crime, a way of construing it that rests on a false ideology. The elder Hamlet is evaluated as a "radiant angel," while Claudius is referred to contemptuously as "garbage" and Gertrude is viewed as "lust" personified (1.5.55, 57). The play's facts, however, indicate somewhat otherwise. The supposedly

ideal King Hamlet actually gambled his kingdom in a duel motivated by an "emulate pride" in both contestants. The allegedly beastly Claudius full of witchcraft is capable surprisingly of human kindness, and we see him at prayer begging for heaven's help to repent his crime. Gertrude has remarried unaware of any crime and with approval from the Council of Denmark; her love shows itself in a wifely concern to protect her husband from danger and to correct her alienated son. But since Hamlet equates his father with model virtue, he imitates him by vilifying other persons. With satiric barbs he spreads an unhealthiness. To protect the state from this disease, Claudius feels driven, against his wishes, into plotting a murder of Hamlet. Thus corruption multiplies.

But Hamlet meanwhile suffers psychological frustration from his inability to kill Claudius, and to overcome this paralysis he works himself into a lather of loathing. Only after soaking his mind with animalistic epithets can he thrust a steel dagger—as happens when he shouts "rat" and stabs blindly, thus by mistake killing Polonius. For this act he says he repents, but instead he transfers the blame onto heaven. In a later scene, after a shameful shouting match with Ophelia's brother, he once again shuffles off any blame:

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet!  
 If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,  
 And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,  
 Then Hamlet does it not. (5.2.233-36)

A parallel to this is the dodging of blame by Augustine, when he was under the spell of Manichean ideology. Let me quote Augustine's report:

I still thought that it was not we that sinned, but I know not what other nature sinned in us; and it delighted my pride, to be free from blame. . . . But in truth . . . my impiety had divided me against myself; and that sin was the more incurable, whereby I did not judge myself a sinner.<sup>26</sup>

The false ideology which divided Augustine against himself had its equivalent in Shakespeare's times in a popular mixture of Neoplatonism and Stoicism that polarized reason and passion into a quasi-Manichean interpretation of human nature. I described this phenomenon in a *PMLA* article in 1951 on "Hamlet's Apostrophe to Man," where I was following



up Theodore Spencer's book on *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* (1943). Whereas Pico and Ficino viewed man as capable of making himself into an angel or god, pessimists such as the stoic Cardan and sceptic Montaigne saw man's destiny as no other than the dusty death of an animal. Between these two moods Hamlet oscillates, concluding with the latter by meditating on his return to clay. When he confesses to Horatio an illness of heart, he has the weariness of a melancholy man. Since he lacks Christian hope, his reason and passion remain un-integrated and let him act only by fits and starts. Alternating between euphuistic courtesy and savage spleen, Hamlet has a will divided against itself—as did Augustine prior to his being healed by Christian grace. Shakespeare can depict Hamlet's tragedy because he knows Augustine, who became a convert to the Christian motto of *credo ut intelligam* (I believe so I may understand).

For understanding life, the premise Augustine found most helpful was the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. It enabled him to criticize the Manichees and also the Platonists for their view that evil has its source in the body. The flesh, he insisted, "is good in its own degree and kind," else Christ would not have assumed flesh.<sup>27</sup> In other words, human beings should not seek a melting of the flesh, as Hamlet does, or a discarding of it in order to live better with the "other half," as Hamlet insists Gertrude do; rather, they should seek a healing of the wounded self through the grace of charity. Evil is not some "mighty opposite" of the good; it is, rather, a deprivation that depends on the goodness it corrupts. This important premise enabled Augustine to describe the evil-doer as one who seeks a likeness to God, but in a shadowy way. Why did I, he asks, perversely imitate God when fleeing from Him, and thus obtain only a maimed liberty that mimicks His omnipotency?<sup>28</sup>

Augustine's realization that the fate of sinners is to parody unwittingly the action of God is an insight Dante used when writing *The Inferno*. That Shakespeare also used it, I have illustrated elsewhere<sup>29</sup>—for instance by pointing out that Hamlet's "mousetrap" strategy amounts to a parody of the atoning mousetrap enacted by Christ, and by noting that Antony's offering of his self-stabbed body to Cleopatra is a parody of the crucified Christ's offering his wounded body to God. Another example is the parody of a Catholic Mass we recognize when Macbeth

meditates on a dagger (in place of a cross) and declares "It is done" (his *consummatum est*) as he goes forth on a mission of murder. A parody of the Mass occurs also when Romeo, at Juliet's tomb, raises his chalice with the words "Here's to my love" (5.3.119). And of course in this tragedy both Romeo and Juliet parody their proclaimed role of holy "pilgrim" by behaving as "runaways." I must now break off, however, at least for the moment, my illustrating of Augustinian premises in Shakespeare. I hope I have made clear that these premises include all that constitute a genuinely Christian understanding of human nature and destiny.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Una M. Ellis-Fermor, *Christopher Marlowe* (1927; rpt. Hamden: Archon Books, 1967) 33.

<sup>2</sup>John Bakeless, *Christopher Marlowe* (London: Cape, 1938) 6.

<sup>3</sup>Douglas Cole, *Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1962) 260.

<sup>4</sup>*The Divine Weeks, The First Week, Seventh Day*, 119 and 184-85, *The Complete Works of Joshua Sylvester*, ed. A. B. Grosart (London, 1880).

<sup>5</sup>Philip du Plessis-Mornay, *A Woork Concerning the Trewnesse of the Christian Religion* (1587; rpt. Delmar: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints) 217.

<sup>6</sup>Preface, Sig. D<sup>v</sup>-D2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>7</sup>Du Plessis-Mornay 213-16.

<sup>8</sup>For instance, Augustine, *Confessions*, end of Book VII, trans. E. B. Pusey (Rivington, 1838).

<sup>9</sup>Marlowe is quoted from *The Works and Life of Christopher Marlowe*, gen. ed. R. H. Case, 6 vols. (1930; rpt. New York: Gordian P, 1966).

<sup>10</sup>*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.iv.3-4, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster P, 1960).

<sup>11</sup>Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 3 (London: RKP, 1960) 291 and 339. Compare Calvin's view, in *Institutes* I.xvi.5 and 8, that every adversity a man suffers is God's curse and a sign of God's "special vengeance."

<sup>12</sup>Shakespeare is quoted from the Riverside Edition, ed. G. Blakemore Evans et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

<sup>13</sup>Emrys Jones, *The Origins of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977) 229.

<sup>14</sup>Calvin was wary of this concept. In *Institutes* II.v.11 he declared: "Any mixture of the power of free will that men strive to mingle with God's grace is nothing but a corruption of grace."

<sup>15</sup>*Summa Theologica* I-II.85.2, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, rev. Daniel J. Sullivan (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952). A useful comparison of Aquinas with Calvin is provided by Alvin Vos, *Aquinas, Calvin & Contemporary Protestant Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985).

<sup>16</sup>*Institutes* II.i.8-9. He holds in *Institutes* II.iv.4 that a sinful man cannot of his own nature aspire to good, and in II.ii.6 he faults Peter Lombard for suggesting that man of his own nature seeks after good.

<sup>17</sup>*Institutes* II.vii.10. The Calvinist Du Bartas speaks, similarly, of "Our boiling Fleshe's fell Concupiscence," in *Divine Weeks*, First Week, Fourth Day, line 535. Such language differs from that of Augustine, who speaks of the "birdlime" of concupiscence in which the will gets stuck. See *Confessions* X.42 and compare Shakespeare's Claudius, "O limed soul . . ." (*Ham.* 3.3.68).

<sup>18</sup>See *Confessions* VIII.22-24.

<sup>19</sup>*City of God* XIV.11, ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo, 1887).

<sup>20</sup>*Summa Theologica* I-II.77.4.

<sup>21</sup>*City of God* XV.1 and 7.

<sup>22</sup>*Summa Theologica* I-II.87.1 and 4.

<sup>23</sup>Paul Jorgensen, *Our Naked Frailties: Sensational Art and Meaning in Macbeth* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1971) 214.

<sup>24</sup>Douglas Cole thought he detected what theology calls pain of loss in Tamburlaine's grief for the death of Zenocrate, and in the sorrow of Edward II over losing his crown (252-54). But since those were temporal losses to which the hero responds with fury, it seems to me Cole has misapplied the theological concept.

<sup>25</sup>*Confessions* IX.10.

<sup>26</sup>*Confessions* V.18.

<sup>27</sup>*City of God* XIV.5. Similarly, against the Stoics, Augustine argued in XIV.9 that human passions are good if rightly ordered. Reason and passion are integrated when a humble charity heals the disorder in our fallen human nature.

<sup>28</sup>*Confessions* II.14 and *On the Trinity* I.xi.5.

<sup>29</sup>In "Augustinian Roots in Shakespeare's Sense of Tragedy," *The Upstart Crow: A Shakespeare Journal* 6 (1986): 1-7; and in *Shakespeare's Christian Dimension* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994) 47-50 and 402-04.

## Was *The Raigne of King Edward III* a Compliment to Lord Hunsdon?

ROGER PRIOR

The anonymous play *The Raigne of King Edward the Third* was entered in the Stationers' Register on 1 December 1595 and first published in the following year.<sup>1</sup> It owes what fame it has to the increasingly popular theory that Shakespeare wrote all or part of it.<sup>2</sup> Many critics have believed that he wrote the scenes in which King Edward tries to seduce the reluctant Countess of Salisbury, but recent work has tended to stress the unity of the play, and to conclude that if Shakespeare wrote the Countess scenes he probably wrote the whole play, despite its uneven quality.<sup>3</sup>

Although I agree that Shakespeare did write all or most of *Edward III*, this paper is not primarily concerned with the question of authorship. It suggests that *Edward III* was written as a deliberate compliment to Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, Elizabeth's cousin and Lord Chamberlain from 1585, and that it was performed before him and his family in 1594 by the actors whom he took into his service in that year, the company commonly known as the Lord Chamberlain's men. This theory is based on two kinds of evidence. First, I shall show that the author of *Edward III* must have known Hunsdon personally, had access to his library, and used his privileged knowledge in the writing of the play. Secondly, I argue that *Edward III* contains specific references to Hunsdon's interests; it flatters him both by referring more or less directly to his achievements and by providing support for his views.

One of Hunsdon's interests was in fact the reign of Edward III itself. He left the evidence for this in his own copy of Froissart's *Chroniques*, which is preserved in the British Library.<sup>4</sup> Thanks to this fortunate survival we know that the principal source for *Edward III* was also one of Hunsdon's most valued and consulted books. He used it rather as

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For debates inspired by this article, please check the Connotations website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debprior00303.htm>>.

a family bible, for on a blank leaf he recorded the births of his children—the time of birth, the place, and the names of their godparents. Moreover on some pages in the first Book he underlined short sections of the text and added comments in the margin. The margins were later cropped, with the result that a few letters are missing from some of the annotations. There is no doubt that these notes are in Hunsdon's own hand, and it is certain, from the firm and elegant character of the hand, that Hunsdon wrote them long before his old age and hence long before the composition of *Edward III*. They show, first of all, that the dramatist and Lord Hunsdon were both interested in the same historical events and had read about them in the same chapters of Froissart. No other dramatist depicted these events in any extant play. Froissart's *Chronicles* is a very long work, but both dramatist and patron were concerned with the same small section of it. The overlap is not exact, but it is extraordinarily close. Hunsdon begins his annotation of Froissart at Chapter 24; in the same chapter the dramatist starts to borrow consistently and heavily from Berners' translation.<sup>5</sup> The only chapter that he uses earlier than this is Chapter 5. Hunsdon's notes end at Chapter 123, while the dramatist continues to borrow from another fifty chapters. Thus the dramatist read all the chapters that Hunsdon annotated, and borrowed from many of them. Hunsdon did not annotate the accounts of Crécy and Poitiers, which are important in the play, but it is hard to believe that he did not go on to read Froissart's account of these battles, either in the original or in Berners' translation.

The marginal notes vary in importance. Some consist of a word or two, and are little more than signposts, but others are longer and indicate a greater interest. When we compare these longer annotations with *Edward III* we find again and again that what Hunsdon thought worth recording is reflected in the play. What makes these parallels especially significant is that both Hunsdon and the dramatist are highly selective in their use of Froissart. In fifty chapters of Froissart, for example, Hunsdon may make as few as ten marginal notes, and the dramatist, of course, is equally selective, or more so.

The fact that the play seems to echo so many of Hunsdon's annotations leads to the natural conclusion that the dramatist had read them, and we shall later see conclusive proof that this was the case. More, he must

have had Hunsdon's own copy of Froissart's *Chronicles* before him as he wrote. As he read the annotations, he sometimes chose Hunsdon's words in preference to those that he found in Berners' translation of Froissart.

What are the main parallels between Hunsdon's annotations and the play? Hunsdon notes: "kyng edward cales hymself kyng of france" (fol. xxxi *recto*), and the same point is made in the first scene of the play. Even more striking is the note: "Homage dune by kyng edward too kyng phillip of france" (xvii *recto*). This occurred long before the events depicted in the play, and there is no reason why the dramatist should make use of it. Nevertheless he does so, and departs from Froissart in the process, since he makes Edward's refusal to do homage part of his declaration of war (I.i.60: "do him lowly homage"). Nor is there any particular reason why the dramatist should mention that "the Emperor . . . makes our king lieutenant generall" (II.ii.8, 10). But again Hunsdon notes: "kyng edward m[ade] ye emperors vi[car] general and ly[eute]nant of ye empire" (xxv *recto*). Hunsdon comments on the sea battles, including the battle of Sluys; the dramatist shows us this battle in detail. Hunsdon, like the dramatist, is interested in the Earl of Salisbury, and notes that he was taken prisoner (xxxv *recto*). The dramatist describes this incident, and returns to it several times. Elsewhere Hunsdon writes: "[ki]ng edwardes [la]ndying yn nor[m]andy" (lxxxii *verso*). Berners does not use the word *landing* in this context, but in the play Edward twice refers to "my (our) *landing*" (III.iii.15, 89; my italics).

But most remarkable of all is the fact that Hunsdon takes an especial interest in the Scottish siege of Salisbury's castle, an incident which the dramatist not only included but, as we shall see, seems to have designed with Hunsdon in mind. Hunsdon notes in the preliminary sack of Durham: "[y]e towne of duram [ta]ken and burnt [a]nd man woman chylde kylde" (liii *verso*). Here the dramatist seems to echo three of Hunsdon's words—*towne*, *taken* and *burnt*—and he uses them in the same context: "or *take* truce; / But *burne* their neighbor *townes*" (I.ii.23-24, my italics). In Berners (Chapter 75) Durham is always correctly referred to as a *city*, never a *town*. Hunsdon then writes: "Salsbery beseg[ed]" (liiii *recto*), and over the page "[y]e skots remoude yer sege" (liiii *verso*). He does not always note the names of participants, but on this occasion

he picks out for mention a man who plays an important rôle in this section of the play, Sir William Montague, the messenger between the Countess of Salisbury and the King. Finally Hunsdon shows his interest in the principal subject of the next act. He writes: "The kyng fell in love wythe the countes of Salsb[ury]" (lv *recto*).

Besides these shared areas of interest there is conclusive evidence that the dramatist had seen the marginal notes, and that he had Hunsdon's copy of Froissart before him as he wrote. We have already noticed that from time to time the play seems to echo Hunsdon's words. Another verbal parallel occurs on folio xxvi *verso*, where Hunsdon noted "[so]luthamton [sp]oylde." With this we may compare the dramatist's "Newcastle spoyld" (I.i.128); *spoiled* is not in Berners. The dramatist's attention was particularly caught by an unusually long note about Sir William Montague: "Wyllyam Montageu and xl wythe hym overthreu iic skots and tooke vixx horsys laden wt iuels and uthar stufe" (liii *verso*). From this note the dramatist borrowed several words, including *jewels*, which does not occur in Berners' translation.

Douglas. Why then, my liege, let me enioy her *jewels*. (I.ii.45, my italics)

The dramatist invented this dialogue between the Scottish King David and Douglas, in which they argue about which of them shall have the Countess's jewels when they capture her castle. Berners has nothing about the Scots stealing jewels, but it is clearly implied in Hunsdon's note.

The final verbal parallel is too long and complex to be explained by chance, and can only be a borrowing by the dramatist. The *verso* page of folio liii has two marginal notes, both already quoted; first, that recording the sack of Durham, and then, at the foot, the comment on William Montague. The facing page, folio liiii *recto*, has one note, "Salsbery beseg[ed]," and the *verso* page also has one: "[y]e skots remoude yer sege."

The dramatist had these notes in mind, and probably in front of him, as he began to write Act III, Scene ii, a scene which has nothing to do with the border but which shows the effects of war on the French population. He made some use of Berners' Chapter 122, but most of the

scene is his own invention. His starting point was Hunsdon's note "man woman chylde kylde," and he also picked out the words *laden with*, and *other stuff*, and *removed*. He wrote (all italics are mine):

Enter two French *men*; a *woman* and two little *children* meet them, and *other* Citizens.

One. Wel met, my mysters: how now? whats the newes?

And wherefore are ye *laden* thus *with stuff*?

What, is it quarter daie that you *remove*,

. . . . (III.ii.1-3)

Here there can be no doubt that the dramatist is using Hunsdon's words. Since Berners has "men, women, and chyl dren" (Chapter 75), he may be borrowing from him as well. But none of the other words occurs in Berners in any relevant context. Moreover the dramatist follows Hunsdon's word order almost exactly; only "and other" is slightly misplaced.

The only reasonable explanation for this parallel is that the author of *Edward III* had Hunsdon's annotations, in some form, before him as he wrote. Whoever he was, it seems certain that he was allowed to consult the books in Hunsdon's library in Somerset House, and he quite possibly wrote the play there. It is clear that he was well known to Hunsdon.

His use of Hunsdon as a source allows us other insights into the way he worked. We can see, for example, that he did not work casually. Not all Hunsdon's notes leap to the eye, and a careless glance could easily miss the Montague note, for example. The dramatist looked for the annotations and read them carefully. In other words, he was intent on finding out all that he could about Hunsdon's tastes and interests. He is putting into practice Viola's words on the Fool:

He must observe their mood on whom he jests  
The quality of persons and the time;  
And, like the haggard, check at every feather  
That comes before his eye. This is a practice  
As full of labour as a wise man's art.

(*Twelfth Night* III.i.61-65)



The dramatist, carefully reading and using Hunsdon's notes, might well be said to "check at every feather / That comes before his eye."

The same desire to please his patron is, I believe, visible in many other aspects of *Edward III*. The play contains several broad themes and many individual details which would have been of particular interest to Hunsdon, and to few others in the audience. On several occasions it reflects views which we know that he held. When the dramatist alters what he finds in Froissart, the change often seems designed to compliment Hunsdon. I suggest, on this evidence, that *Edward III* was written with Hunsdon's knowledge and assistance, and was created as a public compliment to him.

If the dramatist had wanted to compliment Lord Hunsdon, to what would he have first drawn attention? Hunsdon and his sons were professional soldiers; war was their occupation and their pride, and the front on which they saw most service was the Scottish border. There were good political reasons for this. The border was the most vulnerable and unreliable part of Elizabeth's realm; she therefore entrusted it to her most reliable subjects—the Carey cousins who were her nearest kin. They fully justified her trust. Both Hunsdon himself and his eldest son George made their military reputations here, Hunsdon by his defeat of the rebellious northern Earls in 1570, and George by his bravery in action in the ensuing campaign in Scotland.<sup>6</sup> Hunsdon held military command on the border from 1568 until the end of his life. So, at different times, did three of his surviving sons. They had an intimate knowledge of border fighting against the Scottish raiders, and everyone knew that this was their particular expertise.<sup>7</sup>

It may therefore be significant that one of the principal themes of *Edward III* is the king's defence of his northern border against the Scots. The subject is not treated at great length, but it is introduced early in the play and is then frequently referred to, since the success of Edward's campaign in France depends on the security of the Scottish border. The alliance between France and Scotland that Edward faces in the play still had to be faced by Hunsdon two hundred years later in his border command.<sup>8</sup> In fact the early scenes of the play reflect with some accuracy the conditions on the border during most of Elizabeth's reign. The Scottish invasion is simply a raid carried out by men on horseback

who destroy as much as they can and carry off anything valuable. They quickly retire, unpunished, when they hear that a relieving force is marching North. The defensive importance of garrisoned towns and castles is made clear. *Edward III* is the only extant play which depicts the military situation on the Scottish border in this way. For this reason alone it was likely to have had a special appeal to Lord Hunsdon.

The very first mention of Scotland in the play would have caught Hunsdon's attention. Edward asks: "How stands the league between the Scot and us?" (I.i.122). The state of the league between Scotland and England was a question that had preoccupied Hunsdon for much of his career. One of his many diplomatic missions to Scotland had had as its aim the restoration of this league. In the play, Sir William Montague replies to the King that the Scots have "made invasion on the bordering Townes" and captured both Berwick and Newcastle: "Barwicke is woon, Newcastle spoyld and lost" (I.i.127-28). Hunsdon had spent his life on the watch for just such invasions. Moreover, in specifying these two towns the dramatist has chosen to go directly against his source, Froissart's chronicles. Froissart spends some time explaining that the Scots did *not* take either Berwick or Newcastle. The towns that they destroyed were Durham and, on an earlier occasion, Edinburgh.<sup>9</sup> Why does the dramatist diverge from Froissart here? I believe that he is deliberately shaping his material both to interest Hunsdon and to compliment him. Berwick and Newcastle were the two border towns for which Hunsdon had been responsible and whose garrisons he had commanded. He was appointed governor of Berwick in 1568, and the town was his northern base for the next twenty years. Moreover we know that he thought of the two towns as a single unit. He considered "that the charge at Newcastle should be joined to Berwick."<sup>10</sup> This early mention of Berwick and Newcastle in the play (and they are never mentioned again) would therefore arouse his interest and remind the rest of the audience of his past achievements and his sons' present duties in the North. There is an implicit contrast between the days of Edward III, when the Scots could sack Berwick and Newcastle, and the reign of Elizabeth, when her cousins kept both towns secure. A reference to Durham, following Froissart, would not have had the same effect.

It might be objected that this compliment is inept, since Hunsdon knew his Froissart well, and would have realized the deviation from the source. But the compliment is in no way diminished by such knowledge. On the contrary, the dramatist is flattering Hunsdon, both by appealing to his knowledge of Froissart and by, as it were, letting him share in the creative process. He and his patron become accomplices, a complicity that we have already seen in his use of Hunsdon's annotations. They both knew more than the rest of the audience, who, ignorant of Froissart, take the compliment as historical truth. *Edward III*, I shall later argue, was designed to be a public tribute as much as a private one.

In its last fifty lines, then, the first scene of the play recalls Hunsdon's concerns in his border command, and Edward resembles Hunsdon both in his situation and his personality. He regards the Scots as "trayterous," just as Hunsdon did, and he has Hunsdon's love of war and honor.<sup>11</sup> He too is faced, as Hunsdon so often was, with a sudden Scottish invasion, and he prepares to "once more repulse" it (I.i.155). If Hunsdon had seen the play it would have been easy for him to identify with Edward at this early stage. Very few others in a London audience could have done so.

The next scene, like all the Countess scenes, actually takes place in a border garrison. It opens before the castle of Roxburgh, where the Countess of Salisbury is besieged by the jubilant and boasting Scots. The tables are agreeably turned, however, by the arrival of the English army, at the mere report of which the Scots hurry away without a fight.

There are innumerable ways in which the dramatist might have written this scene. Yet his choice of theme and particular examples seems designed to appeal to Hunsdon and his family. What he chooses to give us is a vivid, highly detailed picture of certain aspects of life on the border, and in particular of those whom he calls "the everlasting foe," the Scots. We hear of "their broad untuned othes" and their speech—"their babble, blunt and full of pride" (I.ii.8, 17). But the subject of most interest to the dramatist is their military tactics and equipment, a topic which is introduced with an ingenuity that must arouse suspicion. In theory King David of Scotland is sending a declaration of loyalty which the French ambassador will report to the King of France. But in fact the declaration is simply an excuse for a long description of a Scottish border raid:

Touching your embassage, returne and say,  
 That we with England will not enter parlie,  
 Nor never make faire wether, or take truce;  
 But burne their neighbor townes, and so persist  
 With eager Rods beyond their Citie Yorke.

(I.ii.21-25)

King David then depicts in detail his men and their appearance, an account which has little dramatic point, since no raid ever takes place. They are "bonny riders" who use "lightborne snaffles" and "nimble spurres." They wear "Jacks of Gymould mayle" and carry "staves of grayned Scottish ash" which in peace they hang "upon their Citie wals." They sling their swords, their "byting whinyards" from "buttoned tawny leatherne belts." This detailed inventory, which occupies eight lines out of a total of seventy-two, is remarkable, and unique in the play. In two thirds of the play we are concerned with war, and meet soldiers of many nationalities—French, English, Genoese, Poles and Muscovites—but only the Scots, whom we never see fighting, have their armor so meticulously described. The rest are not described at all. Why is this? Can we believe that the average London playgoer was interested in "buttoned tawny leatherne belts"? Hunsdon certainly was. He had, after all, many years first-hand experience of the Scottish raiders and their equipment, and in 1587 we find him discussing which weapons are suited to border fighting, and which not.<sup>12</sup>

These two short scenes—one of fifty, the other of seventy lines—did more than appeal to Hunsdon's interests and specialist knowledge. They flattered him in the most irresistible way of all: they agreed with him. His opinions and prejudices are either expressed by characters with whom we sympathize, or else demonstrated in the play's action. The play satisfyingly confirms his views.

Not everyone, for example, disliked the Border country, yet Hunsdon did, and in particular thought that its air was unhealthy.<sup>13</sup> Sure enough, the Countess complains of "the barraine, bleake, and fruitlesse aire" of Roxburgh (I.ii.14). Her words "barraine" and "fruitlesse" may echo Hunsdon's own belief that his post at Berwick was unprofitable: as he put it, "for pleasure or commodity is none in it and less thrift."<sup>14</sup>

A contemporary describes Hunsdon's attitude to Scottish raiders as follows: "He takes as great pleasure in hanging thieves as other men

in hawking and hunting."<sup>15</sup> The comparison may directly reflect Hunsdon's views. His love of hawking is well attested, and in 1594 we find him referring to English pursuers who "chase" the fleeing Scots "even to Edinburgh gates."<sup>16</sup> His son Robert describes a day's fighting in which several men were killed on both sides as a "day's sport."<sup>17</sup> King Edward also looks on war as a kind of field sport. Of the fleeing Scots he says

What, are the stealing foxes fled and gone,  
Before we could uncouple at their heeles?

To which Warwick replies:

They are, my liege; but, with a cheerful cry,  
Hot hounds and hardie chase them at the heeles,  
. . . . (I.ii.90-93)

Later in the play Edward speaks of war in the language of hawking (III.v.46).

If there was one thing that Hunsdon hated, it was what he called "the rejoicing of his enemies," or, on two other occasions, their "jollity."<sup>18</sup> He was particularly irritated when a rumor reached Scotland that Mary Queen of Scots was going to marry the Duke of Norfolk. What annoyed him was the jubilation of her supporters at this proposed match and their certainty that it would take place. "They hold it for concluded," he wrote, "and make assured account and vaunt of it as if it were irrevocable, wherein they are in such a jollity as who but they."<sup>19</sup> We may be sure that he was correspondingly delighted when their hopes were dashed. Clearly Hunsdon not only strongly disliked this premature rejoicing, he also saw it as a Scottish characteristic ("as who but they"). It is therefore interesting that this characteristic is singled out for special criticism in *Edward III*. The Countess, like Hunsdon, cannot bear the derision and the "skipping giggs" of the triumphant Scots.

Thou doest not tell him, if he heere prevaile,  
How much they will deride us in the North,  
And in their vild, unsevell, skipping giggs,  
Bray forth their Conquest and our overthrow  
. . . . (I.ii.10-13)

Not long afterwards we see the Scottish leaders doing exactly what Hunsdon so disliked in the followers of the Queen of Scots: they celebrate an anticipated success—in this case the capture of Roxburgh Castle. "Say you came from us," says King David to the French ambassador, "even when we had that yeelled to our hands" (I.ii.36-37). But his confidence is premature: the castle is not yet in their hands. The King and Douglas then return "to our former taske again," that is "the deviation of this certayne spoyle" (I.ii.40-41), and they argue over which of them shall have the Countess and which her jewels. This is precisely what Hunsdon describes: "they hold it for concluded and make assured account and vaunt of it as if it were irrevocable." The Countess makes the same point when she describes them as "the confident and boystrous boasting Scot" (I.ii.75). As they prepare to run away, she mocks their recent certainty: "I am sure, my Lords, / Ye will not hence, till you have shared the spoyles" (I.ii.63-64).

This detailed critique of Scottish over-confidence is, I believe, unique to *Edward III*. I have not found it in any other play of the period, and I suggest that the dramatist made so much of it because he knew that this Scottish trait was a *bête noire* of Hunsdon's. The Scots in the play behave exactly as Hunsdon would like them to behave. There is nothing so pleasant as having our favorite prejudices confirmed.

One other aspect of these scenes suggests that the dramatist is using them as a vehicle for topical reference. We saw that King David's description of a Scottish raid was as relevant to Elizabeth's reign as to the fourteenth century. In the same way the dramatist carefully constructs the Countess's first speech so that her attack on the Scots becomes universal rather than particular. It is as true for the audience as it is for her. She might have said: "If I am captured, the Scots will scorn me and woo me with oaths." But what she in fact says is

Thou doest not tell him, what a grieve it is  
To be the scornfull captive to a Scot,  
Either to be wooed with broad untuned oaths,  
Or forst by rough insulting barbarisme

....

(I.ii.6-9)

She has turned her particular situation into a general complaint, and the dramatist goes on to repeat the phrase which achieves the

transformation: "Thou doest not tell him" (I.ii.10). The naturalness and psychological realism with which this trick is managed are the marks of a skilled dramatist.

One of the problems of *Edward III*—and one reason for seeing it as a play of divided authorship—is its mixture of the crude and the sophisticated. This is as true of the play's ideology as it is of its poetry. While the scenes between Edward and the Countess take a complex and subtle view of human relationships, the battle scenes are excessively simple. In these scenes war is viewed with almost unqualified approval, and the value of military honor is never questioned. War is good, the play suggests, because it is the only arena where honor can be won. In the words of the Black Prince, war is the "schoole of honor," and the tumult of war is therefore "as cheerful sounding to my youthful spleene" as "the joyfull clamours of the people" at a coronation (I.i.160-65).

This crude glorification of war is easily explained if we suppose that the author was writing for Lord Hunsdon. Hunsdon was renowned for his bluntness and straightforward speech; he was not subtle, and the soldier's code of honor was what he lived by. Naunton writes of him: "he was downe-right . . . his Lattine and dissimulation were alike . . . he loved sword and buckler men, and such as our fathers were wont to call men of their hands."<sup>20</sup> One could apply to him the words that his eldest son George used of himself, that he "ever esteemed an ounce of honour more than a pound of profit."<sup>21</sup> This is perfectly the spirit of *Edward III*. In a work written for such a man it would be tactless to question the values of war and honor.

One way of winning honor was through military display and ceremony, and both were important to the Careys. In his youth George Carey won renown for issuing a challenge to the Scottish governor of Dumbarton, Lord Fleming. The youngest son, Robert, was a keen competitor in tilts and joustings. "In all triumphs I was one," he wrote, "either at tilt, tourney or barriers."<sup>22</sup> I believe that the Careys' love of honor and military ceremony led the author of *Edward III* to make an addition to his source which, judged by its length alone, he obviously considered of some significance.

In Act III Scene v the King knights his son, the Black Prince, for his valor at the battle of Crécy. This knightng is the battle's climax, its end

and even, we are led to feel, its justification, and the dramatist takes considerable pains to prepare for it. Before the battle the Prince is presented with his armor in an elaborate ceremony in which war is given almost religious importance. His father introduces the rite as follows:

And, Ned, because this battell is the first  
That ever yet thou foughtest in pitched field,  
As ancient custome is of Martialists,  
To dub thee with the tipe of chivalrie;  
In solemne manner we will give thee armes.  
(III.iii.172-76)

According to the original stage direction four heralds now bring on "a coate armor, a helmet, a lance and a shield." The Prince receives each piece of armor in turn, each accompanied with an appropriate speech of dedication. Finally his father adds:

Now wants there nought but knighthood which deferd  
Wee leave, till thou hast won it in the fields.  
(III.iii.204-05)

During the battle the Prince is in mortal danger, but despite the pleas of Artois, Derby and Audley the King refuses to rescue him, lest he jeopardize his knighthood.

Tut, let him fight; we gave him armes to day,  
And he is laboring for a Knighthood, man.  
(III.v.17-18)

Naturally the Prince emerges not only safe but victorious, bringing with him the dead body of the King of Bohemia, "this sacrifice, this first fruit of my sword" (III.v.72). The climax of this semi-religious ritual is the knighting. The Prince sums up his account of his deeds in battle:

Lo, thus hath Edwards hand fild your request,  
And done, I hope, the duety of a Knight.  
(III.v.87-88)

To this his father replies: "I, well thou hast deservd a knighthood, Ned!," and he knights his son with his own sword, carried on "yet reaking



warme" by a soldier. "This day thou hast confounded me with joy," says the proud father (III.v.89-93).

The battle thus begins and ends with two military ceremonies, and both were invented by the dramatist. The giving of arms is not in Froissart at all; nor is the knighting at Crécy. It is true that Edward did knight the Black Prince, but not at Crécy, nor for valor in battle. Edward knighted his son as soon as the army landed in France.<sup>23</sup> Froissart has only a brief reference to the Prince being allowed "to wynne his spures" at Crécy.<sup>24</sup> He spends more time on Edward's refusal to rescue his son, but even this was considerably expanded by the dramatist. Such an expansion is easily explained, since the refusal to rescue creates a highly dramatic situation. But the emphasis on the knighthood is neither necessary nor particularly dramatic. Why then did the dramatist invent it, and build his account of the battle of Crécy around it?

He designed it, I suggest, as an easily identifiable compliment to Lord Hunsdon. By 1594 Hunsdon had four surviving sons, to whom he was strongly attached and for whose honor he was much concerned.<sup>25</sup> The author of *Edward III* altered his source so that the Black Prince was knighted on the field of battle; three of Hunsdon's four sons were knighted in a similar way—by their commanders while on military service.<sup>26</sup> In the small world of the Elizabethan court this distinction would have been well known, and to a soldier like Hunsdon it was naturally a source of pride. Few other fathers, if any, could boast of such a record. The dramatist, through his invention of the elaborate knighting ceremony, was able to draw attention to the parallel case of a well known soldier who, like Edward III, was proud that his sons were knighted in the field. Hunsdon's affection for his sons, and theirs for him, is well attested, and the dramatist may have had this in mind when he designed the scene to bring out the relationship between Edward III and his son. One could argue that the main dramatic interest of the whole episode lies in this relationship. What brings these scenes to life is the father's pride in his son and the son's corresponding desire to live up to that pride.

The scenes are full of references to the father-son relationship. The Prince compares his father to "Ould Jacobe" "when as he breathed his blessings on his sonnes" (III.iii.210-11). Even more than the desire for

honor it is his father's trust in him that inspires him. When he is in peril of his life and his strength fails, he revives himself by remembering "the gifts you gave me, and my zealous vow" (III.v.83). And his knightly duty is done to fulfil his father's "request" (III.v.87).

With this we may compare the high value that Robert Carey placed on his father's opinion. In his journal he writes of his marriage: "the Queen was mightily offended with me for marrying, and most of my best friends, only my father was no ways displeased at it, which gave me great content."<sup>27</sup>

The parallel between Edward and Lord Hunsdon in this scene is made even closer by an apparent increase in Edward's age. As we have seen, his son compares him to "Ould Jacobe," and a similar length of years is implied shortly afterwards. If the Black Prince is killed, says his father, "what remedy? we have more sonnes / Then one to comfort our declyning age" (III.v.23-24). His "declyning age" must be in the future, but this is by no means clear, and the words are extraordinarily inappropriate from a man of thirty-four, which was Edward's age at the time. They seem even more odd when one remembers that he still had thirty-one years to live. Hunsdon, however, certainly was in his declining age. In 1594 he was sixty-eight, and he did have the comfort of "more sonnes / Then one" in his remaining two years of life.

There was one achievement of Hunsdon's that no dramatist who wished to flatter him could afford to omit. The highest point of his career came in the Armada year when he was summoned from the North to take command of the Queen's bodyguard. This was a post of great responsibility, and Hunsdon was well rewarded for his services.<sup>28</sup>

It is therefore no surprise to find that *Edward III* is full of obvious allusions to the Armada. As others have pointed out, the dramatist radically changed the accounts of the battles of Sluys and Poitiers that he found in the chronicles, and in each case he introduced details that an informed auditor would have recognized as drawn from the Armada narratives.<sup>29</sup>

At this point it may be useful to summarize the main points of the case that I am making. We have seen that the author of *Edward III* consulted Hunsdon's own copy of Froissart as he wrote the play, and echoed Hunsdon's annotations certainly in Act III Scene ii and probably

in other scenes as well. There can therefore be no doubt that the dramatist associated the play with Hunsdon, and it is a reasonable assumption that Hunsdon himself knew what the dramatist was writing. He must, after all, have known that the dramatist was using his highly prized copy of Froissart.

As the subject of his play the dramatist chose a period of history in which he knew Hunsdon was particularly interested, and he used as his source a chronicle that Hunsdon particularly admired. He therefore knew from the start that his entire project would appeal to Hunsdon and that he was likely to want to see the play, the more so since it was the first and only one to deal with these events. It would have for him a personal interest that it could have for no other spectator. Others were interested in the Scottish border, but very few were as personally concerned with it as Hunsdon was. And how many of these few were also devotees of Froissart? Certainly none of them had lent his copy of the *Chronicles* to the author of the play.

Since we know that the author himself associated the play with Hunsdon, his apparent echoing of Hunsdon's interests and prejudices is likely to be deliberate rather than coincidental. To take one example, Hunsdon would certainly have appreciated the emphasis that the play gives to the knightng of the Black Prince on the battlefield. He would know that it was the dramatist's invention, and he could hardly avoid taking it as a personal compliment to himself and his sons. He would also have noticed that the dramatist greatly expanded Froissart's account of the events at Roxburgh Castle, an account which he himself had heavily annotated. Would he suppose that the dramatist, who had seen his annotations, did this without any reference to himself? Or would he have thought that the many allusions to the Armada were introduced simply by chance? He is more likely to have seen them as a graceful compliment to himself, just as he is likely to have been flattered by the play's reflection of his own views on the Border and the Scots.

There can be little doubt that if Hunsdon or any of his family had seen the play, they would have taken it as an obvious tribute to the Lord Chamberlain. Indeed other court spectators would have had no difficulty in interpreting it as such. Can we believe that the play's author, who used Hunsdon's own notes as a source, accidentally introduced so much

which would have been agreeable to him and his family? The appeal to coincidence strains credulity. It is also unnecessary, since, as we shall see, there were actors and at least one dramatist who had good reasons for paying a compliment to Lord Hunsdon.

When and by whom was *Edward III* first performed? If my theory is correct, it is obviously most likely to have been commissioned by Hunsdon's own company of actors. But which company? It must have been written after 1588, and Hunsdon did have a company of players up till 1589. All the evidence, however, argues against this company and such an early date. The play was clearly written to be acted by a large company in a well equipped theater.<sup>30</sup> But Hunsdon's men of 1588-89 were not a company of this kind; they are only recorded in the provinces and there is no sign that they acted in London. Secondly, since they are not heard of after 1596, one would expect them to have sold their copy of *Edward III* long before 1596, its actual date of publication. Finally, the play's references to the stories of Hero and Leander and Lucrece suggest a date after 1593.

The new evidence, then, leads to the conclusion that *Edward III* was first performed in 1594 by the actors that Hunsdon took into his service in May or June of that year. It is in fact just the kind of play that they were accustomed to put on. They were an experienced group who were used to large casts and complex staging. Moreover they had in their repertoire other plays which look as if they were designed to please aristocratic patrons—*Love's Labour's Lost*, for example, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is now widely accepted that in 1597 they paid a compliment to their master, Hunsdon's son George, with their production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. We might well expect them to have put on a similar performance for his father three years earlier.

In 1594 they had good reason to do so. By taking them into his service he rescued them from an unpleasant situation. They had just endured almost two years of plague, with all the hard work, additional expense and small reward of touring in the province. Some were probably members of Pembroke's company, which had gone bankrupt. Others were certainly servants of the Earl of Derby, the former Lord Strange, who had died painfully and suddenly on 16 April. At this moment Strange's men found themselves on tour, with the plague still raging

and without the protection of a patron. For the time being they continued under the name of Derby's widow, the Countess, but this can have been no more than a temporary arrangement, and during May their future was dangerously uncertain.<sup>31</sup> They could not know that the plague would die away by June; they might have expected it to increase in the warmer weather. At this critical moment Hunsdon solved their most urgent problem by taking at least the principal actors into his service.<sup>32</sup> They were thus deeply, and perhaps literally, in his debt. *Edward III* would have been a way of expressing their gratitude, and perhaps their loyalty to a new master. It would also have proclaimed their new identity to the general public; with its overt compliments to Hunsdon, it said unmistakably "these actors are Hunsdon's men."

If this scenario is correct, *Edward III* must have been written in 1594, probably in May or June. Such a date is confirmed by the play's references to the war between Austria and Turkey, which broke out openly in June of 1593.<sup>33</sup> The play would also have to be written quickly, and hasty writing may be one explanation for the play's uneven quality. Its first performance would presumably have been a private one, given before an audience composed of Hunsdon, his family and friends. Yet it was clearly also designed to be acted in a public theater, and, according to the title-page, was so acted. This is not surprising. On the contrary, it is just what we should expect in the difficult early summer of 1594. The actors may have wanted to thank their new patron, but with the re-opening of the theaters they also needed new plays to attract the public. They could not afford to put on and rehearse a play for only one or two performances. In any case Hunsdon's men were in the habit of bringing their coterie plays into the public repertory.

*Love's Labour's Lost* and *Titus Andronicus* both had public and private performances. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* probably had a private origin, but was certainly acted in public. *Edward III* fits perfectly into this pattern. The public audience would naturally miss some of the more personal allusions, but they could be expected to appreciate the more obvious references to Hunsdon's border service, his Armada honors and his soldier sons. There were many ways in which the actors could make clear the play's purpose.

I turn finally to the question of authorship. It is obvious that the association of *Edward III* with Shakespeare's patron and Shakespeare's company must greatly increase the possibility that he had a hand in it. If Hunsdon's men needed a play to flatter their master, they would naturally turn to Shakespeare, especially if he was already a member of the company. They needed a play which was patriotic and had war as its theme. In 1594 Shakespeare was already well known for his skill in handling military and patriotic themes. He was also an experienced and successful writer for aristocratic patrons. Most of his known or probable output in the years 1593-94 was of this kind: the *Sonnets*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, *Love's Labour's Lost*. The actors had already commissioned him, or would commission him to write their other plays of compliment—the *Dream* and *Merry Wives*. It would be surprising if they had not asked him to write this particularly important play as well. At the beginning of a new London season, after so long a gap, they needed to put their wares on view as quickly as possible, and Shakespeare was certainly a valuable asset.

The techniques which the author of *Edward III* used to compliment Hunsdon are techniques in which Shakespeare shows interest, and which, in one play at least, he used himself. I have argued that *Edward III* is in effect a mirror in which Hunsdon can see himself and his own career. The dramatist recalls and displays to him his military experience on the Scottish border, his part in the Armada year, his pride in his sons, and his love of Froissart. Implicitly he compares him to the successful soldier, Edward III. Shakespeare was clearly fascinated by the theater's power to act as a mirror. This power is at the centre of *Hamlet*, where the play-within-the-play is devised to show Claudius an image of his past actions. The same technique may be seen in *Love's Labour's Lost*, in which the aristocratic audience for whom the play was probably written watch the reactions of an audience like themselves as they watch a play. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* also shows a noble audience its own reflection, and so do the 'garter' passages in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

The theory that *Edward III* was written for Lord Hunsdon also counters the principal objections that can be brought against Shakespeare's authorship. It explains the play's crude jingoism and uncritical worship of the code of honor. It may also explain its markedly uneven quality.

Richard Proudfoot has argued that in it we see "the working of an artistic intelligence of the highest order in material which . . . is in many ways constricting."<sup>34</sup> If the dramatist was writing to order, limited by what Lord Hunsdon wanted to hear, he may well have been constricted by his material. Indeed at one point he refers to "constraining warre" (III.ii.49).

To sum up, we now know that there was a connection between Hunsdon and *Edward III*. The dramatist had access to Hunsdon's personal copy of Froissart's *Chronicles*, and used his marginal notes as a source for the play. Moreover he often altered or added to Froissart's account in ways which seem designed to compliment or flatter Hunsdon. Hunsdon's men had reason to compliment their master in the first half of 1594, and internal evidence makes this a likely date for the play's composition. Finally, the new facts agree with the other evidence that Shakespeare had a hand in the writing of *Edward III*.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>References are to the edition in C. F. Tucker Brooke, ed., *The Shakespeare Apocrypha* (Oxford: OUP, 1908) 67-101. I have also consulted the edition of Fred Lapes (New York: Garland, 1980).

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, MacD. P. Jackson, "Edward III, Shakespeare, and Pembroke's Men," *N&Q* 210 (1965): 329-31 (p. 330); Richard Proudfoot, "The Reign of King Edward the Third (1596) and Shakespeare," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 71 (1985): 159-85 (p. 184); John Kerrigan, ed., *The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint* by William Shakespeare (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986) 293-94; Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 136; Eliot Slater, *The Problem of The Reign of King Edward III: A Statistical Approach* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988).

<sup>3</sup>Proudfoot 168, 176-78.

<sup>4</sup>B. L. 596.L.24.25. Two vols. (Paris, 1513). The chapters are not numbered.

<sup>5</sup>Robert Metcalf Smith, "Edward III," *JEGP* 10 (1911): 90-104. This article shows which chapters of Berners the dramatist consulted for each scene. The allocation is useful, but incomplete.

<sup>6</sup>*DNB* under "Carey, Henry" (entries also for George and Robert). For all information about the Careys *DNB* is the source unless a separate reference is given. The entry for Hunsdon in S. T. Bindoff, *The House of Commons 1509-1558* (London: Secker, 1982) 1: 582, gives his date of birth.

<sup>7</sup>*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the reign of Elizabeth, 1591-1594*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1867) 268.

<sup>8</sup>*Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the reign of Elizabeth, 1569-71*, ed. Allan James Crosby (London, 1874) 178, 212-13.

<sup>9</sup>Lord Berners, trans., *The Chronicle of Froissart*, ed. W. P. Ker (London: David Nutt, 1901) vol. 1, chs. 55, 73-75.

<sup>10</sup>Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury*, K. G. (London, 1883) 1: 373.

<sup>11</sup>Hunsdon's mistrust of the Scots is in DNB.

<sup>12</sup>*Calendar of Letters and Papers relating to the affairs of the Borders of England and Scotland*, ed. Joseph Bain (Edinburgh, 1894) 1: 282.

<sup>13</sup>*CSP Foreign 1572-74* (London, 1876) 132.

<sup>14</sup>*HMC Salisbury MSS* 1: 372.

<sup>15</sup>*CSP Foreign 1575-77* (London, 1880) 175.

<sup>16</sup>*HMC Salisbury MSS* 4: 504-05. For his hawks, see *Calendar of Border Papers* 1: 73.

<sup>17</sup>*The Memoirs of Robert Carey*, ed. F. H. Mares (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 19.

<sup>18</sup>*CSP Foreign 1572-74* 42; 1569-71 212. See also the next note.

<sup>19</sup>*HMC Salisbury MSS* 1: 420.

<sup>20</sup>Robert Naunton, *The Court of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. James Caulfield (London, 1814) 79.

<sup>21</sup>*HMC Salisbury MSS* 6: 488.

<sup>22</sup>*Memoirs of Robert Carey* 7.

<sup>23</sup>DNB, under "Edward, the Black Prince."

<sup>24</sup>Berners, *Froissart* 1: 300.

<sup>25</sup>*CSP Foreign 1569-71* 115, 571, 580; 1572-74 41-42. A. L. Rowse, *Eminent Elizabethans* (London: Macmillan, 1983) 187.

<sup>26</sup>George, Edmund and Robert. See P. W. Hasler, *The House of Commons 1558-1603* vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1981) 545, 547-49, 550-51.

<sup>27</sup>*Memoirs of Robert Carey* 26.

<sup>28</sup>Rowse 178.

<sup>29</sup>Proudfoot 170-71.

<sup>30</sup>Proudfoot 162-63.

<sup>31</sup>E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951) 2: 126.

<sup>32</sup>Chambers 2: 126, 193.

<sup>33</sup>For a discussion of this evidence, see Roger Prior, "The Date of *Edward III*," *N&Q* 235 (1990): 178-80. E. K. Chambers in *William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930) 1: 517, and James Winny, ed., *Three Elizabethan Plays* (London: Chatto, 1959) 19, also date the play to 1594. But a much earlier date is preferred by many commentators, including Karl P. Wentersdorf, "The Date of *Edward III*," *SQ* 16 (1965): 227-31; MacD. P. Jackson 329-31; Lapidés 4, 31; Proudfoot 181-82. Some of their reasons are worth considering in detail. Wentersdorf favours 1589-90, partly because "plays rarely came into the hands of the printers until several years after their original production" (230). This is, in my view, the best argument for an early date. But Wentersdorf himself admits that it is "inconclusive" (231), and adds: "more important . . . is the fact that *Edward III* breathes the spirit of nationalistic feeling that was particularly



strong in the years immediately after the victory over the Armada" (231). I would argue instead that the play owes its nationalistic spirit to the influence of that defender of the nation and cousin of the Queen, Lord Hunsdon.

MacDonald Jackson raises an important new point. He demonstrates that there are echoes of *Edward III* in two reported plays, *The Contention* (1594) and *The True Tragedy* (1595). "It has been generally accepted," he writes, "that these reports were constructed by some of Pembroke's Men upon the collapse of that company in the summer of 1593. Those scenes in *Edward III* which are echoed by one of the two Bad Quartos can therefore hardly have been composed later than 1592" (331). I accept Jackson's evidence that the reporters knew *Edward III*, but I disagree with his conclusions. Why must *Edward III* have been written by 1592? Could it not have been written, and at least rehearsed, in 1593? Alternatively, if we date the play to 1594, is it not possible that the reporters acted in it in that year, before they went on to compile the Bad Quartos? They were, after all, familiar with *Romeo and Juliet*, which is rarely dated before 1594.

<sup>34</sup>Proudfoot 179.

## Faulkner and Racism

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The single most indelible fact about William Faulkner's work is his persistent concentration on observing and recording the culture and country in which he was born; what is most striking now, as we look back on his legacy from our own, is the enormous courage and cost of that task. Faulkner's Lafayette County, in northeastern Mississippi, not far from the battle sites of Brice's Cross Roads, Corinth, and Shiloh, is still marked in its town squares with statues of soldiers of the Confederate Army of the United States, in full battle dress and, more often than not, facing South towards the homeland they mean to protect with their lives. But what for Faulkner is most haunting is not the communal psychology of war so much as the agonizing recognition of the exacting expenses of racism, for him the most difficult and most grievous awareness of all. Racism spreads contagiously through his works, unavoidably. Its force is often debilitating; its consequences often beyond reckoning openly. The plain recognition of racism is hardest to bear and yet most necessary to confront.

Perhaps the most powerful scene in Faulkner's writing which centers on a black, and unforgettable for anyone who has read it, is the sermon the Reverend Shegog from St. Louis preaches on Easter Sunday April 8, 1928, in the last section of *The Sound and the Fury* (1929). The Reverend Shegog juxtaposes three iconic pictures of Christ: the baby threatened by Herod, the man betrayed by Pilate, and the triumphant Lord who suffered on the Cross. Shegog's narrative of Christ's life, while biblically universal, is in its calculated delivery at this place clearly the history of black slavery writ personally and biblically. It is also, by no coincidence, written in blood, Christ's narrative at its bloodiest moments despite his urging the annealing power of that bloodshed. Under his

powerful sway, readers like his congregation may forget that the story he tells is the white man's cultural heritage, not Shogog's, and in transporting all of them into tongues he also reduces his own language to a primitive sound and ritual: the scene takes on darker and darker meanings as we contemplate it. Dilsey nevertheless seems transformed. "I've seed de first en de last," she says,<sup>1</sup> but she cannot explain what the first and last are; Benjy remains unchanged; and Frony reverts to her embarrassed social consciousness: "'Whyn't you quit dat, mammy?' Frony said. 'Why all dese people lookin. We be passin white folks soon'" (297). Dilsey's reconciling tears seem out of place for Frony and for her fellow parishioners. What are we to make of this? Perhaps a great deal: in the last pages of the novel, Frony is proven right, not Dilsey. Nothing has changed. The blacks remain servants, and often servile, to the whites.

But Faulkner has already told us this. His initial portrait of Dilsey in the fourth section—based in part on his own black mammy Caroline Barr—is anything but heroic as she exits from her cabin. She is not defeated by her life, but clearly it has worn her down and worn her out. Consumed, ruined, on the day of resurrection Dilsey is herself only a skeleton, her sagging skin pointedly displaying how she is exhausted, diminished by her life. Her first decision, once outdoors, is to turn around and go back from where she came, circling back to her immediate beginning as the larger novel, in the end, circles back to "post and tree, window and doorway and signboard each in its ordered place" (321). In the following pages, as she hauls in firewood, toils up the stairs with a hot water bottle, scolds her grandson and feeds the thirty-three-year-old suffering from Downs Syndrome, her every gesture remains that of the traditional mammy: her outreach is imprisoned in duties dictated by past legacy. Her glory is to serve, but she serves not the Lord in this novel but the deteriorating Compson family in their rotting house. She evokes for us, then, a kind of fatality that seems both to sadden and to undermine any claim she may have on our sense of heroism. She invokes enormous pity but insufficient terror. The racism which Faulkner exhibits here is, I think, profoundly subtle and profoundly deep, and wholly unintended. But Faulkner's admiration for Dilsey betrays him.

That portrait, however, is a significant step forward for Faulkner as he came, through his writing, to understand ever more deeply the forces

and characteristics of racism. His first novel of Yoknapatawpha, *Flags in the Dust* (1973; as *Sartoris*, 1929), shows more openly the pressures and shapes of the culture that formed him. There the blacks are characterized by the Strother family—a father who swindles the people of his parish by gambling their savings, a son who lies about his heroism during World War I, and the wife and mother who sees her own race betraying itself in the song she sings:

*"Sinner riz fum de moaner's bench,  
Sinner jump to de penance bench;  
When de preacher ax'im whut de reason why,  
Says 'Preacher got de women jes' de same ez I'.  
Oh, Lawd, Oh Lawd!  
Dat's whut de matter wid de church today."*<sup>2</sup>

In time, though, Faulkner reveals that Elnora Strother sings mainly about herself, for she is her own worst example of sin, having surrendered to the white Colonel Sartoris to produce a mulatto, and bastard, son. And Faulkner goes even further. Depicting servitude and endurance in *Flags in the Dust*, he calls for "Some Cincinnatus of the cotton fields [to] contemplate the lowly destiny, some Homer [who] should sing the saga, of the mule and of his place in the South," that lazy worker which "with its trace-galled flanks and flopping, lifeless ears, and its half-closed eyes drowsing venomously behind pale lids, apparently asleep with . . . its own motion" is both "Outcast and pariah" and "Ugly, untiring, and perverse . . . Misunderstood even by that creature [the nigger who drives him] whose impulses and mental processes most closely resemble his" (313-14). This suddenly illuminating and awful analogy, itself perverse, suggests more strikingly than elsewhere in Faulkner the racial attitudes he had to overcome to present Dilsey Gibson with some measure of dignity and respect.

There is a much keener racial awareness at work ten years later, however, in Faulkner's novel of the war of Northern aggression, *The Unvanquished* (1938). This novel at times works more indirectly, though, as if Faulkner was himself still shy at showing racist thought, racist tension, and racist tragedy. There is, for instance, the slave Loosh's proud

betrayal of the white Sartoris family, based on Faulkner's own ancestors, when he steals their family's heirloom silver which they have taught him to hide from marauding Yankee soldiers. Granny sees him leaving the plantation. In the words of an older Bayard, looking back on the event,

He was coming up from his cabin, with a bundle on his shoulder tied up in a bandanna and Philadelphia behind him, and his face looked like it had that night last summer when Ringo and I looked into the window and saw him after he came back from seeing the Yankees. Granny stopped fighting. She said, "Loosh."

He stopped and looked at her; he looked like he was asleep, like he didn't even see us or was seeing something we couldn't. But Philadelphia saw us; she cringed back behind him, looking at Granny. "I tried to stop him, Miss Rosa," she said. "Fore God I tried."

"Loosh," Granny said. "Are you going too?"

"Yes," Loosh said. "I going. I done been freed; God's own angel proclaimed me free and gonter general me to Jordan. I dont belong to John Sartoris now; I belongs to me and God."

"But the silver belongs to John Sartoris," Granny said. "Who are you to give it away?"

"You ax me that?" Loosh said. "Where John Sartoris? Whyn't he come and ax me that? Let God ax John Sartoris who the man name that give me to him. Let the man that buried me in the black dark ax that of the man what dug me free." He wasn't looking at us; I don't think he could even see us. He went on.

"Fore God, Miss Rosa," Philadelphia said. "I tried to stop him. I done tried."

"Dont you go, Philadelphia," Granny said. "Dont you know he's leading you into misery and starvation?"

Philadelphia began to cry. "I knows hit. I knows whut they tole him cant be true. But he my husband. I reckon I got to go with him."

They went on.<sup>3</sup>

The older Bayard discerns more because the younger Bayard sensed more than the older grandmother, acculturated to black slavery. The point is underscored once more when Granny, meeting an aging mother left behind with her baby, tells her to return home—to her plantation—which the black woman will no longer acknowledge (84-85) as she struggles too to cross Jordan (in the actual Mississippi landscape, the Tallahatchie, which will take her north into Tennessee).

Granny's intractable racism is continually the novel's subtext. She befriends a black slave boy Ringo because he refuses to leave the Sartoris family—something Bayard works free enough to recognize only in the final episode of the novel, "An Odor of Verbena"—and with Ringo's imaginative plan and support she swindles Yankees of mules and horses, sells them back for a profit, and distributes the illegal profits of her own war of Southern aggression at the local church.

Last summer when we got back with the first batch of mules from Alabama, Granny sent for them, sent out word back into the hills where they lived in dirt-floored cabins, on the little poor farms without slaves. It took three or four times to get them to come in, but at last they all came—men and women and children and the dozen niggers that had got free by accident and didn't know what to do about it—I reckon this was the first church with a slave gallery some of them had ever seen, with Ringo and the other twelve sitting up there in the high shadows where there was room enough for two hundred; and I could remember back when Father would be in the pew with us and the grove outside would be full of carriages from the other plantations, and Doctor Worsham in his stole beneath the altar and for each white person in the auditorium there would be ten niggers in the gallery. And I reckon that on the first Sunday when Granny knelt down in public, it was the first time they had ever seen anyone kneel in a church. (134-35)

In the larger narration, Bayard's fixation on Granny's heroism and generosity erases the fact that she plays the role of a plantation overseer when there is no plantation left, and that Ringo, who has in fact gotten her contraband for her and thus preserved her dignity and delusion, is relegated now to the slave balcony with all the other unknown, ignorant blacks. Faulkner's model here is the College Hill Presbyterian Church, in the plantation section of his county near where he was married which I visited only a few months ago. The doors of that slave balcony are still visible on the outside church walls. What is gone is the outside ladder by which the slaves could climb to the balcony outside the church and sit to hear the sermon entirely enclosed so they never saw the service and their white slaveowners never saw them. Granny forces Ringo to this position, too, forces him back into the posture of a prewar slave.

The scenes of Granny with Loosh, with the freed mother, and in the church are all deeply ironic, unlike *Flags in the Dust* and *The Sound and the Fury*, but Faulkner has earned this ability to confront the legacy of racism, even in characters based on his own family (who also owned slaves) in two earlier works, *Light in August* (1932) and *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936). In *Light in August*, Joe Christmas has no clear identity because he does not know what race he belongs to: he passes as a white boy in an orphanage because of his light skin yet the dietitian there calls him a nigger. Forced into the role of an outcast from both races, he is driven to make love to a white woman who, as the daughter of abolitionists, is herself an outcast in Yoknapatawpha. When she is found murdered, nearly decapitated, it is likely he committed the act, overcome with shame and guilt at their behavior, although we never witness the actual crime. Faulkner is here confronting and incorporating the actual crime of Nelse Patton, the most famous crime at the time in his own Lafayette County. According to the *Lafayette County Press* for 9 September 1908,

One of the coldest blooded murders and most brutal crimes known to the criminal world was perpetrated one mile north of town yesterday morning about ten o'clock, when a black brute of unsavory reputation by the name of Nelse Patton attacked Mrs. Mattie McMullen, a respected white woman, with a razor, cutting her throat from ear to ear and causing almost instant death.

Racing through a ditch in the middle of Faulkner's home town of Oxford, Patton was pursued by over a hundred men who shot him before he fell and was taken to jail. According to a participant, John B. Cullen, then fifteen years old, who was the first to shoot at Patton,

The news spread over the county like wildfire, and that night at least two thousand people gathered around the jail. Judge Roan came out on the porch and made a plea to the crowd that they let the law take its course. Then Senator W. V. Sullivan made a fiery speech, telling the mob that they would be weaklings and cowards to let such a vicious beast live until morning. Mr. Hartsfield, the sheriff, had left town with the keys to the jail, because he knew people would take them from him. My father was deputized to guard the jail. Had he the slightest doubt of Nelse's guilt, he would have talked to the mob. If this had not proved successful, they would have entered the jail over his

dead body. After Senator Sullivan's speech, the mob began pitching us boys through the jail windows, and no guard in that jail would have dared shoot one of us. Soon a mob was inside. My brother and I held my father, and the sons of the other guards held theirs. They weren't hard to hold anyway. In this way we took over the lower floor of the jail.

From eight o'clock that night until two in the morning the mob worked to cut through the jail walls into the cells with sledge hammers and crowbars [taken from nearby hardware and blacksmith shops]. In the walls were one-by-eight boards placed on top of one another and bolted together. The walls were brick on the outside and steel-lined on the inside. When the mob finally got through and broke the lock of the murderer's cell, Nelse had armed himself with a heavy iron coal-shovel handle. From a corner near the door, he fought like a tiger, seriously wounding three men. He was then shot to death and thrown out of the jail. Someone (I don't know who) cut his ears off, scalped him, cut his testicles out, tied a rope around his neck, tied him to a car, and dragged his body around the streets. Then they hanged him to a walnut-tree limb just outside the south entrance to the courthouse. They had torn his clothes off dragging him around, and my father bought a new pair of overalls and put them on him before the next morning.<sup>4</sup>

bought a new pair, that is, because he would not dress a black man in a white man's trousers.

The incident was, at the time of *Light in August*, the most notorious incident in Faulkner's county. But what he does with it is doubly surprising. First, he turns Joe's death into a miraculous apotheosis, quite unlike the extant descriptions of Nelse Patton's death.

He just lay there, with his eyes open and empty of everything save consciousness, and with something, a shadow, about his mouth. For a long moment he looked up at them with peaceful and unfathomable and unbearable eyes. Then his face, body, all, seemed to collapse, to fall in upon itself, and from out the slashed garments about his hips and loins the pent black blood seemed to rush like the rush of sparks from a rising rocket; upon that black blast the man seemed to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever. They are not to lose it, in whatever peaceful valleys, beside whatever placid and reassuring streams of old age, in the mirroring faces of whatever children they will contemplate old disasters and newer hopes. It will be there, musing, quiet, steadfast, not fading and not particularly threatening, but of itself alone serene, of itself alone triumphant. Again from the town, deadened a little by the walls, the scream of the siren mounted toward its unbelievable crescendo, passing out of the realm of hearing.<sup>5</sup>



This is an astonishing psychological transfer: Faulkner has buried the horror of the actual event with a kind of magical poetry that at once dilutes the event and renders it less harmful while making Faulkner both innocent and apparently honest in the telling of it. He divorces himself from the individual, and effectively from the cultural, responsibility. He, at least, is home free. Or is he? For an explanation of what happened to cause Joe's death, he introduces a highly educated lawyer, Gavin Stevens. According to Gavin, a woman who claims to be Joe's grandmother tells him that her white daughter eloped with a Mexican of mixed blood and together they produced Joe; that therefore it was

those successions of thirty years before . . . which had put that stain either on his white blood [as guilt] or his black blood [as shame], whichever you will, and which killed him. But he must have run with believing it for a while; anyway, with hope. But his blood would not be quiet, let him save [himself]. It would not be either one or the other and let his body save itself. Because the black blood drove him first to the negro cabin. And then the white blood drove him out of there, as it was the black blood which snatched up the pistol and the white blood which would not let him fire it. And it was the white blood which sent him to the [defrocked, helpless] minister, which rising in him for the last and final time, sent him against all reason and all reality, into the embrace of a chimaera, a blind faith in something read in a printed Book. Then I believe that the white blood deserted him for the moment. Just a second, a flicker, allowing the black to rise in its final moment and make him turn upon that on which he had postulated his hope of salvation. It was the black blood which swept him into that exstasy out of a black jungle where life has already ceased before the heart stops and death is desire and fulfillment. And then the black blood failed him again, as it must in crises all his life. (448-49)

Often seen by critics as Faulkner's surrogate, Gavin is incredulously reductive and racist; all passion and ignorance stems from black blood, all hope and salvation from white. The determinism here, condemning the mulatto while freeing the pure white man of any involvement, is frightening.

But, having in the end of *Light in August*, addressed race directly through the metaphor of a character of unknown lineage, Faulkner was now able to address the most pressing racial issue—that of miscegenation which, at some point, he learned had actually been present in both his

paternal and maternal ancestors.<sup>6</sup> *Absalom, Absalom!* is about the rise and fall of Thomas Sutpen, a stranger to Yoknapatawpha who arrives suddenly, with an army of slaves, builds a plantation on a hundred acres of land, and then falters in founding the dynasty he plans. The question the novel raises is why his son Henry shot Charles Bon and, in turn, why Thomas Sutpen failed. In his admiration for Charles at the University of Mississippi, Henry brings him home to meet his sister Judith and in time Charles and Judith plan to marry. Subsequently, Henry learns that Charles is a bigamist, or so he thinks, and excuses him for his misdemeanor. Then he learns that Charles is in fact his own half-brother by his father's first wife, so that marriage to Judith would be incest. That is more difficult to accept, but also, in time, bearable. Then, at last, Charles tells Henry why his father had disowned him and his mother and remarried: Thomas Sutpen's first wife had turned out to be black. It is this that Henry cannot accept. At a final confrontation at Shiloh, where brothers are killing brothers in the War Between the States, Charles insists on leaving the war to marry Judith unless Henry stops him by shooting him.

*Henry looks at the pistol; now he is not only panting, he is trembling, when he speaks now his voice is not even the exhalation, it is the suffused and suffocating inbreath itself:*

*—You are my brother.*

*—No I'm not. I'm the nigger that's going to sleep with your sister. Unless you stop me, Henry.*

*Suddenly Henry grasps the pistol, jerks it free of Bon's hand and stands so, the pistol in his hand, panting and panting; again Bon can see the whites of his inrolled eyes while he sits on the log and watches Henry with that faint expression about the eyes and mouth which might be smiling.*

*—Do it now, Henry, he says.*

*Henry whirls; in the same motion he hurls the pistol from him and stoops again, gripping Bon by both shoulders, panting.*

*—You shall not! he says—You shall not!<sup>7</sup>*

For Henry and in turn for Quentin Compson who nearly fifty years later tells the story, miscegenation is more unbearable than bigamy or even incest: blood itself is what is most desired and feared. Quentin's roommate at Harvard understands: the potency and endurance of blacks will in time prove superior, and will in time erase pure white lineage

and superiority. "So it takes two niggers to get rid of one [white] Sutpen, dont it?" he asks Quentin and then predicts the future:

"I think that in time the Jim Bonds are going to conquer the western hemisphere. Of course it wont quite be in our time and of course as they spread toward the poles they will bleach out again like the rabbits and the birds do, so they wont show up so sharp against the snow. But it will still be [the sole black descendant of the Sutpens] Jim Bond; and so in a few thousand years, I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings. Now I want you to tell me one thing more. Why do you hate the South?"

"I don't hate it," Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; "I dont hate it," he said. *I dont hate it* he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark. *I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!* (302-03)

In *Absalom, Absalom!* Henry Sutpen as Faulkner's surrogate has learned, to his horror, how deeply his own racism penetrates, how difficult it is to overcome, and how destructive it is to his pride and love of his region.

*Go Down, Moses* (1942) is the direct sequel to *Absalom, Absalom!*; it is Faulkner's second most painful and agonizing novel because it shows the consequences to man and culture when the present is built on a past of miscegenation—of the dominance and possession of blacks in which slavery before the War still dictates the values of a culture. The novel, named for a gospel song that is a cry for a redeemer for blacks, traces a new aristocratic family on a plantation in Yoknapatawpha, but the McCaslins, like the Sutpens, are guilty of miscegenation. In fact, when Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin impregnates his own daughter by a slave woman, the girl's mother commits suicide in an icy creek at Christmas. This awful fact, duly recorded in the plantation ledgers—which measure the blacks as property bought and sold, lost and found—is one which baffles Lucius' sons Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy. They deny their father's involvement in Eunice's death. In addition, they welcome her grandson, Tomey's Turl, their mulatto half-brother, but they treat him at times like a slave, hunting him like their pet fox. When one of them is in danger of marriage he does not want, they gamble their half-brother against the end of bachelorhood. This episode is called "Was" and told as if it were a harmless tell tale, but the race relations it attempts to disguise are painfully evident and the title deeply ironic.

Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy salve their conscience by giving their former black slaves their big house and moving into slave quarters. But they lock their servants up each night at the front door, allowing them to escape out of the back so long as they are home in the morning to be let out the front door again: that is, they deny the fact of slavery but practice all the facets of it. Nor does their kindness extend to cash, for they take the \$1000 their father left for his three black children and merely triple the legacy and pass it on in turn to the next generation—to Ike McCaslin. Ike's attempt to pay off the past is frustrated: one son claims the money himself, a second son cannot be found, and the daughter refuses the money: I am free, she tells Ike from her unproductive farm in Arkansas. To find her, Ike says, he travels like the Magi, insinuating holiness and grace in the mission. His arrogance continues when he chooses to relinquish tainted money and plantation while living off his cousin who does maintain the plantation with its black labor force.

*Go Down, Moses* does not arrange its episodes chronologically but instead dramatically. If, however, we rearrange the chapters in chronological order, we will find three occur in the simultaneous present of 1941. "Pantaloone in Black" tells of Rider, a black worker on the McCaslin plantation who is victimized by crooked white bootleggers and dicemen. In exposing them, he is lynched. In a second episode, "Delta Autumn," Ike is confronted by a woman who wishes to marry his nephew and acknowledge their child. But when she tells Ike her aunt took in washing, he knows she is black and that miscegenation has returned to the family. She rises above this but Ike cannot. In the third contemporaneous episode, itself called "Go Down, Moses," it is Gavin Stevens who fails. When the last black of the McCaslin line is executed for crimes in Chicago, his grandmother, married to Ike's mulatto uncle, asks that he be brought home and given a proper burial and an obituary in the local paper (although, illiterate, she cannot read it), Gavin is moved to call on her and apologize for his white race. She will have none of it.

"Roth Edmonds sold him," the old Negress said. She swayed back and forth in the chair. "Sold my Benjamin."

"Hush," [the white elderly] Miss Worsham said. "Hush, Mollie. Hush now."  
 "No," Stevens said. "No, he didn't, Aunt Mollie. It wasn't Mr. Edmonds. Mr. Edmonds didn't—" *But she can't hear me*, he thought. She was not even looking at him. She never had looked at him.  
 "Sold my Benjamin," she said. "Sold him in Egypt . . . Sold him to Pharaoh."<sup>8</sup>

Pharaoh, in Mollie's apt and brilliant aperçu, is Roth Edmonds who sold young Butch into slavery by making him a victim of a white supremacy and attracting him to white materialism. He sold this freed black relative every bit as much as if these were antebellum days and an actual slave auction was being held. Gavin does not see what Miss Worsham and Mollie Beauchamp both know: that slavery has never really left Yoknapatawpha; it has just gone underground. Miscegenation perpetuates slavery indefinitely because it extends the slaveowner's attitudes. What is racially reprehensible from before the War of Northern Invasion is now less reprehensible only because it has grown more subterranean.

Nor has much changed since Faulkner's death in 1962. When visiting his home town early in 1993, I found no copy of *USA Today* available as usual. I later discovered why. The only story in the issue for Friday, January 22, under "Mississippi" read:

Water Valley—3 men face a hearing today in Justice Court on charges they attempted to hang Larry Simmons, 30, in an automobile shop Jan. 11. Simmons said the men put a chain around his neck and pulled him off the ground for a brief time.

The paper does not say that Simmons was black and his persecutors white, but it did not need to. (Water Valley is twelve miles south of Faulkner's Oxford, and is the model for Mottstown in *The Sound and the Fury*.) On Sunday, February 21, 1993, *The New York Times* published this story from Mendenhall, Mississippi:

They found the body of Andre Jones hanging in a dank jailhouse shower stall, a black shoelace from his gray Air Jordan sneakers forming a noose around his neck, a day before he was supposed to start college at Alcorn State University.

State and Federal officials have ruled it a suicide, committed, they say, by a young man who was probably despondent about being caught driving a stolen vehicle and facing the prospect of going to prison. His family and supporters call it a lynching disguised as a suicide.

And they say it is only one of many committed in the jails of a state where the terror of Jim Crow and the civil rights eras lives on in new forms. Civil rights groups and the United States Civil Rights Commission have called for a Federal investigation into Mr. Jones's death as well as those of 21 other blacks in Mississippi jails in recent years, all of them deaths by hanging.

The state of Mississippi could not ban this newspaper story, although they did temporarily ban the showing of the movie *Mississippi Burning* about the deaths of three Northern civil rights workers who attempted to register the blacks as voters not, I think, because the film focuses on racial prejudice but because it portrays a South terrified of and unable to change despite its own best intentions.

Faulkner struggled with this culture, and this heritage, all his life. In his last years, he spoke up in newspaper letters against the punishment of blacks which he thought excessive. He lost the friendships he had and the recognition of his own brother and much of his family. Still he wrote publicly about the need to integrate local schools. At the same time, he wrote in *Ebony* magazine of all places, the leading black national magazine published in the North, an argument that precisely echoes Ike McCaslin in "Delta Autumn": he argued that the South should go slowly and independently on matters of race, taking perhaps a hundred, perhaps a thousand years to assimilate everyone into a single race. Like Henry Sutpen and Gavin Stevens, he often wanted more than he himself could supply.

But he never stopped trying. He died just two months before James Meredith attempted to be the first black student to enter the University of Mississippi, whose campus was contiguous with Faulkner's property. We can guess where, painfully, Faulkner would have stood on the Meredith case. Yet just a few years earlier, he had also told the British journalist Russell Warren Howe that he would have to shoot blacks if a riot occurred. For Faulkner battled with race and racism, publicly and privately, as few other American authors have ever done or ever had to do. He was still battling when he died, living, quite consciously, what

he had finally come to terms with in an essay for *Holiday* magazine in 1954: "Loving all of it even while he had to hate some of it because he knows now that you dont love because: you love despite; not for the virtues, but despite the faults."<sup>9</sup>

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>*The Sound and the Fury* (New York: Vintage International, 1990) 297.

<sup>2</sup>*Flags in the Dust* (New York: Vintage, 1974) 25.

<sup>3</sup>*The Unvanquished* (New York: Vintage International, 1991) 74-75.

<sup>4</sup>*Old Times in the Faulkner Country* in collaboration with Floyd C. Watkins (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1961) 91-92.

<sup>5</sup>*Light in August* (New York: Vintage International, 1990) 464-65.

<sup>6</sup>As shown in detail by Joel Williamson, *William Faulkner and Southern History* (New York and Oxford: OUP, 1993) esp. Part One.

<sup>7</sup>*Absalom, Absalom!* (New York: Vintage International, 1990) 286.

<sup>8</sup>*Go Down, Moses* (New York: Vintage International, 1990) 362.

<sup>9</sup>As reprinted in *Essays, Speeches & Public Letters by William Faulkner*, ed. James B. Meriwether (New York: Random House, 1965) 42-43.

## Antidrama—Metadrama—Artistic Program? Arthur Kopit's *The Hero* in Context

BERND ENGLER

In 1957, Arthur Kopit, then a student of engineering at Harvard University had his first play, the one-act drama *The Questioning of Nick*, performed at the stage of the Dunster House Drama Workshop in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The realistic play was written in the manner of Arthur Miller's early works, and focussed on the psychological conflicts faced by the dramatis personae. By the time Kopit graduated from Harvard in 1959, seven of his early plays had been performed. By then he had gradually moved away from realistic traditions. Yet although plays like *Oh Dad, Poor Dad* (1960) and *Indians* (1968) may be regarded as important contributions to the contemporary American stage, Arthur Kopit's dramatic work has not gained the critical attention it deserves. With the exception of *Indians* his plays are usually neglected. In his monumental three-volume *Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama*,<sup>1</sup> Christopher W. E. Bigsby mentions Arthur Kopit's work only briefly, while he extensively acknowledges the plays of Sam Shepard, David Mamet, and Robert Wilson. As if Kopit's artistic potential were exhausted by his inventing the most lengthy, hilarious and absurd titles, critics often confine their interest in Kopit to listing some of these quite breathtaking titles, such as *On the Runway of Life, You Never Know What's Coming Off Next* or *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad: A Pseudoclassical Tragifarce in a Bastard French Tradition*.

Given the unanimous critical neglect, one might assume that Kopit's work does not deserve the effort of sustained criticism. Yet although in the scope of this paper I won't be able to prove comprehensively that the critics' disregard is based on an obvious prejudice, I will nevertheless try to show that Kopit is an important contemporary American play-

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wright who deserves his audience's undivided interest. This assessment is based on a short introductory discussion of Kopit's early play *Oh Dad, Poor Dad* as well as on a more detailed analysis of his short play *The Hero*, written in 1964.

To appreciate fully the characteristics of the American drama of the 1960s and 70s one will have to account for the difficult situation which young dramatists faced at that time. When, in the late 1950s, Arthur Kopit turned to the theatre, American drama was undergoing a crisis. With Eugene O'Neill's death in 1953, with Arthur Miller's withdrawal into private life, and with Tennessee Williams' retreat from the literary arena, American theatre had lost its major representatives. Miller, Williams and O'Neill had firmly established a new dramatic tradition, a blend of realistic-expressionistic drama with a sharp focus on psychological and social conflicts.<sup>2</sup> The young dramatists, however, did not regard this type of drama as a model they wished to emulate. As they tried to open up new directions for the American theatre they even acclaimed the disappearance of the old guard as a promise of liberation from paralysing artistic conventions.

In 1959 a significant change in American drama was obvious: Edward Albee celebrated his first major success with his *Zoo Story*, The Living Theatre performed Jack Gelber's *The Connection*, Allan Kaprow had his *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* staged, and Lorraine Hansberry revived the *Black Theatre* movement with her extraordinarily successful *A Raisin in the Sun*. With the emergence, or rather eruption of these new voices, American drama seemed to enter the 1960s with the promise of a complete break away from stale and outmoded traditions.<sup>3</sup> Yet the reorientation, radical and vital as it was, happened to be but the prologue to a lengthy and in many ways quite unsuccessful process of fighting the overwhelming heritage of the preceding generation.<sup>4</sup>

In the course of the 1970s all the major experimental attempts to create an utterly new theatre had exhausted their creative potential and ended in a return to realistic conventions. In spite of the fact that experimental theatre and playwriting lived on—even after the closing of such influential experimental stages as The Living Theatre and The Open Theatre—the revolutionary momentum seemed broken. Those dramatists and directors who intended to play a major part in the American theatre

during the 1970s and 80s sought to revive formerly abandoned traditions. Thus, Sam Shepard, to give just one example, turned away from his early experimental metadramatic plays (such as *Action* and *Melodrama Play*) and began to write more conventional, realistic "family plays" in the 1970s and 80s.<sup>5</sup> In spite of the fact that by then the American theatre had transcended some of the economic pressures of the Broadway system by moving to off-Broadway stages, the new generation of dramatists could never completely escape from the lure of Broadway and the dictates of the audience's less revolutionary expectations. Although young playwrights had directed a considerable part of their energy to a reform of dramatic conventions, they had also acknowledged the very existence and prominence of these conventions, especially by fighting against them.

Arthur Kopit's works reflect these difficulties in many ways. From his surrealist early plays *Sing to Me Through Open Windows* (1959) and *Asylum, or, What the Gentlemen Are Up To, Not to Mention the Ladies* (1963),<sup>6</sup> to the internationally acclaimed *Indians*, Kopit's work is the result of an ongoing and never completed effort to establish a voice of his own. In his essay "The Vital Matter of Environment," which was published in *Theater Arts* in 1961, Kopit frankly comments on his inability to break completely away from the conventions his predecessors had so firmly established:

One can never wholly dissociate a work of art from its creative environment any more than one can separate its style from the traditions around it. . . . Tradition has always been the basis of all innovation, and always will be.<sup>7</sup>

Any attempt to overcome the pressures of tradition by explicitly opposing them and writing what some dramatists and critics have called "antidrama,"<sup>8</sup> makes the playwright admit, as it were *e negativo*, the persistence of the former dramatic models. Paradoxically, antidrama expresses and affirms the continuing impact of the tradition it claims to surpass, because it cannot help recreating in the first place what is to be attacked later. Moreover, by the very nature of their discourse, attempts to write antidrama are but forms of metadrama, that is, plays which explicitly deal with the problems of playwrighting and the dramatist's efforts to discard out-moded traditions.<sup>9</sup>

Arthur Kopit's first successful play which, after being staged at Harvard University became a box-office hit at a Broadway theatre in 1962, is both a metadrama and an antidrama *par excellence*. It celebrates the spirit of rebellion and seems to take extraordinary pleasure in subverting the entire repertoire of the American drama in the 1940s and 50s. With its subtitle *A Pseudoclassical Tragifarce in a Bastard French Tradition* Kopit's play *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feeling So Sad* signals that it is primarily out to satirize the dramatic tradition. Although Arthur Kopit seems to follow Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams in his choice of subject (a men-hating mother dominating her emotionally crippled son), his dramatic technique is completely different.

When the curtain rises and some of the props are carried onto the stage, the audience immediately perceives Kopit's parodistic intentions. In addition to a coffin in which Mrs Rosepettle transports the corpse of her deceased husband from one holiday resort to another, the audience's attention is directed to two enormous Venus fly-traps. The latter as well as the entire atmosphere of the opening scene recall Williams' play *Suddenly Last Summer*. Moreover, the names of the characters tellingly refer the spectator to another of Williams' works, *The Rose Tattoo*. You have Mrs Rosepettle, the domineering mother, Commodore Rosabove, her passionate but bluntly rejected wooer, and Rosalie, the young woman who tries to rescue the retarded Jonathan from under his mother's domination. Yet there are also obvious similarities with respect to the dramatic action. In *The Rose Tattoo* the widow Serafina delle Rose celebrates her love for her dead husband Rosario by centering her whole life around the urn containing his ashes. Very much like Mrs Rosepettle, Serafina, in her self-destructive mourning, threatens to destroy the life of her only child, Rosa. Yet, in contrast to Williams' realistic portrayals, Kopit refrains from exploring the psychological problems of his dramatis personae altogether, presenting characters which are as flat as caricatures can possibly be. He is satisfied with delineating his characters as if they were mere quotations from pre-existing texts. By putting elements of the "pre-texts" in new and utterly inappropriate contexts he ridicules the objectives of traditional drama, not even shrinking back from devices of slapstick comedy when he can use them effectively. In the final scene in which Rosalie tries to seduce Jonathan in his mother's bedroom he makes fun of modern

dramatists and directors, especially of their habit to "over-psychologize" in their often blunt application of Freudian psychoanalysis to the characters on stage. When Rosalie and Jonathan are about to make love, the father's mummified corpse falls from the closet—where it was stored—right onto the bed.<sup>10</sup>

As *A Pseudoclassical Tragifarce in a Bastard French Tradition, Oh Dad, Poor Dad* is also meant to be a critical analysis and repudiation of the "French" influence on the American theatre of the 1950s, i.e. the influence of the Theatre of the Absurd.<sup>11</sup> Kopit's characters are trapped in situations similar to those depicted by the so-called Absurdist as typical of the human condition. The dramatis personae live in a world where meaningful action is impossible and communication leads nowhere. The plot of *Oh Dad, Poor Dad* is circular, and, at the end—as if speaking for the distressed spectator—Mrs Rosepettle can only voice the complete breakdown of meaning when she addresses Jonathan with the question: "What is the meaning of this?"

Since Arthur Kopit's *Oh Dad, Poor Dad* negates the dramatic conventions dominating American drama in the 1950s it may be called a perfect antidrama. Consequently it displays many elements of metadrama, because it constantly reflects the failure of realistic and absurd drama, and explicitly disqualifies those specific texts that used to serve as "pre-texts." One might even feel justified in interpreting the events on stage as a dramatization of the situation in which the new playwrights found themselves at the start of their career. Jonathan, who, as a consequence of his paralyzing dependence on his parent, has not even been able to find his own language but stammers most of the time, may represent the young dramatist who tries to overcome the stifling heritage of his predecessors and is still in search of his own voice. As the play ends with Jonathan submitting again to his mother's overpowering influence and his regression to a stage of speechlessness, *Oh Dad, Poor Dad* gives a rather bleak outlook on the future of American drama. With the "pre-texts" still looming so large, the contemporary dramatist is condemned to endlessly "re-present" the tradition, either by slavishly imitating it or by rebelling against it.

Arthur Kopit's *The Hero* may be regarded as an antidrama to an even greater extent than *Oh Dad, Poor Dad*. The play is a dumb show, and as

such completely dispenses with one of the foremost means of dramatic presentation, the medium of language. It negates the conventions of traditional drama in the most radical way. Again, Kopit writes his play on the backdrop of pre-existing texts. Very much like the two protagonists in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, the nameless hero of Kopit's short play is a ragged tramp who seems to have lost his orientation in the world. The scenario evoked by the stage décor confronts the spectator with the perfect emblem of man's absurd plight: the hero finds himself lost in the midst of an endless desert.

To summarize the action: after entering the stage a man collapses from exhaustion, gets up again, and carefully dusts off his rags and his attaché case. Then he begins to search the ground, looks back from whence he came, searches again, and finally leaves the stage as if intent on fetching something he lost on his way. He returns carrying a huge scroll of paper. Satisfied with his success, he takes a sandwich from his pocket, but soon finds out that he cannot eat it as it is rotten and hard as a rock. Irritated by this experience, he pulls out a large, badly fragmented "MAP OF THE WORLD." Although he knows that a map on this scale will not give him any sense of his exact whereabouts, he nevertheless checks the map, and pretends to have found the section depicting the desert. When he seems to spot something in the distance he gets out a pair of opera glasses and begins to unroll the scroll of paper, arranging it like a billboard. He picks up his attaché case, takes out a paintbox, and, while scanning the distance with his opera glasses, draws a sketch of an oasis with a palm tree, a pool and all the goodies necessary for a luxurious picnic. After finishing his painting he carefully hides the paintbox behind the scroll, straightens up his appearance and rests, in a rather cheerful and content mood, in the shade of the palm tree he has just painted.

This ludicrous and seemingly meaningless action reaches its climax when a tattered woman appears on the stage. Suddenly confronted with the picture of an oasis and a real man resting under a fake palm tree, she is somewhat irritated, but pretends not to notice. After a while she studies the billboard and checks the distance, but—as the text of the play repeats several times—"she sees, of course, nothing." The man offers her his opera glasses, yet again, she cannot see anything. Finally she gives up her suspicions and sits down under the palm tree, even going so far as to

share the rotten sandwich with the man. She seems to be content with her situation. The play ends with the following stage direction:

*Suddenly she touches his shoulder and he turns. He looks at her. She motions to the surrounding oasis and sighs, with pleasure. She laughs warmly. He laughs modestly. They snuggle up to each other. They stare off into the distance, smiles on their faces. Long pause.*

*The orange disk of the sun sets slowly against the cyclorama. The lights fade as it does. They snuggle more, as the cold of night approaches. The vague smiles on their faces never leave. Indeed, they almost seem frozen there. Darkness.*<sup>12</sup>

The dramatic action in Arthur Kopit's *The Hero* is indeed quite enigmatic if not absurd, and, accordingly, critics regard it as an insignificant joke, a joke not even worth the effort of interpretation. So far, only one critic has bothered to analyze the play in some detail. Jürgen Wolter deals with Kopit's playlet as a critique of the common ideology of heroism. "After a long journey through the world," Wolter asserts,

after a severe test of his heroism by reality, the hero . . . uses a billboard to advertize the false dream of his heroism. When a woman comes along, he succeeds in making her believe in his vision. . . . For the audience, the dream of heroism, which the woman indulges in . . . turns into nightmare, because we realize that . . . life can only be endured with the help of illusion.<sup>13</sup>

In his search for what he calls the "serious subject" in Kopit's play Wolter comes to quite a convincing conclusion. But with regard to the context in which Kopit's early plays were written, and especially to their overall anti- and metadramatic orientation, we might as well question Wolter's interpretation. Given Arthur Kopit's earlier *Oh Dad, Poor Dad* with its poignant satire of the "Bastard French Tradition," the question arises whether *The Hero* is not as much of a metadrama as most of Kopit's earlier plays. As such it could be interpreted as a subversive attack on the preconceptions and ideologies on which most plays written in the vein of the Theatre of the Absurd are based.

Indeed, from the very beginning of the play, the situation of the homeless tramps who find themselves cast out in a life-negating desert evokes a perspective propagated by many playwrights of the absurdist tradition. The orientation which the fragmented "MAP OF THE WORLD"

seems to promise is far from comprehensive, and, as the image of the discarded segments of the map suggests, the past, i.e. the road already travelled, is absolutely incapable of defining one's present situation. Yet unlike Samuel Beckett, Arthur Kopit does not conceive his dramatis personae as being petrified when facing the meaninglessness of their actions. The structure of his play is not circular, and in contrast to Beckett's tramps in *Waiting for Godot*, Kopit's characters do not remain trapped in schematized patterns of speech and "non-action." Kopit's protagonist is a "hero" in so far as he does take action and creates an antidote to a reality which seems to be without any promise. His act of evoking the illusion of a counter-world is intended to be treated as an illusion. The means of producing it are always kept within easy reach. The capability of achieving such an illusion is so essential to man's being that the hero immediately sets out to fetch his scroll of paper when he thinks he has lost it.

In his act of creating the illusion of an alternative world the artist is certainly not restricted to a mere imitation of reality. When the woman enters the stage and is not able to find the "real" equivalent of the pictured oasis anywhere on the horizon, the audience becomes aware of the fact that the work of art produced by the artist/hero is not at all a representation of a pre-existing reality. The woman "sees, of course, nothing," because the oasis is only a projection of the artist's imagination and as such the expression of his own psychological needs. When the woman finally and even against her better judgement discards her skepticism and quite willingly submits to the illusion, she enacts what in the theory of art has been aptly described as the readers' or audiences' "willing suspension of disbelief." This willing suspension refers to an act of the intentional disregard of one's better knowledge, that is to say the knowledge that all pictures of reality presented by art are more or less well made artefacts. The phrase of the "willing suspension of disbelief," which was coined by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, originally only encapsulated the artist's effort of creating an imaginary reality with a "semblance of truth."<sup>14</sup> Coleridge maintained that the artist had to manufacture his picture of reality in a way that enables the recipient to perceive the picture as if it were reality itself. Because the suspension of disbelief depends on the verisimilitude of the work of art, Coleridge

wants the artist to make the reproduction of reality as authentic as possible.

Unlike Coleridge, who approached the problem of artistic illusion from the point of view of "art production" and meant his term to refer to the artist's means of making the reader suspend his disbelief, Kopit's reference to this concept opens up a double perspective. On the one hand, Kopit focusses on the artist himself and analyses the conditions and procedures which lead to the creation of artistic illusions; on the other hand, he deals with the psychological mechanisms which enable or even force the spectator to accept the mere "As-If" as the real reality. In contrast to the widely held theory that the creation of a work of art immediately presupposes reality as a model of its imaginary reproduction, Kopit's version of the concept seems to imply that the prerequisite of artistic production is not objective but subjective reality, in other words, a specific psychological disposition. In the case of *The Hero*, the oasis the artist seems to copy by looking at some distant reality with his opera glasses is nothing but a mere hallucination. The artist does not represent reality, but the likeness of his own wishful thinking. Hoping to find an oasis he projects his wishes onto reality in the first place. His work of art, then, is merely the mirror of his emotions. The depiction of a picnic scene directly reflects his frustration at finding his sandwich inedible.

From the point of view of the recipient, a "willing suspension of disbelief" is, indeed, an act of volition. The woman scrutinizes and acknowledges the illusion as the illusion it actually is. She realizes that the oasis is a fake. And only after she has scanned the horizon and knows that there is no real oasis in sight which could satisfy her wishes, she decides to give in to the illusion. The illusion art can offer is, however, not regarded as an alternative to reality, but as a means of compensation for what cannot be obtained in real life.

With this depiction of the compensating function of art, Arthur Kopit poses the fundamental question of the possible objectives which art might fulfill in modern society. As the ending of *The Hero* reveals, the illusion created by art seems to enable man to transcend the threatening situation of his being cast into a hostile and uninhabitable world. Art's compensating potential is, however, also characterized as a means of a highly questionable escape from the necessity of finding an adequate answer



to the demands of the present situation. When darkness approaches, reality can no longer be suppressed. Although both characters try to do their best when they face the destruction of their illusion, Kopit clearly shows that art can lead to a dead end. The bright smile on the faces of the *dramatis personae* becomes vaguer and vaguer as the sun gradually disappears, and seems almost frozen in the end. In spite of the fact that a temporary retreat into the world of illusion might improve man's ability to cope with the frustrations inflicted by an adverse reality, this retreat might also lead to a complete loss of one's ability to take adequate action in order to adapt oneself to an allegedly hopeless situation.

At the end of his play, Kopit certainly does not follow an aesthetics of escapism as it had been propagated by the Broadway system. Works of art are certainly able to create a perfect illusion and may thus temporarily satisfy the psychological needs of the audience. Yet, such perfect illusions are counterproductive as they destroy the audience's capabilities of analyzing and responding to the problems of exterior reality in an appropriate way. *The Hero* dramatizes Kopit's call for an anti-illusionist artistic program, a call for a theatre which confronts the audience with the reality it would rather not see. Designed as a metadrama, *The Hero* could indeed never become a herald of an aesthetics of illusion. Its major thrust is directed at criticizing the results of an art which traps its audience in a fake world of wish-fulfillment.

Arthur Kopit remained true to the artistic program thus outlined in his early antidrama. In his later works of art from *The Day the Whores Came Out to Play Tennis* (1965) and *Indians* (1968) to *Wings* (1978) and the apocalyptic play about the unpredictable success of nuclear deterrence, *The End of the World* (1984), Kopit lived up to his programmatic claim for a theatre which confronts the audience with an unvarnished picture of reality.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>(Cambridge: CUP, 1985). Critical discussions of Kopit's oeuvre are scarce. Notable exceptions are Jürgen Wolter's "Arthur Kopit: Dreams and Nightmares," *Essays on Contemporary American Drama*, ed. Hedwig Bock and Albert Wertheim (Munich: Hueber, 1981) 55-74, Carol Harley's article "Arthur Kopit" in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 7: *Twentieth-Century American Dramatists* (Part II), ed. John MacNicholas (Detroit: Gale, 1981) 41-49, and Doris Auerbach's study *Sam Shepard, Arthur Kopit, and the Off Broadway Theater* (Boston: Twayne, 1982).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. esp. O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* (1946) and *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1956), which was staged only posthumously, Miller's *All My Sons* (1947), *Death of a Salesman* (1949) and *The Crucible* (1953), and Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955). For a comprehensive survey of the predominance of psychological and social realism in the American drama of the 1940s and 50s cf. Gerald M. Berkowitz, *American Drama of the Twentieth Century* (London: Longman, 1992), esp. chapter 4, and Paul Goetsch's "Vom psychologisch-sozialkritischen zum absurden Drama: Williams, Miller, Albee," *Das amerikanische Drama*, ed. Gerhard Hoffmann (Bern: Francke, 1984) 202-39 and 309-11.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Theodore Shank's *American Alternative Theatre* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982) and Herbert Grabes's "Das experimentelle Theater in Amerika seit den frühen 60er Jahren," *Das amerikanische Drama*, ed. Hoffmann, 240-72 and 311-12, here: 240.

<sup>4</sup>Edward Albee's rebellion against the tradition of the psychologically oriented realistic drama in such plays as *The Zoo Story* and *The American Dream*, did, for instance, not really succeed in reaching its objectives. Albee's attempt to rid himself of the influence of Miller and Williams by embracing the new tradition of the Theatre of the Absurd, only made him submit to other figures of authority. Moreover, with his mode of characterization and the development of the dramatic action he still moved along the old tracks of the psychological and socio-critical drama.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Ron Mottram, *Inner Landscapes: The Theatre of Sam Shepard* (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1984), Elena Oumano, *Sam Shepard: The Life and Work of an American Dreamer* (New York: St. Martin's P, 1986), Ulrich Adolphs, *Die Tyrannei der Bilder: Sam Shepards Dramen* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1990), Martin Tucker, *Sam Shepard* (New York: Continuum, 1992), David J. DeRose, *Sam Shepard* (New York: Twayne, 1992).

<sup>6</sup>*Asylum* was later performed and published under the title *Chamber Music*.

<sup>7</sup>*Theater Arts* (April 1961) 36.

<sup>8</sup>The term "antidrama" is used here as a relational term, i.e. a term which is defined by its radical opposition to and discarding of dominant theatrical conventions and not by a set of fixed features. In "Le tragédie du langage," (1958) Eugène Ionesco defined "anti-theatre" as the result of a parodistic impulse which subverts and negates existing standards: "En écrivant cette pièce [i.e. *La Cantatrice chauve*] (car cela était devenu une sorte de pièce ou une anti-pièce, c'est-à-dire une vraie parodie de pièce, une comédie de la comédie), j'étais pris d'un véritable malaise, de vertige, de nausée. . . . Je m'imaginai avoir écrit quelque chose comme la *tragédie du langage*! . . . Quand on la joua je fus presque étonné d'entendre rire les spectateurs qui prirent (et prennent toujours) cela gaiement, considérant que c'était bien une comédie, voire un canular." Ionesco, "La tragédie du langage," *Notes et contre-notes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962) 157; originally published in *Spectacles* 2 (July 1958). Cf. also ch. 3 ("Eugène

Ionesco: Theatre and Anti-Theatre") of Martin Esslin's *The Theatre of the Absurd*, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), esp. 125-41.

<sup>9</sup>For a discussion of the term "metadrama" see esp. Lionel Abel, *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963), Robert J. Nelson, *Play within Play: The Dramatist's Conception of His Art: Shakespeare to Anouilh* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1958), James L. Calderwood, *Shakespearean Metadrama* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1971), and Richard Hornby, *Drama, Metadrama and Perception* (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1986).

<sup>10</sup>The fact that the seduction scene happens to take place in the mother's and not in Jonathan's bed, additionally highlights the unsolved oedipal situation. Cf. Zoltan Szilassy's interpretation in "Yankee Burlesque or Metaphysical Farce?," *Hungarian Studies in English* 11 (December 1977) 143.

<sup>11</sup>The term "Theatre of the Absurd" is used here as defined by Martin Esslin in his seminal study *The Theatre of the Absurd*. Esslin bases his attempt at definition primarily on the ideological orientation of plays by Beckett, Adamov, Ionesco and others which seem to expound a view of life quite similar to that expressed, for instance, by Camus in his *Le mythe de Sisyphe: Essai sur l'absurde* (1942). Edward Albee and most dramatists of his generation pay homage to the so-called "French tradition." Albee himself described the Theatre of the Absurd as "an absorption-in-art of certain existentialist and post-existentialist philosophical concepts having to do, in the main, with man's attempts to make sense for himself out of his senseless position in a world which makes no sense—which makes no sense because the moral, religious, political and social structures man has erected to 'illusion' himself have collapsed." Albee, "Which Theatre is the Absurd One?," *Directions in Modern Theatre and Drama*, ed. John Gassner (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966) 332.

<sup>12</sup>The text of Kopit's *The Hero* is quoted from *The Day the Whores Came Out to Play Tennis and Other Plays by Arthur Kopit* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965) 79-84, here: 84.

<sup>13</sup>Wolter 63.

<sup>14</sup>In ch. 14 of his *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge asserts: "In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*; in which it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith." *Biographia Literaria*, ed. John Shawcross, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907) 2: 5-6.

## Chivalry and Courtesy: A Comment on Richard McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood*

THOMAS KULLMANN

Where rites and ceremonies of the Elizabethan age are concerned, which are given expression in literary texts, inductive analyses of historical and phenomenological data (now frequently going by the name of New Historicism) have furthered our understanding; i. e. proceeding from one text or group of texts and taking into consideration the immediately telling historical and sociological background. Richard McCoy's study on *The Rites of Knighthood*, published by The University of California Press in Stephen Greenblatt's "The New Historicism" Series,<sup>1</sup> takes up Elizabethan texts which celebrate the rituals of medieval knighthood, examining them for hidden political "sub-texts."

Proceeding from the fact that "Elizabeth's reign fostered a spectacular revival of chivalric ideals and practices" (14-15) McCoy convincingly demonstrates how ambitious noblemen such as Leicester, Sidney and Essex made use of chivalric "rites" in order to further what they considered their political "rights." Under the mask of veneration of the monarch, the texts accompanying chivalric spectacle reveal the noblemen's strong claim for autonomy. Seemingly harmonious forms of spectacle, such as Leicester's famous Kenilworth entertainments (42-45) or Sidney's *Four Foster Children of Desire* (58-65) are shown to contain meaningful ambivalences and ample signs of political conflict. These ambivalences—between the poles of loyalty and submission on one hand, and proud chivalric independence on the other—McCoy also detects in Samuel Daniel's *Civil Wars*, in the story of the knight Amphialus in Sidney's *Arcadia*, and in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. McCoy further establishes links between this literary treatment and the practice of chivalric tournaments. That these were much more than just playful shows is demonstrated by the fact that the noblemen who participated

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in the Essex revolt in 1601 had been known for their feats in chivalric entertainments such as the yearly Accession Day tilt (81-82). McCoy argues that the various chivalric tournaments helped to keep up a "chivalric compromise," i.e. a balance of power between self-asserting members of the nobility on one hand and the Queen with her Privy Council on the other (9-27).

On the one hand McCoy's interpretations of the texts chosen are quite plausible and do indeed illustrate an important area of Elizabethan cultural life. One may, however, hesitate to adopt the implied thesis that chivalry is not just one manifestation of the Elizabethan political philosophy but *the* dominating source of metaphor for the ongoing power struggles. McCoy's study says nothing about the many anti-chivalrous texts of the Elizabethan Age. Neither does he mention texts which propagate codes of behaviour different from the code of chivalry.

To exemplify the one-sidedness of McCoy's approach I propose to examine his discussion of Sidney's (*New*) *Arcadia*, and to look at the competing "cultural metaphors" found in this novel. McCoy comments on the ineffectiveness of "the protagonists' martial prowess and chivalric heroism" in book II (69) and the "inconsistencies" of "Amphialus' justification of rebellion" in book III (70), pointing out that while Sidney "deliberately strips away the glorious facade of chivalry . . . the *New Arcadia* remains bound by the conventions of chivalric romance" (71). By his insistence on "conflicting impulses" and "contradictions . . . unsolved" (73) McCoy implicitly contradicts those interpretations which are based on the assumption that Sidney intended to create ideal harmony which is in some way (e.g. by instruction through delectation) transmitted to the reader.<sup>2</sup> While it may be conceded that these traditional interpretations need qualification it seems surprising that McCoy hardly glances at those parts of the *Arcadia* which deal with the pastoral existence of Pyrocles and Musidorus, only saying that the "postures" of melancholy and pastoral withdrawal are "part of the chivalric repertoire" (67).

Now it is certainly true that these postures belong to the repertoire of Renaissance poetic motifs, but I cannot see that they are in any way "chivalric." On the contrary: in the *New Arcadia* the shepherds' life is juxtaposed with the world of knighthood as a way of pursuing a

"journey's end," which is in some respects its exact opposite: Knights-at-arms are supposed to be, as McCoy points out himself (16-18), proud, active and ostentatiously masculine. Shepherds, on the other hand, are humble, passive and non-violent, mixing with women on terms of equality. In the respective literary traditions, the ends of chivalric and pastoral endeavour can be much the same: winning the love of a lady. The strategies to achieve this end can be seen to indicate the respective concepts of human perfection.

The traditional attributes of both knighthood and pastoralism are present in Sidney's *Arcadia*. Sidney does, however, transgress the confines of the two 'paradigms' by having his two heroes, Pyrocles and Musidorus, achieve chivalric fame and disguise themselves as a woman and a shepherd, alternately. But then the transformations of the two knights are obviously intended to constitute a fundamental breach of the chivalric pattern of behaviour. When Musidorus realizes that his friend Pyrocles has dressed up as a woman, calling himself/herself Zelmane, he is scandalized:<sup>3</sup>

But by that time Musidorus had gathered his spirits together, and yet casting a ghastful countenance upon him as if he would conjure some strange spirit, he thus spake unto him:

'And is it possible that this is Pyrocles, the only young prince in the world formed by nature and framed by education to the true exercise of virtue? Or is it indeed some Amazon that has counterfeited the face of my friend in this sort to vex me? For likelier sure I would have thought it that any outward face might have been disguised than that the face of so excellent a mind could have been thus blemished . . . .' (132)

Musidorus reminds Pyrocles of the "excellent things" he has done, the "fame" he has won as a knight, which are likely to be "overthrown" by his dressing up in women's clothes. Musidorus, however, will later, in chapter 18, shock his friend in a similar way by his appearance in "shepherdish apparel" (169), i.e. an identity change of his own:

. . . she [Zelmane/Pyrocles] plainly perceived that it was her dear friend Musidorus; whereat marvelling not a little, she demanded of him whether the goddess of those woods had such a power to transform every body, or whether, as in all enterprises else he had done, he meant thus to match her in this new alteration.

'Alas,' said Musidorus, 'what shall I say, who am loth to say, and yet fain would have said? I find, indeed, that all is but lip-wisdom which wants experience. I now (woe is me) do try what love can do.' (169-70)

The reason for the transformation is the same in both cases: the knights are in love, love being the "journey's end . . . most fair and honourable" which excuses the use of "foul" ways (174). Their disguises will enable them to gain access to the Arcadian princesses Philoclea and Pamela. While their knighthood has earned them fame, it hinders their freedom of movement: ". . . the court [of Arcadia] could not be visited, prohibited to all men but to certain shepherdish people" (109); and while Arcadia is no country for knights, its inhabitants are characterised by "right honest hospitality" (171). In their disguises the two knights do indeed manage to make friends with the princesses. Nevertheless, their disguises cause Pyrocles and Musidorus a profound uneasiness: before his own transformation Musidorus laments his friend's "bewitchment," his loss of "virtue" and "the use of reason," and finally his "thraldom" (171). The latter term obviously refers to Pyrocles' loss of chivalric autonomy. Soon afterward, however, Musidorus meets Pamela and finds himself in the same sorry state: ". . . the very words returned back again to strike my soul" (171). He realises that it is better to "yield" to love than to resist it (172). With this passive attitude, he flatly contradicts the chivalric concept of "passionate activism" (McCoy 73), of forcing one's destiny.

The ensuing love plots also reveal a profound sense of ambiguity concerning the conflicting attitudes of chivalry and pastoralism, activity and passivity. Their disguises may have enabled the two friends to gain access to the Arcadian court; in order to win the love of the ladies, however, they have to reveal themselves for what they are: Only when Philoclea becomes aware of "Zelma's" true sex can she admit the true nature of her affection for him. Only when Pamela realizes the identity of the foreign shepherd with the famous knight Musidorus does she consider him worthy of her love. Musidorus reveals himself to Pamela indirectly, by telling his own story in the third person. In the course of his narrative he excuses himself for the "baseness" he voluntarily undergoes:

. . . he clothed himself in a shepherd's weed, that under the baseness of that form he might at least have free access to feed his eyes with that which should at length eat up his heart. In which doing, thus much without doubt he hath manifested that this estate is not always to be rejected, since under that veil there may be hidden things to be esteemed. And if he might with taking on a shepherd's look cast up his eyes to the fairest princess Nature in that time created, the like, nay the same desire of mine need no more to be disdained or held for disgraceful. (230)

As Maurice Evans remarks in the note to this passage in his Penguin edition of the book (855), the "veil" refers to the allegorical level of meaning traditionally found in pastoral writing. Renaissance pastoral can usually be seen as a "veiled" representation of courtly life.<sup>4</sup> This particularly applies to the *Arcadia*, where Sidney, according to Sukanta Chaudhuri, "has in mind a distinctive idea of 'pastoral' excellence . . . . It is not a genuinely pastoral ideal but the perfection of a courtly one. The pastoral contributes that touch of perfection, a pristine or unspoiled version of the standard courtly virtue."<sup>5</sup> In the light of this literary tradition McCoy's assumption that to Sidney the pastoral world denotes a "withdrawal" from the court (63-64) is obviously mistaken. If the court is criticised from a pastoral point of view—as in *As You Like It*, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*—this is usually due to the fact that the court is corrupt, whereas the true courtly values are preserved in an ideal green world. While McCoy minutely examines the political connotations of chivalric motifs in Elizabethan life and literature, he apparently fails to see the political relevance of the pastoral: in the *Arcadia* the two heroes become aware of the fact that pastoral (and courtly) submissiveness can be more successful than knightly valour. This obviously corresponds to the political ideology of Elizabeth who, as she could not be an absolute ruler, preferred her courtiers to beg for favours and promotion submissively, and with displays of love, like shepherds, rather than by shows of strength, like knights.<sup>6</sup> In her famous speech at Tilbury she maintained that she put her "chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will" of her subjects.<sup>7</sup>

These remarks concerning the pastoral in Sidney's *Arcadia* do not invalidate McCoy's theses concerning the political meaning of Elizabethan pageantry. Chivalry, however, turns out to represent only one of the



several political "options" struggling with one another during the reign of the Virgin Queen. McCoy's theses should also be qualified in that these struggles are not confined to politics, but refer to fundamental philosophical issues concerning the nature and the achievement of perfect virtue. I should like to argue that by juxtaposing the two literary (and cultural) traditions of chivalry and pastoralism Sidney offers the reader two distinct models of behaviour which might lead to this ideal, trying to achieve a *discordia concors* of two conflicting attitudes (or "discourses"). McCoy points to *discordia concors* in connection with Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (129, 160) but in calling it a "chivalric ideal" he fails to see the full range of "discords" contained in this "harmony."

*Discordia concors* also seems to be implied in Sidney's famous surname "the Shepherd Knight." McCoy discusses this "figure" embodying "the 'exact image of quiet and action'" (77) without giving proper attention to the paradoxical nature of this appellation. In the passages quoted from the *Arcadia* the basic incompatibility of chivalry and the "pastoral way of life" is quite obvious: only the excuse of Musidorus' great love can save him, in his eyes, from the charge of being "disgraceful." Like Sidney himself, Musidorus means to achieve a synthesis of opposites in order to reach perfection.

The female attire of his friend Pyrocles presents the reader with another visual correlative to the lovers' passive, non-violent attitudes: in order to succeed in a courtly community, a nobleman has to give up his "manhood." The lack of "virilitie" is a charge Samuel Daniel levels at the Tudor dynasty in his dedication prefatory to *The Collection of the History of England* which McCoy discusses at length (9, 103-26). It is also a charge which was sometimes levelled at court life in general, as well as at the first and foremost virtue of any courtier: courtesy.

In his *Cortegiano* (1528), translated by Thomas Hoby in 1561, Castiglione several times sees fit to defend courtesy against the charge of being a means to make men "womanish" (89).<sup>8</sup> McCoy quotes Castiglione only once, to characterise the equilibrium between "play" and "earnestness" in chivalric tournament (24). As "the recommended bible of the gentleman" (Kelso),<sup>9</sup> *The Courtier* should also be noted for its manifest anti-chivalrous tendencies: while the courtier should be a good soldier when serving his prince at war, he should not brag of his exploits.

Whereas the nourishing of their pride and the quest for honour had been among the main traits of medieval knights (as well as some of their Elizabethan successors, such as Leicester and Essex, discussed by McCoy), Castiglione's courtier may be obliged to forego the gratification of these wishes:

Yet will we not have him for all that so lustie to make braverie in wordes, and to bragge that hee hath wedded his harnes for a wife, and to threaten with such grimme lookes, as wee have seene Berto [a buffoon] doe often times. (36)

Gentlemen who display their pride in their prowess are dismissed as braggards, even though they may be valiant warriors. Castiglione cites the negative example of a gentleman who "When to entertaine a gentle woman whom he never saw before, at his first entring in talke with her . . . began to tell how many men he had slaine, and what a hardie fellow hee was, and how hee coulde play at two hand sword" (97).

Methods of male self-assertion customary to medieval knighthood tended to make a Renaissance courtier ridiculous. The courtier was, in contrast, supposed to modestly adapt himself to the dispositions of other courtiers, and in particular to the ladies at court. As Castiglione says, he should be "pliable" in order to win the estimation of his equals. The pleasure of the greatest ladies forms some sort of yardstick. Castiglione mentions the Duchess of Urbino as the head of the courtly assembly:

. . . everye man conceived in his minde an high contentation [contentment] every time we came into the Dutchesse sight. And it appeared that this was a chaine that kept all linked together in love, in such wise that there was never agreement of wil or hartie love greater betweene brethren, than there was betweene us all.

The like was betweene the woman, with whom we had such free and honest conversation, that everye man might commune, sitte, dallye, and laugh with whom hee had lusted.

But such was the respect we bore to the Dutchesse will, that the selfe same libertie was a very great bridle. Neither was there any that thought it not the greatest pleasure he could have in the world, to please her, and the greatest grieve to offende her. (20)

Castiglione also considers courtesy as a means for a man to declare his love to a lady in an honourable way. The honour of a woman can be enhanced rather than lessened by her receiving a declaration of love:

... to doe honour to the woman he talketh withal, seeming to him that to declare to love her, is a witsnesse that she is worthie of it, and that her beawtie and worthinesse is such, that it enforceth everie man to serve her. (236)

The passive role of the courtier is particularly conspicuous in the behaviour recommended to him in love affairs. According to Castiglione, the lover as the "servant" of the lady he loves, is to "observe" her inclinations and find out her pleasure, rather than to take any active measures:

... he that taketh in hande to love, must also please and apply himselfe full and wholly to the appetites of the wight beloved, and according to them frame his own: and make his owne desires, servants: and his verie soule, like an obedient handmaiden. (245)

Another point mentioned by Castiglione concerns the use of courtesy for career planning. The modesty and pliability required of the courtier rule out an open pursuit of any personal ambition. Ambition is indeed, according to Stefano Guazzo, one of a courtier's deadly sins:<sup>10</sup>

... ambition, which altogether bereaveth them of rest, which set no staye to their restlesse desires: which filleth them full of pensive care, blindeth their understanding, rayseth them aloft, to the intent to throw them downe headlong, to breake their neckes, and bring them to destruction. And thereupon it is saide, that Lucifer through pride and ambition fell from heaven, desiring rather to commaunde, then obey. (1: 99)

Behaving submissively to the prince, however, the courtier can "get him favor" (*The Courtier* 106) and hope for promotion. In careers, as in love, restraint is considered to be more effective than chivalric forms of self-assertion. This very much corresponds to what Pyrocles and Musidorus experience, somewhat to their dismay, at the pastoral court of Arcadia. Musidorus' main concern is to get access to "the prince's presence," as he hopes that "having gotten the acquaintance of the prince, it might happen to move his heart to protect [him]" (172). Basilius, the Arcadian king, does indeed appreciate Musidorus' "goodly shape and handsome manner" (181). He later declares his love "with the most submissive behaviour that a thrall'd heart could express" (227). When he delivers a love letter "with trembling hand" (250), Pamela is "about to take courtesy into [her] eyes" (250-51). Musidorus' courtly behaviour will get its reward.

As indicated before, courtly submissiveness also seems to correspond with what we can grasp as the ideology of the English Court of Queen Elizabeth. In the light of this form of "courtliness," Sidney's retreat from Court could be interpreted in a way diametrically opposite to that suggested by McCoy (63-68): Far from being a retreat from chivalry, it could be a step away from courtly submissiveness back to chivalric independence.

It is here that the limitations of the inductive method as understood by New Historicism become evident: like other New Historicists McCoy concentrates on one "discourse" while disregarding other cultural productions and "discourses" even though they may be contained in the same literary work. While McCoy explores the politics of chivalry with great thoroughness, he obviously fails to recognise the politics of pastoralism, and of courtesy. On the one hand McCoy convincingly states that Queen Elizabeth disapproved of much of the chivalric display by the ambitious noblemen of her court, on the other he does not say what the alternative to chivalry consisted of.

Looking at the entertainments presented at the Court of Elizabeth, one realises that pastoral, and courtly, poetry and drama was given preference to chivalric spectacle. In Lyly's *Endimion* (1585), an "allegorical drama of Court-life"<sup>11</sup> the cult of male passivity with regard to a superior female object of love reaches a climax: being told of Endimion's passion, Cynthia, the moon goddess, graciously allows him to continue loving her, and though she does not return this love, rewards it with her favour. Her words to Endimion closely echo some of Elizabeth's proclamations:<sup>12</sup> "*Endimion*, this honorable respect of thine, shalbe christned loue in thee, & my reward for it fauor. Perseuer *Endimion* in louing me, & I account more strength in a true hart, then in a walled Cittie" (5.3.179-82). It cannot be assumed that the noblemen present would have felt much sympathy with Endimion's attitude, which in the play itself is initially called a "dotage no lesse miserable then monstrous" (1.1.24-25). Endimion precisely lacks that virility the assertion of which has been, according to McCoy, one of the aims of Elizabethan chivalric display. Endimion's effeminacy, however, could find acceptance because it corresponded to the doctrines of courtesy as outlined in Castiglione's *Cortegiano*. The political usefulness of a loving courtier is obvious. Cynthia both "comforteth" by her

"influence" and "commaundeth" by her "authoritie" (1.2.30-31). In these courtly activities she in some respects resembles both Castiglione's Duchess of Urbino and Queen Elizabeth. In order to be favoured, male followers have to adopt a courtly attitude, as chivalrous pride would be of little avail.

However, the courtly dramatist most consistently anti-chivalrous is Shakespeare in his comedies:<sup>13</sup> In *Twelfth Night*, for example, knighthood is represented by Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who calls himself a "true knight" (2.3.54).<sup>14</sup> He has come to Illyria in the course of his quest to win the love of Lady Olivia. He is, however, utterly unfamiliar with courtly manners: When told to "accost" Maria (1.3.48), his inability to sustain a courtly conversation is ridiculed, as is his ignorance of French (1.30.90-93), the knowledge of which can certainly be considered a typical courtly accomplishment. Sir Andrew's linguistic (and courtly) incompetence is again revealed by his attempt to word a challenge to "Cesario" with "vinegar and pepper in't" (3.4.146). Sir Toby does not deliver this challenge, as he judges Cesario "to be of good capacity and breeding" (3.4.186-87), i.e. to possess exactly those courtly qualities which Sir Andrew lacks. When wounded by Sebastian, his utter uncourtliness is emphasised in his wish: "I had rather than forty pound I were at home" (5.1.175-76). It is Viola and Sebastian who prove to be successful by courtly submissiveness: Valentine tells "Cesario" that "he" is favoured by the Duke and "like to be much advanced: he hath known you but three days, and already you are no stranger" (1.4.2-4). In sixteenth-century conduct books being accepted at a strange place was considered a hallmark of courtliness,<sup>15</sup> as it is in Sidney's *Arcadia*. By courtly behaviour Viola and Sebastian "win" the love of Olivia, without even intending to.

In Orlando in *As You Like It* Shakespeare creates a character who achieves happiness by his courtly manners after his chivalrous heroism has failed. When he appears before the banished courtiers in the Forest of Arden, he exclaims, with his sword drawn: "Forbear, and eat no more" (2.7.88). The Duke, however, teaches him good manners: "What would you have? Your gentleness shall force,/More than your force move us to gentleness" (2.7.102-03). Courtly behaviour will be more successful than chivalrous strength. Later on, Rosalind will teach Orlando courtly manners in the field of love.

As has often been stated, Shakespeare's political attitudes seem to conform with the ruling ideology.<sup>16</sup> If this is so, chivalry as described by McCoy appears to represent the attitude not of the English nobility in general but of one faction of it; it turns out to be an opposing force to the ruling world picture and political ethics. While McCoy is certainly right in stressing the political importance of literary and cultural representations of chivalry, I should like to argue that to assess its position in the power struggles (and moral debates) of the Elizabethan age one has to take the "competing" cultural traditions into account as well: pastoralism and courtliness.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Richard McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1989).

<sup>2</sup>Lothar Černý, for example, points out that by creating the 'image' of an ideal world of beauty and virtue Sidney intends to move the characters as well as the reader to "virtuous action"; *Beautie and the Use Thereof: Eine Interpretation von Sir Philip Sidneys Arcadia* (Köln: Böhlau, 1984) 2, 343-44 *et passim*.

<sup>3</sup>Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, ed. Maurice Evans (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977).

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Sukanta Chaudhuri, *Renaissance Pastoral and its English Developments* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989) 1-6 *et passim*.

<sup>5</sup>Chaudhuri 302.

<sup>6</sup>Elizabeth was "opposed to activist policies of any kind" and was obsessed with "her reputation as a woman of clemency"; Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect* (London: Weidenfels and Nicolson, 1974) 151 and 291. See also Johnson's account of the careers of Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Walter Raleigh, 213-21. What Johnson calls Elizabeth's "feminine tricks" (130) and her "meretricious façade of vanity" (443), could be interpreted as a calculated display of courtesy. According to Francis Bacon, Elizabeth "allowed herself to be wooed and courted, and even to have love made to her; and liked it . . . these dalliances detracted but little from her fame and nothing from her majesty, and neither weakened her power nor sensibly hindered her business"; quoted from Louis Adrian Montrose, "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture," *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) 31-64; 53. Pastoral metaphors for Elizabeth's royal power are discussed by Montrose, "'Eliza, Queene of Shepheardes,' and the Pastoral of Power," *ELR* 10 (1980): 153-82.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted from Johnson 320.

<sup>8</sup>Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, translated by Sir Thomas Hoby, ed. W. H. D. Rouse (introduction), Drayton Henderson (critical notes), Everyman's Library (London: Dent, 1928).

<sup>9</sup>Ruth Kelso, *The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century*, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, vol. 14, 1-2 (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1929) 13.

<sup>10</sup>*The Civil Conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo*, ed. Sir Edward Sullivan, Bart., 2 vols., The Tudor Translations (London: Constable, 1925).

<sup>11</sup>John Lyly, *The Complete Works*, ed. R. Warwick Bond, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1902), Introduction to *Endimion*, 3: 9.

<sup>12</sup>Apart from the Tilbury address quoted above, the most famous example is certainly the "Golden Speech" delivered in 1601 to the Members of Parliament: "There is no jewel, be it of never so rich a price, which I set before this jewel: I mean your love. For I do esteem it more than any treasure or riches; for that we know how to prize, but love and thanks I count invaluable . . ."; quoted from Johnson 417.

<sup>13</sup>For a more comprehensive account of Shakespeare's attitude towards chivalry see my book on *Abschied, Reise und Wiedersehen bei Shakespeare: Zu Gestaltung und Funktion epischer und romanhafter Motive im Drama* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989) 244-51.

<sup>14</sup>Quotations and line numbers are from the respective Arden editions of Shakespeare's plays.

<sup>15</sup>See, for example, *The Civil Conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo* 1: 229: ". . . it shalbe the part of a straunger, being in another mans house, not to take upon presumptuously, but to behave himselfe so modestly, that every man may love and favour him . . . ."

<sup>16</sup>See, for example, Stephen Greenblatt's assertion that Shakespeare "approached his culture . . . as a dutiful servant, content to improvise a part of his own within its orthodoxy," *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980) 253.

## Shakespeare, Burgess, and Psalm 46: A Note in Reply to Paul Franssen\*

WILLIAM HARMON

I figure that I have had my turn at bat, and, if others want to comment on what I say, then they can have their turns. Once one engages in writing replies to responses, then there are rejoinders to the replies to the responses, begetting ripostes to the rejoinders, etc. For months now readers of *TLS* have been watching an endless series of counterstatements on the role of actors' memories in constructing the text of Shakespeare—to such an extent that most have forgotten the original issue.

I did not discover all that business about Shakespeare and Psalm 46, nor did I get it from Anthony Burgess's *Shakespeare* (1970) or *Enderby's Dark Lady* (1984), neither of which I have ever read. The only book by Burgess that I can remember finishing is the novel *MF*, which has a most fitting title for a book about a character with some qualities in common with Oedipus. That play on initials should have made me think about including Burgess—and especially the title *Abba Abba*—in a piece about authors' names.

I cannot remember when, where, or how I first heard about Psalm 46. For decades now, going back into the 1950s, I have been all but addicted to books like Isaac D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature* and columns like Martin Gardner's "Mathematical Games" (talk about preserving your initials in a title!) that used to run in *Scientific American*. At any rate, one can pick up a large number of crumbs in a lifetime of idle reading and chat. It's fun to see the reaction to this, for example:

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\*Reference: William Harmon, "Paronomastics: The Name of the Poet from Shakespeare and Donne to Glück and Morgan," *Connotations* 2.2 (1992): 115-25; Paul J. C. M. Franssen, "Half a Miracle: A Response to William Harmon," *Connotations* 3.2 (1993/94): 118-22.



born on July 21, 1899, in the American Midwest, of parents named Clarence and Grace, becoming a writer of genius in whose life the Caribbean played an important part, death by suicide: all that is true of *both* Hart Crane *and* Ernest Hemingway.

I was at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1967-68 and then left for two years. While I was away, Burgess was writer in residence at that school, where I know he talked with many people that I had also talked with. Then his *Shakespeare* appeared in 1970. It seems as likely that he got the Psalm 46 from me, via common friends in Chapel Hill, as that I got it from him; or, equally, that both of us got it from a common source. (The Kipling story is another matter, since it has been available to the public since 1933 and does not concern Psalm 46 but other parts of the Old Testament, especially Isaiah.)

Once you start down these primrose paths, then everything blossoms at your feet. I am drafting this note while watching a videocassette of Martin Scorsese's *Main Street*.

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## Romance and the Didactic in the Eighteenth-Century Novel: An Elaboration upon Andrew Varney\*

BREAN S. HAMMOND

What I have to offer on Andrew Varney's stimulating piece is a widow's mite rather than a more thrilling Titanic struggle—a matter of emphasis and nuance. On page 135, Varney makes an arrestingly obvious, but so far as I know unnoticed, point when he argues that the French wars of the early century contributed to a decline in the fashionability of the Frenchified term 'romance.' As he rightly says, however, the outmoding of the term did not betoken any decline in the narrative appetites that French romances were supposed to satisfy. He adumbrates Michael McKeon's model of the development of the early novel constructed in *The Origins of the English Novel* (1987)—romance narrative, giving place to "naive empiricism" (Defoe), resolving into "extreme scepticism" (Fielding)—though Varney sees these as co-present (even consciously played off against each other) rather than as temporally distinct phases. Possibly he is a little unfair to McKeon, whose model is more flexible than Varney's gloss suggests. McKeon argues that the Fieldingesque narrative mode recalls earlier romance (though it is driven by entirely different ideological determinants) because it forces us to attend to the artificiality of all writing that romance also makes no attempt to conceal.

On the substantial point, however, of romance's longevity, I agree wholeheartedly with Varney that the romantic mode remained vital in English literature for longer than is often supposed. He gives some intriguing examples of romance metaphors cropping up even in places where one would think they were least welcome. My examples are perhaps more obvious ones from imaginative fiction. Sarah Fielding's

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\*Reference: Andrew Varney, "Brightness and Beauty, Taste and Relish: Advertising and Vindicating Eighteenth-Century Novels," *Connotations* 3.2 (1993/94): 133-46.

novel *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744) has inset into it a long digressive narrative called "The History of Isabelle" written entirely in the style of French romance and not ironised to any extent. Here is a typical paragraph which neatly encapsulates the standard romance predicament and exemplifies a stylistic treatment of it as far away from Defovian "naive empiricism" as it is possible to be:

But imagine the horrible Situation she left the Chevalier in. Ten thousand various Thoughts at once possessed him, Confusion reigned within his Breast, and whichever way he turned himself, the dismal Prospect almost distracted him. Good God, what was his Condition! with a Heart bursting with Gratitude towards his Friend, filled with the softest and faithfulest Passion for the Woman he but an Hour before flattered himself he was just upon the point of receiving from the Hands of the Man, who made *his* Happiness necessary to his own, with a Mind which startled at the least thought of acting against the strictest Rules of Honour. He suddenly found that the Passion his Friend's Wife was possessed of for him, was too violent to be restrained, and too dangerous to be dallied with; he could not perceive any Method to extricate himself out of the Dilemma he was thus unexpectedly, unfortunately involved in.<sup>1</sup>

A decade or so later, when Charlotte Lennox writes *The Female Quixote* (1752), it is becoming necessary to distinguish romances from novels, as part of a project to establish the novel's respectability. Arabella, the novel's heroine, has been raised on a diet of seventeenth-century French romances in such a way that she takes the manners and conduct promulgated in these fictions to be normative over her own behaviour. For much of the time, she is an endearing figure of fun whose unworldly high-mindedness and absolutist attitudes are objects of satire. In the time-honoured Quixotic manner, however, her romance-derived codes of conduct serve to satirise the rapaciousness, social conformism and petty-mindedness of those who surround her. At times, though, the stakes are higher than this. Romance attitudes are not just easily guyable forms of ludicrous social solecism. They are dangerous. This is apparent in Arabella's constant misprision of others' motives—she even suspects her father-in-law-to-be of harbouring lustful thoughts about her. Her assumption that every man is a potential rapist is one of the most unsettling aspects of her character. Even more serious is her substituting of romance chronology for real history. She takes a pagan, fictionalised

version of history for a true record, her belief so convincingly expressed that it seeps out and contaminates the minds even of characters who fancy themselves as knowledgeable about the past. In Book VII chapter V, Arabella is in company with one Selvin, a chatterer who prides himself on his knowledge of ancient Greece. Arabella makes reference to the “fine Springs at the Foot of the Mountain *Thermopylae* in Greece” and proceeds to an account of the doings of Pisistratus the Athenian, who has had an “Adventure” at those baths. Selvin is unwilling to confess that he has never heard of Pisistratus, in fact a character out of Mme de Scudéry’s *Artamenes; or, The Grand Cyrus: That Excellent Romance* (1690-91):

I protest, Madam, said Mr. *Selvin*, casting down his Eyes in great Confusion at her superior Knowledge in History, these Particulars have all escaped my Notice; and this is the first time I ever understood, that *Pisistratus* was violently in Love; and that it was not Ambition, which made him aspire to Sovereignty.

I do not remember any Mention of this in *Plutarch*, continued he, rubbing his Forehead, or any of the Authors who have treated on the Affairs of Greece.

Very likely, Sir, replied *Arabella*; but you will see the whole story of *Pisistratus*’s love for *Cleorante*, with the Effects it produced, related at large in *Scudery*.

*Scudery*, Madam! said the sage Mr. *Selvin*, I never read that Historian.

No, Sir! replied *Arabella*, then your Reading has been very confined.

I know, Madam, said he, that *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, and *Plutarch*, have indeed quoted him frequently.

I am surprised, Sir, said Mr. *Glanville*, who was excessively diverted at this Discovery of his great Ignorance and Affectation, that you have not read that famous Historian; especially, as the Writers you have mentioned quote him so often.

Why, to tell you the Truth, Sir, said he; though he was a *Roman*; yet it is objected to him, that he wrote but indifferent *Latin*; with no Purity or Elegance; and—

You are quite mistaken, Sir, interrupted *Arabella*; the great *Scudery* was a *Frenchman*; and both his *Clelia* and *Artamenes* were written in *French*.

A *Frenchman* was he? said Mr. *Selvin*, with a lofty Air: Oh! then, ’tis not surprising, that I have not read him: I read no Authors, but the Antients, Madam, added he, with a Look of Self-applause; I cannot relish the Moderns at all: I have no Taste for their Way of Writing.

But *Scudery* must needs be more ancient than *Thucydides*, and the rest of those Greek Historians you mentioned, said Mr. *Glanville*: How else could they quote him?

Mr. *Selvin* was here so utterly at a Loss, that he could not conceal his Confusion: He held down his Head, and continued silent.<sup>2</sup>

On one level, the exchange is about the discomfiting of an intellectual snob. Selvin's risible pose as a true-blue Englishman who despises French culture and as an "Antient" is, even in its orthography, outdated and transparent. But where does it leave the protagonist Arabella, who actually believes in romance as true history? The normative character in this episode is clearly Glanville, a man of sense who considers Selvin a joke and Arabella a sad case.

What is at stake, then, is epistemology—the very factual basis upon which we build all our knowledge of the present. Implicitly, *The Female Quixote* argues that fictionality *per se* is not the problem: it is irresponsible fiction, like romance, that is the problem. Already by 1750, Fielding had usurped the honorific title "historian" to describe his activity in writing *Tom Jones*, implying thereby not that his writing was not fiction, but that it was a form of fiction that performed the classical function of being more philosophical (because wider in possibility and scope) than history, confined as it is to real occurrences. While Arabella inhabits a portion of the world given over to *romance*, the characters in the framing narrative are part of the *novel*. Arabella must be dehumoured. She needs to be brought into the world of responsible fictions, from which it is possible for her and for the reader to *learn*. Doubtless, this can only be done at a cost: but contemporary feminist readings tend, in my view, to exaggerate that cost in arguing that romance attitudes confer power and independence upon Arabella.<sup>3</sup> They do so, but at the price of solipsism and virtual insanity. Later still, Clara Reeve in her well-known preface to *The Old English Baron* (1777) is still trying to negotiate the territory of responsible fiction. She considers solutions less draconian than banishing romance altogether. *The Castle of Otranto*, she thinks, has combined the narrative entertainment of romance with the ethical direction of these satisfactions to be undertaken by the novel; and her "gothic story" will attempt to follow in Walpole's footsteps. It is for the responsibility of most fiction that Jane Austen eloquently argues in the fifth chapter of *Northanger Abbey* (1818) when she satirises the attitudes of those who continue to think that novel reading is evidence of depravity:

Let us leave it to the Reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy at their leisure, and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which

the press now groans . . . . Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried . . . there seems almost a general wish of decrying the capacity and undervaluing the labour of the novelist, and of slighting the performances which have only genius, wit, and taste to recommend them.<sup>4</sup>

Co-eval with the development of the eighteenth-century novel, then, is a debate about the means by which fiction can make itself responsible and respectable. Where I might wish to disagree with Andrew Varney, rather than merely elaborate on him, is on the terms in which this debate was conducted in its earliest (Defovian) phase. The crux of Varney's argument is that the didactic mode of early British fiction "exists in a sophisticated self-conscious negotiation with the less deliberately improving aspects of narrative writing" (137). Emphasis on the sophistication of Defoe's writing brings Varney into line with, for example, Lincoln Faller, who, in his *Crime and Defoe*, has stressed the dialogism, copiousness and flexibility of Defoe's narratives which enables an unprecedentedly complex reader-response.<sup>5</sup> In Varney's model, Defoe has to combine exciting narrative with pious moralising that the novelist in him discovers to be operating against the interests of the excitement. An aesthetic vocabulary of "taste" operates as a swing-bridge mediating between the incompatible imperatives of story-telling and didacticism. This is an ingenious and elegant idea, by which I want to be persuaded. I don't find myself fully persuaded by it, however, because it seems just a shade too contemporary in its assumption that "there is clearly a tension between novelistic and moral values" (139) in the period's writing. Complexity and sophistication being commodities more prized by literary critics than naiveté and simplicity, I can see why those who appreciate Defoe would wish to take that line. Does it not result in the final analysis, however, in rejecting an important aspect of what early eighteenth-century writing has to offer? In *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth Century English Fiction* (1990), J. Paul Hunter urges us to come to terms with the fact that much period writing is—just is—didactic. Because we ourselves find it impossible to take pleasure in moralistic forms of expression, because "didactic" is one of the most negative adjectives in contemporary usage, we tend to think that the

moralising function is some collective dementia from which the century and its writers inexplicably suffered. Those who are to be singled out for praise as the enduring and the best writers must be found to escape this quicksand in which so many others drowned.

I contend, however, that although we might wish to do so, we cannot read into invisibility the didactic aspects of this period's fiction. *David Simple*, referred to above, is replete with passages of straightforward ethical reflection that the reader must be expected at some level to enjoy, not merely to skip over as an impediment to an otherwise rattling good yarn. Some years ago I wrote an article on *Moll Flanders* arguing that however the modern reader wishes to write off devices like Moll's conversion in Newgate, however the modern reader looks at the outcome of that conversion and is driven to the conclusion that crime *does* pay—so that the Preface, in which the morally improving tendency of the narrative is stressed, comes to seem malfeasant or ironic—nevertheless the modern reader must try to enter more sympathetically into an early eighteenth-century perspective.<sup>6</sup> My argument was that in a world in which characters are constantly being faced by sin-or-starve predicaments, they had little opportunity to avoid sin and consequent damnation. For Defoe, conversion offered an opportunity to start again, to wipe the slate clean and gain a second chance: and if the result of that was economic success, so much the better. Of course, the argument depends on imagining a world in which damnation is felt along the pulses and in which moral condemnation and legal judgement are routinely visited upon those who could legitimately claim to have no choice: not, in short, the world we live in here and now. Perhaps the point can be brought into sharper focus by looking again at the example from *Roxana* that Varney discusses on pp. 142–43. There has been a storm and Roxana has vowed to reform if she weathers it. She does, and in Varney's words, "she reports what then happened to her state of mind:

The Danger being over, the Fears of Death vanish'd with it; ay, and our Fear of what was beyond Death also; our Sense of the Life we had liv'd, went off, and with our return to Life, our wicked Taste of Life return'd, and we were both the same as before, if not worse.

Good news for the reader. Roxana's brilliant phrase 'our wicked Taste of Life' pins down precisely what imaginative narrative ministered to."

My uptake on this would be that the narrative interest is *not* merely in getting on with the story about Roxana's wicked life. The reader is also interested in a psychological process that he or she has perhaps experienced, whereby when mortal danger recedes, so does fear of damnation. That is the *didactic* point. The reader should be aware of the spiritual danger in foul-weather Christianity. If you can keep the fear of damnation in mind when you are not in any particular proximity to your Maker, you will be a healthier individual spiritually. To Defoe and his readers, this is quite as interesting as any account given of Roxana's fornications—which, in point of fact, recent generations of readers always discover to be disappointingly tame by contemporary standards. Maybe the lesson is: value eighteenth-century writing for what is actually there in it.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Sarah Fielding, *The Adventures of David Simple*, ed. Malcolm Kelsall (Oxford: OUP, 1969), bk. IV, ch. II, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote; or The Adventures of Arabella*, ed. Margaret Dalziel (Oxford: OUP, 1970; rpt. 1989) 266-67.

<sup>3</sup>See, for example, Margaret Anne Doody's introduction to the 1989 reprint of Margaret Dalziel's World's Classics edition (above, n2); and Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist from Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: OUP, 1986; rpt. 1989) 187-92.

<sup>4</sup>Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, ed. Anne Henry Ehrenpreis (Oxford: OUP, 1972; rpt. 1975) 58.

<sup>5</sup>Lincoln B. Faller, *Crime and Defoe: A New Kind of Writing* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993).

<sup>6</sup>Brean S. Hammond, "Repentance: Solution to the Clash of Moralities in *Moll Flanders*," *English Studies* 61 (1980): 329-37.



"But the poet . . . never affirmeth":  
A Reply to Bernard Harrison\*

LOTHAR ČERNÝ

Professor Harrison has honoured me with a very long and substantial reply. Discussing my article and the responses of Professors Hammond and Hudson conjointly, he has written much more than a mere reply. He has given us, in fact, a theory of reader response which he, rather too modestly, claims to be a modification of Iser's theory only. Before I enter into this discussion, however, I would like to answer a charge which I regard as relating exclusively to my article.

In Harrison's view I keep reanimating the old question whether Fielding belongs to the camp of the sentimentalists or the moral rationalists and—what is worse—voting for the first. Now, what I really wanted to do and, as far as I can see, have done, is proving this dichotomy to be inadequate because I share Harrison's view that it is "a distinction which, ultimately, he [Fielding] escapes" (170) or, in my own words: "Fielding does not simply exchange the absolute rule of reason with that of sentimentality" (157). Harrison's very pertinent analysis of the role of the "Good Heart" in relation to its counterpart "worldly wisdom" is—if I am not presuming too much—not far from mine.

In the face of this seeming disagreement I would like to discuss a topic which may have caused the misunderstanding, perhaps because I have not made myself clear enough. Therefore this is a most welcome opportunity to explain in greater detail the significance of Fielding's

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\*Reference: Lothar Černý, "Reader Participation and Rationalism in Fielding's Tom Jones," *Connotations* 2.2 (1992): 137-62; Bernard Harrison, "Gaps and Stumbling-Blocks in Fielding: A Response to Černý, Hammond and Hudson," *Connotations* 3.2 (1993/94): 147-72.

rationalism or rather anti-rationalism and—arising from this—Iser's concept of the reader and the reading process in Fielding.

My starting point was the use of the word "sagacious." It is an undisputed fact (1) that Fielding uses this synonym of "rational" ironically, (2) that Iser did not take notice of the irony and turns the reader into someone who is meant to use his own wits to fill in the gaps Fielding explicitly left in the text. I wanted to keep the "rational" or "sagacious" reader in perspective, in other words to show Fielding's "rational reader" in his or her fitting ironical light. If this entitles Fielding to the predicate "anti-rationalist," it certainly does not do so in any strictly philosophical sense. To the contrary, I wanted to make it very clear that Fielding is much too rational, too much of a dialectical rhetorician to fall into the trap of sentimentalism.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps it may help to stress a fact not hitherto mentioned though probably uncontroversial. Fielding is not a moral philosopher, whether of rationalist or sentimentalist leanings, even if he uses the vocabulary of the moral discourses of his time. He is a poet providing his readers with images which "possess the sight of the soul" as Sidney puts it in his *Apology*.<sup>2</sup> His characters owe their lives not so much to ratiocination as to imagination. And what they (always including the *persona* of the narrator) have to say is not ruled by the law of contradiction, because "the poet, he nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth."<sup>3</sup> Now, though as images the characters are not identical with philosophical abstractions, they are not at all lacking expressive energy. On the contrary, the main purpose of poetry in this idealist tradition is to move the reader or spectator to goodness, because it "yieldeth to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description, which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul."<sup>4</sup>

Considering that Fielding is a writer of fiction I would hesitate to call him a follower of some clearly defined school of thought. Consequently I never argued that Fielding, following the lead of, let us say, Hume, reduces morality to sentiment. I rather think that Fielding raises before the eyes of the mind an *altera natura* which, reduced to the level of abstract ideas, would have to be interpreted by way of complex or even dialectically opposed principles. This is why "Goodness of Heart," far

from being opposed to reason is, in fact, the very quintessence of all the virtues a writer of fiction ought to possess, including "Judgment" and "Learning":

Nor will all the Qualities I have hitherto given my Historian avail him, unless he have what is generally meant by a good Heart, and be capable of feeling. (IX.1.494)

Even on a quasi-theoretical level, then, Fielding does not subscribe to the alternative: rationalism or sentimentalism.

I find myself in absolute agreement with Harrison that Fielding provides his hero, not with sentiment or even sentimentality, but with an ability to put himself imaginatively in another person's place. I have called this empathy, not sentiment. Like Harrison I regard Tom as a character who sympathizes with the people he likes; he has enough imagination to put himself in the position of someone like Black George or—very differently and even more importantly—Sophia. I am quite convinced of Harrison's telling genealogy of the latitudinarian type of virtuous appetite (160), but not completely so. Although this view certainly corresponds to what Fielding says, for example, about love (IV.1), I cannot quite agree with Harrison's suggestion that Tom "has matured by the end of the novel" to prudence, which he considers "a name for the rather impressive combination of self-committing goodness of heart, sound judgment and self-control" (160).<sup>5</sup> I am not sure that *Tom Jones* already belongs to the genre of *Bildungsroman*. If or when Tom reaches prudence, he does so not "actually" by way of learning or maturation, but symbolically by marrying Sophia.<sup>6</sup> Tom's prudence is nothing but a hope and promise. The fulfilment of both is the union with Sophia.

Now to Harrison's main point of disagreement with me: the issue is whether such an arguable reading of Fielding as Iser's invalidates the theory which it is supposed to prove. My objective is not so much disproving Iser's theory of reading but calling in question his interpretation of Fielding. That does not necessarily invalidate his theory though it is, of course, a moot point how far a theory can be convincing which does not really meet its chosen empirical subject. Harrison thinks

that I have gone too far because "some of Iser's claims are detachable from any such dependence [on his reading of *Tom Jones*]" (148). As I "neglected" those aspects and parts of Iser's theory which Harrison finds acceptable, my interpretation is supposed to remain "within a system of categories and conceptual distinctions . . . whose influence Fielding was most concerned to combat" (148). Even if this were so (but *vide supra*) it surely would not follow from ignoring some aspects in Iser, since my own approach is historical while Iser's is not.

By way of developing his own theory of reading, Harrison discusses Fish's disagreement with Iser's view of gaps in the process of reading. This opens a field of discussion which is not quite congruent with my own. Where Iser believes to discover gaps in the text—more or less as given—Fish sees everything happening in the reader: "there is no distinction between what the text gives and what the reader supplies; he supplies everything" (150). Iser's own construction of gaps seems to corroborate Fish's remarks up to a point. To discover a gap between Allworthy's moral perfection and his inability to perceive the hypocrisy of Captain Blifil is not a gap in the text but in the interpreter's mind. "They are gaps between the text and the noema undergoing constitution in the reader's mind" (Harrison, 150).

I wonder whether Sidney's idea of the otherness of poetry compared with moral philosophy might not come in here once more to help solve the problem of Mr Allworthy's goodness in the Fish-Iser discussion. The quarrel whether his goodness contradicts his ignorance of the true character of the Blifils, is an example of a discussion among moral philosophers which would provoke Sidney's satire. Why on earth should "virtue" be compromised by "errors" of judgment or lack of knowledge of the ways of the world? Harrison's criticism of this debate seems too mild rather than too astringent to me (153).

Harrison, by contrast with Fish establishes a kind of latitudinarian ethics in *Tom Jones*, in other words a historical and doctrinal frame of reference, an idealized type of "Vorverständnis." For some readers this may lead to a discovery of contrast, for others it may be an affirmation of their own convictions. After all, Fielding was not an original latitudinarian thinker. For that reason it is not quite easy to follow Harrison's assumption that this awareness amounts to an experience of "tensions

between text and expectation" (161). I do not see why it necessarily amounts to "subversive pressures" (162) whose impact Harrison turns into a definition of serious reading. Fielding's ethical code was certainly different from that of the admirers of *Pamela*, but his ideas were not without precedence. I am not sure, therefore, that Harrison's admittedly fascinating digression into the history of ethical thought is a suitable starting point for another theory of reading alongside with Iser's. As it seems to me, Harrison's historical approach has little in common with Iser's deductive reasoning.<sup>7</sup> Harrison is less of an Iserian than he himself wants to believe. His mode of reading is more or less identical with the hermeneutical situation of existing within a language and a community of shared beliefs. The experience of novelty within the framework of one's tradition is altogether different from such a speculative concept as Iser's theory of reader-participation.

When it comes to Harrison's comments on the tension between author and reader as regards "goodness" it is again the definition of poetry which makes for a certain tension between Harrison's position and my own. In his view Fielding has made it his business to contradict moralists like Hawkins to whom good does not mean what is desirable but what is "not bad." I quite agree that such an idea of goodness is just not good enough, i.e. not complex enough for Fielding. But, as it seems to me, what he aims at (as do poets in general) is not so much contradicting or rather differentiating simplified notions but rather to provide a reading experience including fear and pity as well as delight and laughter, involvement even to self-forgetfulness and intellectual detachment, sentiment and irony . . . Surely, if weighing contradictions would be a reader's office, he or she would soon be weary of it.

Likewise Harrison's argument that Mr Allworthy's goodness is to be regarded as "a counter-weight to Richardson's Puritan optimism concerning the efficacy of inward virtue in transforming the human world" (157) seems to fit into the context of moral philosophy rather than poetry because it appreciates Allworthy as a separate entity. But in the novel he has no such kind of existence. He is part of an overarching providential design which makes his failures of judgment quite unimportant and successfully blots out his shortcomings in penetrating the wickedness of Blifil and son. Surely Fielding's readers

were able to grasp this point of the workings of providence as quickly as the "contradiction" between Mr Allworthy's benevolence and his perspicacity. Isolating a single trait of a certain character like this means construing a philosophical, ethical or legal "case" rather than elucidating the organic whole of a work of art.

As to Harrison's final disagreement with me over the relationship between Fielding and Locke I beg to respond *more syllogistico*: Harrison charges me with quoting Locke as a target of Fielding's anti-rationalism. He doubts that Locke is a suitable target of Fielding's anti-rationalism because in the first half of the eighteenth century rationalism was closely related to Deism and Locke was regarded as an arch-partisan of Deism. According to the rule that, when two quantities are equal to a third one they are equal to each other, it follows from this that Locke the Deist must also have been a rationalist. Therefore Locke was a possible target of Fielding's anti-rationalism. So where is the reason for disagreement?

I would like to conclude on my favourite note: "the poet . . . never affirmeth," in other words: Fielding, the poet, was under no obligation to be philosophically consistent.

Fachhochschule Köln

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For Fielding's use of negatives see Jeffrey M. Perl, "Anagogic Surfaces: How to Read *Joseph Andrews*," *The Eighteenth Century* 22 (1981): 249-70.

<sup>2</sup>Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry or The Defense of Poesy*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (London: Thomas Nelson, 1965) 107, 116.

<sup>3</sup>*An Apology for Poetry* 123.38.

<sup>4</sup>*An Apology for Poetry* 107.13.

<sup>5</sup>I am also at a loss to follow Harrison's other example of Tom's sympathy: " . . . when his perception of Sophia's needs compels him to turn away from his desire to involve her in his downfall" (170). Did Tom ever have such a desire?

<sup>6</sup>Martin C. Battestin has drawn attention to the allegorical elements of this marriage in his chapter on "Fielding: The Definition of Wisdom," *The Providence of Wit* (Oxford: OUP, 1974) 164-92.

<sup>7</sup>For a similar criticism see the review of Iser's book on Sterne by Götz Schmitz, *Archiv* 228 (1991): 172-75.

## "Strange Meeting" Yet Again\*

KENNETH MUIR

Jon Silkin, whose work as poet, editor and critic I have long admired and to whose journal, *Stand*, I have subscribed since its inception, deserves our gratitude for calling our attention to other poets of the First World War. My other respondent, Douglas Kerr, is the author of one of the most illuminating books on Owen (*Wilfred Owen's Voices*, 1993). As it was published after I had written my article, I have read it only recently.

I am sorry Silkin thinks I was irritated with him. I may mention that at the beginning of the Owen centenary, I arranged an exhibition in which other poets from Brooke to Rosenberg were well represented. One of my two lectures in connection with the exhibition was devoted to poets other than Owen, starting with Masfield's "August 1914," and referring to his play, *Philip the King*, on the defeat of the Spanish Armada, written as Aeschylus' *The Persians* had been, from the standpoint of the defeated. The other lecture was concerned entirely with Owen whose formative years were spent in Birkenhead. I had been a governor of his old school and I had campaigned for a suitable memorial to him in the shape of a collection of the work of his fellow-poets.

In my article I was not suggesting that Owen was a greater poet than Rosenberg, but I dislike arranging poets in a pecking order. Is Byron greater than Blake, Wordsworth greater than Keats, Eliot greater than Yeats? The questions are absurd. I once attended a public discussion in an American university in which my two opponents agreed that Eliot

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\*Reference: Douglas Kerr, "'Strange Meeting' Again," *Connotations* 3.2 (1993/94): 173-85; Jon Silkin, "'Strange Meeting,' a Fragment? A Reply to Muir's 'Owen,'" *Connotations* 3.2 (1993/94): 186-92.

was greater than Yeats, Auden greater than Eliot, and Larkin greater than Auden. Larkin was placed in this elevated position because he was absolutely sincere and wrote without hiding behind a mask. I need hardly say that I was outvoted.

Clearly, I disagree with Geoffrey Hill and Jon Silkin about "Anthem for doomed Youth." The contrast between the octave and the sestet, one forbidding mourning and the other allowing a silent mourning in the eyes of boys and the pallor of girls, and in the dusk that is Nature's equivalent of drawing down blinds on the death of an inmate (as when my father died in 1914) seems to me not a contradiction, but a natural ambivalence. Kerr makes a similar point when he says in *Wilfred Owen's Voices* that "the poem reaches into silence on the eloquent sign of a family in mourning, the home with drawn blinds, beautifully naturalized as a figure for dusk," (83) "a beautiful refreshment of the theme of mourning nature" (288).

I find it hard to understand Silkin's other disagreement with me. I thought I had made it clear that Owen's motive for returning to France in 1918 was not for patriotic reasons. If Silkin refers to what I actually wrote (28), he will see that I gave three motives: 1. to show his solidarity with the soldiers; 2. to prove that he could be a good officer, in spite of his shell-shock; 3. he thought it to be his duty as a poet, to validate his war poems. He proved himself as an officer by his bravery in action, by his winning the Military Cross and by the comments of his men in the letters he had to censor. Nor does his possible echo of King Henry's Agincourt speech imply that he was reverting to patriotism. He was expressing solidarity with his fellow-soldiers, his band of friends. In such an allusion he had overcome his snobbish feeling that the new officers of 1918 were not really gentlemen.

Of course I agree with Silkin that a mere list of events after Owen's death—Guernica, the Gulag, the Holocaust—only hints at the horrors they symbolise. When I went to Germany and Czechoslovakia after the war I was moved and embarrassed by the gratitude of the refugees we had welcomed into our home, and of the various "friendship" groups with whom we had been associated during the war. But this could do little to alleviate our communal guilt for the horrors we had failed to avert.



Douglas Kerr, in his valuable account of the after-life of "Strange Meeting," makes many points with which I agree. It is true that some of Owen's best poems eschew parhyme, as I have often pointed out in my readings, but I doubt whether the difficulty of the device spoils the lines Kerr quotes from the poem, and I do not think they are as confused as he believes. We should never forget that the poem was unfinished and unpolished.

Although I was aware that many of my readers would reject the Marlowian source for parhyme, there is no other suggested source that uses the identical words as *The Jew of Malta* does.

Kerr approves of my reference to *doppelgangers* in the last weeks of Shelley's life (182), but he and Silkin both reject that the two soldiers in the poem are *alter egos*, since Owen never claimed that they were. Here again Kerr is economical with facts. Both men are young poets. The German's account of himself and his ambitions might well be a fragment of Owen's autobiography. He quotes from Owen's fragmentary *preface* (misprinted *poem* in my article) "the pity of war." He speaks of the duty of the poet to warn, as Owen in his preface had said "all a poet can do today is to warn." I still adhere to the view called by Silkin "re-cycled Welland," that the spokesman in "Strange Meeting" encounters himself. Re-cycling is an honourable activity for critics and poets.

Kerr seems to deny that the lines he deplores are Owen's message to futurity. But he can hardly deny that the nations trekked from progress in the years following Owen's death.

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# Connotations

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