

Connotations

A Journal for Critical Debate



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Editors' Note

To our regret, Professor Thomas F. Merrill has decided to tender his resignation from the editorial board of *Connotations* since he has officially retired from the University of Delaware. We cannot thank him enough for having given us his support even when we were only just planning the journal.

Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate

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Peter Martyr, Richard Eden and the New World: Reading, Experience and Translation

ANDREW HADFIELD

How should we read the early colonial literature of the New World? As Myra Jehlen has pointed out, "The business of reading . . . is not as easy as it looks" and recent critical interpretations of that material have suggested that the question of how to read needs to be at the centre of any investigation into attempts at reconstructing a history of the Americas. Jehlen and Peter Hulme's recent debate hinged on the question as to whether the term *cannibalism* should be considered with reference to a "material reality" or as a "term within colonial discourse"—no less "real" for that. In examining Captain John Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia*—the starting point of Hulme and Jehlen's disagreement—David Read concluded that "we should be extremely cautious about hypothesizing a single, stable version of colonialism out of the flux that surrounds the early English activity in North America" because "colonists imported a multiplicity of approaches which only sorted themselves out over the *longue durée*."¹

In this essay I want to supplement rather than challenge such readings via a consideration of an encounter narrated in one of the most influential early accounts of the Spanish conquest of the Americas, Peter Martyr's *De Orbe Novo Decades* (Alcala, 1516), which, thanks to Richard Eden's English translation (London, 1555), came to be the *Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India* and, as such, one of *The First Three English Books on America*.² The account of this incident, I would suggest, illustrates two points in line with the recent debates outlined above. First, it demonstrates the diversity of colonial responses to the New World and shows how descriptions of encounters became invested with different meanings in different situations. It is not only ourselves who might read the same texts in importantly divergent ways—as Hulme and Jehlen

do—but so did sixteenth-century readers, who were often unsure what to make of the evidence at their disposal. Second, it reveals the dangers of teleological reading: just because we know what eventually happened we are not entitled to return to the start of a defined historical process—colonialism—and assume that the results we have observed were always an inevitable consequence of the initial actions or the intentions of the original actors, propagandists and historians.

I.

In the third book of the second decade of Spanish New World exploration and colonisation narrated by the exiled Italian historian, Peter Martyr d'Anghera, in his collected volume, *De Orbe Novo Decades*, read here in Eden's translation, there occurs a strange and fascinating confrontation between the Spanish *conquistadores* led by Vasco Nunez de Balboa and the son of the local king, Comogrus. In the wake of Columbus's voyages and discoveries, numerous disputes took place both between colonists and the crown and amongst the colonists themselves. After a series of incidents culminating in a mutiny, Balboa was elected leader, as much out of fear as respect, because "the best parte was fayne to give place to the greatest" (115). In pursuit of gold, Balboa was attempting to lead his faction across Darien (Panama) from the Gulf of Uraba to the Pacific Ocean.³ Having sacked the rich village of Poncha, they came across the court of King Comogrus, which Peter Martyr describes in some detail. In many ways it resembles European courts; the palace, despite being made of wood, is said to be as strong as one made of stone; there are civil courtiers who the Spanish have met before under their now deceased commander, Diego de Nicuesa; the king's huge cellar contains a wide range of wines made from dates rather than grapes, in the same way that Germans, Flemings, English, regional Spaniards, Swiss and other Alpine dwellers, make a variety of alcoholic drinks from barley, wheat, hops, and apples, and the *conquistadores* enjoy some of these with King Comogrus.

However, if this has started to make the reader feel more at home for one of the few times in the seemingly endless catalogue of exotic

savagery, Spanish atrocities and generally murderous conflicts, the narrator immediately warns us that we are about to return to that world once again: “nowe yow shall heare of a thyng more monstrous too behoulde.” The Spanish are conducted into the bowels of the palace where they are led into a room which contains corpses hanged with cotton ropes. These, it turns out, are mummies of the ancestors of the king, who are honoured with religious reverence and dressed up with precious stones and gold “accordynge unto theyr estate.” Although obviously appearing “superstitious” to the Spanish, at least this particular religious practice avoids the horrific diabolism of ritual human sacrifice and cannibalism encountered throughout the *Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India*.⁴

It is at this point that the eldest of the king’s seven sons, who had an “excellente naturall wytte,” enters the frame; first he gives the Spanish four thousand ounces of gold, “artificially wrought” and fifty slaves, veterans of Amerindian wars, as a means of flattering and pleasing them and assuaging his fear of the rapacious soldiers who, the narrator tells us, he thinks are a “wanderynge kynde of men . . . luyvng onely by shiftes and spoyle” and may “handle hym as they dyd other whiche sowght noo meanes howe to gratifie them” if he fails to be sufficiently generous. The soldiers try to divide up the booty, leaving a fifth for the crown, but fall to “brabbylynge” and contention, whereupon the king’s son starts to chastise them:

What is the matter with yowe Christen men, that yow soo greatly esteme soo litle a portion of golde more then yowr owne quietnes, whiche neverthesse yow entend to deface from these fayre ouches [necklaces] and to melte the same into a rude masse. If yowre hunger of goulde bee soo insatiable that onely for the desyre yowe have therto, yowe disquiete soo many nations, and yow yowre selves also susteyne soo many calamit[i]es and incommodities, lyving like banished men owte of yowre owne cuntrye, I wyll shewe yowe a Region flowinge with goulde, where yow may satisfie yowr raveninge appetites.

He points out that they will have to contend with the fierce King Tumanama and the “cruell Canybales, a fierce kynde of men, devourers of mans fleshe, lyving withowte lawes, wanderynge, and withowte empire.” These cannibals are also “desyrous of golde” and have

conquered the people who used to own the gold mines in the mountains. They now “use them lyke bondmen” and force them to mine the gold they once owned and make plates and ornaments. The Comogruans have traded these artefacts with the cannibals for prisoners of war, which they buy in order to eat, or household objects like sheets, furniture and food. The risks and rewards of such an encounter will clearly be great: the king’s son informs the Spanish that in such regions all household objects are made of gold which is as common to them as iron is in Europe.

The Spanish marvel at the oration of the young man and carefully consider his words; not, it seems, because of his forthright criticisms of their inordinate greed, but at the prospect of wealth beyond their wildest dreams as they ask how certain he is of what he has just told them. The king’s son continues, having first prepared himself as an orator keen to persuade his audience: “Gyve eare unto me o yowe Chrystians. Albeit that the gredie hunger of golde hathe not yet vexed us naked men, yet doo we destroy one an other by reason of ambition and desyre to rule. Hereof springeth mortall hatred amonge us, and hereof commethe owre destruction.” The Indians cannot control their desires to fight wars and so are no better than the Europeans at heart. The king’s son agrees to guide Balboa’s party so that they can obtain gold and the Comogruans defeat their enemies, but first the Spanish must send for another thousand troops. “After these woordes, this prudent younge *Comogrus* helde his peace. And owre men moved with greate hope and hunger of golde, beganne to swalowe downe theyr spettle.”

Subsequently events unfold as follows: Comogrus is willingly converted and changes his name to Charles after the Spanish king and he appears later on as a notable friend to Christians, even though he considers himself a god when given axes, tools and a soldier’s cloak by the Spanish (148-49); Balboa undertakes the journey without waiting for the thousand relief troops from Spain (137), with considerable success until he is killed by a rival *conquistador*, Pedrarias Davila.

The narration of this encounter is multi-layered and demands some decoding, especially as we do not know exactly how Peter Martyr acquired his information: was it by way of interviews with the returning *conquistadores*, second-hand retelling or imaginative reconstruction? It

is hard to determine who is speaking at which point—the Amerindians, Peter Martyr, the *conquistadores*—or who is being addressed—the original correspondents of Peter Martyr, a general public, influential government figures, colonial Latin America or metropolitan Spain?⁵ At certain points the reader is made aware that the text exists at—to say the least—two removes, that the narrator of the book was not present at the scene but is reporting speech: “They say that with *Comogrus*, they droonk wyne of sundry tastes.” At others, the narrator disappears and merges into the group of Spanish *conquistadores*: “this eldest soone of Kyng *Comogrus* beinge presente, whome we praysed for his wisdom.” Put another way, the reader is never sure exactly what is going on and what status the statements given in the text have because of the shifting nature of the pronouns used.⁶

In the same way it is hard to know how to read the description, as a piece of travel literature or as a specifically colonial text: does the example of the Comogruans illustrate the superiority of European powers over the savages of the New World, a cultural clash which displays mutual incomprehension, the use of the New World as an allegory which either represents the problems of the Old World or shows a way of life which is manifestly superior? These early details appear to signify in opposite directions: on the one hand the Comogruans are recognisably similar to Europeans with their sophisticated court where civil social intercourse takes place; on the other, they are superstitious idolators who worship the dead bodies of their ancestors.

The speech of the king’s son spectacularly confirms this ambiguity. The narrator’s interpretation of his motives, in what can only be an interpolation, seems to single out the Spanish as akin to one of the lowest elements of European society, the landless poor.⁷ They are dismissed as “thys wanderynge kynde of men”—a detail which has to be reconfirmed, “(our men I mean),” presumably in case the reader mistakes Spaniards for Comogruans—and explicitly separates them from the noble status of the Amerindian prince so that two extremes of social rank confront each other across the cultural and racial divide.⁸ This incident in early travel history shadows from afar Aphra Behn’s criticism of black slavery in *Oronoko* where the aristocratic African hero is finally executed by “one Bannister, a wild Irishman, and one of the council, a fellow of

absolute barbarity, and fit to execute any villainy.”⁹ Clearly, the Amerindian prince—like Oronooko—is in the morally superior position at this point and his hostile analysis of Spanish greed carries weight. It is not merely that the Spanish are avaricious but that they are indifferent to and destructive of beautiful objects; whereas the Indians make ornaments which are “artificially wrought” and give them to their visitors as presents, the Spanish simply want to melt everything down into a “rude masse.” They value gold as a monetary commodity, not the labour which makes the object an aesthetic pleasure.¹⁰

The Comogruans, in contrast, according to the king’s son, “no more esteem rude gold unwrought, then we doo cloddess of earthe, before it bee formed by the hande of the workeman to the similitude eyther of some vessell necessarie for owre use, or some ouche [necklace] bewetifull to be worne” (117). This is a more subtle critique of European values than that of Thomas More’s ascetic Utopians who laugh at gold chains of state and make chamber pots of gold in order to show their contempt for frivolity, and should be read alongside that more famous account.¹¹ The Utopians value iron more than gold because it is more necessary for human life; they respect materials only in accordance with their *intrinsic* worth. The Comogruans, in contrast, value the *social* worth of gold and, therefore their society stands as an exact opposite to that of the Spanish adventurers.¹²

The king’s son—at least in the first part of his oration—is an early representative of a figure quite familiar from later colonial narratives and travel literature, that of the “savage critic” who is able to perceive the excesses of the colonists and show them by word and deed what they have lost, in itself a narcissistic, Eurocentric vision.¹³ The verbal echoes and rhetorical patterning in this early section of the speech make a devastating parallel between the Spanish and the cannibals, the lowest form of humanity for Europeans and their worst nightmare.¹⁴ Both are equally “desyrous of golde” so that the Spanish lose their own quietness while disquieting other nations (presumably those they plunder); the cannibals, on the other hand, are alienated from their own environment and from those they conquer and ruthlessly exploit as “bondmen” to mine the gold which they then trade for human flesh. Both are exiles, the Spanish forced to live “like banished men owte of [their] owne

countrey," "thys wanderinge kinde of men," the cannibals "lyving withowte lawes, wanderinge, and withowte empire." In effect, what the king's son seems to be saying, is that the Spanish are not different to what they would like to think of as their polar opposites; both restless peoples are ruled by an inordinate and destructive greed in contrast to the relative social harmony of the Comogruans; both bring appalling destruction in their wake; both are cruel and blind to what really matters; neither is capable of setting down a workable and settled system of laws; both are dangerous vagabonds who threaten social stability and know no boundaries, the Spanish as colonists cut off from their homeland (which perhaps condemned many of them to a life of bondmen), the cannibals as men without a nation.¹⁵ The text recognises that the reader will be challenged and unsettled at this point. In a crucial sense, the king's son seems to imply that both Spain and the New World work to produce what threatens their very existence, a structural imbalance which is expressed in the second half of the speech.

The reaction of the Spanish to these criticisms is similarly disturbing. They interpret them in a way which can only seem willfully blind and a vindication of the king's son's harsh remarks to the reader:

Owre capitaynes marveylyng at the oration of the naked younge man (for they had for interpretours those three men whiche had byn before a yere and a halfe conversant in the court of kynge *Careta*) pondered in theyr myndes, and earnestly considered his sayinges. Soo that his rashnes in scatteringe the golde owte of the balances, they turned to myrth and urbanitie, commendynge his dooinge and sayinge therein. Then they asked hym frendely, uppon what certeyne knowelege he spake those thynges (117).

The first sentence sets up expectations that are immediately thwarted in the second. The reader might think the Spaniards would consider the king's son censorious and openly critical of them while in fact they only seem to wonder whether his liberality is genuine. Even Columbus at his most pig-headed and bizarre could scarcely rival this eccentric misreading and a huge gulf opens up between the European readers of the Latin or English text and the European protagonists of its narrative.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the oration does succeed in restoring their good humour and stopping the fight that had started to break out, a clear

irony. The laughter is, however, a false resolution which does not heal the divisions and thus represents a pause in the thrust of the narrative or else a comic fissure because the joke is really on those who are laughing.¹⁷ The way forward for the Spanish is to confront and overcome their *doppelgangers*.

When the king's son speaks again after the Spanish ask how they can get hold of such fabulous wealth, the nature of his discourse changes dramatically and he turns his "naturall wytte" inwards in analysing how and why the Comogruans destroy themselves. They may not be afflicted by the greed of the bad savages, the cannibals, but they are by no means as serenely good as they at first appear.¹⁸ Hate and ambition torment them:

Owre predicessours kepte warres, and soo dyd *Comogrus* my father with princes beinge bortherers abowte hym. In the which warres, as wee have overcoome, so have wee byn overcoome, as dothe appere by the number of bondmen amonge us, which we tooke by the overthrowe of owre enemyes, of the whiche I have gyven yowe fiftie. Lykwyse at an other tyme, owre adversaries havinge th[e]upper hande agenste us, ledde away manye of us captive. For suche is the chance of warre (117).

He then informs them that many of the Comogruans were once the captured slaves of King Tumanama who have presumably either escaped or been rescued in the course of subsequent hostilities, before making the arrangement to lead them onwards.

Just as the opening description of the court of King Comogrus oscillated between an affirmation of a shared European and New World identity—what Anthony Pagden has recently called "the principle of attachment"¹⁹—and an acknowledgement of the vast difference between the two, so does the speech of the king's son, but in a more complex and sophisticated manner. In the first section the Spanish explorers and the nameless cannibals are pitted against the savage critic and, presumably, the European reader of the text; in the second section, a universal malaise is affirmed, that of human aggression, a characteristic which appears to define the species.

Even though some dwellers of the New World can see through to the "truth" of human actions and expose the false motives and hypocrisy,

they are subject to precisely the same limitations of behaviour and fall into the same traps. Ultimately both Europeans—colonists and readers—and savages—Comogruans, Tumanamans and cannibals—blend as one. The Comogruans turn out to be exactly the sort of naked and aggressive people that they seemed to be defined against; hence the apparent schizophrenia of the savage prince. The Comogruans are both savage critics and participators within the world of savagery, occupying an uneasy position within the series of discourses which represents them. They are at once noble savages (an ambiguous representation in itself, simultaneously reminding Europeans of what they have lost, but also what they should have), ignoble savages and ordinary human beings.

This strange confrontation with its seemingly confused and conflicting messages demands to be read within the context of the whole work of *De Orbe Novo Decades*, both with and against the grain and also in terms of a Spanish/international Latin reader and an English one. Peter Martyr's own short preface to the expanded edition of 1516 explains that he left Italy for Spain because of a desire to record the important new discoveries in the Americas, fearing that they might be lost for ever: "I myght particularlye collecte, these marvelyous and newe thynges, which shoulde otherwyse perhappes have line drowned in the whirlepoole of oblivion: forasmuch as the Spanyardes (men woorthy [of] greate commendation) had onely care to the generall inventions of these thynges." In other words, the Spanish are good at acting but not at understanding the significance of their own actions and a foreign narrator is required to tell the story of their deeds and interpret the meaning of them. Peter Martyr states that he left his homeland because there was nothing of significance to record: "in Italye, by reason of the dissention among the Princes, I coulde fynde nothyng wherewith I myght feede my wytte, beinge a younge man desyrus of knowleage and experience of thynges" (63).²⁰ Despite being tempted to return, he has not partly because of the pleas of the deceased Ferdinand and Isabella, but

also that in maner throwgh owt all Italy, by reason of the *disorde of the Christian Princes*, I perceaved all thynges to runne headelong into ruine, the countreys to be destroyed and made fatte with human bludde: The cities sacked, virgines

and matrones with theyr gooddes and possessions caried away as captives and miserable innocentes without offence to be slayne unarmed within theyr owne houses. Of the which calamities, I dyd not onely heare the lamentable owtcryes but dyd also feelee the same. For even the bludde of mine owne kinfolkes and frendes, was not free from that crueltie [my emphasis] (63-64).

In marked contrast to this heart-felt lament for the fate of his native land, based on a shared sympathy and personal experience, is the extravagant praise for the Spanish monarch, Charles V who not only has a virtually unified realm ("yowr graundefathers by your moothers syde, have subdued all Spayne under yowr dominion except onely one corner of the same"), but has expanded his territories beyond the horizons of any previous rulers:

But not offendynge the reverence due to owre prediccursors, what so ever frome the begynnyng of the worlde hath byn donne or wrytten to this day, to my judgement seemeth but little, if wee consyder what newe landes and countreys, what newe seas, what sundry nations and tounge, what golde mynes, what treasures of perles they have lefte unto yowe hyghnesse, besyde other revenues. The whiche, what they are and howe greate, these three Decades shall declare (64).

The preface sets up a whole series of oppositions, many of which clearly have a bearing upon the narrated incident analysed above. These can be listed—in no particular order—as follows:

Spain/Italy
 Unity/Fragmentation
 Expansion/Contraction
 Christianity/Paganism
 Knowledge/Ignorance
 Health/Illness
 Nation/Regions
 Centre/Margins
 Empire/Colony
 Wealth/Poverty
 Intact/Violated
 Home/Exile
 Self/Other
 Lack of Awareness/Awareness

Although it is easy to see that these oppositions can be related to Peter Martyr's description of the encounter between the Spanish and the Comogruans, they cannot be mapped on in a straightforward manner. Whilst both the *conquistadores* and the cannibals are classified as wandering exiles, the same can, of course, be said of Peter Martyr, not just in fact, but as he chooses to represent himself. The difference is that they move away from stability, from civilisation to barbarism, and he moves from the chaos of his homeland to become a subject in a more stable, powerful and civilised country. It has frequently been noted that what holds the knowledge gained from accounts of the New World together is the rhetoric of the "I" / eye-witness, forced to abandon all appeals to a canon of authorities and insist on the unclassifiable newness of the data which can only be described by one who has seen the land in person;²¹ Peter Martyr, in effect, goes a stage further, suggesting that he alone can truly appreciate the achievements of the Spanish because he comes from a country which is contracting into smaller regions rather than already unified and now expanding. Only those without a nation can come to understand the good fortune of those who have one, in perhaps the same way that the son of King Comogrus can warn the Spanish of what they might lose through their excessive greed and consequent dissension. According to Benedict Anderson, modern forms of national identity were exported back to Europe from the colonial states in the Americas; according to Peter Martyr, the exiled narrator of the colonising voyages was in an analogous position and able to comment on the growth of European national consciousness.²²

This might help to explain the radical disjunction contained in the odd encounter analysed above. Ostensibly, the purpose of *De Orbe Novo Decades* appears to be to celebrate Spanish success in the New World and the acquisition of territories, wealth and so on; yet it is also clearly a reflection on the desirable form civil society should take. Peter Martyr cannot overlook the dissension among the Spanish without perjuring himself and ignoring the eye-witness accounts which are what constitutes the knowledge of the hitherto unknown New World, but he intervenes in his capacity as narrator to point out a moral so that his narrative depends very much on his own credibility as an interpreter. Like the two great opponents later in the century, Oviedo and Las Casas, Peter

Martyr was not "an impartial neutral observer, nor did he wish to be. . . . His history belonged to a . . . political and moral project."²³ The problem is that this project splits the narrative, pulling its narrator in two directions at once.

We cannot know the original basis of this story and how much it has been altered, whether Peter Martyr's recording of the words of the king's son are at all accurate; nevertheless, the telling bears significant marks of having been transformed to fit in with these dual, almost inevitably contradictory, aims. The incident does serve to tell Charles of the successful acquisition of new wealth and lands as Peter Martyr announces he will do in the preface; but it also warns of the perils of civil dissension, lack of stability and excessive greed. The narrated encounter praises Charles's vast success, but simultaneously urges him to be cautious and think carefully about how he runs his colonial policy and whom he trusts—and, if one thinks that the example of the cannibals' exploitation of neighbouring Amerindians as "bondmen" is a reflection upon Spanish society, about domestic policy as well. King Comogrus's son serves as both type and anti-type of his Spanish opposite. In the preface Peter Martyr explicitly connects the acquisition of knowledge with his moving to the unified Spanish nation; unfortunately, part of the knowledge he gains in his attempt to complete his self-assigned task, to record the history which the native fails to understand, is that exile in the name of expansion all too often leads to the sort of civil discord that he left Italy to escape. It might well seem that what has to be excluded—a defined nation and secure identity—as a precondition of knowledge reappears as an object of knowledge. In other words, as so often in colonial narrations, we are back where we started.

II.

The situation of Peter Martyr's English translator, Richard Eden, was in many ways analogous to that of the exiled Milanese historian. Eden had been active under the protectorate of Northumberland (1549-53) in translating and promoting colonial literature in order to encourage

English voyages to the New World. Northumberland had gathered a formidable team, including John Dee, William Buckley, a mathematician, Clement Adams, a cartographer, Leonard and Thomas Digges, both interested in surveying, and Robert Recorde, a physician who had supervised an earlier attempt to exploit silver mines in Ireland (1551); Eden had translated part of Sebastian Muenster's *Cosmographia Universalis* as *Of the Newe India* (1553) and Ralph Robinson had produced his more famous translation of *Utopia* (1551) (again, suggesting that in England *Utopia* was read alongside non-fictional accounts of colonial voyages).²⁴ Northumberland was undoubtedly keen to counteract the economic depression which gripped England and looked enviously across to the boom enjoyed in Spain fuelled by the import of gold and silver from its colonies which resulted in relative prosperity.²⁵

However, when Edward VI died in 1553, many of this intellectual circle, including Richard's uncle, Thomas, took part in the attempt to put Lady Jane Grey on the throne and understandably fell foul of Mary. Thomas and Richard's father, George, were strongly linked to English Protestant exiles in Europe and Thomas eventually left for Strasbourg in 1554, helping in the extensive propaganda campaign against the Spanish presence in England. One of the most prominent of these exiled Protestants, John Ponet, cited Peter Martyr's *De Orbe Novo Decades* in his justification of tyrannicide, *A Shorte Treatise of Politicke Power* (1556), to condemn Spanish atrocities there and predict that soon the English would be shipped over as slaves (suggesting that Peter Martyr's work could be read in different ways in different contexts, for his work was by no means as obvious a source for the Black Legend, which sought to emphasise the cruelties of the Spanish in their empire, as Las Casas's extensive condemnations of Spanish policy in the New World).²⁶

Eden's career trajectory moved in the opposite direction for he appears to have "decided to throw in his lot with the new regime" and produced his translation of *De Orbe Novo Decades* in 1555, a work which also contained extracts from Oviedo's *History of the West Indies* and writings by others connected with Spanish ventures in the Americas such as Amerigo Vespucci, Antonio Pigafetta and Lopez de Gomara. This "lengthy and badly-organised book," which was nonetheless "readable and informative" did not fail to prevent suspicions of Eden's loyalty.

In the same year he was accused of heresy and lost his job at the Treasury.²⁷

Eden appended a long preface addressed to the reader to his translation, 29 pages compared with the 3 of Peter Martyr's original and like that document it is an essay beset with anxiety. Eden lavishes his praise on the *conquistadores* in a manner that is alien to both Peter Martyr's preface and his actual text:

And surely if great Alexander and the Romans which have rather obteyned then deserved immortall fame amonge men for theyr bluddye victories onely for theyr owne glory and amplifyinge theyr empire obteyned by slawghter of innocentes and kepte by violence, have byn magnified for theyr doinges, howe much more then shal we thynke these men woorthy just commendations which in theyr mercyfull warres ageynst these naked people have so used them selves towarde them in exchaungynge of benefites for victorie, that greater commoditie hath therof ensewed to the vanquished then to the victourers (50).

Eden does acknowledge alternative narratives—"But sum wyll say, they possesse and inhabyte theyr regions and use theym as bondemen and tributaries, where before they were free"—only to dismiss them as partial interpretations which refuse to recognise that now the Indians are truly free as Christians not pagans and enjoy the benefits of land properly used. The Spanish have only killed "suche as coulde by no meanes be brought to civilitie" and so are exonerated of any blame and charges of excessive use of violence, as in, for example, Ponet's text.²⁸ Rather, the modern Spanish heroes go beyond those of the ancient world, who are here portrayed as vicious butchers. For Eden, the discovery of the Americas is the key event which illustrates that the moderns have supplanted the ancients and established their own time through a break with the past. Once again, the discovery of the Americas is shown to be the crucial moment which defines the experience of modernity, enabling the development of a self-reflexive consciousness which does not have to refer back to previous authorities.²⁹

The passage also makes play with the notion of "exchange," suggesting that victory has been won through trade; an impressively benevolent one as the vanquished gain more than the victors. Again, such language

signals a clean break with the past; whereas before victory had to be won through brutal warfare and conspicuous cruelty, as in the establishment of the Greek and Roman Empires, now the peaceful bartering of commodities and spreading of true religion are all that is required. The propagandist implications of Eden's words are obvious: the conquest of the Americas will be easy, will bring untold benefits and involves no moral dilemmas (whatever others might say . . .). The English have every reason to copy their great European rivals.

Eden's comments are also notable for their partiality. He is clearly reacting to Protestant anti-Spanish sentiment and, whilst an alternative narrative of the history of the colonisation of the Americas is dismissed, it is nonetheless acknowledged and shadows his not overly persuasive attempt to exonerate the Spanish and transform the *conquistadores* into role models. But Eden also protests too much in his reading of the text he is translating, for what is also obvious to any scrupulous reader of his translation of *De Orbe Novo Decades*, is that Peter Martyr's narrative does not support Eden's claims for it. As the encounter with King Comogrus illustrates, the natives of the New World are not always represented as straightforwardly grateful "naked people" who will be delighted with whatever they are given and the *conquistadores* are hardly portrayed as saintly heroes eager to give away more than they get. The ending of the episode with the Spanish slaving over the prospect of more gold is perhaps not quite as shocking a rhetorical construction as Montaigne's conclusion to his essay "Of The Cannibals"—"They weare no kinde of breeches nor hosen"—but it is just as graphic an image.³⁰

Eden's text contains a series of marginal glosses, a mixture of shorthand pointers for the aid of readers, with a few interpretative comments.³¹ Often these serve the purpose of attempting to lead the reader away from construing the incident as a criticism of European values. For example, alongside the second half of the speech of the son of King Comogrus (see above, p. 3), there are three notes: at the start is "Naked people tormented with ambition"; against the exhortation of the prince that he will lead the Spanish to the gold is printed, "A vehement persuasion"; and at the end, as the Spanish start to drool, is "A token of hunger." Such comments affirm the self-confessed inability of the

Comogruans to confront their defective wills,³² linking their defects to the greed of the Spanish.

The gloss, "Naked people tormented with ambition," can be read as a contradiction of his earlier use of "naked" in "The Preface to the Reader" (see above, p. 14), a bad "nature" to place beside a good, innocent one, a reading affirmed by the drooling for gold of the Spanish.³³ The point is that all people are ultimately the same and are spurred on by their desires, and, by implication, so will the English in their search for empire. This is confirmed by the gloss, "A vehement persuasion," placed beside the promise of the prince to lead the Spanish on in their less than admirable quest. Eden's text has started to resemble later more overtly colonial propaganda such as Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and True Reporte of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588).³⁴ It is as if Eden is reconstructing the original conversation between the Amerindians and the Spanish for his English audience, hoping that they will choose to be inspired by the hope for gold and empire, even if the motives for gain are transparently base.

Given Eden's biography, his anxiety is perhaps understandable and his desire to homogenize Peter Martyr's contradictory text, unsurprising. Three pages further on in the preface, a marginal note alerts the reader to an "Apostrophe to England," following a condemnation of criticisms of Philip II who was now married to Mary and, therefore, king of both Spain and England. Eden urges his fellow-countrymen to acknowledge their "infirmities and deformities" by rereading the book they have mangled so badly, the Bible: "If the greefes of them bee to thee unsensible by reason of thy feeblenesse and longe sicknes, take unto thee that glasse wherein thou gloryest with the Jewe and thynkest that thou seest al thynges and canst judge all mysteries: Looke I say in that pure glasse and beholde thy owne deformities, which thou canst not or wylle not feele" (53). The traditional appeal to the reading of a text as a mirror in which all vices can be seen contains a certain irony:³⁵ Eden's claim that the Bible ought to be read in a spirit of self-criticism, rather than directed at a Catholic monarchy ruling a Protestant people, sits uneasily with his own attempts to limit the range of meanings of *De Orbe Novo Decades*. His attempt to argue that English expansion into the New World will lead to an overall unity at home and in the newly

acquired colonies is not borne out by Peter Martyr's original text where, all too often, the opposite is shown to occur (as in the tensions revealed in the encounter with the Comogruans).

For Eden, England has become a perverse and unnatural motherland: "There is even now great talke of thee [i.e. England] in the mouthes of all men that thou hast of late yeares brought furthe many monsters and straunge byrthes." The rhetorical manoeuvre here is an astute one: America was thought to be the land of monsters and human deformities, but in Eden's judgement they are already inside the realm.³⁶ He proceeds to read them for his audience and so silence the "dyvers interpretacions more monstrous then the monsters them selves":

One hath well interpreted that such monstrous byrthes signifie the monstrous and deformed myndes of the people mysshapened with phantastical, dissolute opinions, dissolute lyvynge, licentious talke, and such other vicious behavoures which monstrously deforme the myndes of men in the syght of god . . . What deformed beastes are more monstrous than lyinge, rebellion, strife, contention, privie malice, slaunderynge, mutteringe, conspiracies, and such other devillisse imaginations. But O Englande whyle time is gyven thee, circumsise thy harte (53).

Eden is clearly referring to Protestant resistance to the Marian regime, notably the Wyatt rebellion of the previous year (1554), and in the process envisages a "correct" reading of his translation as a means of helping to foster unity.³⁷

Ultimately, despite attempts to homogenize and simplify the text, Eden's English translation of *De Orbe Novo Decades* is as double and contradictory as Peter Martyr's Latin original. In one sense Eden is glorifying the Spanish in the New World and recommending them as heroic exemplars for the fragmented and "monstrous" body politic of England. Their actions provide a recipe for unity and expansion and will provide both internal and external cohesion illustrating that the forces of nationalism and colonialism cannot be easily separated. In another, there is an uncomfortable link between Peter Martyr's descriptions of the rebellious acts of the *conquistadores* in the Americas and Eden's castigations of his fellow citizens' crimes. Either way, the speech of the son of King Comogrus addresses at least two audiences: those who recognise his criticisms as legitimate and an affirmation that

the “other” of the New World is, in fact, identical to the sceptical, anti-colonial reader; and those who use his speech also to affirm an identity, but with the universal human desire for gold and glorious colonial conquest to which all are helpless subjects even if they can recognise the syndrome.

III.

What can be learnt from this strange and complex cultural encounter? The most obvious point involves placing stress upon the difficulty of reconstructing either the original event or how the text was read by its early readers, especially given the contradictory aims stated by compiler and translator, both of whom lived in trying political circumstances and depended on various forms of patronage and whose texts clearly relate to their own situations within two different European societies. Perhaps this ambiguity is in itself surprising given the monolithic models of power which have all too often characterised New Historicist readings of early modern cultural encounters.³⁸ In Eden’s text we are not made simply to choose between what is orthodox and what is subversive, but, given the unstable nature of European political society, and the uncertain forms of representing the Americas as a conspicuously “new” site of knowledge, find it difficult to decide what actually belongs in either category. The incident with the Comogruans might have left its first readers with the conclusion that the Spanish were successful, but ultimately, morally wrong. Should they therefore be condemned or celebrated? Does their greed for gold serve as a condemnation of colonial enterprises, a recognition of a universal human desire necessary despite its unappealing nature, or something which ought to be—and can be—corrected in the future? In the end, perhaps, we simply do not know, just as Peter Martyr and Richard Eden seem not to have known exactly what to make of the abundance of new information coming back from the New World. European encounters with the Americas were undeniably disastrous in the short and long term,³⁹ but early colonial writings do not necessarily illustrate the inevitability of this destruction and many, despite the obvious restraints of patrons and political

expediency, register profound disquiet with colonial expansion and, perhaps more importantly, hopes of a sympathetic *rapprochement* with the New World, albeit alongside other more predictable sentiments. What early colonial/travel literature texts like *De Orbe Novo Decades* reveal is serious confusion regarding the value of their own and other cultures; it is vital that we recognise their unease with as well as their complicity in European expansion and do not dismiss them as simply monolithic apologies to be read with or against the grain. The politics of identity and difference cannot be solved by straightforward celebration or condemnation, either in their time or ours.

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NOTES

¹Myra Jehlen, "Response to Peter Hulme," *CI* 20 (1993-94): 187-91, at p. 187; Peter Hulme, "Making No Bones: A Response to Myra Jehlen," *CI* 20 (1993-94): 179-86, at p. 184; David Read, "Colonialism and Coherence: The Case of Captain John Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia*," *MP* 91 (1994): 428-48, at pp. 446, 445; Myra Jehlen, "History Before the Fact: or, Captain John Smith's Unfinished Symphony," *CI* 19 (1992-93): 677-92. See also Andrew Hadfield, "Writing the New World: More Invisible Bullets," *Literature and History*, second series, 2.2 (1991): 3-19. Jehlen's original conclusions correspond to Read's: "The current scholarship of colonization has focussed on the way the empire builders acquired control. But in the acquiring, in the process of acquisition, control is not yet at work . . . As we look back to the seventeenth century, seeing the interaction in the course of empire building makes it seem less destined and the empire builders less entitled" ("History before the Fact" 691-92).—My thanks to Daniel Carey and Paul Harvey for commenting on an earlier draft of this essay.

²Edward Arber, ed., *The First Three English Books on America* (Birmingham, 1885). All subsequent references to this edition in parentheses. I have slightly modernised "u" to "v" and "i" to "j" where appropriate. The first three books (decades) of *De Orbe Novo Decades* were collected together in an edition in 1516, having been published separately in Venice (1504), Seville (1511) and Alcalá (1511). See John Parker, *Books to Build an Empire: A Bibliography of English Overseas Interests to 1630* (Amsterdam: N. Israel, 1965) 51n22. I have used the collected edition, *De Rebus Oceanicis et Novo Orbe, Decades Tres, Petri Martyris Ab Angleria Mediolanensis (Coloniae, 1574)*.

³J. H. Elliott, "The Spanish Conquest and Settlement of America," *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: CUP, 1984) 1: 149-206, at p. 169; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Southern Voyages, AD 1492-1616* (New York: OUP, 1974) 200-04.

⁴See Arber, ed., *First Three English Books on America*, 50, 66, 69, 107, 110, 120, 130, 157, 187-89, *et passim*, for further references. See also Bernal Díaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963) 21, 37-38, 65, 98, 104-06, 122, *et passim*. More positive encounters between the Spanish and the Amerindians did occur in *De Orbe Novo Decades*: see Arber, ed., 87-88, 95, 98, 150-52, 166 *et passim*.

⁵"If speaking for someone else seems to be a mysterious process," Stanley Cavell has remarked, "that may be because speaking to someone does not seem mysterious enough"; Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) 3-30, at p. 13. *De Orbe Novo Decades* started as a series of letters to influential figures in Italy, principally ecclesiastical dignitaries, and was eventually published as a collected whole in 1530. On Richard Eden see David Gwyn, "Richard Eden: Cosmographer and Alchemist," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 15 (1984): 13-34.

⁶Eden's translation does not differ significantly from the original Latin of Peter Martyr; the passage analysed here exists in *De Rebus Oceanicis et Novo Orbe, Decades Tres* 146-52. There is a modern translation by Francis Augustus MacNutt, *De Orbe Novo: The Eight Decades of Peter Martyr D'Anghera* (1912; rpt. New York: B. Franklin, 1970) 213-23. For example, the indented quotation cited above is rendered as "What thing then is this, Christians? Is it possible that you set a high value upon such a small quantity of gold? You nevertheless destroy the artistic beauty of these necklaces, melting them into ingots. If your thirst of gold is such that in order to satisfy it you disturb peaceable people and bring misfortune and calamity among them, if you exile yourselves from your country in search of gold, I will show you a country where it abounds and where you can satisfy the thirst that torments you" (220).

⁷On vagrancy in Europe see A. L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The vagrancy problem in England, 1560-1640* (London: Methuen, 1985); John Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy in Tudor England* (Harlow: Longman, 1971); Penry Williams, *The Tudor Regime* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979) 196-206; Angus Calder, *Revolutionary Empire: The Rise of English-Speaking Empires from the Fifteenth Century to the 1780s* (London: Cape, 1981) 22-25; J. H. Elliott, *Europe Divided, 1559-1598* (London: Collins, 1968) 67-68. On the connection between the representation of landlessness in Europe and the Americas, see Stephen J. Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets," *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988) 21-65, at pp. 49-50.

⁸See Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986) 144.

⁹Aphra Behn, *Oronooko, The Rover and Other Works*, ed. Janet Todd (Harmondsworth, 1992) 139-40. On the cultural stereotyping of the Irish see Joseph T. Leerssen, *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael: Studies in the Idea of Irish Nationality, Its Development and Literary Expression Prior to the Nineteenth Century* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1986).

¹⁰For a related discussion see Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975) 279-400, at p. 377. Marx discusses speeches from Goethe's *Faust* and Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* specifically about the greed for gold.

¹¹Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Paul Turner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965) 86-87.

¹²For comment see Marx 377.

¹³Anthony Pagden, "The Savage Critic: Some European Images of the Primitive," *YES* 13 (1983): 32-45; Bernard Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge: CUP, 1980) 34.

¹⁴Sheehan 60-61.

¹⁵For analysis of a similar incident described in related terms see Hadfield 13-15; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages, AD 500-1600* (New York: OUP, 1971) 237-38.

¹⁶See Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993) 17-24.

¹⁷For further analysis of types of laughter see Susan Purdie, *Comedy: The Mastery of Discourse* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) chs. 1, 3.

¹⁸On this distinction see Hulme, ch. 2.

¹⁹Pagden, *European Encounters* 21. See also Stephen J. Greenblatt, "Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century," Fredi Chiappelli, ed., *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1976) 561-80.

²⁰For details of Peter Martyr's life see MacNutt, trans., *De Orbe Novo*, "Introduction," 1-48.

²¹See Pagden, *European Encounters*, ch. 2; Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991) 31, 128-30.

²²Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983) ch. 4. See also "Exodus," *CI* 20 (1993-94): 314-27.

²³Pagden, *European Encounters* 69. I have altered plurals to singulars.

²⁴Gwyn, "Richard Eden," 23-24. See also John Parker, *Books to Build an Empire*, ch. 4, for further details on Eden.

²⁵Gwyn 21. On Northumberland's economic problems see C. S. L. Davies, *Peace, Print and Protestantism, 1450-1558* (St. Albans: Paladin, 1977) 284-87.

²⁶Gwyn 27-28; John Ponet, *A Shorte Treatise of Politicke Power* (Strasbourg, 1556), sig. F7. On the "Black Legend" see William Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: The Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558-1660* (Durham, N. C.: Duke UP, 1971).

²⁷Gwyn 29-31.

²⁸See n26 above. Compare Edmund Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. W. L. Renwick (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970) 95 for similar sentiments.

²⁹Pagden, *European Encounters*, ch. 3.

³⁰*The Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne*, trans. John Florio (1603), 3 vols. (London: Everyman, 1910) 1: 229.

³¹The Latin text contains only three marginal glosses. One beside the description of the corpses in the temple; another when the king's son begins his speech; and another near his concluding remarks.

³²See Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), for an analysis of European discussions of the human status of the Amerindians in the Sixteenth century and the reasons for their "defective" nature.

³³On "good" and "bad" nature see Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, chs. 3-4.

³⁴Reprinted in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, vol. 8 (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1904) 348-86. For analysis see Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets" 21-39; Hadfield 6-10.

³⁵L. K. Born, "The Perfect Prince: A Study in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Ideals," *Speculum* 3 (1928): 470-504; A. M. Kinghorn, *The Chorus of History: Literary-Historical Relations in Renaissance Britain, 1485-1558* (London: Blandford P, 1971) 268.

³⁶Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man* 10-11.

³⁷On Wyatt's rebellion see Anthony Fletcher, *Tudor Rebellions* (1968; rpt. Harlow: Longman, 1983) ch. 7.

³⁸See, for example, Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets"; Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1983); Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres* (London: Methuen, 1986).

³⁹J. H. Elliott writes that "If the pre-conquest population of central Mexico fell from 25 million in 1519 to 2.65 million in 1568, and that of Peru fell from nine million in 1532 to 1.3 million in 1570, the demographic impact of European conquest was shattering both in its scale and speed," 202.

Grace Note: The Manuscript Evidence for a Christological "Crossing the Bar"

ROBERT F. FLEISSNER

The purpose of this essay is to corroborate the critical verdict that the familiar "Pilot" image in Tennyson's popular eschatological lyric "Crossing the Bar" bears directly on Christ as head of the Church, not merely upon his principal deputy, Peter. Thus, the navigational image has its main literary antecedent plausibly enough in the Miltonic "Pilot" of *Lycidas* (l. 109), although the net effect of a general metaphysical abstraction is operative as well. In any event, the full meaning of the "Grace" in the essay's title is meant to convey an ecclesiastical and not merely tonal aura. On yet another level, the "Note" points in symbolic and paronomastic terms to the need for further archival research, specifically for closer reading of the manuscripts of the poem and determining how then that should affect our overall interpretation. Thereby an early draft published by Jerome Hamilton Buckley in his *Tennyson*¹ reveals changes in several details from the final text, ones which in some key respects, according to Paul F. Baum, are "retrograde" (116).

When the question of whether Tennyson's Pilot was either Peter or the Savior Himself was first registered in print,² the main notion submitted was that the guiding light, in the person of the navigator, derived from the most familiar previous allusion of this kind in English poetry, namely that in Milton's elegy, to "the Pilot of the *Galilean lake*" (according to the original type-setting). A certain precedent for such a link is to be found in Dryden's own adaptation of the Miltonic image in *The Hind and the Panther* ("the same vessel which our Saviour bore / Himself the pilot" [131-32]), Dryden having been noticeably indebted to Milton already elsewhere, as is common knowledge.

But that dual seventeenth-century association did not fully convince certain readers, those who principally felt that Milton's Pilot, when conceived of as Christ rather than as His disciple Peter, turned out to be a critical identification simply of later vintage. Yet the standard or orthodox Christian conception of the fisherman Peter being what he was only through the Savior, who compared His followers to fishers (Mark 1:17) (even as Peter literally had to gather seafood), validates such a view and even in terms of the earliest references in English literature—regardless of whether the Puritan in Milton would have been fully aware of this. Hence, in support of such a proposition, I later adduced the notion in print that hidden iconographic symbolism provided a fitting key: as a secretive "Cross-" symbol appears already, paronomastically, in the first syllable and in the very title-play of the lyric, so in the final line a common British spelling ("crost") fulfills what Tennyson's titular label already implies (cf. the manuscript as printed below). In short, the crossing of the "t" in this somewhat antiquated British orthography (as opposed to the more common, modern variant of "crossed") inaugurates the implicit rite of making a "sacramental" effect, namely that of the Sign of the Cross.³ Hence the textual reading can lead to a promising and reverent subtextual meaning.

Curiously enough, though, the earlier spelling of "crost" is not reflected in modern texts I have used (though the manuscript spelling does appear in *Demeter, and Other Poems* [1889]), nor for that matter even in that of a familiar Protestant hymn which is clearly based on the lyric. The rationale evident in the last case is that the slightly longer orthography of the modern past-tense form can lend itself more easily to prolonged utterance at the hymn's finale, thereby producing, as it were, almost a quasi-mystical effect of its own. To the obvious contention that Tennyson himself might not have readily condoned so close a reading, a counter-argument can now be adduced: that an author's own overt signification or intent is, in universal terms, of lesser import than that of inner or archetypal meaning—or especially that of divine intent itself, presuming that that can be determined. In any event, the author's true signification could well have been subliminal in this case as well. The relevance of the common critical term *Mehrdeutigkeit*, or *pluri-signification*,⁴ applies here. In any event, the British "crost" spelling works

very nicely, not merely because it fits neatly into place but because it conveys further, relevant spiritual meaning by implication.

More evidence worth citing in support of the final "crost" manuscript spelling as textually worthy of being once again transcribed can be found in the greater spontaneous intensity it can generate—*intensity* itself being such a key term in Tennyson criticism. Because this Victorian Poet Laureate, in his late Romantic fervor, became an acclaimed follower of such a recognizably intense Romantic as Keats, let us closely correlate here yet another line, again, it so happens, a final one. Keats's lyric "Why Did I Laugh Tonight? No Voice Will Tell" contains a likewise crucial spelling at the tail end, namely in terms of the intense effect of death transmogrified as life's "high mead." In a recent article, Eve Leoff has contended that the original textual spelling, "mead" (rather than the more commonly used variant form, "meed"), is in fact preferable and not merely as an acceptable variant, but because it better describes "the intensity of the experience Death brings," whereby it relates to the poet's referring also to an "endless fountain of immortal drink" in his *Endymion* (23), likewise to the plural form ("meads") in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" (13), and finally to "the bedded grass [mead] of 'Ode to Psyche' where the poet discovers Cupid and Psyche" (121). Leoff made reference then, in passing, to the same term as having reverberated, once more, in Milton.⁵

The manuscript of the final version of "Crossing the Bar" in the Tennyson Research Centre in Lincoln, England, contains some further textual evidence in favor of the "crossing effect" of the "t" at the end as being inherently symbolic of making the sign of the Christian cross, not necessarily in any specific denominational sense, though some sort of Catholic usage stands out. The additional proof in the manuscript is in its frequent use of a scribal form of the ampersand device, which, in terms of strict paleography at least, offers in context the subtle nuance of further, even complementary, small cross effects. That scribal device occurs no less than four times in the written text: already in the opening line and then once in each of the succeeding stanzas as if serving as a reminder there. Hence the final effect of the crucial crossed "t" at the tail end actually amplifies the hidden symbolic overtones as witnessed earlier. Such outspoken reverberation of the ampersand amounts to more

than mere circumstantial proof, pictorial though the net effect may be. Because I have not had the privilege of examining Tennyson's other manuscripts in detail, I am unable to determine whether his use of the ampersand was particularly characteristic of his style in general, whereas it does pointedly stand out here, as the published transcript from the Tennyson Research Centre reveals. True, I did gain access to *some* archival material at Cornell University whereby I learned how Tennyson was prone to the use of this device in a short letter from the Isle of Wight (the setting of the poem) to Jennie McGraw Fiske (undated), the transcription of a four-line lyric at the end containing another example thereof. (I cite this with the permission of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.) But that hardly dispells the value of the particular usage in "Crossing the Bar."

Other, more clandestine hints of the cruciform image also emerge. For example, the third line, "And may there be no moaning of the bar," presents a subliminal resonance, one pointing not only to a ship crossing the perilous sandbar, that being the obvious occasion of the poem (at least in its final form), but also to simply crossing a vertical in forming a cruciform image. The restraint related to "moaning" in the line could then reflect on the physical suffering commonly associated with the Crucifixion yet, in context, also point therewith to the true Christian's stalwart obligation to bear his own cross daily and without complaint. Such a clear-cut, neo-Stoical maxim (in more obvious Tennysonian terms) is then reiterated, clearly enough, in stanza three.

More intriguingly yet, the term "bourne" in the manuscript (13) represents still a further echo, but this time not from Tennyson's own work (or from Milton); it goes further back and even to Shakespeare, specifically to Hamlet's most popular soliloquy, notably the following lines which point to his fundamental predicament:

But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered Countrey, from whose Borne
No Traveller returns, Puzels the will . . . (3.1.78-80)⁶

Because Tennyson is known for having been poetically enraptured with Shakespeare, referring to him so often that he is even, again in somewhat

picturesque terms, frequently cited for having died with a finger deftly inserted in the playwright's *Works*,⁷ we can virtually imagine how he "anticipated" his own demise with a distinctive echo in his requiem, for he had insisted that "Crossing the Bar" should always be positioned at the very end of his collected poems in all editions and for obvious symbolic reasons.⁸

On the surface, true, such a Hamletian recollection may appear to detract from a more specifically Christian nuance in this poetic context, for clearly the very problematic point of the famed soliloquy is that the Danish Prince has apparently witnessed the Ghost of his father (unless the specter is a devil in disguise), has therefore presumably confronted a returnee from the land of the dead.⁹ So why should he so soon thereafter have recourse to denying any such spiritual message? Was he out of his mind?

Certainly one standard answer has been that what he, in truth, implies is that no traveler definitely returns *for good* from the Land Beyond. Yet further exegesis prompts the verdict that the speaker cannot make up his erratic mind precisely *what* to believe, whether to accept a Catholic, if in this case also folklorish, belief in disembodied souls returning from purgatorial confines, or to disdain this popularized doctrine as mere superstition (possibly owing to his hitherto having made some relevant, learned studies at the university in Wittenberg).¹⁰ Or he might have had in mind Irish folk beliefs, as suggested in his "by Saint Patrick" reference (1.5.136), though that allusion may be mainly to Simon Paterick, who was a translator of Machiavelli's *Il Principe*¹¹ (the issue of whether "the end justifies the means" applies to killing the king being fundamental to this tragedy).—Would Tennyson not have had some of this in the back of his mind?

If the Poet Laureate appropriated any of such Hamletian ambivalence, he could well have thought of it somehow in terms of the capitalized Pilot image. He thereby would have meant one who, in his own capitalized way, so to speak, would indicate Christ, yet at the same time allude to a subordinate like Peter or even, in a round-about Hamletian manner, to a vaguer or more intellectualized guide. This final possibility happened to receive some telling support from my correspondence with Sir Charles Tennyson.¹² The point is that the capitalization of "Pilot"

does not in fact have to suggest any explicitly divine agency, whereby the text supplies good reason for this. For a number of other nouns are noticeably also capitalized, including ones in the final stanza as well, "Time" and "Place." Thereby all three internal capitalizations "Time," "Place," and "Pilot," could signify abstractions of some deep, rather ontological sorts, yet still ones in no way finally at odds with an inherently Christological resonance as well, the limited strength of Tennyson's personal faith perhaps notwithstanding.

Clearly the New Testament is explicitly evident in Tennyson's turn of phrase "face to face" (15) (from 1 Cor. 13:12), even if the more immediate, topical allusion would at first appear to be, as Christopher Ricks at any rate once had it, to Arthur Hallam.¹³ In short, it appears admissible that because the poem was supposedly composed, as is well known, during only a few minutes while the poet was traversing the watery straits in separating the Isle of Wight from the British mainland,¹⁴ he most likely did not intend any single, specific allusion. Yet, at the same time, most probably all of the allusions were on the back of his fertile psyche. This is supported by Paull Baum's finding three separate versions of how the lyric was composed: that stated in Hallam Lord Tennyson's *Memoir* and dealing with composition after reaching Farringford; that by Sir Charles which involves his jotting the lines down on the inside of a used envelope en route; and finally that attributed to Canon Rawnsley involving composition on a long walk.¹⁵ (Baum cites a further source in passing, Kingsley's "The Three Fishers," because of its refrains, "And good-bye to the bar and its moaning," with the drowning of the fishermen, yet that happenstance is of truly minor significance in terms of Tennyson's most famous poem. Still, Tennyson owned this poem and read some of Kingsley's poetry to a friend, as Ricks tells us.)¹⁶

Granted, as Robert Bernard Martin has to remind us, the poem ideally amounts to "a fitting encapsulation of the childlike faith" that Tennyson felt,¹⁷ whereby such an annotation again would summon up for us an inherent allusion to the Christian Savior, His admonition about His followers needing to become again like little children in the simplicity of their faith (Mark 10:15), thereby being able to accept graciously what heaven has in store. Still, Ricks would go further and rather make

something of "Hallam's own line in a poem to Tennyson's sister Emily ('Till our souls see each other face to face')."¹⁸ In any case, that could represent an acceptable secondary meaning, one also based on the Bible. The final suggestiveness, however, must be in terms of God as Alpha and Omega, the "progress outward which is yet a circling home,"¹⁹ whereby the critical reader nowadays is prone to enlist historically the familiar analogous evidence in John Donne, not to forget the modernist analogy in T. S. Eliot's familiar dictum about coming to terms in the end with our true beginning ("Burnt Norton" V.38), splendid correlations indeed. As a side-note, it can be added that Matthias Bauer finds Eliot's two usages in "East Coker" (the first and last sentences) derivative of a famous "Latin pun which has come down to us in several variants of a proverbial saying or motto in which the two words *oriri* (to rise, to begin) and *moriri* (to die, to end) are juxtaposed."²⁰ Evidence of this he traces back not only to *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight*, but to Augustine's *De civitate Dei* and his *Confessiones*, so it would hardly have been unhistorical for Tennyson as well.

As for any final verdict concerning proof of the true antecedent source of the "Pilot" image in the poem, a broader study of the pilot-helmsman effect now definitely is called for and, by analogy, in terms of another ship, namely the Ark as symbolic of the Church, and thereby of Noah as a *type* of the Christ-Peter-Pilot fusion, yet at the same time in terms of the universal poetic conception of priests as pilots (on which, compare George Herbert's "Priesthood," 32).²¹ Resorting to Shakespeare once again, we can well enlist in comparison secular-pagan uses of the pilot image in *The Rape of Lucrece* (279) but also Carew's "The Rapture" (88). Then, finally, back in touch with Milton yet once more, we take special notice of his hint of Vane as Religion's pilot in the well-known Vane sonnet, a point generally supported by Herbert's "The Bag," where the Lord explicitly accomplishes the steering (stanza 1).²²

Therefore, although the proposed "echoing" of Milton in "Crossing the Bar" could be thought of as overly simplistic initially, it nevertheless should readily come first to many a scholarly mind—whether or not the Lycidean Pilot has then to be taken, in historical terms, as a literal surrogate for the Savior as proper Steersman.²³ So let us continue to see a Christ-like elegiac navigator as a guiding light. In short, the original

orthography of the main manuscript, including the spelling (resonant of the Renaissance) and the ampersands, might best be retained²⁴ for the final, ritualized effect that Tennyson most probably had in the back of his mind.

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The Final Manuscript Version of "Crossing the Bar" [Derived from a facsimile of the original in the Tennyson Research Center, Lincoln]

Sunset + evening star;
 And one clear call for me.
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
 When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
 To[o] full for sound + foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
 Turns again home.

Twilight + evening bell,
 And after that the dark;
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
 When I embark!

For tho' from out our bourne of Time + Place
 The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
 When I have crost the bar.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

NOTES

¹Tennyson: *The Growth of a Poet* 257 (not to be confused with Rick's *Tennyson*, cited later), as cited by Baum 116.

²See my note on "The 'Cross-' of 'Crossing the Bar.'"

³See my "*Quo Vadis Pedes*," which appeared in a journal devoted to ecclesiastical studies, generally of a Roman Catholic sort. This was reprinted with revisions in my *Ascending the Prufrockian Stair* 35-37.

⁴The latter term is credited to Philip Wheelwright's *The Burning Fountain* by William Van O'Connor in his assessment of modern literary criticism, where he states that it means that "a word in a given context may have two or more meanings and . . . these meanings in some way complement each other or one another" (225). As such, the term seems preferable to *ambivalence* and certainly to *ambiguity*.

⁵*Paradise Lost*, 5.343-46.

⁶Reference is to the Norton facsimile of the First Folio for the orthography and punctuation but with line assignments from the revised Pelican ed.

⁷Thus cf. Juliet's line "My bounty is as boundless as the sea" (2.2.133) with the feeling in "Crossing the Bar"—a point made by a critical reader of this article for *Connotations*.

⁸See Ricks, *The Poems of Tennyson* 3: 153.

⁹For a succinct analysis of these problems, see Harold Jenkins's edition of *Hamlet*, especially the section dealing with "Revenge" (153-57).

¹⁰This issue could entail Wittenberg's association with Luther in Shakespeare's time and plausible allusions to Luther's life and Lutheran doctrine in *Hamlet*. Should it be argued that Shakespeare only was interested in that university because of Marlowe's own usage a bit earlier, it could be argued that Marlowe himself was influenced by Lutheranism (as well as Calvinism) when he studied at Cambridge. In any case, speculative though these matters are, they have been broached in detail in a leading article by David Remnick recently in *The New Yorker*, "Hamlet in Hollywood."

¹¹For further commentary on this possible allusion, see my article "That Oath of the Prioress."

¹²This knighted grandson of Lord Tennyson was an acclaimed man of letters himself and an authority on the Poet Laureate. His prized letters to me are dated 16 August and 5 Sept. 1973.

¹³See *The Poems of Tennyson*, first ed., 1459. But in his second ed., he refers to Tennyson speaking of "the absurdity of the 'Pilot' being Arthur Hallam" (3: 254).

¹⁴Although Tennyson said he "began it and finished it in twenty minutes," it had been on his mind since April or May 1889, "when his nurse suggested he write a hymn after his recovery from a serious illness" (Ricks, *The Poems* 3: 253).

¹⁵Baum 115. Peter Levi's rendition is the most recent and has a certain popular appeal worth citing: the idea for the poem was planted by his nurse, who told him to "stop grumbling," for "he might better offer a hymn of praises to God." Then he composed "Crossing the Bar." Levi adds: "When he said it to her, with 'Is that good enough for you, old woman?' she burst out crying, and ran out of the room" (312). Curiously, this reaction would appear to contradict the urging in the poem: "And may there be no moaning . . ." Cf. n14 above.

¹⁶*The Poems* 3: 253-54.

¹⁷*Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart* 570.

¹⁸*The Poems* 3: 254; see also his *Tennyson* 296.

¹⁹Ricks, *Tennyson* 296.

²⁰Bauer 110.

²¹A subliminal piece of paronomasia linking the pilot image also with the biblical ark may be evident in the *dark / embark* end-rhymes. Cf. also "*star*" (line 1), "*clear*" (2), "*bar*" (3), "*farewell*" (11), "*bear*" and "*far*" (14), and "*bar*" (16). If only one or two of these rhymes were applicable, they might appear far-fetched, but the variations involved suggest subliminal influence.

²²These final suggestions are included with the recommendation and concurrence of J. Max Patrick, Editor Emeritus of *Seventeenth-Century News*; he first proposed them to me in private correspondence.

²³Several arguments in this essay derive from the Tennyson Centennial Conference at Central State University, "Tennyson and the End of Empire," Wilberforce, Ohio, 14 Oct. 1992.

²⁴At the same time an obvious misspelling ("*To*" for "*Too*") in line 6 should not be ignored; in the transcription here included, I have indicated the correction in brackets.

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Author and Reader in Renaissance Texts: Fulke Greville, Sidney, and Prince Henry*

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The recent discussion between John Breen and Andrew Hadfield on the authorial responsibility of Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland* has foregrounded issues of genre and context which resonate in other Renaissance texts. Central to the discussion, or so it appears to me, is the epistemological status of the *View*: are we to take it as autobiographical, an elaborate statement of Spenser's personal position on the Irish question; or as a complex performance of humanist dialogue; or as political rhetoric promoting a radical colonialist project? That there is no easy answer—and perhaps no conclusive answer at all—to these questions is amply demonstrated by the persuasiveness with which Breen and Hadfield argue their alternative positions.

The need to attend to the generic complexity of the *View* is indisputable. Breen brings into focus the *View* as humanist dialogue and, through careful analysis of its formal strategies, confirms both its generic heritage and artistic autonomy. But like Hadfield, I too find that he overstates his case against some form of political contextualization. What is difficult and challenging is not the construction of a politics from the *View*, but to decide in what ways it could be read in order to retrieve a history of the circumstances of its writing. There have been slippages from one to the other in earlier criticism, and as Breen and Hadfield point out, these can take a number of forms. Both distance themselves from biographical identifications of Irenius and his militant colonialist views

*Reference: John Breen, "Imagining Voices in *A View of the Present State of Ireland*: A Discussion of Recent Studies Concerning Edmund Spenser's Dialogue," *Connotations* 4.1-2 (1994/95): 119-32; Andrew Hadfield, "Who is Speaking in Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland*? A Response to John Breen," *Connotations* 4.3 (1994/95): 233-41.

with Spenser. However, the "historicists" like Greenblatt, Norbrook, and Healy, who Breen thinks have made this identification (Breen 120-21) do not really share the same platform with those "historians," challenged by Hadfield, who appear "superior to literary critics because they . . . do more work" (Hadfield 240, see also 234). This is a distinction which Hadfield does not make but should have done, especially since his main thrust is to demonstrate the historicity of the *View* as political rhetoric which an interest in its formal sophistication need not preclude.

It is the "historicists" who sought, in the last decade, to reinstitute politics in formal considerations of texts, to site fiction in Renaissance public institutions and civil society—a project rendered urgent precisely because "historians" of the kind whom Hadfield disputes have always looked upon the *View* as evidence rather than art, and as one piece of evidence among many rather than as a work of art with its distinctive socio-cultural context. Breen, with his interest in the generic intricacies of the *View*, would understandably take issue with the reductiveness of some "historicist" readings though his observation on "[t]he paradox of self-promotion and self-effacement that emerges from Spenser's position, and is a typical Spenserian poetic strategy" (122) resonates of Greenblatt's pioneering *Sir Walter Raleigh* and, of course, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*.¹ Hadfield's analysis of the political situation of the *View* belongs even more specifically to that "historicist" lineage which his generalised notion of "historians" obfuscates. While Breen slights this lineage despite his own obvious debts to it, Hadfield refuses it its distinctiveness.

This caveat aside, surely Hadfield is right to argue that the *View's* artistic manipulation of the dialogue genre is indissociable from its "manipulative rhetoric" (239). Indeed, it is the subtlety of the former, which Breen has analysed in detail, that makes it so effective as the latter: a point of connection which Hadfield clearly demonstrates in his own study of the crucial exchange between Irenius and Eudoxus on how Ireland can be reformed (Variorum ed. 2910-3317). In the genre of dialogue with two fictive speakers, the relationship of the author to the views expressed by the speakers is inevitably vexed and problematic. Spenser wrote no plays, but in an age of vigorous dramatic activity, his relationship with the speakers in the *View* is comparable to that of the

playwright with the characters he creates in a play. This is a situation which Breen hints at when he says that "the authentic voice of the author oscillates between absence and presence for the voice of the dramatic characters is never wholly conterminous [sic] with the voice of the author" (121). What I would like to do in the rest of this essay is to explore the wider issues of genre and history raised in Breen and Hadfield's debate in relation to a kind of writing which exemplifies a transparency of authorial responsibility quite different from Spenser's *View*. Or so it seems.

In his essay, Hadfield notes an article of mine, "The rhetoric of the 'I'-witness in Fulke Greville's *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney*."² Greville's work is historical though it speaks of history in a different idiom from that of the *View* and, through it, Spenser. And unlike Spenser who shadows both his speakers in the *View*, Greville's authorial presence is enunciated right from the beginning in a singular "I":

For my own part, I observed, honoured and loved him so much as, with that caution soever I have passed through my days hitherto among the living, yet in him I challenge a kind of freedom even among the dead: . . . I am delighted in repeating old news of the ages past, and will therefore stir up my drooping memory touching this man's worth, powers, ways and designs, to the end that in the tribute I owe him our nation may see a sea-mark raised upon their native coast above the level of any private pharos abroad, and so, by a right meridian line of their own, learn to sail through the straits of true virtue into a calm and spacious ocean of human honour.³

The "I" speaks with quiet authority and a clarity of purpose suggesting the authentic voice of Greville, Sidney's friend who guards his memory and shares his patriotism. In this brief passage near the opening, the "I" has already moved across multiple literary genres, rendering entirely permeable the boundaries between them: intimate *life-writing* in the manner of William Roper's *The Life of Sir Thomas More* (c. 1553) or George Cavendish's *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey* (c. 1556-1558) and more recently, the account of Sidney's life in Holinshed's *Chronicles* by Edmund Molyneux, secretary to Sidney's father; elegy and specifically the verse elegies to Sidney of 1587 and 1591-95; and didactic treatise like Thomas Moffet's *Nobilis* (c. 1594) that urges personal and social reform modelled upon Sidney and harks back to *The Mirror for Magistrates*.⁴ The "I" in

the *Life* is generically complex in ways that belie the coherent self which announces its presence from time to time in the narrative. It signals the hybridising of literary modes that enables the *Life* to contest a place for itself in each of the textual traditions that mediate Sidney's memory. Furthermore, the generic hybridity of the *Life* enables it to appear as the culmination of diverse textual attempts on Sidney's life and memory, one whose authority is difficult to challenge because it can gather up what has been written, in the forms they have been written, and surpass them all. These are observations on the textual strategies of the *Life* as they are focalised through the "I" which were not made in my earlier article, and which in the light of John Breen's discussion of the *View's* generic complexity, seem to be worth spelling out.

The other point I wish to raise here concerns the knotty problem of how to retrieve, or construe, the historical circumstances of the *Life*, as they pertain to both Greville the author and to his situation in the Jacobean political configuration. The relationship between the "I" in the *Life* and that figure in history which is Fulke Greville is no less problematic—and provocative—than that between Spenser and his two fictive "I"s, Irenius and Eudoxus. The "I" in the *Life* seems to speak with a clarity of self-knowledge and purpose but it would be a mistake to see it as the sign of a unified self. In one register, it establishes and maintains its authority as the authentic voice and guardian of Sidney's worth, but this first "I"—the sign of an elegiac self whose self-estimation springs from what it knows and what it can remember about Sidney—has to negotiate with another paradoxical but no less authentic "I" who questions the wisdom of Sidney's radical and militant projects in the light of changing times. The contradictions of the "I" inscribe a complex history of change between the early 1580s, when Sidney was struggling to make his mark in Elizabethan public life and the first decade of the seventeenth century, when Greville appears to think that his own political life is over. And it is to this history to which I will now turn.

"The difference which I have found between times," Greville begins,

and consequently the changes of life into which their natural vicissitudes do violently carry men, as they have made deep furrows of impressions into my heart, so the same heavy wheels cause me to retire my thoughts from free traffic with the world and rather seek comfortable ease or employment in the safe

memory of dead men than disquiet in a doubtful conversation among the living; which I ingenuously confess to be one chief motive of dedicating these exercises of my youth to that worthy Sir Philip Sidney, so long since departed . . . (3)

The "difference" mentioned here—with a discretion that seems almost coy—has been taken commonly to refer to the transition to Jacobean rule;⁵ the passage, dominated by the figure of a perilous journey, registers unease with the transition. But the "I" is poised ambiguously as both the passive victim of change—the "heavy wheels cause" him to retire—and the agent who can "seek" alternative "employment" and afford to choose the privilege of safety over "disquiet."⁶ There is, throughout the *Life*, an ongoing transaction between an "I" who speaks of Greville the exiled courtier haunted by the departed Sidney, the subject of a double loss, and Greville the seeker after royal favour biding his time as he affirms his own continued relevance through affirming the enduring legacy of Sidney. This doubled and ambivalent "I" points towards the anxieties and desires which constitute Greville's political situation during the period when the *Life* was written. If Spenser is dispersed between Irenius and Eudoxus, so too is Greville between the "I"s of the *Life*. From another point of view, Greville the historical figure as he emerges from the *Life*—for how else do we know him except through his texts—is the hybrid subject whose presence cannot be constrained by exclusive embodiment in a single enunciation or generic mode.

The *Life* is a work of exile, not least because it was composed, though not published, from 1604 to 1614 when Greville, having been one of Elizabeth's favourite courtiers, found himself without public office under Jacobean rule.⁷ It is also a work of exile in that it is characterised by a strong sense of displacement, of being outside a political community and a code of ethics which Sidney is seen to embody. With his death, what Sidney exemplifies is irretrievably lost; elegiac in tone and import, the *Life* also distances itself from the solace of elegy. While it has no doubts about Sidney's sanctification, the "I" seems to see no reprieve for itself from a darkened world. Sidney and his associates bear witness to the "real and large complexions of those active times" against which "the narrow salves of this effeminate age" (7) can only appear decadent.

But the elegist's mortal despair is belied, from another perspective, by the exile's unrelieved worldliness; the *Life* is a work that looks towards replacement and return as it laments displacement and loss. As the "I" in the *Life* speaks of Greville, it also speaks to an audience. But who is this audience or intended reader? This is the final point which I wish to address here and it will entail retracing some of the steps that Hadfield took, albeit on a different textual site: to consider that aspect of the *Life*'s historicity which moves between construing its author's principled positions as a radical Protestant to a grounded speculation about its political performance as radical Protestant rhetoric.

The observation that in Sidney, "our nation may see a sea-mark raised upon their native coast above the level of any private pharos abroad" (4) seems no more than a general appeal to patriots. But the contrast between the "native" "sea-mark" and "any private pharos abroad" hints at a specific attempt to win back those over whom foreign influences or models might have held sway. The fact that the *Life* and the dramas it prefaces were not published in Greville's lifetime, and that they contain, in the different manuscript versions, no special dedication to a patron, must make any discussion of readership speculative. One cannot, as Stephen Greenblatt has done in his study of Raleigh's *History of the World*, demonstrate that the content, structure, and revisions of the *Life* are influenced by an awareness of an interested patron who, in Raleigh's case, was Prince Henry, James I's eldest son.⁸ But I think there are good reasons, both external and internal, for arguing that the *Life* was written, like the *History of the World*, with Prince Henry in mind.

The dating of the *Life* to 1604-1614 includes the period of Prince Henry's emergence as a prominent figure in Jacobean politics prior to his death in November 1612. He was described by Henry Peacham, in a contemporary echo of Greville's native "sea-mark" and "pharos abroad," as "A prodigie for foes to gaze vpon, / But still a glorious Load-starre" for England.⁹ Godson of Elizabeth, Prince Henry was regarded, in many ways, as her successor, and the link between the two becomes a tactic of political criticism for those disaffected with the reign of James I. In the "Dedication" of his play, *Philotas*, to Prince Henry, Samuel Daniel laments that verse, esteemed in the age of Elizabeth, has suffered a reverse of fortune with dynastic change. The kind of verse which Daniel

promotes is that "which may shew / The deedes of power, and liuely represent / The actions of a glorious Gouvernement."¹⁰ Daniel implicitly urges the prince to heed the lessons of statecraft contained in such verse and assume the mantle of Elizabeth as its patron (98-99). It is significant that for Daniel, as for Raleigh, the Prince became a kind of alternative court of appeal.¹¹ And the Prince himself seems to have cultivated an identification with the late Queen: he is described, after his death, as having "ever much revered" the "memory and government" of Elizabeth.¹²

Like Sidney in the *Life*, Prince Henry was figured as the defender of the true faith, who would realise the militant Protestant hopes of European continental conquest and the establishment of the kingdom of the godly on earth. The outlines of this mythical persona were already drawn by the time the Prince entered England in 1603. The moment of his birth was greeted with colourful prophecies of future triumphs in humbling Spain—"fastu donec Iberico / Late subacto sub pedibus premas"—and casting down Rome—"Clarus triumpho delibuti / Gerionis, triplicem tiaram, / Qua nunc revinctus tempora Cerberus / Romanus atra conduplicat face / De rupe Tarpeia fragores / Tartareos tonitru tremendo."¹³ Throughout his short life, the Prince was the intended recipient and reader of a plethora of anti-Roman Catholic tracts.¹⁴ These tend to increase in number at moments when the perceived Roman Catholic threat seems to intensify to alarming proportions as, for instance, after the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, and the assassination of Henry IV of France in 1610.¹⁵ It would appear that, apart from writers like Daniel and Raleigh who failed to find favour in the Jacobean court, those who believed in confrontation with Spain and Rome looked to the Prince for a sympathetic reader.

One very persuasive reason for thinking of Prince Henry's connection with the *Life* is that the Prince was seen by his contemporaries not only as the heir of Elizabeth, but of Sidney himself. This Sidney connection is disarmingly commemorated by Arthur Gorges, Raleigh's kinsman and Spenser's sometime patron, when he rewrote his epitaph "Of Syr Phyllypp Sydney" of the late 1580s as the elegaic sonnet "To his Entombed Bodye" on the death of Henry.¹⁶ Gorges's friendship with Raleigh blocked his chances of office during the first years of James I's

rule. After the Gunpowder Plot, he became vehemently anti-Papist, and his proposal to the Prince for dealing with recusants seemed to have been favourably received, for in 1611, he became Henry's Gentleman of the Privy Chamber.¹⁷ Judging from the number of elegies to Henry besides Gorges's which refer directly or indirectly to the Sidney connection, one can safely say that it must have been an outstanding and established received impression of the Prince in his lifetime.¹⁸ The Prince inherits Sidney's mantle as radical Protestant hero and standard bearer, and this mythical personation derives greater credibility and generates more eager anticipation because of the Prince's royal status and succession. Here, at last, is a future king who has the power and aggressiveness in what the *Life* has called "an effeminate age" to carry his religious zeal through to acts of conquest. Or so it seemed to the radical Protestants of the time.

The Prince's martial pursuits fuelled their hopes. An examination of Greville's chivalric representation of Sidney in the *Life* reveals a surprising number of similarities with the known interests of the prince. Indeed, they are of such a kind that belies the possibility of mere coincidence. Prince Henry was assiduously following a romantic fashion of which Sidney has provided a spectacular Elizabethan example. The Prince's passion for riding, and his patronage of books on horsemanship are widely known, and like Sidney, his chivalric image derives from and is visualised in his participation in tilts and barriers. The Prince made his first appearance in the tiltyard at the age of twelve in 1606, "gallantly mounted, and [with] a hart as powerfull as any, thou that youth denyed strength."¹⁹ Henry's active disposition and prowess in the tiltyard revived for many the glorious pageants of Elizabethan Accession Day Tilts, and helped stabilise his image as Sidney and Elizabeth's heir. In fashioning Sidney as chivalric model almost twenty years after his death, the *Life* appears carefully attuned to the nascent image of the knightly Prince.

Henry was known to be interested in military affairs; like Greville's Sidney, his active disposition looked for satisfaction in war. He had, according to Francis Bacon, "something of a warlike spirit" and "both arms and military men were in honour with him."²⁰ He devoted his energy to the navy and naval reform, especially after his coronation as

Prince of Wales in 1610, inspected the navy at Chatham in 1611, summoned all the royal shipwrights to Greenwich to discuss the prospect of building ships in Ireland in 1612, and received advice about naval matters from several people including Raleigh. One of the significant revisions of the *Life* involves the addition of material about the advantages of maintaining a standing navy. This revision, which occurs in Chap. IX (Gouws 55-56), is inconsistent with its context, which is about Sidney's plan "to carry war into the bowels of Spain" (54).²¹ It would not be surprising if this new material is Greville's response to the Prince's known interest. With his knowledge of the speculations and corruption in the navy garnered when he was Elizabeth's Navy Treasurer, Greville was well-qualified to offer advice which would complement the technical expertise of someone like Raleigh. The argument for the Prince Henry connection becomes even more persuasive in the light of Sidney's plans for an expedition to the New World (*Life*, Chap. X) and Henry's enthusiasm for such expeditions. In 1607, Henry sent Robert Tindall to Virginia to survey and report on the land, people and fortifications. In 1609, he became an official shareholder of the Virginia company, and was named Patron of the Virginia Plantation. On his visit to Chatham, he listened attentively to a plan for naval war against Spain in the West Indies, and pursued his advisers with questions about the design of vessels for such a venture. The radical Protestant vision, evident in Sidney's projected expedition, of the New World as a second paradise on earth, peopled by the Christian faithful, provides the religious justification for colonial expansion and a second front in the war with Spain. Henry's apparent willingness to become involved in a New World project fits seamlessly into his martial and heroic image for which the radical Protestants of James I's reign are vocally enthusiastic, amplifying their professed hopes for his succession as the moment when the nation of the spirit extends its reach and becomes an empire.

Greville has revised the chapters on Elizabeth in the *Life* by adding new material on Elizabeth's relationship with the church, her ministers and Parliament, and rearranging old material so that an account of her foreign policy comes after that of domestic affairs. Through the revision, Greville produces an image of the Queen as moderate in her religious policy, both at home and abroad, early in her reign which then gives

way to an aggressive anti-Spanish stance in the years after the defeat of the Armada. According to Greville, at the beginning of the reign, the Queen made

a vow like that of the holy king's in the Old Testament, . . . that she would neither hope nor seek for rest in the mortal traffic of this world till she had repaired the precipitate ruins of our Saviour's militant church through all her dominions, and, as she hoped, in the rest of the world by her example. Upon which princelike resolution, this she-David of ours ventured to undertake the great Goliath among the Philistines abroad (I mean Spain and the Pope), despiseth their multitudes not of men, but of hosts, scornfully rejects that holy fathers wind-blown superstitions, and takes the almost solitary truth for her *leading star*.

Yet tears she not the lion's jaws in sunder at once, but moderately begins with her own changelings: gives the bishops a proper motion, but bounded; the nobility time to reform themselves with inward and outward counsel; revives her brother's laws for establishing of the church's doctrine and discipline, but moderates their severity of proceeding. . . . (98-99, emphasis added)

The figurative devices—Old Testament metaphors and the image of the leading star (already familiar in its signification of Sidney as radical Protestant hope of the nation) establish by implication the Sidney-Elizabeth association, and confirm the Queen's place in Protestant revelational history. Elizabeth is shown to unite power with spirit and put the former in the viable, practicable service of the latter. The retrospective centralization of radical Protestant tradition in national history—she has early made “a vow like that of the holy king's in the Old Testament”—co-ordinates with her reign as the site of the struggles and, eventually, triumph of the cause. Earlier on, I have referred to the identification of Prince Henry with the Queen. It is as the sign of a specific lineage of faith within the royal succession that this identification is forged in the radical Protestant vision of its own centrality in the nation's history. The identification looks back to the past but also forward to the future when the national destiny of England will find its fulfilment in the reign of a radical Protestant Prince as king.

The explanation for the revision Greville offers in the *Life* is that he was denied access to Council papers by Robert Cecil. In response to Cecil's question as to how he could clearly deliver many things done

in that time [i.e. Elizabeth's reign] which might perchance be construed to the prejudice of this [i.e. James I's reign] (131), Greville reports his supposed answer:

. . . an historian was bound to tell nothing but the truth, but to tell all truths were both justly to wrong and offend not only princes and states, but to blemish and stir up against himself the frailty and tenderness not only of particular men, but of many families, with the spirit of an Athenian Timon. . . . (131)

Greville's solution to the problem of "truth" contains an offer of self-censorship which obviously did not satisfy Cecil. While the manner of the response is no doubt conditioned by the wish not to offend, the substance of what he says indicates the political constraints that shape the Elizabethan chapters. Thus a study of these chapters as political rhetoric means exploring those strategies that enable Greville to speak the unspeakable under the contemporary dispensation. By mapping the image of Elizabeth in the *Life* on that of the Prince in other texts, some sense does emerge of what Greville is trying to do within the larger configuration of radical Protestant desires as they are invested in the Prince. Cecil may have been right to be anxious that the Jacobean regime could be embarrassed by a hagiographic—and nostalgic—representation of Elizabeth.

Sir John Holles, in his letter to Lord Gray, observes that "[a]ll men of learning, countryman or stranger, of what virtue soever, military or civil, he [the Prince] countenanced and comforted. He was frugally bountiful . . . respectfully courteous to all, familiar with those he esteemed honest . . . wise, just, and secret. [His] excellently composed inside was accompanied with as well a built outside. . . ." ²² The language evokes the notion of balance and moderation—"frugally bountiful," "familiar . . . secret"—as the key to the prince's character and relations with men. In the eyes of a more dispassionate observer like Bacon, this moderation in character and action becomes a sign of greatness that could never be confirmed because of the prince's early death. Bacon observes of the prince that while "[t]he masters and tutors of his youth . . . continued in great favour with him," "no one in his court . . . had great power over him or . . . possessed a strong hold on his mind." "His passions," Bacon continues, "were not over vehement,

and rather equable than great . . . ,” and with characteristic cynicism, adds, “the goodness of his disposition had awakened manifold hopes among numbers of all ranks, nor had he lived long enough to disappoint them.”²³

Bacon’s cautious appraisal confirms that the prince’s moderation, or temperateness, was a well-observed fact. Some of these descriptions no doubt owe something to the conventions of royal characterization: it was polite, prudent and perhaps wishful to speak with measured approbation about a king’s son. What is significant is that such moderation, just like his active disposition, is registered as a promising sign of his fitness to rule. The Prince’s chivalric image, steeped in radical Protestant desires of conquest, inspires hopes of a specific kind for those who identify national and religious revival with war. Samson Lennard, in dedicating to the Prince his translation of Phillipe de Mornays’s *The Mysterie of Iniquite: That is to say, the Historie of the Papacie* (1612) expresses the fervent wish “to march ouer the Alpes, and to trayle a pike before the walls of Rome, vnder your Highnesse standard.” “The cause is Gods,” he urges Henry, “the enterprise glorious, O that God would be pleased, as he hath giuen you a heart, so to giue power to put it in execution.” The Prince promises to become the royal ideal, embodied in Greville’s model of Elizabeth, of moderation in religious policy at home and aggressiveness abroad, an ideal whose inconsistency did not strike Greville and his co-religionists, and might not have been inconsistent, in *realpolitik*, at all.

If Greville intended to use the *Life* as a statement of his affinities with the young Prince, and through this, to reinsert himself into Jacobean public life, this intention is never explicit, never articulated. My contention is that the revised version of the *Life* is a document which has Prince Henry in mind, and which is strategically designed to appeal to him and to those radical Protestants who look to the young prince as the focus of their hopes. The project is circumscribed by Greville’s usual caution, and his customary sense of hope deferred. In making the *Life* a preface dedicating his verse dramas to Sidney, dead for almost twenty years, Greville implicitly acknowledges failure to obtain patronage in a new regime without however committing himself, like Daniel and Raleigh, to the notion of an alternative patron who might right the wrongs

of monarchical disfavour. Greville's adversity as an exile from court did not make him adversarial. To invoke and fashion the image of Sidney to whom the Prince was regarded as successor, and at a time when the Prince was looked upon by militant Protestants as the new chivalric knight, is the crowning tactic of indirection. In a speech to John Hayward the historian, Prince Henry said, "Wee are carefull to prouide costly sepulchers, to preserue our dead liues, to preserue some memorie that wee haue bene: but there is no monument, either so durable, or so largely extending, or so liuely and faire, as that which is framed by a fortunate penne. . . ." ²⁴ Given these sentiments, and all that the *Life* contains, the Prince, had he read Greville's work, might well have received it with favour.

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NOTES

¹Stephen Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1973); *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980).

²*Literature and History*, 2nd series, 2.1 (Spring 1991): 17-26.

³"A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney," *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*, ed. John Gouws (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1986) 4. Apart from the *editio princeps* of 1652, there are three manuscript versions of the *Life*, and only one bears the title of *Dedication*. Gouws's preference for this title is supported in certain respects by the opening lines in which Greville speaks of dedicating a volume of his writing to Sidney through the prefatory account of his life. More critically contentious is his claim that his choice reflects "Greville's explicit statement of his intentions in the very first period of the work [and] has the advantage of not creating any false expectations about the work itself" ("General Introduction" xiii). The title, "A Dedication," captures the mnemonic and elegiac sentiments of the first period and indeed, of the work, but as a generic indicator, it is not very helpful. The length and historical compass of Greville's work clearly differentiates it from the customary prefatorial dedications to patrons, real or prospective. Furthermore, the authorial act of "dedicating" the work needs to be distinguished from the completed work itself which, as we shall see, compounds elegy with biography. *Life* has the advantage over "A Dedication" in that it helps to place Greville's work within the convention of *life-writing* in general and verse and prose accounts of Sidney's life in particular, and enables the knowledge of that genre to be brought to bear on a reading of its

artistry. This is a knowledge which we might presume in the first readers of 1652, and it would obviate the kind of "false expectations" which Gouws, probably with an eye to the modern reader, is concerned about. The use of prefatorial *lives* to introduce the work of a certain author is also common practice in the seventeenth century. Greville's *Life* is in line with this practice, and also departs significantly from it.

⁴William Roper, *The Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore, Knighte* (1626), ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock (Oxford: OUP, 1935); George Cavendish, *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey* (1641), ed. R. S. Sylvester (London: OUP, 1959); Raphael Holinshed, *The Chronicles of England, Scotlande and Irelande*, 2 vols. (London, 1587): 1554; Thomas Moffet, *Nobilis or A View of the Life and Death of A [sic] Sidney and Lessus Lugubris* (1592), eds. V. B. Heltzel and H. H. Hudson (San Marino, California: Huntington Library P, 1940).

⁵Greville's two modern biographers detect in the *Life* a palpable sense of dissatisfaction with James I's rule despite its cautious rhetoric. See Ronald Rebholz, *The Life of Fulke Greville First Lord Brooke* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1971); Joan Rees, *Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke 1554-1628* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971).

⁶Greville might be out of office, but he was certainly not destitute. During this period, he devoted his energies to the reconstruction of Warwick Castle with money earned from the Welsh sinecure and a variety of leaseholds granted to him by Elizabeth, and which he invested profitably. Much of Warwick Castle as it stands today is the result of Greville's efforts and expenditure. Rebholz 191-95.

⁷Greville's activities during this period are detailed in both Rebholz and Rees.

⁸Raleigh's *History* was dedicated to Prince Henry. For Greenblatt's discussion, see *Sir Walter Raleigh* 131-54.

⁹*Minerva Britannia* (London, 1612) 17.

¹⁰*The Tragedy of Philotas* (1605), ed. Laurence Michel (New Haven: Yale UP, 1949) 98.

¹¹Greville was successful in eliciting royal patronage for Daniel in 1595 (Rebholz 143). For a discussion of Daniel and the Prince, see Elkin Calhoun Wilson, *Prince Henry and English Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1946) 37. Greville and Raleigh moved in similar circles at court around first Leicester and then Essex during Elizabeth's reign. Rebholz provides numerous details of their common associates.

¹²Sir John Holles to Lord Gray in a letter endorsed February 1613. See Roy Strong, *Henry Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986) 8.

¹³Andrew Melville, quoted in Wilson 2.

¹⁴Wilson lists these tracts in the year they appear. See *Prince Henry and English Literature* 43, 44, 59, 63, 100 passim. For a list of books dedicated to Henry, see Franklin Burleigh Williams, *Index of Dedication and Commendatory Verses in English Books Before 1641* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1962) 93.

¹⁵See J. W. Williamson, *The Myth of the Conqueror: Prince Henry Stuart: A Study of Seventeenth Century Personation* (New York: OUP, 1978) 38, 61, 116.

¹⁶The texts of the two poems are reprinted in *The Poems of Arthur Gorges*, ed. Helen Easterbrook Sandison (Oxford: OUP, 1953) 117, 181. See also Strong 14.

¹⁷Helen Easterbrook Sandison, "Arthur Gorges, Spenser's Alcyon and Raleigh's friend," *PMLA* 43 (1928): 664.

¹⁸See Ruth Wallerstein, "The Laureate Hearse," *Studies in Seventeenth Century Poetic* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1950): 59-95; Strong 14; Wilson 144-68.

¹⁹Strong 66.

²⁰*The Works of Francis Bacon*, eds. J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, D. D. Heath, vol. 12 (London, 1869) 20.

²¹Ho 21-23.

²²Strong 8.

²³*Memorial of Henry Prince of Wales, Works*, vol. 6 (London, 1861) 326-27.

²⁴Hayward, *The Lives of the III. Normans, Kings of England* (London, 1613), sig. A2v.

A Woman Killed with Kindness and Domesticity, False or True: A Response to Lisa Hopkins*

DIANA E. HENDERSON

The artistry of Thomas Heywood is not a common topic for literary analysts. Perhaps daunted by his prolific playwriting (according to his own report, he had a hand in over 200 plays) or misled by his humble professions, many have argued that his plays lack unity and care. Lisa Hopkins helps correct the record, lucidly remarking on the symbolic resonance of domestic details in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. She argues that this play deserves the same "kind of reading processes" applied to "grander" tragedies such as *Othello* and *Hamlet* (6). Having chosen the work long regarded as Heywood's masterpiece of course aids her case; indeed, a fair amount of scholarship written during the past twenty years has made essentially the same claim for this play's artistic coherence, though citing different details and patterns.¹

What remains provocative about Hopkins's argument is not her analysis of the play itself but rather her characterization of domestic tragedy, the generic category from which she wishes to rescue *A Woman Killed*. She ultimately describes domestic tragedy as "the rude, episodic, unshaped story of ordinary people, the stuff of journalistic ephemera, which was, moreover, very often centred on the domestic world and amorous passions so closely associated with women" (6). This description, Hopkins's rhetorical relationship to it, and the uneasy placement of "moreover" within it, all raise larger questions. Where did she derive this view of "traditional" domestic tragedy, how apt is it, and what are the consequences of a critical practice that repeatedly places

*Reference: Lisa Hopkins, "The False Domesticity of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *Connotations* 4.1-2 (1994/95): 1-7.

"art" and "life" in antithesis? Why must Heywood's domesticity be "false" for his play to be good?

Hopkins builds her case on two points presented as related: Heywood's plot is fictional, and its domestic details are therefore chosen for their symbolic resonance. She rightly notes that, unlike the other two domestic tragedies she names (*Arden of Faversham* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*), *A Woman Killed with Kindness* does not derive from a contemporary murder case. In a year when the United States press has obsessively presented every sensationalist shred of "evidence" about the People vs. O. J. Simpson and about Susan Smith's drowning of her children, one on my side of the Atlantic can hardly forget that "true stories" may indeed arouse the "voyeuristic attraction" and "prurience" Hopkins attributes to them (2). Whether this leads necessarily to her next claim is more debatable. Hopkins states that the factual origins of other domestic tragedies produce in all cases "something of the incoherence and shapelessness which characterise most people's experience of life" (2); that is, facts conspire against artistic form.

Granting for a moment the formalist aesthetic presumed here, I remain skeptical about the inability of a skilled artist to craft a shapely narrative or symbolic allegory out of the facts of life—especially in an age when Biblical typology and the classical tradition of discerning *exempla* were dominant models for composition as well as "reading processes." Two other domestic tragedies unnamed in the article—*The Witch of Edmonton* and *Two Lamentable Tragedies*—suggest that playwrights did indeed order and reshape facts to create the same kinds of artfully parallel plots that Hopkins discerns in *A Woman Killed*. Even *Arden of Faversham*'s shifty tone and construction may not be a sign of incoherence caused by adherence to facts (with which it tampered).² Rather, it may indicate a conflicted attitude toward the story itself: a fitful recognition of the complexities involved in assigning moral responsibility, complexities that defy conventional wisdom. Whereas Hopkins sees kinship to the Theatre of the Absurd, I might instead glance back to the differently structured but equally discomfiting *Medea* of Euripides.

The premise that the residue of life creates random, meaningless effluvia in art leads Hopkins to conclude that fact-based domestic tragedy is less literary. Indeed, the presence of details drawn from actual lives

becomes for her the essence of "traditional domestic tragedy," making it synonymous with docudrama. Is this a received opinion, a straw man argument designed to free *A Woman Killed* from ignominy, or a new definition of the genre? The question is a sincere one. In my own study, I have found descriptive variety and murkiness in the definitions of domestic tragedy, a term coined only in the nineteenth century (by the notorious scholar/forgery, John Payne Collier). The early moderns did not use this generic label—much less differentiate between innovative and "traditional" domestic tragedies; all the plays we so describe were new to them, a type of contemporary drama developing only with the emergence of the public theatre repertory in the latter part of the sixteenth century. How we treat as well as define these plays has broader consequences, which bear upon those modern reading processes Hopkins's essay (guardedly) seems to endorse.

I return to the definition quoted in my second paragraph, which Hopkins presents as a "traditional difference in classification" between domestic and classical tragedy. In the nineteenth century, domestic tragedy was indeed differentiated from the classical form, but not always with such dismissiveness as is implied here; indeed, the category was meant to distinguish the stories of non-royal, contemporary figures as worthy objects for serious attention. The obvious kinship between the protagonists of such plays and those in nineteenth-century novels helps explain repeated critical reference to Heywood's Master Frankford as "bourgeois," although he is a wealthy, landed gentleman. Domestic themes were so much the stuff of late nineteenth-century theatre that even subtler generic distinctions were made, my personal favorite being the "nautico-domestic drama." Most assuredly associated with the feminine "sphere" of home life, domestic tragedy was subordinate to the classical but still far more than "journalistic ephemera" for its earliest students.

H. H. Adams's standard scholarly work on *Domestic, or Homiletic Tragedy* (1943) announces its inheritance of a moralizing tradition, and also counters Hopkins's emphasis on these stories as primarily voyeuristic or prurient in appeal. Quite the converse: Adams argues that such plays were primarily meant to teach lessons, hence their less textured and subtle presentation. Like the Reverend Henry Goodcole,

who transcribed for publication so many stories of murderers and witches during the early seventeenth century, Adams discerned a pious purpose for the immediate, detailed representation of errant Englishmen and women. My desire is not to argue the relative merits of these positions in describing actual audience responses, but to note how they serve the scholars' differing aims; Adams's definition attempted to elevate the genre itself, whereas Hopkins's definition serves her goal of redeeming a particular work from the seamy genre.

Or so it seems to this reader. Some of Hopkins's qualifiers and phrasings give me pause: most notably, that "moreover" adding domesticity and amorous women to the rude world of ephemera. This would seem to be an apt description of common sixteenth-century associations, not the author's own. Her repeated references to "traditional" ways of viewing drama leave me wondering whether she wants to distinguish them from her own stance. Hopkins never takes issue with those traditions though she seems rhetorically removed, perhaps not fully endorsing the aesthetic hierarchy of universal over particular, literary over lived, timeless over transitory, classical over domestic—the binaries which sustain her argument. If so, the placement of women—both in this hierarchical list and in *A Woman Killed*—would reasonably account for a little distancing.

My comments could easily turn in a direction familiar to those in women's studies. I will not now rehearse the truth and consequences of the aesthetic grids above, how they have sometimes legitimized forms of social subordination when a choice between putative "opposites" is demanded; such work has been done elsewhere, from de Beauvoir and Cixous to Showalter, Schor, Moi, and more. Nor need I detail (post)modernity's love affair with the detail, arguing for an alternative aesthetic valuing of *bricolage*, *verfremdung*, or the supplement. Rather than invert the hierarchical list, I simply want to point to its enduring power—here, there, and everywhere. The effect in Hopkins's article is to disjoin art and life, and specifically the life associated with domesticity. Another rhetorical approach is possible, achieving the same goal of honoring *A Woman Killed* without denigrating domestic tragedy in order to do so. For just as "amorous passions so closely associated with women" appear in the classical and Shakespearean tragedies "tradition-

ally interpreted as dealing with concerns universally applicable," so can domestic tragedy as a genre be as porous as the topics it contains (6). It can be artful or ill done, its details from life given symbolic weight or simply inserted like the designer labels in a 1980s New York novel. We need not kill domestic tragedy with its own kind-ness.

Hopkins's examples point the way to a fuller exploration of the local details, whether derived from an actual case or not. She mentions the setting of York Castle in the subplot of *A Woman Killed* as possibly connoting Catholicism, the "Old Religion"; one might add that the initial hunting party gone awry occurs at Chevy Chase, another reminder of past battles and an older world of honor superseded. But if the North can be symbolic in this fiction, might it carry similar associations in fact-based plays such as *A Yorkshire Tragedy* or *The Late Lancashire Witches*? Knowledge of the town of Faversham's financial involvement with the Cinques Ports reinforces the connection between the defense of a nation and a household in *Arden of Faversham*; when Thomas Arden is displaced from his chair and then murdered, more is at stake than one man's fall. And in one of the most ironic of domestic plays, *The Witch of Edmonton*, the conventional associations with place are both asserted and undone: Old Carter, the jovial embodiment of a mythic past when sturdy English yeomen upheld family values, mistakenly assumes that a London gallant will be more dangerous to his daughter than is local boy Frank Thornton. In all these cases, the specifics of locale do matter.

Such examples lead us to look back and forth between history and drama—not to seek simple equations or facile anecdotes, but to explore a fruitful interaction. Instead of locking the door on life, we might wish to consider a wider set of reading processes even as we honor the gentle craft of playwriting. When reading the memorable soliloquy of Master Frankford with which Hopkins initiates her discussion, Lena Cowen Orlin and I likewise see the power of detail and physicality, but it leads each of us in a different direction: Hopkins to images of penetration, myself to a narrative pattern mixing secular and sacred versions of the Fall, and Orlin to the innovation of locked chambers and new notions of privacy and gendered space. A similar wealth of possibilities waits to be examined in other plays dubbed domestic tragedy—if assumptions about the genre and the topics they contain do not prevent us from

crediting their aesthetic potential. In the process of exploration, we may also discover that those associations with women and the world of domestic culture, once regarded as trivializing, hold more interest than traditional aesthetics may have perceived. Four centuries later, the "ephemera" provides a rare glimpse of something like history.

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¹Hopkins cites only Brian Scobie's 1985 edition and two studies of Heywood written prior to 1970. For a small sampling of more recent approaches, see the articles by Laura Bromley ("Domestic Conduct in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*") and myself ("Many Mansions: Reconstructing *A Woman Killed with Kindness*") in *SEL* 26 (1986): 259-76 and 277-94 respectively; Nancy A. Gutierrez's "The Irresolution of Melodrama: The Meaning of Adultery in *A Woman Killed With Kindness*," *Exemplaria* 1 (1989): 265-91; and Lena Cowen Orlin's thorough discussion in *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994). Some of these studies further substantiate Hopkins's suggestions about Heywood's symbolic use of detail, though they challenge the definition of domestic tragedy that she presumes.

²See Orlin on the historical facts about Thomas Arden, who was not a longtime country gentleman of Kent but a "new man" owing his fortunes to the crown and court, and thus far from a stable icon of social authority; both Orlin and Frances Dolan (*Dangerous Familiars* [Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994]) discuss the emphasis on Alice Arde[r]n's "petty treason" in narratives about his murder.

Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and the Genetics of Genre Formation: A Response to Lisa Hopkins*

MICHAEL WENTWORTH

One of the most remarkable developments in English Renaissance drama was the appearance over the final quarter of the sixteenth century of what literary historians would later identify as domestic tragedy, a genre which in contrast to the more usual aristocratic and courtly orientation of Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy

... deals with the troubled affairs in the private lives of men of less than noble birth—gentlemen, farmers, merchants. It is a small and fairly well-defined class; the action is most frequently a murder, committed for greed or love, the setting is usually English and realistic, the basis for the story is nearly always an actual and fairly recent crime, recorded in a chronicle like Stow's or in ballad, chapbook, or pamphlet.¹

That Thomas Heywood is most often associated with the genre is hardly surprising since his drama *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is generally acknowledged as the finest domestic tragedy in the language. Heywood is fully conscious of the innovative nature of his enterprise as he forewarns the audience in the "Prologue" to "Look for no glorious state, our Muse is bent / Upon a barren subject, a bare scene."² According to Lisa Hopkins's recent essay, "The False Domesticity of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," Heywood, through his artful deviation from the genre markers that typify earlier domestic tragedies, further attempts to "elevate the play to a status grander, more 'literary,' than that of traditional domestic tragedy" (6). To Hopkins's credit, this is a strikingly

*Reference: Lisa Hopkins, "The False Domesticity of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *Connotations* 4.1-2 (1994/95): 1-7.

original claim and one that provides a fresh perspective on Heywood's play; on the other hand, she fails to measure her claim against other, and equally probable, influences that may have affected Heywood's composition of *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and likewise overlooks a number of rather obvious aspects of the play that would have further strengthened her own thesis, which is by no means inadmissible.

To summarize Lisa Hopkins's argument: the most distinctive aspect of Heywood's play is the dramatist's skill in evoking the illusion of an authentic domestic setting which, upon closer investigation, is revealed as a "false," that is, an artistically contrived, "domesticity." As a measure of Heywood's achievement, Hopkins identifies characteristic features of earlier domestic tragedies, the most notable of which is a reliance upon real events, an audience's awareness of which "points directly to one of the chief fascinations of domestic tragedy: the voyeuristic attraction which comes from the sensation that we are witnessing the actual living space of a real family group" (2). Unlike previous domestic tragedies, however, *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is based on a story, or fiction, of Heywood's own invention which nonetheless *simulates* an authentic domestic setting and, like "other products of the genre," thereby engages the audience's voyeuristic tendencies. Furthermore, similar to "the inconsequentiality of the plays of the Theatre of the Absurd," domestic tragedies "are full of tiny details which obscure the clarity of the narrative line and resist the thematisation to which literary texts are normally so susceptible," as a result of which domestic tragedies "all partake of something of the incoherence and shapelessness which characterize most people's experience of life" (2). Since, at first glance, *A Woman Killed with Kindness* "retains much of the air of specificity and redundancy of detail which habitually characterizes domestic tragedy and other modes of 'realistic' writing," here again Heywood seems to conform to, rather than transcend, convention; but as it turns out, just the opposite is true, for Heywood's "apparently minor details" are in fact "invested with great thematic, emotional and symbolic significance" (3). For Hopkins, then, the literary artistry of *A Woman Killed with Kindness* derives from Heywood's invention of the main plot and a resulting measure of artistic control far greater than that of the traditional domestic tragedy.

However stimulating, the premises supporting Hopkins' claim for Heywood's artistic achievement invite a number of qualifying remarks and suggestions. For example, though the sources of Heywood's subplot have been specifically identified, the source of the main plot is very much a matter of speculation.³ Unlike Hopkins, who assigns the main plot to Heywood's own invention, others have traced the main plot to such sources as William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, George Gascoigne's *Adventures of Master F. J.*, and Robert Greene's "The Conversion of an English Courtizan";⁴ still others feel the matter too indeterminate to draw any decisive conclusions one way or the other.⁵ It would have been far safer to acknowledge that whatever the diversity of opinion regarding the source of the main plot, Heywood, nonetheless, *does* deviate from convention by avoiding the "true-crime" origins of traditional domestic tragedy. Primarily concerned with the originality of Heywood's domestic setting, Hopkins curiously overlooks the derivative nature of the subplot. Such a matter is easily resolved, or at any rate circumvented, in terms of Renaissance poetics, for it is arguable that Heywood would have viewed his creative adaptation of extraneous sources in fashioning his subplot as no less original than his "invention" of the main plot, though such an acknowledgement would necessarily qualify the force of Hopkins' argument.⁶ In a related matter, she fails to reconcile the atmosphere and setting of the subplot (both of which are decidedly more artificial than those of the main plot) with the prevailing conventions that, on her own terms, define domestic tragedy.

In corroboration of her second premise—Heywood's artfully deceptive management of seemingly inconsequential details—Hopkins perceptively cites the social and ultimately ironic significance of the playing of "The Shaking of the Sheets" immediately following Anne and Frankford's marriage at the outset of the play and later makes an equally compelling case for the homely realism and symbolic irony of Anne's breaking of her lute after she has been banished from Frankford's household. On the other hand, Hopkins's selection and discussion of other details is less convincing. For example, she finds the play's northern setting, established by Sir Charles Mountford's imprisonment in York Castle, especially significant and revealing since at the time of the play's production the north of England was a stronghold of Roman Catholicism

and rebellion, as manifested in its resistance to "the tenets of the Reformation" (4). Though, as she observes, Catholicism is "never mentioned in the play" (a revealing admission in itself), Hopkins proposes that the implicit association of the play's setting with Catholicism is no less thematically suggestive than other seemingly minor details. Such an implicit association, as she explains, was rendered dramatically explicit in the 1991 Royal Shakespeare Company's staging of the play, a production "liberally sprinkled with crucifixes, genuflections, characters crossing themselves and chanting" (5). Based on these and related embellishments, Hopkins credits director Katie Mitchell's innovative and, one would assume, intentionally provocative reading of the play which situates

Anne's self-starvation firmly in the context of Catholic ideology about the female body and the question of the relative superiority of words and deeds in the process of repentance and redemption, so that unusual attention was directed to an examination of the precise nature of the play's title quality, "kindness," and the ways in which this well-intentioned attitude interacts with a fallible world. (5)

Such an interpretive extrapolation from a passing reference to York Castle is ultimately perplexing since the extrapolation itself is not only insufficiently developed but fails to articulate Heywood's own relative position to such a reading. If, on the one hand, she means to suggest that Heywood's sympathies and intentions are pro-Catholic, such a stance would clearly contradict his self-admitted "Protestant" (i.e., Anglican) affiliation and his life-long interest in and glorification of the Protestant middle class.⁷ Alternatively, to read Heywood's treatment of Frankford's kindness, Anne's self-starvation, and related matters as a parody of Catholic beliefs just as clearly devalues the obvious homiletic structure of the play and Heywood's clearly sympathetic treatment of Frankford and Anne.

Equally problematic is Hopkins's comparative analysis of the servants' heated disagreement in choosing among a variety of country dances (scene 2) and what she perceives as a related discord among Frankford, Anne, Wendoll, and Cranwell in deciding among a variety of card games (scene 8) shortly before the "discovery scene." Thus, for Hopkins the

two scenes, relationally considered, assume a mutually reflexive irony as the gentry appear just as contentious as their social inferiors. Yet it would seem more probable that plot rather than class-driven considerations provides the primary motivation for the card scene since Frankford, having recently been informed by Nicholas (a household servant) of his wife's infidelity, conceives of the card game as a means of distraction pending corroboration of Nicholas's allegations and, more significantly (and not unlike Hamlet's device of the "mouse trap"), as a means of testing and possibly entrapping the guilty parties. The resulting irony is not so much a matter of acrimonious contention (as Hopkins seems to suggest), but originates rather in Frankford's self-consciously ironic role in the immediate situation at hand. Moreover, Hopkins seems to miss the striking theatricality of the scene. As Keith Sturges observes,

The card game is a masterpiece of sustained metaphor as the fact and proof of Anne's infidelity are conveyed to Frankford through the unerring choice by each character of the meaningful pun. The pairing of Wendoll and Anne against Frankford is an image of the larger truth; and whether we read the scene in a Freudian way—Anne's guilt dictating her punning—or see it simply as a stylized representation of the real situation, it remains a theatrically brilliant scene.⁸

Heywood's ironic handling of class relations is more aptly revealed through his artful juxtaposition of the main plot, with its emphasis upon the middle-class household of John and Anne Frankford, and the aristocratic orientation of the subplot. That the primary focus of the play ultimately centers on the middle-class world of Frankford and Anne is directly related, according to Richard Levin, to Heywood's unmistakable recommendation of "Frankford's middle-class morality, with its restraint, prudence, and respect for religious and legal sanctions" as against the aristocratic and "artificial code of private honor and vengeance" maintained by Sir Francis Acton and Sir Charles Mountford.⁹ As such, Frankford, who is evidently a landowner of substantial means, though he lacks an aristocratic title, reconfirms Chaucer's radical assertion that true "gentillesse" is not a matter of rank, but "gentil deedes." Significantly, Sir Francis Acton had initially been critical of Frankford's leniency:

Heywood's play that would have further strengthened her argument. Compared to the husbands in *Arden of Faversham* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, certainly one of Heywood's most remarkable innovations is the moral authority assigned to Frankford. Crucial in this regard is Frankford's suppression of his violent outrage upon discovering his wife Anne's infidelity and his assumed responsibility for her moral rehabilitation. As such,

Frankford's kindness is manifested not only in his refraining from violence, but also in his provision for and protection of his fallen wife.¹³

Though Frankford's banishment of Anne might strike a modern audience as unduly and self-righteously severe, the motivation for, and intended effect of, such a judgment would have been clear enough to Heywood's original audience who, in view of Frankford's restraint following the discovery scene, would have been reminded of the husband's role

. . . as the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of His Church. The husband's authority derives from his superior reason and from the hierarchical relationship established between Adam and Eve at the time of their judgment in the garden. According to Protestant tradition, the submission of the wife was safeguarded by the loving protection of the husband so that the ideal marriage was a domestic partnership. With Anne's transgression, she loses her identity as wife and thus the right to claim the protection of her husband; at the same time, the authority and responsibility that Frankford bears as the Christian husband is intensified.¹⁴

Frankford's moral foresight is vindicated at the end of the play when Anne openly acknowledges her guilt and entreats her husband's forgiveness. Witness to his wife's moral recovery, Frankford reverts to his former role of loving husband and reveals a naturalness of affection and generosity of temperament that typified his personal relations prior to Anne's fall:

My wife, the mother to my pretty babes,
Both those names I do restore thee back,
And with this kiss I wed thee once again.
Though thou art wounded in thy honour'd name,
And with that grief upon thy deathbed liest,
Honest in heart, upon my soul, thou diest. (17.115-20)¹⁵

It is finally Frankford's exemplary conduct not only as Christian gentleman but Christian husband that provides Anne with the opportunity for repentance and ultimately ensures her spiritual salvation. Thus, immediately following Anne's death, Sir Francis Acton informs Frankford,

Brother, had you with threats and usage bad
Punish'd her sin, the grief of her offense
Had not with such true sorrow touch'd her heart. (17.133-35)

What is true of Frankford is, of course, equally true of Heywood who imagines a non-violent and morally instructive alternative to the more familiar course of revenge. More directly relevant to Hopkins's argument is Sturges's assertion that "the deliberately unbloody and unsensational ending" of Heywood's play represents a radical departure "from the *Arden* type of domestic tragedy." Sturges continues,

No one and nothing in the play condones Anne Frankford's adultery; but her husband, eschewing violence and thus allowing his wife the opportunity for repentance and forgiveness in Heaven's and his eyes, gives evidence of a sensibility which finds revenge brutal and the vindication of personal honour irrelevant. And Heywood clearly recognizes the originality of what he is doing.¹⁶

A. C. Swinburne aptly summarizes Frankford's exemplary role in the play: "The whole play . . . is Frankford: he suffices to make it a noble poem and a memorable play."¹⁷ Finally, then, anxious as she is to establish the innovative quality of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, it is surprising that Hopkins would have overlooked what many critics feel is the *most* original and innovative aspect of the play.¹⁸

All things considered, I would generally concur with Hopkins that Heywood expands the possibilities of the genre by writing a new sort of domestic tragedy and, as such, that *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is a signal contribution to, and a formative influence upon, the evolution of domestic tragedy. But I would finally propose that the influences, generic, or otherwise, that contributed to the singularity of Heywood's play are more complex than Hopkins suggests. For example, it could be argued that though *Arden of Faversham* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* are

frequently grouped with *A Woman Killed with Kindness* as the most notable examples of Elizabethan domestic tragedy, Heywood's play is distinctively different from, rather than an improvement upon, the other two plays which might be alternately classified as true-crime dramas or murder dramas.¹⁹ Moreover, Hopkins might have drawn more comprehensively upon the tradition of domestic tragedy; as it is, she limits her discussion to *Arden of Faversham*, which, indeed, was printed fifteen years before *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (first published in 1607), and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, which was first printed in 1608. Unfortunately (or fortunately perhaps, considering the pronounced homiletic tenor and lack of artistic control that typify most extant examples of the genre), many domestic tragedies have been lost.²⁰ Nevertheless, it might have been revealing to establish various points of contact, and departure, between *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), the authorship of which is frequently assigned to Heywood, or likewise to examine the relations between *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and Heywood's *The English Traveller* first published twenty-six years later.

Of course, the question of genre formation is especially vexatious in the case of English Renaissance drama and even more specifically so in the case of Heywood, whose extant dramas include chronicle plays, mythology plays, history plays, tragicomedies, domestic tragedies, comedies, and farces, though aside from traditional genres (i.e., comedy and tragedy) such genre labels were largely devised by literary historians anxious to reduce the confusing welter of plays produced during the English Renaissance to some manageable taxonomic order. Indeed, a number of Heywood's plays have, depending upon the criteria applied, been variously classified. *The English Traveller*, for example, has been described as both a domestic tragedy and a tragicomedy, and *The Fair Maid of the West* as a comedy or more specifically still as a romance-adventure drama. Barbara Baines, in explaining her own reductive classification of Heywood's plays, aptly observes,

If ever a writer demonstrated the Renaissance love of the mixed genre, it was Thomas Heywood. His practice would defy the refined classifications of any Polonius. Despite this resistance, I have attempted generic classification for

convenience of discussion and for a clearer understanding of the nature of each play. Various plays, like illegitimate offspring . . . are reluctant to conform to legitimate categories or insist upon belonging to more than one.²¹

Baines's generic categories—history, comedy, tragedy, tragicomedy, mythological drama—are clear enough. More interesting is her more restrictive identification of individual plays; thus, the broad area of comedy includes "adventure-romance dramas" (*The Four Prentices of London* and *The Fair Maid of the West* I/II), "domestic comedies" (*How a Man May Choose a Good Wife from a Bad* and *Fortune by Land and Sea*), and "comedies of intrigue" (*The Wise Woman of Hogsdon* and *A Maidenhead Well Lost*). Were Heywood, as a matter of fanciful curiosity, to consult Baines's work or, for that matter, Hopkins's essay, he would no doubt concur with the two authors' generic categorization of the relevant dramas under investigation, though during his lifetime it is doubtful that he would have consciously composed a "domestic tragedy" or "comedy of intrigue" to order. Though poetic genres were clearly defined (note, for example, the descriptive genera in Sir Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poesie* or George Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy*), the parameters of dramatic genres would seem less fixed, as a result of which it is difficult to determine to what extent, aside from tragedy and comedy, Heywood and his contemporaries were conscious of reshaping popular genres, a number of which were unlabelled as such until much later. On the other hand, it is no doubt true that as a practicing playwright whose livelihood depended upon the commercial success of his work, Heywood was particularly sensitive and responsive to plot situations or, structurally considered, plot types (as opposed to clearly defined genres) in his own work and that of his fellow dramatists and was thus quick to capitalize upon his own success and that of others. It is more than likely, then, that Heywood was influenced by earlier domestic tragedies, though it is just as likely that he was equally influenced not merely by classical tragedy, as Hopkins herself suggests, but even more specifically by the popularity of the Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge tragedy. In fact, *A Woman Killed with Kindness* might be instructively viewed as a domestication and social reorientation of the typical revenge tragedy since Frankford, as an exemplary represen-

tative of the middle class, rejects the bloody retribution and calculated revenge of his aristocratic counterparts.²²

It is further possible that Heywood was influenced by his own earlier work, most notably, the two-part *Edward IV* which recounts the broken marriage of Jane and Matthew Shore as Jane capitulates to the king's amorous intentions and Matthew consequently leaves the country in disgrace, though husband and wife are ultimately reconciled and reunited. The Jane Shore story in *Edward IV* bears a number of instructive parallels to the Frankfords' domestic tragedy in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, and Barbara Baines has more specifically noted that "the temptation, fall, expiation, and death of Jane provide the pattern" for Heywood's later play.²³ On the other hand, the two plays are significantly different in their domestic emphasis; for compared to the Shores' domestic tragedy, which is one, though to Heywood clearly the most interesting, of a number of multiple plots in *Edward IV*, the primary, rather than competing, narrative status of the Frankfords' marriage further reveals the innovative nature of Heywood's achievement as well as his bent for generic experiment.

In fact, Heywood's interest in domestic relations (tragic or otherwise) as well as his decidedly middle-class sympathies and his optimistic belief in the regenerative power of love and forgiveness recur throughout his work regardless of genre or date of composition. Thus, though undeniably influenced by generic developments, Heywood was simultaneously motivated by his own moral and socio-cultural agendas and perhaps one of his most singular achievements is the fact that he managed to contextualize those agendas within such a variety of formats. Such an estimate in no way diminishes the likelihood that, as Hopkins suggests, Heywood was influenced by earlier domestic tragedies any more than it discredits additional, though not necessarily alternative, influences (revenge tragedy, the English morality tradition, the narrative complaint tradition, Elizabethan faculty psychology, Heywood's own work, or even those personal thematic concerns that typify Heywood's creative personality); rather, such an estimate recognizes, in far more liberal terms than Hopkins seems to allow, the remarkably synthetic and assimilative quality of Heywood's creative imagination which, guided by his own class interests and thematic concerns, drew

discursively upon a wide range of material, including, but by no means restricted to, both established and evolving genres.

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NOTES

¹Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1964) 143. For a more comprehensive discussion of domestic tragedy, see Doran 142-47; Henry Hitch Adams, *English Domestic, or Homiletic Tragedy: 1575 to 1642* (New York: Columbia UP, 1943); and Keith Sturgess, "Introduction" to *Three Elizabethan Domestic Tragedies: Arden of Feversham; A Yorkshire Tragedy; A Woman Killed with Kindness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969): 7-47.

²Quotations from *A Woman Killed with Kindness* are based on R. W. Van Fossen, ed., *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (London: Methuen, 1961).—Madeleine Doran discerns a similar "apologetic" tone in the prefatory material to other domestic tragedies, including *A Warning for Fair Women* (often attributed to Heywood) and Heywood's *The English Traveller*. See *Endeavors of Art* 143-45.

³R. W. Van Fossen provides a thorough and incisive consideration of various alleged sources for the main plot in the "Introduction" to his edition of *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (xvii-xxvii), but see also Andrew Clark, comp., "An Annotated List of Sources and Related Material for Elizabethan Domestic Tragedy, 1591-1625," *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 17 (1974): 25-33, which lists primary sources, related nondramatic materials, and modern source studies for *A Woman Killed with Kindness* as well as Heywood's *Edward IV*.

⁴A number of scholars have discerned narrative parallels between the main plot and various novellas in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*. See, for example, E. Koeppel, *Quellen-Studien zu den Dramen Ben Jonson's, John Marston's, und Beaumont und Fletcher's* (Erlangen: A. Deichert, 1895) 136; R. G. Martin, "A New Source for *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *Englische Studien* 43 (1911): 229-33; McEvoy Patterson, "The Origin of the Main Plot of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *University of Texas Studies in English* 17 (1937): 75-87; Max Bluestone, *From Story to Stage: The Dramatic Adaptation of Prose Fiction in the Period of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974) 57-59, 77-78, 84-86, 105-09, 180-83, 223-24, 278-79, 280-81; and David Atkinson, "An Approach to the Main Plot of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *ES* 70 (1989): 15-27. Waldo F. McNeir identifies Greene's "The Conversion of an English Courtizan," which draws upon a story in George Gascoigne's *The Adventures of Master F. J.*, as the primary source for the main plot; see "Heywood's Sources for the Main Plot of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *Studies in the English Renaissance Drama*, ed. Josephine W. Bennett, Oscar Cargill, and Vernon Hall, Jr. (New York: New York UP, 1959) 189-211. Other alleged sources include the medieval miracle and morality traditions and the *Gesta Romanorum*.

⁵Thus Van Fossen, following an investigation of alleged sources for the main plot, ultimately concludes, "The verdict must remain 'not proven'" (xxiv). On the other

hand, Van Fossen finds a more likely, if "indefinite," connection between the main plot and "earlier middle-class tragedies" and "the didactic tradition on which they in part rely" (xxiv). Sturgess finds the origin of the main plot equally indeterminate and thus observes that "it seems likely that Heywood put together hints and details from various stories to create his plot"; like Hopkins, Sturgess then concludes that "it is one of Heywood's contributions to the domestic tragedy that he depended on his own moral vision and dramatic skill to gain acceptance for his play rather than on a journalistic interest in the events portrayed"; see Sturgess, "Introduction," *Three Elizabethan Domestic Tragedies* 40-41.

⁶Critics have often been troubled by the relation of the main plot and subplot, a problem which, in her claim for Heywood's literary artistry, Hopkins might have likewise addressed. Other critics have argued for the structural and thematic integration of the two plots. See, for example, Freda L. Townsend, "The Artistry of Thomas Heywood's Double Plots," *PQ* 25 (1946): 97-119; Peter Ure, "Marriage and the Domestic Drama in Heywood and Ford," *ES* 32 (1951): 200-16; A. G. Hooper, "Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *English Studies in Africa* 4 (1961): 54-57; R. W. Van Fossen, "Introduction," *A Woman Killed with Kindness* xxxvi-xli; Herbert R. Coursen, Jr., "The Subplot of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *ELN* 2 (1965): 180-85; Richard Levin, "The Unity of Elizabethan Multiple-Plot Drama," *ELH* 34 (1967): 425-46; "The Elizabethan 'Three-Level' Play," *Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 2 (1969): 23-37; *The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1971): 93-97; Barbara Baines, *Thomas Heywood*, Twayne's English Authors Series 388 (Boston: Twayne, 1984) 80-89; Diana E. Henderson, "Many Mansions: Reconstructing *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *SEL* 26 (1986): 277-94; and Hopkins 4.

⁷For a discussion of Heywood's Protestant sympathies, see Allan Holaday, "Thomas Heywood and the Puritans," *JEGP* 49 (1950): 192-203 and Baines 7.

⁸Sturgess 45.

⁹See Levin, *The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama* 95.

¹⁰Following the discovery scene, Anne herself expects death at the hands of her husband, an expectation, as Van Fossen observes, "substantiated by the tradition of revenge in the drama and in contemporary practice: short shrift was given the unfaithful woman, whose husband had the right to kill her" (xxii). On the other hand, two recent studies situate Anne's adultery and Frankford's response in relation to popular instructional literature of the period. Thus, Laura Bromley relates Frankford's "kindness" to Renaissance conduct books, in the light of which his behavior can be seen as "a consistent, indeed inevitable, part of the whole play"; see "Domestic Conduct in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *SEL* 26 (1986): 259-76. However, Jennifer Panek regards Frankford's "kindness" as inconsistent with the recommended treatment of female adultery in contemporary marriage manuals and thus concludes, "If the play is an exemplum, it is an exemplum of how *not* to treat a repentant adulteress"; see "Punishing Adultery in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *SEL* 34 (1994): 357-78.

¹¹One of the most innovative aspects of Heywood's achievement in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is his calculated manipulation and reversal of audience expectations. Indeed, the artfully developed suspense of Frankford's soliloquy prior to entering his bedchamber where Anne and Wendoll (her seducer) are sleeping and his rage and murderous intent upon actually discovering the two together would have led the audience, familiar with other domestic crime dramas and already witness to

the violence and retributive "justice" of the subplot, to expect a precipitous and bloody conclusion to Frankford's discovery. But just as he has manipulated his audience's expectations to the sticking point, Heywood remarkably pulls back. Such a reversal not only facilitates Anne's moral recovery, but that of the audience whose own emotional response to Frankford's discovery would originally have been dangerously close to his own.

¹²Sturges 43. Barbara Baines provides a particularly perceptive and detailed analysis of the thematic, structural, imagistic, and verbal relations between the two plots. See Baines 80-89.

¹³Baines 95.

¹⁴Baines 95-96. Hardin Craig likewise credits the prudence and moral foresight of Frankford's judgment since matrimony "in the Elizabethan ethical system was . . . fixed by God in His Church and supported by the law as a part of God's plan for governing the universe." See *The Enchanted Glass: The Elizabethan Mind in Literature* (New York: OUP, 1936) 134.

¹⁵As a number of critics have suggested, Frankford's role as moral preceptor should not obscure the human dimension of his character. See, for example, Baines 96-97 and Van Fossen xlv-xlvi.

¹⁶Sturges 41.

¹⁷See Algernon Charles Swinburne, "The Romantic and Contemporary Plays of Thomas Heywood," *Nineteenth Century* 38 (1895): 397-410.

¹⁸Though, as Van Fossen observes, Frankford "has for the most part received favorable treatment from the critics" (xlii), some estimates of his character and conduct have been less than favorable, most notably, in regard to his "kindness." See, for example, John Canuteson, "The Theme of Forgiveness in the Plot and Subplot of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 2 (1969): 123-41; Robert Ornstein, "Bourgeois Morality and Dramatic Convention in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *English Renaissance Drama: Essays in Honor of Madeleine Doran and Marc Eccles*, ed. Standish Henning, Robert Kimbrough, and Richard Knowles (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP; London: Feffer & Simons, 1976) 128-41; Howard Felperin, *Shakespearean Representation: Mimesis and Modernity in Elizabethan Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977) 151-57; and Panek, "Punishing Adultery."

¹⁹Adams, for example, classifies both *Arden of Feversham* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* as "murder plays," though he also designates such plays as "a specific kind of domestic tragedy."

²⁰For a listing and discussion of lost domestic tragedies, see Adams, *English Domestic, or Homiletic Tragedy*, Appendix A, 193-203.

²¹Baines xii.

²²Thus Baines observes that, given the "novelty" of Frankford's reaction as injured husband to "an ancient situation," *A Woman Killed with Kindness* represents "a radical departure from, and a significant innovation upon, the Elizabethan revenge play"; see Baines 95. Fredson Bowers likewise views Heywood's play as an innovative modification of the typical revenge tragedy since he substitutes "the punishment which arises from the erring characters' consciousness of their guilt" for the more usual punishment of "an exterior physical revenge"; see *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy: 1587-1642* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1940) 225.

²³See Baines 79.

Response to *Shakespeare's Christian Dimension*: *An Anthology of Commentary**

CECILE WILLIAMSON CARY

Taken as a whole, *Shakespeare's Christian Dimension*, edited by the late Roy Battenhouse, impresses the reader with the extent to which Shakespeare's plays are informed by Christianity. The chief problem with individual essays is to take perhaps too doctrinaire a position on a play based on too one-sided reading. Professor Battenhouse's own readings of the plays (in the introduction to each section and to each play) tend towards this problem. The introductions do provide, however, a useful overview of the readings of each play; they also include a bibliography for further reading from a Christian viewpoint.

The book is divided into four sections: key assessments, the comedies, the histories, and the tragedies. Robert Speaight in the opening essay on "Christianity in Shakespeare" holds that without an understanding of Christian doctrine Shakespeare's plays are "quite unintelligible" (21). His selection illustrates both the virtue and the "vice" of the approach. His comments on *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are arguable (that Shakespeare sees revenge as wrong in *Hamlet* and damnation as essentially "lonely" in *Macbeth*), but his comments on *All's Well* overlook the fact that when Helena soliloquizes, she takes a non-religious view of her future actions: "Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie / Which we ascribe to heaven. . . . The King's disease—my project may deceive me, / But my intents are fix'd, and will not leave me" (1.1.216-29).¹ Helena only uses religious language when she is trying to convince other people; her soliloquies help give the impression, which has troubled scholars from Samuel Johnson on, of "Venus toute attachée à sa proie." There are six other

*Reference: Roy Battenhouse (ed.), *Shakespeare's Christian Dimension: An Anthology of Criticism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994).

essays on *All's Well* in the text (in the comedies section), and they all seize on the problematical religious language in the play (problematical because spoken in argumentative situations) and overlook the exceedingly peculiar soliloquies. Robert Grams Hunter does see some duality in Helena, "compounded of St. Helena and Helen of Troy," but ultimately compares her to the Virgin Mary (!) (151, 154)—this of a character who maintains "All's well that ends well! still the fine's the crown; / What e'er the course, the end is the renown" (4.4.35-36). As Frances Pearce points out, the clown's speech about being "for the house with the narrow gate" (4.5.50-51) is Christian, but it emphasizes by contrast the motivations of the characters in this exceedingly funny, but basically worldly play (worldly in the sense that the characters are motivated by materialist values, not heavenly ones). But enough on *All's Well*—my approach may itself be idiosyncratic.

The other essays in the overview section stress such aspects as typology (J. A. Bryant), medieval idiom (L. A. Cormican), Dante (Francis Fergusson), nature and grace (M. D. H. Parker), and St. Augustine (Roy Battenhouse). To Nevill Coghill ("The Basis of Shakespearian Comedy") the formula that comedy is "a tale of trouble that turned to joy" is "not only the shape of Shakespeare's comic form but also the shape of ultimate reality" (27). While this formulation may be suggestive of much Shakespearean comedy, used insensitively it can blind us to the uncomfortable realities of some plays (the same can be said of the other approaches in this section). Significantly, Professor Coghill uses *The Merchant of Venice* as his example, a play which is the basis for seven other essays in this anthology. While some sort of Christian approach is almost required by this play, it should not make us feel that all problems are solved with "Christian, Jew, New Law and Old . . . visibly united in love" (31). In the "real world" of the play, Venetians have slaves, Christian and Jew seek vengeance, and closed "in this muddy vesture of decay," even lovers cannot hear heavenly music (5.1.64). Much the same comment can be made about J. A. Bryant, Jr.'s "Bassanio's Two Saviors" which sees Portia and Antonio as Christ figures. The careful reader is left wondering why Antonio describes himself as "a tainted wether of the flock" (4.1.114) and objecting to Antonio's spitting upon Shylock's "Jewish gaberdine" (1.3.112). The "nitty-gritty" of Shakespeare's

art argues against overly schematic versions of his plays. One is left saying "yes, but" to such essays as Barbara K. Lewalski's "Allegory in *The Merchant of Venice*." John R. Cooper's "Shylock's Humanity" correctly stresses that Shylock's famous speech "Hath not a Jew eyes?" points out Shylock's "fallen humanity" (84) as opposed to simply his humanity. The other essays on *Merchant* discuss "Shylock and the Leaden Casket" (Joan Ozark Holmer), "Shylock's Trial" (Lawrence Danson), "Jessica's Exodus" (Austin Dobbins and Roy Battenhouse), and the fifth act love duet in connection with the Easter liturgy (Mark L. Gnerro). One can say about all these *Merchant* essays as well as about the overview essays that recognizing a Christian element in a play should not thereby keep one from seeing the uncomfortably fallen nature of the worlds Shakespeare presents—even in the happiest of the comedies.

The section about the comedies is perhaps the most satisfactory in the anthology, but even here, as already indicated in the comments on *Merchant* and *All's Well*, the writers tend to oversimplify and/or overstate. The first article on *The Comedy of Errors* (by R. Chris Hassel, Jr.) simply points out its appropriateness for the two recorded performances at Innocents' Day celebration (1594 and 1604), such celebrations stressing "misrule and universal confusion" (59). The second, Glyn Austen's "Redemption in *The Comedy of Errors*," seems to push the argument for a play moving from "tragedy to renewal" (61) too far; it is hard to see "beneath the farcical hilarity of the Ephesian world . . . a framework of evil, corruption and disorder" (63). Arthur C. Kirsch's article on *Much Ado* points out iconographical elements in Borachio's speech at 3.3.117-46. The three articles on *As You Like It* similarly point out Christian elements. Alice Lyle Scoufos sees them in "the ancient tree, the wild man, the green snake, the hungry lioness, and the sorely tempted Orlando" (115); William Watterson is interested in concepts of "original sin, Providence, brotherly love, holy matrimony, and pastoral contentment with the tried estate" (117), and René Fortin in "the mystery of grace" and the conversions of Oliver and the bad Duke (126). While aspects of Epiphany may well be relevant to *Twelfth Night*, it is going rather far to ascribe to Viola/Sebastian the dual nature of Christ (Lewalski 134) or to see Antonio as "the incarnation of divine love who has sacrificially redeemed man" (Fortin 141). The four articles on *Measure*

for *Measure* all take seriously its Christian underpinnings. Ever since G. Wilson Knight's 1930 essay on "*Measure for Measure* and the Gospels," a Christian reading of this play has been part of the critical heritage. The temptation here is to over-allegorize the characters so that the Duke becomes "pow'r divine" rather than being "like pow'r divine" (5.1.369) and Isabella becomes chastity personified rather than being an interesting character whose very chastity seems a problem in such lines as "Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die; / More than our brother is our chastity" (2.4.184-85). Perhaps the problem in Christian criticism is to see the characters as fully human and flawed while recognizing Christian parallels.

As might be expected, the romances call forth a number of Christian readings, four each in this anthology. Those on *Pericles* connect it with the medieval miracle play (Hoeninger), morality play and Christian romance (Felperin), the Seven Ages of Man pattern (Marshall), and the biblical story of Jonah (Hunt). Those on *Cymbeline* hold that the two visions of Jupiter both reveal Jupiter's designs being accomplished (Swander), that the three plots all follow the pattern of innocence/fall/redemption (Kastan 225), that Posthumus's history suggests "Atonement after Fortunate Fall" (Kirsch), and that Posthumus's history is analogous to the reference to the eagle in Psalm 103 (Simonds). S. L. Bethell finds "Sin, Repentance, and Restoration" in *The Winter's Tale* while three other writers note connections between the play and early religious drama (Grantley), medieval precedent (Cox), and Christian liturgy (Laroque). E. J. Devereux finds "Sacramental Imagery in *The Tempest*," George Slover gives "An Analogical Reading of *The Tempest*," Robert Grams Hunter notes "The Regeneration of Alonso," and Patrick Grant comments on "*The Tempest* and the Magic of Charity." That all these articles on the romances contribute to understanding them says something about their long-recognized Christian aspect.

The Christian readings of the histories are less convincing. H. R. Coursen seems on center in his "Hollow Ritual in *Richard II*," but this is less so with D. A. Traversi and Roy Battenhouse, who read Falstaff as "warm, alert humanity . . . with a background . . . of inherited Christian tradition" (302) and as *puer senex*—an ironic commentary of the ills of the others, combining a "pilgrim vocation with the earthly

occupation of playing Fool" (311). It seems strange that Christian readings should praise Falstaff so much when he seems to represent "the world, the flesh, and the Devil." H. C. Goddard's reading of *Henry V* argues against an obvious reading of Henry V as hero. I would argue that all three plays are of the real world and hence complex, that Shakespeare gives life to such characters by making them mixed, but that ultimately Henry V is to be admired and Falstaff rejected. The eight readings on *Henry VI, Parts 1, 2, 3* and on *Richard III* run into less difficulty, probably because the plays themselves are less ambivalent. Two of the articles deal with pastoral imagery in the *Henry VI* plays (Smith, Watterson), and two with echoes of passion plays in them (Jones, Elliott). One of the articles on *Richard III* connects the ghosts with All Souls and the Dream of Constantine (Jones); others discuss the Christian conception of time working in the play (Driver), the relation of Herod to the character of Richard (Colley), and "Providential Design" in the play (Rackin).

The tragedies seem least amenable to Christian criticism as offered in this anthology. W. H. Auden sees the love of Romeo and Juliet as vanity, while Francis Fergusson connects it with Dante's story of Paolo and Francesca; John F. Andrews draws a more complex analysis of Fate, Fortune, and the stars in the play, concluding that we have here a "microcosm of postlapsarian humanity" (380). Romeo and Juliet seem to me quite different from Paolo and Francesca in that Shakespeare's lovers are married. Postlapsarian as the lovers (and the other characters, indeed all) are, I do not think we are being asked to judge them at the end of the play. Their deaths have brought a "glooming peace" (5.3.305), their statues will be made of gold, and the Prince states that "there never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo."

The first of two articles on the beginning of *Hamlet* maintains that the Ghost "acts like a devil" (Prosser 390) while the second contrasts this night with Christmas Eve in the mystery plays (Guilfoyle). Roy Battenhouse reads Hamlet's career as a "'mistaken' version of religious self-abandonment, a topsy-turvy salvationism" (404). James Black sees in Hamlet "a trail of broken promises . . . clinging loyally to an oath, however irreligious, to perform a task which is both wrong and impossible" (409). D. W. Robertson finds Hamlet "an obvious moral

weakling and an unrepentant felon" (410). Whatever Hamlet's course in the body of the play, detractors must come to grips with Horatio's "Good night, sweet prince, / And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!" (5.2.299-300).

Othello is a promising play for Christian readings since Othello realizes himself to be damned and kills himself with that understanding. "Reputations in *Othello*" finds that he acts out of a "mistaken allegiance to bad fame" (Jeffrey and Grant 422). Both Roy Battenhouse and Joan Ozark Holmer see *Othello* as analogous to Judas. One would not want, however, to base a whole interpretation on a textual crux between "base Indian" and "base Judean" at 5.2.347.

Both David Kaula and Maurice Hunt approach *Troilus and Cressida* from a Christian standpoint and find, not surprisingly, that Greeks and Trojans are involved in "mad idolatry" and lack "a truly miraculous Lord upon whom they could depend" (440). Both articles are careful about Christian readings on a play set in classical times and come up with credible readings.

The various articles on *King Lear* point out biblical echoes (Milward), connections with the Corinthian Letters (Cox), "Archetype and Parable in *King Lear*" (Mack), a Christian reading of the ending (Summers), a Christian reading of the Gloucester suicide scene (Stein), connections between the storm scene and the Liturgy of Baptism (Cunningham), connections between the play and St. Stephen's Day (Wittreich). All these have interesting material, but there is perhaps a tendency to be too hopeful about the ending. The play is, after all, set in pre-Christian Britain; the ending seems anguished although, indeed, it is true that Cordelia's "smiles and tears / Were like a better way" (4.3.18-19).

Macbeth is a likely subject for Christian readings, and the anthology does not fail here. As Roland Mushat Frye indicates, "Set down in a pilgrimage which can lead 'to heaven or to hell,' Macbeth chooses hell, and finds it even in this life" (481). Macbeth's soliloquy at 1.7 "recite[s] virtually every heinous feature of the evil toward which he is moving" (Jorgensen 481). Glynne Wickham sees similarities between "*Macbeth* and Mediaeval Stage-plays." The final two essays point out elements of Christian geography (Walker) and discuss "Hell and Judgment in *Macbeth*" (Morris).

The last tragedy considered is *Antony and Cleopatra*. Here, it would be easy to oversimplify. It is true that there are many negative elements in the portrait of Cleopatra in this play. She can seem like an archetype of sinful Eve (Davidson 497). But, as other critics point out, "On one hand we are asked to see Antony's rejection of Roman values as the sufficient cause of his tragic fall; on the other hand that fall, in which Antony and Cleopatra paradoxically envision themselves triumphant and transcendent, ironically anticipates Christian redemption" (Fichter 501). David Scott Kastan also sees that "if it [the play] fails completely to transcend the tragic, it clearly points this way" (506). Set in pagan Rome and Egypt, the play can only show two different modes of being, and in showing them, seems to prefer that of the lovers.

Overall, *Shakespeare's Christian Dimension* gives the reader much to think about. One can be amazed at the extent to which Christianity stands as a subtext to the dramas. Sometimes, arguments based on typology, iconography, liturgy, and biblical parallels can seem farfetched, but often they provide clues to meaning. One can also marvel at how the plays resist one-dimensional readings. Yes, Christianity is there, but there are also complex characterizations, other traditions of looking at human life, ambiguity—something "rich and strange."

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NOTE

¹All quotations from Shakespeare's works are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

Towards an Understanding of Christianity in Shakespeare: In Memory of Roy Battenhouse*

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All scholars working in the field of Shakespearean criticism, whether Christian or otherwise, have suffered a grievous loss in the departure of Roy Battenhouse from our midst—though he remains with us as well through his memory as through his many writings, not least his *opus magnum* on *Shakespearean Tragedy*.¹ It is, therefore, appropriate that two of the “comments” in the latest issue of *Connotations* (4.3) should arise out of his own distinguished contribution on the above-mentioned subject in a previous issue (3.3). It is, moreover, out of the first of those “comments,” that by Cecile Williamson Cary, that this contribution of mine takes its rise—and in particular the fascinating question she raises as to “the appropriate theologians to read for an understanding of Shakespeare” (247).

Whereas Roy Battenhouse opts for “Augustine, Dante, and Aquinas (as opposed to Calvin)” (Cary 247) and Roland Frye for Luther, Calvin and Hooker in his misguided *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine*,² Cary herself proposes “Hooker, and Andrewes, and Spenser, for that matter” as being “more believable sources” (248). Her somewhat feeble explanation for this proposal is that “Christianity was the religion in force when Shakespeare was writing,” and that “the official Christianity of Elizabethan England was Anglican—not the Christianity of Calvin, nor that of Augustine, Aquinas and Dante (although Hooker did make use of Augustine, as well as of Calvin)” (249).

*Reference: Roy Battenhouse, “Shakespearean Tragedy: Its Christian Premises,” *Connotations* 3.3 (1993/94): 226-42; Cecile Williamson Cary, “A Comment on Roy Battenhouse’s ‘Shakespearean Tragedy: Its Christian Premises,’” *Connotations* 4.3 (1994/95): 246-50.

Well, if we are looking for "the official Christianity of Elizabethan England," Hooker comes a little late in the day to be accepted as its authorized exponent, considering that his books of *Laws* were only published in the mid-1590s and they only came to prevail as the theology of Anglicanism in the following century. Virgil Whitaker, in his *Shakespeare's Use of Learning*,³ makes out a fair case for some influence from Hooker's *Laws*⁴ on Shakespeare's later plays; but it is not an altogether convincing one. In any case, the spheres in which the dramatist and the theologian moved, were far apart from each other. As for the theological content of the *Laws*, Hooker expresses his indebtedness not only to Augustine but also to Calvin (whose theology he respected more than his theory and practice of Church government); and he even admits to the further influence of the mediaeval scholastics, whom he actually names, Aquinas and Scotus—for which he was severely taken to task by the Puritan authors of *A Christian Letter* (1599).⁵ Thus we may say that, if only through Hooker, Shakespeare may well have had access to Aquinas.

Still, if Hooker comes a little late, surely we have the Elizabethan *Homilies*,⁶ which go back to the early years of the reign, and to which Shakespeare must have been inured from his boyhood, even to the limits of his endurance—to judge from Rosalind's comments on Orlando's "tedious homily of love" (*As You Like It* 3.2.164-65). And then there are the voluminous writings of John Jewel against the Papist champion Thomas Harding,⁷ and of John Whitgift (who went on to commission Hooker's *Laws*) against the Puritan leader Thomas Cartwright.⁸ As for Anglican "orthodoxy" during all this period, in so far as there was such a thing, apart from the mixed doctrine of the *Homilies*, it was clearly Calvinist at least at the two universities of Oxford (where the Puritan leader at the later Hampton Court Conference, John Reynolds,⁹ held sway) and Cambridge (which was even more under the sway of the Puritan William Whitaker).¹⁰ This "orthodoxy" was above all formulated, by Whitaker and Whitgift, in the notorious *Lambeth Articles* of 1595;¹¹ but these remained a dead letter thanks to the Queen's unwillingness to impose such high theological doctrines on the consciences of her subjects.

This all, however, rests on the questionable assumption that Shakespeare himself accepted "the official Christianity of Elizabethan England"—just as the whole argument of Roland Frye in his above-mentioned book is vitiated by his (never proved) assumption that Shakespeare was both familiar with the teaching of Luther, Calvin and Hooker on the liberation of drama and literature from the dominion of theology and amenable to it. True, Luther does have some impact on the mind of the young Hamlet, in so far as he comes from the newly founded (1502) university of Wittenberg¹² and is evidently haunted by a conviction of sin; but Calvin's impact hardly extends further than that of escaping what Benedick calls "a predestinate scratched face" (*Much Ado* 1.1.141-42), not to mention Cassio's drunken comments on souls that "must be saved" and others that "must not be saved" (*Othello* 2.3.107-08).

On the whole, Luther in Wittenberg and Calvin in Geneva, both within the early half of the sixteenth century, seem all too remote from Shakespeare in London towards the end of that century; and as a practising dramatist, Shakespeare must have been more concerned—as his plays everywhere indicate—with more contemporary, if not ephemeral, matters. So if we will but focus our attention a little more sharply on the London of the early 1590s, when we first hear of Shakespeare's presence there, we immediately come upon two very popular exponents of Christian theology whose writings leave us in little doubt of their impact on the mind and even the sympathies of the dramatist—though they are all too widely disregarded by Shakespeare scholars. On the one hand, there are the *Sermons* of the preacher hailed by Thomas Nash as the "silver-tongued Smith," who died in 1591 at the height of his career, and whose sermons were published in one volume two years later.¹³ In them one may find innumerable parallels of imagery, phraseology and thought with the subsequent plays of Shakespeare. On the other hand, there is the even more popular *Book of Resolution*, emanating from the pen of the Jesuit Robert Persons and hailed with no less enthusiasm by the same Thomas Nash.¹⁴ It may have been the work of a Jesuit, who would hardly have been acceptable to the Anglican authorities; but his Papist "poison" had been judiciously removed in a pirated version of his book by Edmund Bunny and in this

form it had provided highly "vendable copy" to its printers from 1584 onwards. In it, too, one may find no fewer parallels of imagery, phraseology and thought than in the *Sermons* of Henry Smith.

In the case of Shakespeare's plays, however, one cannot rest merely with such contemporary influences. Or rather, one has to realise that for him and most of his audience the Bible and St Augustine were hardly less contemporary than Robert Persons or Henry Smith or Richard Hooker. For one thing, so much of what we may call "theology" in Shakespeare comes to him straight from the Bible, as well the Old as the New Testament. (Not a few scholars go astray in requiring overt Christian allusions before they will allow of any Christian "theology" in a play, forgetting that the Book of Job is none the less Christian for being in the Old Testament, and that *Hamlet*, for instance, is charged with allusion to that book.)¹⁵ For another, the secondary influence of St Augustine is incalculable, extending as it did all through the Middle Ages, and received as it was on either side of "the Great Divide" between the Catholics and the Protestants, who both published whole books claiming him as their own.¹⁶ So Roy Battenhouse was perfectly justified in insisting on an Augustinian approach to the "theology" in Shakespeare's plays. Insofar as Shakespeare even as a dramatist ventures upon theological territory, as in the soliloquy of Claudius in *Hamlet* (3.3.36-72), he can hardly help being Augustinian.¹⁷

Finally, there is one more theological "source" I would like to commend to the attention of Cecile Cary; and that is the no less popular (than any of the above-mentioned writings) *Imitation of Christ*. All I would ask of her at this stage, or of any other interested reader, is a simple glance at the *Short Title Catalogue* under the entry "Thomas A Kempis," and there she will discover so many editions and so many translations by both Catholic and Protestant translators continuing all through the period when Shakespeare was writing his plays in London.¹⁸ To judge from what Whitaker (following the eighteenth-century Richard Farmer) calls "Shakespeare's use of learning,"¹⁹ one may well imagine the dramatist haunting the many bookshops in the vicinity of Paul's Churchyard,²⁰ if only in quest for new material for his plays; and at every hand's turn he must have come upon copies of this Christian classic, of which we may find echoes as well in the opening

soliloquy of Friar Laurence (in *Romeo and Juliet* 2.3.1-30) as in the opening speech of the exiled Duke in Arden (in *As You Like It* 2.1.1-17).

Then, by way of postscript, I would like to add a word of warning: against the use of such loaded terms as "forcing" or "imposing" a Christian reading on Shakespeare's plays, as if such a meaning is no less an "outside" approach than that imposed by Marxists or New Historicists. Shakespeare, after all, knew nothing of Marxism or New Historicism, or Freudianism or Feminism, or any other such fashionable ideologies; but he had deeply imbibed Christianity from childhood onwards, whatever may have been his particular affiliation in his days as a dramatist. It may well be possible for modern scholars to impose their favourite ideologies on Shakespeare's plays, as on almost any other literary work, not excluding the Bible; but when it comes to a Christian meaning in those plays, it is more likely to be what a scholar finds in them—even with regard to such apparent minutiae as Inge Leimberg finds in her other comment on Roy Battenhouse, concerning the Scarus episode in *Antony and Cleopatra* (*Connotations* 4.3: 251-65).

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NOTES

¹*Shakespearean Tragedy: Its Art and its Christian Premises* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1969); with my review article, "Theology in Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Studies* (Tokyo) 9 (1970-71). Cf. Battenhouse's recent anthology of *Shakespeare's Christian Dimension* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994).

²*Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1963); with my review article, "Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine," *Shakespeare Studies* (Tokyo) 4 (1965-66).

³*Shakespeare's Use of Learning: An Inquiry into the Growth of his Mind and Art* (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1953) especially ch. 9 on *Troilus and Cressida*: "Whether Shakespeare was indebted to the *Ecclesiastical Polity* for details is, however, unimportant," but "Shakespeare's first systematic statement of this whole complex of ideas so obviously comes straight from Hooker" (207).

⁴Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity** was first published in four books in 1593, with the fifth book following in 1597. The remaining three of the original eight books were not published till 1666. The relevant book for Shakespeare's plays is Book 1. Cf. my chapter on "Smith and Hooker" in *Shakespeare's Religious Background* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1973; republished Chicago: Loyola UP, 1985) 134-43.

⁵The anonymous *Christian Letter of Certain English Protestants* came out in direct response to Hooker in 1599: it was chiefly attributed to the Puritan leader, Thomas Cartwright. Cf. my *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age* (London: Scolar P, 1977) 104-07.

⁶*Certain Sermons or Homilies* was published in two volumes: Vol. 1 in 1547 under the care of Archbishop Cranmer, with more of a Catholic tone; and Vol. 2 in 1563 under the care of Archbishop Parker, with a more obvious Protestant tone.

⁷The first "great controversy" of Elizabeth's reign was provoked by two publications of John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury: his "Challenge Sermon" of 1560, printed in the same year, and his *Apology . . . in Defence of the Church of England*,* printed in 1562, with a Latin version in the same year. Both were answered by Thomas Harding from his exile in Louvain, the former with his *Answer** of 1565, and the latter with his *Confutation** of the same year. The whole controversy involved some 60 printed books during that decade. Cf. my *Religious Controversies* 1-15.

⁸The controversy between John Whitgift, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge till 1577 (Archbishop of Canterbury from 1583), and Thomas Cartwright, Fellow of Trinity College till 1571, arose out of the Puritan *Admonition to the Parliament* of 1572, followed by *A Second Admonition* in the same year. This was attributed to Cartwright and attacked by Whitgift in his *Answer* of that year, followed by further controversy, as recorded in my *Religious Controversies* 29-32.

⁹John Reynolds, or Rainolds, was Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, from 1566, and President from 1598 till his death in 1607. He was the Puritan leader at the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. With him may be mentioned the other leading Puritan at Oxford, Laurance Humphrey, Regius Professor of Divinity from 1560 and President of Magdalen College from 1561 till his death in 1590.

¹⁰William Whitaker, Master of St John's College from 1586, and Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge from 1580 till his death in 1595, was, after Cartwright, the leading champion and exponent of Calvinism in England. He engaged in Latin controversy at the highest academic level with the Jesuit Cardinal Robert Bellarmine in Rome. His lectures against Bellarmine were published posthumously in 1599-1600. Cf. *Religious Controversies* 154-55.

¹¹The *Lambeth Articles* on predestination were drawn up (in Latin) by Whitaker and approved by Whitgift with the other Anglican bishops in 1595; but they remained unpublished till 1613.

¹²It is noteworthy that in one scene of *Hamlet* (1.2.113-19 and 164-68) the university of Wittenberg is mentioned no less than four times: twice with reference to Hamlet, and twice (by Hamlet) with reference to Horatio. Only whereas Horatio appears as more of a classical scholar, or humanist, Hamlet appears as a student of divinity, under the shadow of Luther.

¹³The *Sermons* of Henry Smith were published together posthumously in 1593, and Thomas Nash recalls his memory as "silver-tongued" in his *Pierce Penniless* of 1592. Cf. my chapter on "Smith and Hooker" in *Shakespeare's Religious Background* 126-33.

¹⁴Persons's book, commonly known as "The Book of Resolution," was originally entitled *The First Book of the Christian Exercise, appertaining to Resolution*, and published in 1582. When it was revised by Edmund Bunny in a Protestant sense and republished in 1584, Persons brought out a further edition in 1585, with the altered

title of *A Christian Directory*,* adding an indignant protest at Bunny's piracy. Yet thanks to Bunny the book became, according to its London printer, "one of the most vendible books ever issued in this country"; cf. *Religious Controversies* 73-75 and *Shakespeare's Religious Background* 45-48. It was praised both by Thomas Nash in his *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem** in 1593, and by Robert Greene in his book of *Repentance*, published with his *Groatsworth of Wit** in 1592 just before his death in that year.

¹⁵For the influence of Job, cf. *Shakespeare's Religious Background* 102-03; and in general, my chapter on "The Homiletic Tradition in *Hamlet*," *The Mediaeval Dimension in Shakespeare's Plays* (dedicated "For Roy") (New York: Edwin Mellen P, 1990) 58-73.

¹⁶A notable example of such a combined claim occurs (admittedly after Shakespeare's death) in the 1620s, with two books both entitled *Saint Austins Religion*, one by the Catholic John Brekeley* in 1620, and the other by the Protestant William Crompton in 1624. Cf. my *Religious Controversies of the Jacobean Age* (London: Scholar P, 1978) 200-01.

¹⁷Cf. Roy Battenhouse, *Shakespearean Tragedy* 377-80: "The 'limed soul' of Claudius."

¹⁸A *Short Title Catalogue* by A. Pollard and G. Redgrave, under "Thomas A Kempis," listing five translations, by W. Atkinson* in 1503 (reprinted 6 times), R. Whitford in 1531? (reprinted 5 times), E. Hake in 1567 (reprinted twice), T. Rogers in 1580 (reprinted 13 times), F. B. (A. Hoskins?)* in 1613 (reprinted 5 times).

¹⁹Richard Farmer, *Essays on the Learning of Shakespeare*, first published in 1767, reprinted New York: AMS Press, 1966; but Whitaker pays no tribute to him in his *Shakespeare's Use of Learning*.

²⁰For an account of Paul's Churchyard in Shakespeare's time, cf. T. F. Ordish, *Shakespeare's London* (London: Dent, 1897) 231-35.

* Facsimile reprints published by the Scolar Press.

Modern and Postmodern Discourses in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*: A Response to David Laird*

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In his article, David Laird gracefully and cogently defines several contending idioms in the play, primarily Leontes' absolutist language, intent on forcing connotations into a single, self-serving meaning; Hermione's "discursive skepticism that measures the distance between words and things" (27); Paulina's therapeutic speech associated with the healing arts; Autolycus' multi-tongued utterances, corrosive of totalitarian statements; and Perdita's foster brother's liberating mutualistic language. Laird suggests that the latter four of these five discourses amount to linguistic antidotes for Leontes' cruelly authoritarian speech and the havoc wrought by it. These discourses also figure in Laird's larger scheme, one that involves postmodern and modern language practices. Because the above-described languages are relatively intelligible and determinate in meaning, they represent for Professor Laird alternatives to recent postmodern characterizations of the language of *The Winter's Tale*, especially the analysis of Stephen Orgel. According to Laird, a postmodernist analysis yields occasional radical meaninglessness in the discourses of the play, as well as a resistance to thematic patterning, an always unfinished signification, and "a certain incredulity or skepticism about totalizing or overreaching interpretive schemes or meta-narratives" (26). Laird implies that at least one of the discourses that he offers as alternatives to Professor Orgel's characterization of the opaque language of the play can be called modern. Laird asserts that the languages upon which he concentrates his attention bear "the marks of gender, class, and what Foucault refers to as the emergent power of

*Reference: David Laird, "Competing Discourses in *The Winter's Tale*," *Connotations* 4.1-2 (1994/95): 25-43.

the modern state" (26-27). Leontes' authoritarian freezing of meaning to the sociopolitical disadvantage of dissenting tongues illustrates a Foucaultian modern language practice: "to control language, to exercise the power to name, categorize, and classify is an essential weapon in the arsenal of monarchy and the modern state no less than it was, for instance, of republican or imperial Rome" (27).¹

Laird recognizes in this judgment that Leontes' language could just as easily be called transhistorically monarchical as modern,² but I will grant him the claim that Leontes' speech is modern in a sociopolitical sense. Critics such as Stuart Kurland, William Morse, and Laird himself have persuasively argued that Leontes' dogmatic pronouncements and linguistic aggrandizement parody the linguistic absolutism of the early modern King James.³ In the following essay, I want to extend Laird's analysis of modern discourses in *The Winter's Tale*, posing some critical questions suggested by certain assumptions in his argument. I hope to show that discourse in the play which Laird portrays as a benign alternative to Leontes' petrifying speech, language such as Hermione's playfully ambiguous, polysemous utterance, is every bit as modern as Leontes' despotic habit of pronouncement. This case suggests that other similarities may inhere within the differences that Laird draws. In fact, I want to suggest finally that the modern and postmodern idioms defined by Laird are, in a certain sense, problematically alike, so much so that other paradigms for defining modern and postmodern speech acts in the play recommend themselves. Rather than define these here, I shall describe them at the moment of their introduction, when a portrayal is likely to be more meaningful for the reader.

Distinguishing between certain modern and early modern languages in *The Winter's Tale* focuses major critical questions underlying Laird's analysis. When persons call Shakespeare's age early modern, they may refer to a variety of social, political, or artistic phenomena. Properly speaking, one locates comparable modern phenomena in the period circa 1850 to the mid-1970s (when postmodernism emerged). Thus in the case of Shakespeare's language, modernism (broadly defined) may or may not be a historical descriptor, but postmodernism always must be a metaphorical (or analogical) one. In the case of Leontes' solipsistic, authoritarian language, it is possible to say that it is both an early

modern and a modern event. By many accounts, King James on occasion relied on such an absolutist idiom, as did several nineteenth- and twentieth-century rulers. But auditors hear other discourses in *The Winter's Tale* that are early modern but not modern in the sense that politically absolute speech pervades both epochs. The bitter, medicinal speech of Paulina that Laird cites derives—as he nicely shows—from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century medical treatises on the treatment of madness. And there are other early modern (but not modern) discourses in the play not mentioned by Laird. For example, Polixenes' and Hermione's easy, gracious banter, filled with innuendoes, reflects a Castiglionean *sprezzatura* of language. As such, it amounts to an early modern signifier of aristocratic privilege, not only among noblemen and women but also with regard to the different fluidity of utterance among artisan and peasant classes, heard most clearly in *The Winter's Tale* during the great pastoral scene. Leontes' misinterpretation and denial of this Castiglionean *conversazione* says something about the negative relationship of the discourse of political absolutism to the mutual, deferential language of aristocrats empowered by the degree of non-authoritarianism in their speech. Temperamentally absolutist King James still depended upon courtiers and noblemen often communicating by a complex code of non-absolutist signifiers.

Then again, Apollo's oracular pronouncement silences Leontes, collapsing his world of words, and beginning his healing process. But it does so only because, as the statement of the play's god, it is more dictatorial than any one of Leontes' totalitarian utterances. Many commentators on *The Winter's Tale* have remarked that as a god of *logos*, Shakespeare's Apollo resembles the Judeo-Christian God who, as the Gospel of John reminds us, works through the word. What are the implications for Christian discourse of representing a god of the word adopting the very practice of a deluded mortal in order to silence him? Does the so-called absolutist political discourse of modernity describe the linguistic methodology of godhead? Or is this conflation an early modern rather than a modern trait? And if it is, what does the conjunction say about the relationship of royal political language to the discourse of Christianity as represented in institutions like the Reformed Church of England?

Finally, the precious, often artificial language of the courtiers in V.ii., who report the discovery of Perdita's identity and her reunion with Leontes, has been called Arcadian and Euphuistic.⁴ Its Mannerist conceits associate it not with Castiglione but with the distinctive styles of Thomas Lodge and Sir Philip Sidney (and admittedly not at his best). In short, the discourse is early modern rather than modern. Critics of the play generally do not admire this early modern discourse, and the question arises of Shakespeare's reason for casting his prose in such mannered conceits as Third Gentleman's "One of the prettiest touches of all, and that which angled for mine eyes (caught the water though not the fish), was when, at the relation of the Queen's death . . ." (V.ii.82-85).⁵ Several critics have claimed that Shakespeare purposely made this language un compelling in order to underscore the power of visual knowledge, of the truth that to have missed Perdita's and Leontes' singular reunion is to "have . . . lost a sight which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of" (V.ii.42-43).⁶ But if the gentlemen's talk is serious speech (as it appears to be), where should we place it within Laird's implied grid of modern and postmodern languages in the play? With which discourse does it compete? Clearly, it does not seem to be an empowered or empowering language. Other discourses in the play invite similar descriptions and comparable questions. Answering them involves a more comprehensive understanding than we currently possess of how early modern discourses interacted with one another with regard to the acquisition and maintenance of sociopolitical power. All one needs to say in conclusion is that the language of the play's women surpasses the discourse of the conceited fifth-act gentlemen.

The presence of puns and other kinds of wordplay in the language of the major characters of *The Winter's Tale* complicates the distinction that Professor Laird makes between Leontes' malign and Hermione's benign use of language. The threat to Leontes' despotic insistence on his own self-serving, single-dimensional interpretation of events and dialogue, in Laird's words, "arises initially in Hermione's voicing of a discourse where meanings are multiple, ambiguous, and shadowed by an implicit recognition of what W. K. Wimsatt terms 'the polysemous nature of verbal discourse'" (27). I want to defer for the moment answering the question of whether Hermione's open and open-ended

discourse is in some sense modern in order to note that it employs and responds to puns. They are part of what Laird calls Hermione's "illocutionary legerdemain" (29). For example, Hermione jokingly concludes her first speech in the play, advice on how Leontes might convince Polixenes to prolong his visit, by saying that, if her husband followed her counsel, Polixenes would be "beat from his best ward" (his best defensive position / his best counterargument; I.ii.33). Like Hermione (even more so), Leontes coins and responds to puns; in fact, puns are his chief vehicle for creating absolutist meanings. Rather than being "unwilling to tolerate verbal or perceptual ambiguities" (Laird 31), Leontes actually appears to listen for them, revolve them in his mind, and play upon them for several minutes. W. H. Matchett in a seminal article suggested this tendency twenty-five years ago.⁷ Focusing upon words and phrases in Polixenes' opening speech, terms like "burthen" and "we should, for perpetuity, / Go hence in debt," Matchett masterfully established that Polixenes unintentionally speaks the language of adulterous pregnancy, an ambiguity to which Leontes' suspicious ear is liable. It was M. M. Mahood who memorably demonstrated that the significance we find in *The Winter's Tale* depends in large part upon the resonances generated by its puns, especially those associated with Leontes.⁸ For example, his imagination of bestiality deepens with the pun he detects in the word "neat" (I.ii.122-25); his sense that he enacts the part of a cuckold strengthens with a quibble he makes on "play" (I.ii.187-89); his belief that poisoning Polixenes will cure him of his suffering concludes in a pun on "cordial" (I.ii.316-18), and so on.

Leontes, Hermione, and Polixenes fix their speech meanings by being open to the registers of words; Leontes' friend and queen simply do not insist upon the momentarily fixed meanings of certain evocative words as stubbornly or usually for as long as he does. But that does not mean that they are not, in certain respects, linguistic absolutists. Hermione, for instance, throughout *The Winter's Tale* steadfastly assumes that oaths (despite evidence to the contrary) inherently outvalue sayings of any kind. And she agrees with Leontes that a person can inalterably speak fully to purpose only twice in a lifetime—in her case, so as to earn a royal husband and a friend (I.ii.90-108). When Leontes denies her magnificent verbal protestation of innocence by saying "I ne'er heard

yet / That any of these bolder vices wanted / Less impudence to gainsay
 what they did / Than to perform it first" (III.ii.54-57), she exclaims,
 "That's true enough, / Though 'tis a saying, sir, not due to me" (III.ii.57-
 58). Her reply implicitly argues that certain speech acts of a person (such
 as her present declaration) remain forever fixed in meaning and
 attributable to the speaker.

All this is to say that the language use of Leontes and Hermione is more similar than Professor Laird suggests. In this respect, they are linguistic modernists in a sense that recent reassessments of New Criticism illuminate. Hugh Grady has shown the several ways in which New Critics and the criticism they produced were modernist.⁹ This modernist language practice generally isolated a linguistic artifact as a collection of utterances or statements, searched for connotations and wordplay that could be assembled into thematic and structural patterns, and then reproduced them by articulating a progressive meaning generated by the nuances of words. Foremost among New Critics was W. K. Wimsatt, a writer Laird invokes to portray the multiple meanings and ambiguous, "polysemous" nature of Hermione's discourse. Even though Laird does not say so, this invocation suggests that Hermione speaks a modern discourse. To the degree that Hermione, like Leontes, teases meaning out of the rich ambiguity of language, to the degree that she uses, capitalizes, and builds upon wordplay, she (like her husband) is a modern discourses in senses most fully defined by literary practitioners of the mid-twentieth century. Laird could have argued that Shakespeare in Hermione's language pits one kind of modern discourse against another one, represented by Leontes' verbal authoritarianism.

Speaking in the broadest terms, one can argue that wordplay, especially the pun, appears more frequently in English Renaissance drama and Metaphysical poetry than it does in any comparable body of writing produced in the Middle Ages. I would argue that this higher frequency amounts to an early modern trait of language. Like any Shakespeare play, *The Winter's Tale* manifests this trait, which in the context of my response to Professor Laird's essay leads us first to an awareness of how the play as a whole is a modern linguistic artifact and then to the realization that modern and postmodern language analyses of it are, in a crucial sense, more alike than different. Not only Leontes and

Hermione but almost all the other characters of *The Winter's Tale* coin puns or engage in wordplay. When First Lord remarks that Leontes' resolve to burn the infant Perdita will "Lead on to some foul issue" (II.iii.153), his word "issue" collocates with other uses of the term which relate to child delivery and Apollo's oracle; it suggests that the king's "issue"—his daughter—will cancel the foul issue of Apollo's incriminatory oracle. Similarly, when Antigonus says, "Thou art perfect then, our ship hath touch'd upon / The deserts of Bohemia?" (III.iii.1-2), his word "perfect" forecasts the relative perfection of values appearing in the mythology of the sheepshearing festival. This pattern-producing wordplay of *The Winter's Tale* has been exhaustively chronicled by Richard Proudfoot.¹⁰ Because the resultant redemptive order is the product of the connotations of all the characters' speech acts, one concludes that the pattern is Shakespeare's or Apollo's (or that of both—god's and artist's). In this case, there are no competing discourses among characters. The wordplay of all the major personages cooperates in a modern, New-Critical fashion to reveal a hidden providential design in dramatic events.¹¹

Leontes' honed awareness of the possible meanings of wordplay calls into question the claim that Apollo's oracular riddle is "beyond his capacity to decipher" (Laird 35). Rather, one might say that a flawed linguistic absolutist who operates through wordplay simply chooses not to credit a competitor, here a divine linguistic absolutist whose providence materializes through the signification of wordplay. Having formulated the likeness this way, we realize that it catches Shakespeare's reflection in its glass. Although he rewards Leontes in the end, Apollo angrily makes Leontes immediately pay for usurping his prerogative of absolutist speech. Mamillius dies. Postmodern critics of Shakespeare's plays such as Stephen Orgel may powerfully claim that Shakespeare's texts are always unfinished, blurred and blurring playscripts filled with fissures, blank spaces, and present absences; but the words that the playwright once did fix upon paper became essentially absolute in the form of the First Folio, a freezing of meaning less pretentious than Ben Jonson's precedent-setting *Works* (*Opera*) but august nevertheless. In what sense does the "absolute" language of the playwright Shakespeare differ from that of his mad alter ego Leontes?

Critics have traditionally found certain answers or rectifications in pastoral Bohemia for problems set in Leontes' Sicilian court. In this vein, Professor Laird notes that the multivalent language of Autolycus and the mutualistic, leveling idiom of Perdita's foster brother appear preferable to Leontes' tyrannous coinages. But many of the most beautiful, purportedly redemptive speeches of the great pastoral scene are every bit as absolutist as Leontes' less lyrical pronouncements. This is especially true of Florizel's exquisite love lyric, spoken in response to the ravishing image of Perdita distributing flowers, "What you do / Still betters what is done" (IV.iv.135-46). This lyric may be about the communicative superiority of song, prayer, and dance to conversational speech, but it is only by expressing this likely truth in artistically organized speech that Florizel makes the assertion believable. Appropriately lyrical poetry absolutely fixes the idea that dancing Perdita, like a seemingly ceaseless wave of the sea, might "move still, still so" (IV.iv.142), might, in other words, approximate eternity. Perdita may modestly protest that the praises of Florizel's lyric "are too large" (IV.iv.147), and she may need the corroboration of his "speaking" youth and blood to credit his pronouncements (IV.iv.147-51); but those facts do not qualify the permanent, redemptive status of Florizel's speech regarded as a twelve-verse poem. Florizel's language is as autocratically insistent about the authority of romantic love as Leontes' political language is about the authority of rule.

Literary critics especially responsive to language through interpretation necessarily fix its meaning usually as absolutely as Leontes, Florizel, and even Hermione do. This is generally true whether they show a modernist or postmodernist stripe. In the case of the New Critics, this modernity involved the categorical reading of a chosen text. Paradoxically men and women finely attuned to the nuances of words often defended their verbal interpretations of an event against other absolute readings of it generated by the same resonant words. In this respect, they bear an uncomfortable likeness to Leontes. In their potential effects, both literary artifacts and critical readings of them strangely resemble the impact of Hermione's statue on its beholders. Even as the wonder of the statue's artistry steals the life from admiring Leontes and Perdita, freezing them paradoxically into stone, so the irresistible artistic power

of Shakespeare's plays and the multitude of always necessarily fixed interpretations that they provoke transfix commentators in plottable, usually unyielding positions. Only when one has seen a critical interpretation fixed in the form of a published article or book does one painfully see what is wrong with one's argument.

All I am claiming is that the linguistic process by which any critic of Shakespeare's plays establishes a reading of some aspect of one of them resembles the process by which Leontes shows that he is a modern absolutist with words. And since one can find ancient Greeks and Romans, to say nothing of medieval commentators, operating with language in the same way, giving the term "modern" to this habit may beg several questions. My point includes postmodernists too. The argument that language is circularly referential, always open-ended, forever mutual and negotiable, opaque with regard to knowing any reality other than a self-fashioned one is usually an absolute assertion. Even the most hospitable, non-threatening, multiply qualified statement is categorical about "acategoricity."

Other ways of defining modern and postmodern elements of *The Winter's Tale* exist. The implosion of binary opposites, especially the traditional antitheses of modernist thought, characterizes a recurrent postmodern action.¹² Postmodern "hyperreality . . . brings with it the collapse of all real antagonisms or dichotomies of value," Steven Connor writes: "Baudrillard claims that, with the whole of the political spectrum being dominated by the logic of the simulacrum [the sign detached from reality], even the most [modern] inveterate antagonisms, like that of capitalism and socialism, are annulled by the dependence of one upon the other; authority depends upon subversion, just as subversion draws its energies from authority . . . In this situation, opposites collapse into each other; as Baudrillard says, they 'implode,' producing a 'floating causality where positivity and negativity engender and overlap with one another.'" ¹³ The postmodern implosion condenses binary opposites in a core of counteraction that freezes itself. Out of the ashes of modernism, this postmodern phoenix has arisen, with Jacques Derrida insisting throughout his writings upon the presence of absence and the absence of presence, John O'Neill defining "a certain will to willessness—a failure of nerve that gives it its nerve,"¹⁴ and other postmodern-

ists describing a femaleness of maleness and a maleness of femaleness as well as a slavery of mastership and a mastery of enslavement—in short, the always already presence of the other in each term of a no longer existing but actually imploded binarism.

I have argued elsewhere that the above-described postmodernist paradigm provides the most approximate metaphor for grasping the cultural relevance of the collapse of opposites into new fusions apparent in Jacobean plays of Shakespeare such as *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Winter's Tale*.¹⁵ In the case of the latter play, this fusion, different in kind from the Renaissance paradox defined by Patrick Cruttwell,¹⁶ appears in Florizel's haunting phrase "move still, still so" in his fourth-act paean of love. I have argued that it represents a version of a more pervasive Jacobean-Shakespeare-"postmodern" paradigm of undoing done, of a verbal construct that depicts chaos instantaneously working its own order or containment.¹⁷ (In modernist thought, the artist/critic orders chaos). Within itself, this postmodern construct incorporates a modern stasis and an anarchic motion characteristic of postmodernity.¹⁸ Besides portions of Florizel's love lyric, Paulina's summary portrayal of Leontes' guiltiness (III.ii.207-14) and the dialogue accompanying the transformation of Hermione's statue into the living woman amount to discourses of modernity/postmodernity in *The Winter's Tale* different from those described by David Laird. As a supplement to his thought-provoking notions of modern and postmodern languages in this play, these and other modern/postmodern discourses can reveal Shakespeare's participation in late twentieth-century methods of posing and solving cultural problems of thought and expression.

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NOTES

¹Concluding that Professor Laird is unsympathetic to postmodernist criticism of Shakespeare would be a mistake. Admittedly, his bias generally appears to incline toward modernist methodology, as the following assertion suggests: "to the extent that the [postmodernist critic] Orgel is in earnest about trying to ease the burden

of intelligibility, he registers an important difference between modern and postmodern critical practice, the former identified with a determined effort to work through obscurities, textual and otherwise, to some sort of unifying or comprehensive story or explanation" (25-26). One senses throughout Laird's essay the high value he places on this purportedly modern enterprise of struggling to make the obscure intelligible in various discourses, including narration. And yet Laird is critical of Leontes' modernist abuse of the attempt to forge meaning out of meaninglessness. Laird never explicitly names Autolycus' subversive, multivalent language either modern or postmodern, but he does associate the mutualistic, democratic utterances of Perdita's foster brother with the "less rigid and enforcing discourse [that] prevails in the concluding scenes" (38), with, that is to say, "the communicative efficacy of linguistic gesture and . . . the performative possibilities of language" (39). The foster brother's speech of V.ii.140-45 thus becomes associated with "a postmodernist argument, in a sense, but one that stays on this side of incomprehensibility" (39).

²The presence of so-called early modern cultural traits in pre-sixteenth-century societies has been described by many scholars, among them Alan Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism: The Family, Property, and Social Transition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Lee Patterson, "On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History, and Medieval Studies," *Speculum* 65 (1990): 87-108; and David Aers, "A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the 'History of the Subject,'" *Culture and History 1350-1600*, ed. David Aers (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1992) 177-202.

³Stuart Kurland, "'We need no more of your advice': Political Realism in *The Winter's Tale*," *SEL* 31 (1991): 365-86; William Morse, "Metacriticism and Materiality: The Case of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*," *ELH* 58 (1991): 283-304.

⁴See, for example, S. L. Bethell, *The Winter's Tale: A Study* (London: Staples P, 1947) 42; Charles Barber, "The Winter's Tale and Jacobean Society," *Shakespeare in a Changing World*, ed. Arnold Kettle (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1964) 233-52, esp. 241-42; and Kenneth Muir, "The Conclusion of *The Winter's Tale*," *The Morality of Art*, ed. D. W. Jefferson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969) 87-101, esp. 88.

⁵All quotations of *The Winter's Tale* are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

⁶See, for example, A. F. Bellette, "Truth and Utterance in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Survey* 31 (1978): 65-75, esp. 72-73; Robert W. Uphaus, *Beyond Tragedy: Structure and Experience in Shakespeare's Romances* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1981) 86-88; and David Bevington, *Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1984) 19.

⁷William H. Matchett, "Some Dramatic Techniques in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Survey* 22 (1969): 93-107.

⁸M. M. Mahood, *Shakespeare's Wordplay* (1957; rpt. London: Methuen, 1968) 146-63.

⁹Hugh Grady, *The Modernist Shakespeare: Critical Texts in a Material World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 74-189.

¹⁰Richard Proudfoot, "Verbal Reminiscence and the Two-part Structure of *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Survey* 29 (1976): 67-78.

¹¹The intelligible pattern that the puns of *The Winter's Tale* trace constitutes a stumbling block for a campaign that Laird apparently resists—any large-scale

postmodernist effort to portray language in the play as finally obscure or meaningless (Stephen Orgel focuses upon only a few seemingly undecipherable passages of the play's poetry).

¹²Douglas Kellner, *Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1989) 64, 114, 117. Grady defines the two key components of the postmodern critical revolution as "the end of organic unity as a formal aesthetic property and the subversion of binary hierarchies" (225).

¹³Steven Connor, *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 57. Also see Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983) 30-31; and Mike Gane, *Baudrillard: Critical and Fatal Theory* (London: Routledge, 1991) 51.

¹⁴John O'Neill, "Postmodernism and (Post)Marxism," *Postmodernism—Philosophy and the Arts*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (New York: Routledge, 1990) 69-79, esp. 73.

¹⁵Maurice Hunt, "Elizabethan 'Modernism,' Jacobean 'Postmodernism': Schematizing Stir in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries," *Papers on Language and Literature* 31 (1995): 115-44, esp. 133-40.

¹⁶Patrick Cruttwell, *The Shakespearean Moment and Its Place in the Poetry of the 17th Century* (New York: Random House, 1960).

¹⁷That the paradigm of disorder simultaneously working its own order or containment is distinctively postmodern is shown by, among others, James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Viking, 1987) 9-31; and by Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (Toronto: Bantam, 1988) 143-54.

¹⁸For modern stasis and spatiality, see Hunt 115-24 and the bibliographic references to these pages.

The Cultural Dynamics of Metafictional Discourse in Early American Literature: A Response to Jürgen Wolter*

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Given the well-established theory that the censure of fiction was a pervasive feature of American cultural criticism in the nineteenth century, one may well be surprised to read statements which profess a rather untimely preference for the novel. Although attacks on the pernicious influence of novel reading abound in the Early Republic and throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century,¹ novels met with the approval of the reading public to an extent that was unprecedented and—considering the ruling condemnation of fictional literature—seemed to be possible only much later. As a matter of fact, proud assertions of the new habit of novel reading can be found as early as 1797 when, for instance, the narrator of Royall Tyler's *The Algerine Captive* comments on the revolution that had taken place in the literary market during his protagonist's absence from America:

On his return from captivity, he found a surprising alteration in the public taste. In our inland towns of consequence, *social libraries had been instituted*, composed of books *designed to amuse rather than to instruct*; and country booksellers, fostering the new-born taste of the people, had filled the whole land with modern travels, and novels almost as incredible. The diffusion of a taste for any species of writing through all ranks, in so short a time, would appear impracticable to an European. The peasant of Europe must first be taught to read, before he can acquire a taste in letters. In New England, the work is half completed. In no other country are there so many people, who, in proportion to its numbers, can read and write; and, therefore, no sooner was a taste for *amusing literature* diffused, than all orders of country life, with one accord, *forsook the sober sermons and practical pieties* of their fathers, for the

*Reference: Jürgen Wolter, "Novels are the most dangerous kind of reading": Metafictional Discourse in Early American Literature," *Connotations* 4.1-2 (1994/95): 67-82.

gay stories and splendid impieties of the traveller and the novelist. The worthy farmer no longer fatigued himself with Bunyan's Pilgrim up the "hill of difficulty" or through the "slough of despond," but quaffed wine with Brydone in the hermitage of Vesuvius, or sported with Bruce on the fairy-land of Abyssinia [...].²

Although Tyler's optimism about the flourishing of the new taste for products of the imagination may be an expression of wishful thinking and may be as exaggerated as his favorable assessment of the literacy of the rural population,³ one has to acknowledge that the novel had already won considerable popularity in late eighteenth-century America.

Yet Tyler's *The Algerine Captive* not only makes us aware of the expanding institutionalization of social or circulating libraries⁴ and the subsequent changes in the reading habits of many Americans who did not at all submit to the imperatives of the then still common censure of fiction. It also highlights the cultural reorientations which the so-called democratization of the American mind⁵ brought about. In her seminal study *The Revolution and the Word*, Cathy N. Davidson has convincingly argued that the sensational rise of the novel in America originated, to some extent at least, in the destabilization of public authority during and after the American Revolution. The dramatic changes in the public discourse on authority made possible an increasing disregard for the still prevalent censure of fictional literature as well as the rise of a new "aesthetics of amusement."

For all its intellectual rigor and rather comprehensive argumentation, Jürgen Wolter's analysis of the various forms of metafictional discourse in early American literature fails to pay due attention to the alterations in the reading habits of a large part of the citizens of the Early Republic, and, what is more, in the cultural and ideological orientations of American society. Certainly, Wolter's comments on the "social, philosophical and ideological contexts conducive to metafictional writing" (67) are convincing: he is able to show that the epistemological crisis of the eighteenth century caused writers of fiction to challenge the naive concepts of human perception which still flourished in eighteenth-century America in the wake of the predominant Scottish Common-Sense philosophy. Nevertheless, the reference to the incessant influence of a mentality which succeeded in merging the Puritans' craving for didacticism and moral

utility with an Enlightenment glorification of reason and common sense cannot sufficiently account for the pervasiveness and intensity of the vilification of works of the imagination at a time which witnessed a simultaneous vogue of fiction. What was the use of the incessant repetition of stereotyped verdicts diagnosing a reading-inflicted moral decline of the entire nation when the American reading public's actual behavior proved the futility of all such attempts? Did America's cultural leaders still believe that their authority would be able to stem the tide of a literature which, being in the ascendant all over the Western World, expressly rejected the traditional focus on rationalism and utility?

As Wolter has convincingly shown in his analysis of the metafictional elements in Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland; Or, The Transformation* (1798), the late eighteenth century witnessed a process of aesthetic re-orientation which finally led to the subordination of the former insistence on the *prodesse* of a work of art under the new aesthetic regimen of *delectare*. Yet, although Wolter avoids simplistic explanations and is well aware of the complex changes in the cultural and ideological matrix of the young nation, he creates the impression that American literature developed in a linear manner from obeying the dictates of moral utility to a stage of conflict and subversion, and finally to a stage of emancipation from the oppressive doctrine of a Puritan and/or rationalist mentality. In contrast to a view which "emplots"⁶ the dynamics of literary history in terms of a teleologic development, I want to propose a model of emplotment which describes the cultural dynamics in terms of an ongoing process of negotiation in which conflicting attitudes were problematized rather than reconciled.⁷

A model which takes into account conflicting impulses may be able to explain the fact that American writers could at the same time be faithful servants of the old doctrines castigating the corruptive influence of works of fiction and actively engage in propagating a new faith in the power of the imagination. The fact that often one and the same author proclaimed literature to be and be not a means of moral improvement betrays a frame of mind which was no longer able to relate its value judgments to an undisputed basis of common norms. Novelists exempted their works from the popular indictments of the genre by advertising their writing as based on fact, thereby reaching a climax of

fictionalizing; yet, in the very same texts, they also satirized the devastating consequences of novel reading.⁸

A crucial factor in the success of the novel in America at the end of the eighteenth century was its ability to voice the conflicting aspirations of an increasingly self-confident middle-class readership. As a result of the rise of political democratization after the American Revolution and the subsequent emancipation of the individual from oppressing social conventions, America underwent a process of a far-reaching redistribution of public authority.⁹ And, as works of fiction had been the prime target of Puritan-Protestant moral campaigns, criticism of the novel was predestined to become a prominent battlefield on which the war over public authority was to be fought. As a consequence writers such as Hugh Henry Brackenridge flatly rejected the validity of the doctrine of utility by leading the traditional claim *ad absurdum*. In his introductory chapter to his satirical novel *Modern Chivalry*—the introduction was written and published as early as 1792—Brackenridge even went so far as to recommend his text to his readers because of its lack of moral usefulness:

Being a book without thought, or the smallest degree of sense, it will be useful to young minds, not fatiguing their understandings, and easily introducing a love of reading and study. Acquiring language at first by this means, they will afterwards gain knowledge. It will be useful especially to young men of light minds intended for the bar or pulpit. By heaping too much upon them, style and matter at once, you surfeit the stomach, and turn away the appetite from literary entertainment, to horse-racing and cockfighting. I shall consider myself, therefore, as having performed an acceptable service to all weak and visionary people, if I can give something to read without the trouble of thinking.¹⁰

With its constant use of (parodistic) metafictional digressions,¹¹ Brackenridge's *Modern Chivalry* is a rather exceptional text; yet no study of the rise of the metafictional discourse in the Early Republic can afford to ignore it because it satirizes the entire repertoire of contemporary aesthetic principles. It is, *ex negativo* at least, an indispensable sourcebook for all critics who are interested in the aesthetic standards that were supposed to regulate the production and marketing of literary texts in late eighteenth-century America. Most of the metafictional digressions offer

valuable comments on matters such as literary tradition and authority, but also on the extra-literary forces that determined the success of a novel in a rapidly expanding literary market. *Modern Chivalry* may thus attest to the changes in the system of literary norms which recommended a novel to the reading public: the traditional claim to the book's moral utility was no longer very helpful in making a novel a best-seller. In the "Conclusion" of the third volume of *Modern Chivalry* the narrator eloquently presents these views:

I have only farther to say at present, that I wish I could get this work to make a little more noise. Will nobody attack it, and prove that it is insipid, libelous, treasonable, immoral, or irreligious? If they will not do this, let them do something else, praise it, call it excellent, say it contains wit, erudition, genius, and the Lord knows what? Will nobody speak? What? Ho! are you all asleep in the hold there down at Philadelphia? Will none of you abuse, praise, reprobate, or commend this performance? (MC 262)

Given the enormous variety of metafictional digressions included in Brackenridge's novel, *Modern Chivalry* might have offered Jürgen Wolter an excellent basis for exploring functions of metafictional discourses other than those described in his essay. Brackenridge's text is particularly interesting as it demonstrates that the changes in late eighteenth-century American literature did not—as Wolter claims—primarily originate in the epistemological crisis, but in the different assessment of public authority and the subsequent changes in the mechanics regulating the literary market. One may even argue that the epistemological crisis could not have been as pervasive as it was, had the traditional authorities ruling moral behavior and good taste still been in command. Yet, if "negative" publicity of a novel ("noise") was more effective in securing its success than any recommendation based on its moral usefulness, one may well conclude that the conventional standards for recommending a work of art had already become obsolete. And so had the fictional claim of eighteenth-century novelists to the "historicity" or "authenticity" of their narratives already become a rather commonplace and thus not very original and effective means of answering the indictments of the genre. Writers such as Royall Tyler or William Hill Brown now used a far more efficient strategy of responding to the attacks of the critics:

they readily consented to the traditional censure, but then they redirected the criticism at an altogether different target, i.e. at the productions of their English competitors. Thus, in his novel *The Algerine Captive*, Tyler argued that the inexperienced reader of English novels might be "insensibly taught to admire the levity, and often the vices, of the parent country." An English novel, he then maintained, was likely to impress

on the young female mind an erroneous idea of the world in which she is to live. It paints the manners, customs, and habits, of a strange country; excites a fondness for false splendor; and renders the homespun habits of her own country disgusting.

There are two things wanted, said a friend to the author: that we write our own books of amusement, and that they exhibit our own manners. (AC xi-xii)

As American novelists of the late eighteenth century greatly suffered from the pressures of the literary market which was virtually flooded with pirated and thus inexpensive editions of English novels, they were more than willing to put all the blame that had formerly been voiced against works of fiction in general, merely on English productions. Given the nationalistic orientation of post-revolutionary America, the writers of the Early Republic also liked to think of the English novel as a severe threat to the American political system as it presented the American reader with the picture of a society which was governed by "anti-democratic" principles.

Moreover, instead of simply giving in to the stereotyped vilification of fiction, American novelists of the late eighteenth century pursued a complex strategy: they attempted to find the primary justification of their fictions by "re-inventing" the novel as a *necessary* instrument of the readers' social education, but they did so without giving in to simple-minded moralizing. Cathy N. Davidson is certainly right in stressing that the distribution and structure of public authority had fundamentally changed during the Early Republic. Indeed, as a result of the so-called democratization of the post-revolutionary American mind, the ministry, which before the revolution had held the central position of a moral arbiter and guide, had suffered a great loss of prestige. The fact that ministers became ever more avid prophets of moral degeneration caused by novel reading while, at the same time, an increasing number of

readers shunned their advice, certainly indicates a shift of public authority from the traditional centers (of authority) to the margins, i.e. from the ministry to the "democratic" individual.¹²

Writers such as William Hill Brown seem to have been perfectly aware of the threat their fictions posed to the authority of the ministry, and as if to camouflage their true intentions, namely the novelists' claim to the very authority the clergy had held before, they occasionally paid tribute to the expectations of more conservative readers. Thus, in his epistolary novel *The Power of Sympathy* (1789)—a text often regarded as the first American novel—Brown has one of his characters, Mrs. Holmes, advise the addressee of her letter (and thus the implied reader):

I have seldom spoken to you on the importance of religion and the veneration due to the characters of the clergy. I always supposed your good sense capable of suggesting their necessity and eligibility. The ministers of no nation are more remarkable for learning and piety than those of this country. The fool may pretend to scorn, and the irreligious to condemn, but every person of sense and reflection must admire that sacred order, whose business is to inform the understanding and regulate the passions of mankind. Surely, therefore, that class of men will continue to merit our esteem and affection, while virtue remains upon earth. (PS 79)

Brown's plea for an acknowledgement of the authority of the ministry sounds rather wooden, especially in a text which persistently undercuts the validity of this very plea by its own claims to authority. Paradoxically enough, it is the novelist (or rather his fictionalized spokesperson) who assumes (and obviously has) the authority necessary to grant secondary authority to those who *deserve* our "veneration." Thus, what, at first glance, may well be a writer's voluntary tribute to traditional social order, may also be an indirect and, as it were, sub-conscious act of a novelist's self-empowerment.

Cathy N. Davidson's reading of the rise of the novel in the Early Republic as an expression and product of a gradual re-formation or re-attribution of social authority¹³ presents an interesting new perspective on the emergence of metafictional discourse in the literature of the Early Republic. Most novels of the Early Republic attest to the novelists' claim to authority and to the role of educators of a democratically minded readership. As, at the end of the eighteenth century, American novelists

registered a drastic decline of the traditional system of social and moral values they must have been rather irritated by the increasing destabilization of the very authority they wished to exert. At the same time, they must also have felt tempted to call for what they regarded as their new role as arbiters of public taste and agents of an individualized process of self-education. In a democratic society in which the individual's actions were no longer governed by a generally accepted system of social norms, readers—so the opinion of many novelists of the Early Republic—were called upon to improve their mental faculties by continual self-education, and novel reading was recommended as a means to reach this end. Thus a character in William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* advises her friend to regard the tale of an unfortunate woman as a moral example from which she may draw moral lessons for her own self-improvement. "[I]t certainly becomes us," Brown apostrophizes through one of his characters, Miss Harriot Fawcett,

to draw such morals and lessons of instruction from [the occurrences] as will be a mirror by which we may regulate our conduct and amend our lives. A prudent pilot will shun those rocks upon which others have been dashed to pieces and take example from the conduct of others less fortunate than himself. It is the duty of the moralist, then, to deduce his observations from preceeding facts in such a manner as may directly improve the mind and promote the economy of human life.¹⁴

In a society which was in the process of reorganizing its system of social control by challenging the traditional centers of authority and by stressing the individual's power of self-regulation, it may not come as a surprise that the producers of *belles lettres* immediately offered their services as competent moral educators of the public while, at the same time, challenging the established modes of moralizing. Novelists were quick with their claim that only literature could replace the traditional wardens of civic virtue. Indeed, they could even exploit the new craving for fiction and the subsequent change in the reading habits of Americans for their own purposes. If readers refrained from reading moral tracts and other texts with an explicitly didactic purpose then they had to be addressed by means of more popular genres. In his novel *The Power of Sympathy*, William Hill Brown has his fictional moral arbiter, Mrs.

Holmes, argue in support of the *belles lettres* and their claims to moral authority. "Didactic essays," Mrs. Holmes asserts

are not always capable of engaging the attention of young ladies. We fly from the labored precepts of the essayist to the sprightly narrative of the novelist. Habituate your mind to remark the difference between truth and fiction. You will then always be enabled to judge of the propriety and justness of a thought and never be misled to form wrong opinions by the meretricious *dress* of a pleasing tale. You will then be capable of deducing the most profitable lessons of instruction, and the design of your *reading* will be fully accomplished. (PS 77)

Brown's novel abounds in metafictional comments on issues such as the proper purpose of novel reading, and the novel's characters constantly express opinions which engage every reader in an individual metafictional discourse. Brown's *Power of Sympathy* is perhaps the most accomplished example of the uses of metafictional self-reflexion in the early American novel. The arguments Brown's characters voice in favor of fiction eloquently display and respond to the entire repertoire of contemporaneous prejudices against novel reading. The prime foundation of the conventional censure of fiction, i.e. the belief that novel reading would corrupt the reader's moral being, is attacked and undermined with particular diligence. As the above quotation clearly illustrates, Mrs. Holmes (and certainly William Hill Brown) did not find fault with fiction, but rather with the potential naivety of novel readers. Mrs. Holmes does not want to cure the malady (the danger of misreading) by killing the patient (fiction), and therefore does not call for a ban on novel reading; quite the reverse, she advocates "novel literacy," i.e. the cultivation of the ability to read novels aright, to "remark the difference between truth and fiction" (PS 77) and, as a consequence, to "be capable of deducing the most profitable lessons of instruction" (PS 77) from a class of texts which could well help improve civic virtue. Brown's program of a training in "novel literacy" is based on an extension and intensification of novel reading, not on its reduction.

The arguments American novelists of the late eighteenth century employed in their attempts at establishing and securing their status as America's new wardens of public virtue may easily lead one to the assumption that one system of authority was merely replaced by another

which, as a matter of fact, did not even differ in the means it used in order to fulfill its functions. Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* does, however, tell a different story. Far from claiming the authority the ministry had lost, novelists like William Hill Brown did not even attempt to establish a fixed system of *common* social norms. Instead of confronting the reader with moral edification or even indoctrination, late eighteenth-century American novelists were engaged in a discussion of the very presuppositions of social norms and their claim to indisputable *public* authority. As the passage from Brown's *Power of Sympathy* lucidly shows, the didactic impulse of early American fiction was primarily directed at initiating a process of the reader's *individual* "self-education" or "self-correction." Readers were supposed to draw their own *private* lessons from the novelists' stories, and, once more in *The Power of Sympathy*, Brown uses his principal spokesperson Mrs. Holmes, in order to convey his message to his readers:

Satire is the correction of the vices and follies of the human heart; a woman may, therefore, read it to advantage. What I mean by enforcing this point is to impress the minds of females with a principle of self-correction; for among all kinds of knowledge which arise from reading, the duty of self-knowledge is a very eminent one; and it is at the same time the most useful and important. (PS 50)

Brown's novel amply illustrates that moral edification had given way to a new principle of self-education, a principle which, on the one hand, promoted a rather traditional notion of civic virtue, while, on the other hand, it challenged the very basis of this notion by insisting on the subjective and individual quality of man's education. The role of moral arbiter and guardian of "female education" which Brown seems to take on in the "Preface" to his novel is, indeed, not at all the role of a writer who wants to enforce his claims to moral authority. Although Brown, like most of his fellow novelists at the end of the eighteenth century, is a moralist, he knew all too well that an enlightened and "democratized" readership would no longer accept the norm of moral edification that had once been regarded as the true basis on which a novel could be recommended to the American reader. For Brown, the best guide to proper conduct is that which "*will bear the test of reflection*" (PS 98).

In spite of such extremely individualistic statements, American novelists did not really refrain from claiming the authority they explicitly located in each individual person's capability of moral discrimination. Yet, although novelists did not completely abstain from blunt moralizing, they had set in motion a process which challenged their own claims to authority. They had shown that moral values were the result of a process of cultural negotiation, and they had also shown that these values might have to be re-negotiated as a result of cultural changes. The novel offered a forum for that: it invited the reader to engage in a process of self-education, and this process implied that the reader constantly submitted to *and* questioned the very authority of the text. The eminence of metafictional discourses in early American fiction attests to the fact that the writers of fiction themselves were engaged in a process of negotiation, a process in which they sought to re-define the "role" fiction should henceforth play in American culture.

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NOTES

¹Cf. G. Harrison Orians, "Censure of Fiction in American Romances and Magazines: 1789-1810," *PMLA* 52 (1937): 195-214, Terence Martin, *The Instructed Vision: Scottish Common Sense Philosophy and the Origins of American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1961) 57-101, Henry Petter, *The Early American Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1971) 4-21, and, with the focus on the response to fiction from the 1840s through 1860s, Nina Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1984) esp. chapters 3 and 9.

²Royall Tyler, *The Algerine Captive; or, the Life and Adventures of Doctor Updike Underhill, Six Years a Prisoner Among the Algerines*, ed. Jack B. Moore (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1967) vi-ix; italics mine; hereafter cited as AC with page references to this edition.

³Cf. esp. Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: OUP, 1986) 55-79.

⁴On the extraordinary success of these libraries see esp. Herbert Ross Brown, *The Sentimental Novel in America, 1789-1860* (Durham: Duke UP, 1940) 3-27.

⁵Gordon S. Wood, "The Democratization of Mind in the American Revolution," *The Moral Foundations of the American Republic*, ed. Robert H. Horwitz (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1979) 102-28.

⁶The terms "emplot" and "emplotment" refer to the fact that in our attempts at representing reality we unwittingly impose culturally pre-established and received narrative plots onto the data the phenomenal world offers, and that we are thus able to find a coherence which is not inherent in the data themselves but stems from the culturally accepted models of "world-making" and plausibility. For a theoretical foundation of these terms see Hayden White's *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978) esp. "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," and his essay "The Narrativization of Real Events," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1981): 793-98.

⁷Cf. Winfried Fluck, "Literature as Symbolic Action," *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 28 (1983): 361-71, and esp. Kenneth Burke's seminal study *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1967).

⁸An excellent example of this strategy is Tabitha Gilman Tenney's *Female Quixotism: Exhibited in the Romantic Opinions and Extravagant Adventures of Dorcasina Sheldon* (1801; New York: OUP, 1992). The story of Dorcasina is introduced as a true biography while, at the same time, the author paradoxically testifies to the verisimilitude of the tale by referring to the literary precedent, *Don Quixote*, as the basis of its claim to authenticity: "... you may suspect it to be a mere romance, an Hogarthian caricatura, instead of a true picture of real life. But, when you compare it with the most extravagant parts of the authentic history of the celebrated hero of La Mancha, the renowned Don Quixote, I presume you will no longer doubt its being a true uncoloured history of a romantic country girl . . ." (3). Yet, in spite of its play with its overt fictionality, Tenney's novel explicitly censures novel reading and tries—very much like Dorcasina's mother had tried with respect to her daughter—to prevent the reader's imagination "from being filled with the airy delusions and visionary dreams . . . with which the indiscreet writers of that fascinating kind of books, denominated Novels, fill the heads of artless young girls, to their great injury, and sometimes to their utter ruin" (4-5).

⁹Cf., for instance, James A. Henretta's *The Evolution of American Society, 1700-1815* (Lexington: Heath, 1973) and Jay Fliegelman's *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982).

¹⁰Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Modern Chivalry; Containing the Adventures of Captain John Farrago and Teague O'Regan, His Servant*, ed. Lewis Leary (New Haven: College & University Press, 1965) 26-27; hereafter cited as MC with page references to this edition.

¹¹The reader of *Modern Chivalry* will, however, soon find out that Brackenridge's constant use of metafictional reflections is not digressive but the main principle which governs the novel's structure and the narrative process. Cf. esp. Helmbrecht Breinig's analysis of the novel in his *Satire und Roman: Studien zur Theorie des Genrekonflikts und zur satirischen Erzählliteratur der USA von Brackenridge bis Vonnegut* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1984) 87-125.

¹²The fact that, at the end of the eighteenth century, the clergy intensified its attacks on writers of novels and on their claim to moral authority may be understood as a sign of the desperate and rather futile attempt at winning back the authority the clergy had already lost. For a discussion of this strategy in nineteenth-century America cf., for instance, Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Avon, 1978).

¹³ According to Davidson, the novel posed a fundamental challenge to the existing social order. "The pervasive censure of fiction," she claims, "eloquently attests to the force fiction itself was perceived to have as an ideology (or as an agent of ideology). Had the novel not been deemed a potent proponent of certain threatening changes, there would have been little reason to attack it. Had the novel not been seen as a covert or even overt critique of the existing social order, there would have been no need to defend so rigorously what had not been called into question nor to strive to persuade potential novel readers of the harm that they would do themselves should they foolishly indulge their appetite for fiction" (Davidson 40).

¹⁴ William Hill Brown, *The Power of Sympathy; or, the Triumph of Nature, Founded in Truth*, ed. William S. Osborne (New Haven: College & University Press, 1970) 66; hereafter cited as *PS* with page references to this edition.

Faulkner and Racism: A Commentary on Arthur F. Kinney's "Faulkner and Racism"

PHILIP COHEN

Anyone seeking to shed light on the vexed subject of the racial convictions expressed by William Faulkner during his life and in his fiction must, I think, confront the central fact that Faulkner's racial attitudes, like his explorations of gender and class, were often contradictory, even violently conflicted at any given moment of his career. True, as Arthur Kinney points out, Faulkner progressed from giving voice both in his life and work to some of the most pernicious racist beliefs about African-Americans that he had inherited from his family and his society to expressing more insight into and sympathy for the plight of southern blacks than almost any other southern white male writer of his time. As a young man in his mid-twenties in New Haven, Connecticut, in the autumn of 1921, for example, he smugly lectured his father about how unworkable the relatively enlightened race relations up north were:

You cant tell me these niggers are as happy and contented as ours are, all this freedom does is to make them miserable because they are not white, so that they hate white people more than ever, and the whites are afraid of them. There's only one sensible way to treat them, like we treat Brad Farmer and Calvin and Uncle George. (Watson 149)

Indeed, Faulkner's first Yoknapatawpha novel, *Flags in the Dust* (first published in 1929 as *Sartoris*), perpetuates rather than examines Southern racial stereotypes and caricatures. As Professor Kinney remarks, African-Americans in this novel "are characterized by the Strother family—a father

*Reference: Arthur F. Kinney, "Faulkner and Racism," *Connotations* 3.3 (1993/94): 265-78.

who swindles the people of his parish by gambling on their savings [and] a son who lies about his heroism during World War I" (267). Caspey's short-lived rebellion in the novel against his white masters only serves to parody the shattering effect that aerial service in World War I has had upon the young Bayard Sartoris. No longer content to play the faithful family retainer like Simon Strother, Caspey loafs insolently and retails to his credulous family absurdly fabricated stories about the war in dialect. But his revolt is settled with comic violence by old Bayard with a stick of firewood, and thereafter he relapses into the obedient "nigger" he was before he went overseas. Thereafter, he disappears from the novel. Conceivably, this brief rebellion against white authority represents the unsettling effects which the war had on those black veterans who returned to the society for which they had risked their lives only to find that it still refused to grant them equality, but it is treated far too broadly to be taken seriously. Even Simon's self-importance parodies Sartoris arrogance in that being a Sartoris servant, he sets himself a peg or two higher than the other blacks in the novel. Kinney's assertion, however, that Faulkner also reveals that Simon's daughter Elnora has "surrendered to the white Colonel John Sartoris to produce a mulatto, and bastard, son" (267), presumably Isom, is incorrect. Elnora does not have a child by Colonel Sartoris in Faulkner's third novel, although he went on to make her the colonel's illegitimate daughter in the 1934 short story "There Was A Queen" (727). And Professor Kinney is also right to draw our attention to Faulkner's infamous analogy in the book between Negroes and mules: the omniscient narrator claims that the latter resemble blacks "in their impulses and mental processes" (268).

From this youthful nadir, Faulkner underwent the difficult task of trying to shed his racist inheritance without completely doing so. His progressive evolution when it comes to issues of race is there for all to see in works like *Light in August* (1932), *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), *Go Down, Moses* (1942), and *Intruder in the Dust* (1948). And those familiar with Faulkner's biography are well aware of his courageous, embattled attempt in the 1950s to stake out a public compromise position between impatient northern interventionism and southern intransigence in particular over the Civil Rights crisis and in general over the role and place of African-Americans in the predominantly Euro-American modern South and indeed

in the rest of the United States of America. If Faulkner's solution, a liberal version of gradualism, strikes us today as conservative, we would do well to remember that he was privately and publicly vilified by family, friends, and others for advocating it.

In today's environment of generally sympathetic progressive ideological analysis of Faulkner's novels, however, it seems all too easily forgotten that the man who in 1931 published the story "Dry September," one of the strongest critiques of lynch law and mob rule yet offered by a Southern writer, wrote a letter at the same time to the *Memphis Commercial-Appeal* that Neil R. McMillen and Noel Polk call "astonishing for the baldness of the racial attitudes it expresses" and "its virtual defense of lynching as an instrument of justice" (McMillen 3). After asserting "there was no need for lynching until after reconstruction days," Faulkner goes on to say, "I have yet to hear . . . of a man of any color and with a record beyond reproach, suffering violence at the hands of men who knew him" (McMillen 4). No student of Faulkner familiar with his horrific and critical representation of the lynching of Lee Goodwin, a white man, in both the original and the published versions of *Sanctuary* (1929, 1931) could fail to be troubled by the lines with which the author concludes his letter: "But there is one curious thing about mobs. Like our juries, they have a way of being right" (McMillen 6).

In the wake of D. H. Lawrence's maxim about trusting the teller and not the tale, the formalist banishment of the author, and her or his subsequent death under poststructuralism, some may be tempted to bracket Faulkner's life and focus solely on his fiction. Yet, even the novels and short stories of Faulkner's maturity frequently contain relatively enlightened racial views crammed chock-a-block next to arresting images, actions, and language that many readers would be hard pressed not to acknowledge as racist. Perhaps Faulkner's conflicted views on race are most evident where the troubling issue of miscegenation is concerned. Although he wrote with sorrow and regret about the injustice of the sexual exploitation of black female slaves by Southern slaveholders like Thomas Sutpen in *Absalom* and Lucius McCaslin in *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner's fictional characters early and late suggest that, like most white Southerners of his day, he was not so enlightened or liberal as to condone consensual interracial relationships. Not only are Henry Sutpen and Quentin Compson

haunted by the fear of miscegenation but, one suspects, so was some part of Faulkner's divided psyche. And yet he remained capable of analyzing this fear even as it energized his imagination. Thus in *Light in August*, for example, it is by no means clear that any black blood actually runs in Joe Christmas's veins. Nevertheless, Christmas believes that he has mixed parentage, and this belief causes him along with everyone else in the novel to view him and his actions differently than they would had they believed him to be white. As Judith Bryant Wittenberg points out, "the text's predominant concern" is with "race as a linguistic and social construct rather than a biological given, its focus more on the concept of race than on actual race relations" (146).

The white Southern fear, even horror of miscegenation is also alive and well in *Go Down, Moses* where Sophonsiba Beauchamp ignores her brother Hubert's self-serving defense of his liaison with his black cook—"They're free now! They're folks too just like we are" (289)—and sends the servant packing. In pointing out that bachelor Hubert has never had sexual relations with "proper" white women, Faulkner underscores how patriarchal idealization of white women as non-sexual ladies only led to sexual exploitation of more accessible black female slaves and servants in the antebellum and postbellum South as well. Even the frequently heroic Isaac McCaslin, beneficiary of Sam Fathers's tutelage on man's relation to the wilderness, can only look at Roth Edmonds's part-black mistress and their illegitimate child and think to himself, "*Maybe in a thousand or two thousand years in America . . . But not now! Not now!*" (344). Immediately after the woman leaves without taking Roth's guilt money, Ike lies shaking in his cot thinking how "*Chinese and African and Aryan and Jew, all breed and spawn together until no man has time to say which one is which nor cares*" (347).

Although the fear of miscegenation is as evident in *Go Down, Moses* as in *Absalom*, so is an awareness of the tortured injustice of race relations in the South, an awareness that drives Quentin Compson in *Absalom* to say quickly "I dont hate it" when Shreve McCannon asks him why he hates his native region so and then to repeat the phrase to himself five times as if trying to convince himself of its truth (303). Indeed, some aspects of Faulkner's composition of *Go Down, Moses* underscore his growing racial awareness. As Faulkner revised the short stories that make

up the novel, Michael Grimwood observes, he repudiated the formulaic Anglo-American depictions of comic "darkies" inherited from plantation literature that characterized the stories in their original appearance in national magazines such as *Harper's*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *Collier's* (275-77). In place of the racist aspects of Lucas Beauchamp's depiction in these stories, for example, he occasionally presented the readers of his novel with a more complex character that may appear somewhat inconsistent with the comic, even clownish Uncle Remus figure Lucas cuts in the earlier-inscribed but unrevised material. The omniscient narrator of *Go Down, Moses*, however, occasionally seems ambivalent on the subject of race. In describing Sam Fathers, Ike's mentor, as having been betrayed by his mother "who had bequeathed him not only the blood of slaves but even a little of the very blood which had enslaved it; himself his own battleground, the scene of his own vanquishment and the mausoleum of his defeat," the narrator subscribes to a kind of essentialism of race and blood (162). Then again, the narrator also points out several times that the servile and inferior blood of the black race has been made so by years of slavery. And how does Rider's intense love and grief for his dead wife Mannie in "Pantaloons in Black" relate to these observations? Although Professor Kinney is right to suggest that *Go Down, Moses* "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" (274), it is necessary now and again to emphasize the limits of Faulkner's liberalism.

Critics on both the left and the right have had difficulty dealing with Faulkner's often simultaneous adherence and resistance to the white supremacist racial doctrines of his day, with the unceasing dialectic of progressive and conservative racial discourses that constitutes his work. (One notable exception is Eric Sundquist's *Faulkner: The House Divided* which is attentive to the ambivalence in racial matters that characterizes Faulkner's life and fiction.) Sympathetic critical assessments of Faulkner in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s issued primarily from a blending of liberal formalist ideological sources such as the Southern New Critics Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren with their ties to the short-lived conservative Fugitive and Agrarian movements. Unlike these assessments which often stressed Faulkner's transcendent tragic vision or wisdom

on racial matters, the temptation in our own age of progressive cultural and ideological criticism is to view Faulkner's own comments and fictional representations, when they deviate from current ideals and practice as either the reprehensible, politically incorrect expression of a wide gamut of racist beliefs and ideas or as—and this is more likely to be the case—ironic, subtle negative critiques of an oppressive social order. Critics of the latter persuasion, as Frederick Crews observes, “are militantly committed to uncovering Faulkner's sympathies with the blacks, women, and other subaltern figures who were ‘marginalized’ by the racist and patriarchal Southern order” (126). We have thus moved from Agrarian-influenced conservative readings of Faulkner with all their talk of community, transcendent humanism, and tragic Christianity to poststructuralist readings of Faulkner as the ideological writer par excellence at home on the barricades of every cause from the 1960s to the present.

But why should reading and writing about and especially teaching Faulkner's work in the 1990s be characterized by this tendency to beatify or demonize a constantly conflicted and evolving writer by our contemporary standards? At stake here, among other issues, is our ability to investigate and talk about a particular period of the past as something not only similar to but also different from our own time. Faulkner was neither an anachronistic progressive nor a dyed-in-the-wool reactionary but both. Romantic and Modernist hagiolatry of the creative writer aside, it seems excessively stringent to expect Faulkner's fiction not to display traces of the racist ideology of his culture. After white male Southerners regained political power in the period following Reconstruction, of course, they quickly began a program of systematic legal and illegal disenfranchisement of blacks that included much of the separate and drastically inferior Jim Crow legislation that the Supreme Court's opinion on *Plessy v. Ferguson* ratified in 1896. Consequently, the racial situation in the South was worse, in some ways, than it had been during the antebellum period. This increased hardship and exploitation then led to the Great Migration of black families to northern urban centers such as Chicago, Detroit, and New York during the first half of the century. The fiction of Faulkner's most white hot creative period, 1929-1942, passes through other alembics as well, such as Southern xenophobia, various discourses of eugenics,

and the fear of race suicide by miscegenation that characterized white America in the 1920s and 1930s.

Perhaps another key point for understanding Faulkner's racial attitudes is to recognize that the widely-held negative and racist stereotypes of blacks in 19th century American culture and society became positive but still racist stereotypes of blacks in the early 20th century. This transformation was spurred, in great part, by the influence of Freud and the modern disenchantment, even disgust, with civilization, rationality, and bourgeois Euro-American values. If the discourse of primitivism was deployed negatively in antebellum America to support the suppression of African-American desire for freedom and equality by portraying blacks as children, the men as brutal rapists, and the women as promiscuous sluts, it was then used positively to celebrate blacks in an equally constrained way that did not extend to recognizing African-American political and social goals. In modern fiction such as *Dark Laughter* (1925) by Sherwood Anderson, one of Faulkner's mentors, and some of Faulkner's earlier work, we find the modern stereotype of the African-American, whether comic or tragic, as irrational, emotionally uncomplicated, and sexually liberated child juxtaposed with the neurosis, repression, and despair that characterizes white middle-class life. As Michael Grimwood has pointed out, those writers who drew upon the "cult of the primitive" in their fiction by idealizing "unrepressed personalities, in effect, simply transformed the same old figure from an object of ridicule to an object of admiration" (244). Thus in *Flags in the Dust* Faulkner counterpoints a desperately poor and relatively simple but nevertheless harmonious black family with the tragedy of young Bayard Sartoris's rootlessness and despair in order to heighten the emotional impact of the latter. The positive black stereotype represented with gritty realism by the black family with whom Bayard stays on Christmas Eve and throughout the next day before leaving his home and region forever is similar to what one finds in the conclusions of both *Soldiers' Pay* (1926) and *The Sound and the Fury* (1929). After this poor family takes Bayard in, feeds him, and gives him a place to sleep, one of their number drives him to the train station on Christmas Day, the only day of the year that the sharecropper can pause in his labor.

Faulkner's fiction not only expresses this inherited tradition, it increasingly complicates and occasionally repudiates it even though his most complex representations of blacks are generally reserved for male characters like Lucas Beauchamp in *Go Down, Moses* and Lucas again in *Intruder in the Dust*. Most readers of *Go Down, Moses* will remember Lucas's agonized cry after wrestling for a pistol with Zack Edmonds over whether or not the latter has the right to appropriate Lucas's wife Molly: "'How to God . . . can a black man ask a white man to please not lay down with his black wife? And even if he could ask it, how to God can the white man promise he wont?'" (58). Even if Faulkner's mature fiction often seems more insightful and sympathetic to the plight of the black man in the modern South than that of the black woman—Molly here seems a prize to be fought over by men in an unacknowledged patriarchal system of exchange—he still deserves credit as a white author for investigating what manhood and psychological equilibrium was possible for a black man in a white culture where his slightest assertion of masculinity was fiercely put down. Notably, Faulkner's treatment of African-American sexuality does not generally underscore promiscuity, a major element of the primitivist stereotype whether viewed sympathetically or critically: witness, for example, the monogamous relationships of Lucas and Molly and Rider and Mannie in *Go Down, Moses*.

As his letters and essays along with his fiction suggest, Faulkner knew Southern masculine attitudes on race quite well from the inside. Increasingly, he struggled with his racist patrimony, and his work reflects this continual and continuous struggle. Consequently, the various representations of race in his macabre, melodramatic, and violent work often seem like an uneasy balancing act that rarely stays at a point of equilibrium for long. The difficulty which a reversal of Faulkner's culture's belief in white supremacy has in dealing with this tightrope act is only one of many reasons why he remains so difficult an author to teach. Professor Kinney comments on Granny's "intractable racism" in the stories that form *The Unvanquished* (1937) and how 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" (269). The question readers of *The Unvanquished* must decide is

whether Faulkner is constructing an ironic critique of Granny's racial prejudices or merely overlooking it as he champions her heroism. Enmeshed in the Southern culture he wrote about, Faulkner seems simultaneously complicit and critical of its various ideological manifestations. I am not talking here about the problematic interpretive gambit of identifying the words and beliefs of some of Faulkner's characters with those of the author himself as did so many critics in the 1950s and 1960s. We would do well to remember that uneasy tension and contradiction are defining characteristics of almost all aspects of Faulkner's work and that we simplify it at our risk. In so simplifying his books into either progressive or reactionary fictions, we do a disservice to the man who wrote the books, to the people who read them, and to any notion of history that involves recognizing the difference of the past from our own time.

I wish to conclude by looking at a well-known lightning rod for critical discussions of race in Faulkner's fiction: his representation of the faithful Compson family retainer Dilsey Gibson in *The Sound and the Fury*. Professor Kinney offers an anti-heroic reading of the black servant and substitute mother for the Compson siblings that dissents from Cleanth Brooks's enormously influential reading of her as a stoic, unsentimental Christian who, unlike her white charges, sees the world from the perspective of eternity (Brooks 343-46). One plausible implication of Kinney's contrarian view, a view shared by many black readers of the novel, is that this conception of Dilsey as a heroic martyr tells us more about Southern New Critical racial views than it does about Faulkner's beliefs. Professor Kinney, who calls the preacher Shegog's remarkable Easter Sunday sermon the story of "the white man's cultural heritage" (266), however, might be more sympathetic to Faulkner's depiction of black Christianity in the novel. During the years of slavery, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow, the black church was also an undeniable source of strength, support, and resistance to many, regardless of our modern perception of black Christians as so many Uncle Toms collaborating in their own oppression.

Professor Kinney labels Faulkner's Dilsey as dignified and respected but based, nevertheless, on the stereotype of the mammy, noting that "She invokes pity but insufficient terror" (266). His argument has merit,

especially given Faulkner's almost complete desexualization of Dilsey. In evaluating Faulkner's portrait of Dilsey, we might also take note of the portraits of blacks that other white writers were producing at the time. Whenever I teach *The Sound and the Fury*, for example, I have my students take a look at Roark Bradford's successful *Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun* (1928) which Marc Connelly then dramatized for Broadway with similar success as *Green Pastures* (1931). Indeed, the two men were jointly awarded a Pulitzer Prize for the play. Faulkner's friendship with Bradford dates from his New Orleans days in the mid-1920s, and he first met Connelly in New York in the latter part of 1931 while basking in the notoriety that the publication of *Sanctuary* had generated. In Bradford's *Ol' Man Adam*, the black experience in America is retailed for white consumption through a series of condescendingly comic retellings of Old Testament stories in dialect. Drawing on every black stereotype imaginable, the book presents biblical characters as black denizens of the Mississippi delta in chapters with titles such as "Samson, Strong Boy." In noting "the racial attitudes [Faulkner] had to overcome to present Dilsey Gibson with some measure of dignity and respect" (267) as well as pointing to the stereotypical aspects of Dilsey's characterization, Professor Kinney, it seems to me, has his finger on the difficulties involved in talking about race in Faulkner.

It is both easy and fashionable in literary criticism nowadays either to wave the bloody flag of moral and ideological superiority over an earlier writer's work or to show how such work really reflects ideas and values that parallel our own. Nevertheless, one criterion for evaluating an author's work is, for me, simply how much resistance it offers to the prejudices of its time and place. Furthermore, it seems fair to judge writers by the moral as well as formal and intellectual standards set by their best work. Judged by the moral sympathy and the desire for social justice one finds in his best fiction and without overlooking the difficulties he had in imagining fully and convincingly the inner lives of black men, let alone that of black women, Faulkner remains an American writer to be reckoned with in the 1990s.

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Author's Commentary*

ARTHUR F. KINNEY

In responding to my essay on "Faulkner and Racism" (*Connotations* 3:3), Philip Cohen notes that "It is both easy and fashionable in literary criticism nowadays either to wave the bloody flag of moral and ideological superiority over an earlier writer's work or to show how such work really anticipates or reflects ideas and values that parallel our own." This crucial warning is shared by the authors of two other responses in *Connotations* 4:3, Pamela Knights and John Cooley; we all agree that Faulkner's attempts to deal with the racial issues of Yoknapatawpha, as with those in historic Mississippi, "a liberal version of gradualism," nevertheless caused him to be "privately and publicly vilified by family, friends, and others for advocating it." We agree that what might seem to us a knee-jerk reaction was a difficult one for the Mississippi born Faulkner. Nor were his views always consistent. "Even the novels and short stories of Faulkner's maturity," Cohen continues, "frequently contain relatively enlightened racial views crammed chock-a-block next to arresting images, actions, and language that many readers would be hard pressed not to acknowledge as racist." How, now, we deal with this is our common concern and our common project.

Cooley in this connection is pessimistic. Citing the work of Levi-Strauss, he argues that "it is impossible to 'know' very different people, individually or collectively except by carefully observing differences

*Reference: Arthur F. Kinney, "Faulkner and Racism," *Connotations* 3.3 (1993/94): 265-78; Pamela Knights, "Faulkner's Racism: A Response to Arthur F. Kinney," *Connotations* 4.3 (1994/95): 283-99; John Cooley, "Faulkner, Race, Fidelity," *Connotations* 4.3 (1994/95): 300-12; Philip Cohen, "Faulkner and Racism: A Commentary on Arthur F. Kinney's 'Faulkner and Racism,'" *Connotations* 5.1 (1995/96): 112-22.

from one's own culture, which retains a normative relationship to the other Even if [Faulkner] had abandoned his own society to live for a time among black Mississippians, it is inevitable he would still have viewed African Americans across a racial divide." Consequently, Cooley extends my observations to include other peoples (American Indians) and other works by Faulkner to show how the ideas of cultural primitivism helped Faulkner to locate and manage such differences as those he discerned. Knights is even more trenchant; she first cites the black Southern writer Alice Walker—caught between not fully knowing and needing to know and understand. "I stand in the backyard [of a white antebellum home] gazing up at the windows, then stand at the windows inside looking down into the backyard [toward a "rotting sharefarmer shack" where she was reared], and between the me that is on the ground and the me that is at the windows, History is caught." This is the History that Faulkner deliberately chose to write about, his obsessive focus suggesting a similar need to know. But his understanding, like Walker's, was also limited, as Knights points out, further citing Toni Morrison's sense of the distance between white writer and black as one of "the gaze," of a perspective slightly awry even when fixed on its subject; a "white construction" of black people, in Faulkner's instance, that, Knights argues, now needs its own translations—and our awareness of silences as well as differences of what is spoken awry; of what is not spoken at all.

Cohen points out in an illustration of my own essay what Knights has in mind: he says that my interpretation of the Easter Sunday service in the last section of *The Sound and the Fury* as well as the Rev. Shegog's sermon, which I comment accepts a white (rather than a black) biblical legacy, is too restrictedly a "black perspective" and, moreover, fails to acknowledge the long, hard struggle of the black church which was "an undeniable source of strength, support, and resistance" during the days of slavery, war, and reconstruction. Anyone who has read about the history of black religion in the United States must agree with the positive force of black religion, which not only preached salvation but constantly was called upon to practice it. This is one of Faulkner's most moving passages, perhaps because he was so aware of Cohen's point, and, unfortunately, one of my silences. It is moving because, as Cohen points

out, so many diverse and contradictory attitudes are revealed in key scenes of Faulkner's work: "We would do well to remember that uneasy tension and contradiction are defining characteristics of almost all aspects of Faulkner's work and that we simplify it at our own risk." (Cohen's other useful correction in my essay—the later work "There Was a Queen," that identifies Elnora as Colonel Sartoris's illegitimate daughter, a point not made as I said in the earlier novel *Flags in the Dust/Sartoris*—may refer to the fact that between the two works (1929; 1934) Faulkner learned of the mulatto line started by his great-grandfather whose life was the basis of the Colonel; time, too, complicates matters.) Similarly, Cohen's reference to Judith Bryant Wittenberg's statement that the "predominant concern" of *Light in August* is with "race as a linguistic and social construct rather than a biological given, its focus more on the concept of race than on actual race relations," may dismiss too easily the strong biological urgings of the energetically mature Joe Christmas and the aging Joanna Burden, facing menopause even as she attempts to secure education for the (black) children she herself was never able to bear. The pressures on Faulkner's characters, as on Faulkner, then, are cultural, biological, personal; demanding, unavoidable, conflicting. All four of us agree (as I had hoped readers would) with the centrality and urgency of Faulkner's work as it opens up with power and poetry historic and cultural issues confronting and pressuring the creative imagination that any responsible critic, too, must face.

Not only that: I think these responses have gotten somewhere, somewhere important. "Cultural primitivism" is a method which sheds light as well as limitation in its applications; language must be tested more searchingly; resolution may not be possible, but is not the *sine qua non* of our reading; perhaps a deeper awareness of intentional or unintentional irony is (Cohen) or the distortion of form or syntax (Knight). Let me return to the "mule passage" in *Flags in the Dust*. Sidney Kaplan has located and paraphrased a 72-page pamphlet written by two anti-abolitionists in the Presidential campaign of 1864 which first (satirically) coined the word *miscegenation* to identify the newly growing American population of mixed bloodlines: *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro*, in which they also coined *mulatto* in analogy to *mule*, based on the

similarity of color, function, lack of ancestral line, and—most awful to contemplate—similarity in their desired sterility. Following Cohen, perhaps Faulkner's reference to some Cincinnatus (not Homer or Vergil) singing an epic song about the mule is meant ironically—is his own attempt to parody this traditional Southern belief and attitude as, elsewhere in the novel, as Cohen and Knights both indicate, Caspey serves to parody the white race and the Sartoris family. If so, this is parody by insinuation, to a degree—a matter partaking of form and silence both.

Cohen speaks of the recently discovered letter by Faulkner in 1931 which—uninvited—proposes that lynching is often an acceptable and useful form of justice; and, further, that this was written contemporaneously with the publication of a short story, against lynching, "Dry September." The coincidence is baffling. We might address this at least in part, by a concern with audience: Faulkner might find it *possible* to say something in a story published by the *American Mercury* that would be self-defeating in the *Memphis Commercial-Appeal*; or, following *Sartoris*, the newspaper letter might be an outrageous parody of a Southern anti-abolitionist, its extreme statements meant to show the foolishness of the position. (It might also, as one of my colleagues has suggested, be the result of an unguarded, drunken moment, like the famous interview I cite with Russell Warren Howe, but of course then all the more important for that.) But it also might, as I think Knights would propose, be a signal that should return us to "Dry September," and its more subtle and perfected, less occasional, commentary. Doing that, I find the short story not centrally about lynching at all, but about the frustrations of Minnie Cooper, whose sexual life, like Joanna Burden's, seems to have passed her by and made her subject to the town's mockery. Her fictional rape—for I for one don't believe Willie Mayen would have found (or risked) interest in her—surrounds the abduction of Willie and is at least one referent of the story's title: "Dry September" is a story of class and gender, of the plight of the aging white woman in a society that places no premium on spinsters. Surely that is an explicit theme in the story. But Knights argues that whereas my essay concentrates largely on theme, it "could be extended to include the ideology implicit in other aspects of the texts: the radical distortions of form or the strains of syntax." If

we do that here—if we see that Faulkner's focus on the social victimization of (and pity we might have for) Minnie Cooper is an indirect condemnation of lynching, then we can see how he might also be using "Dry September" to address racial victimization to his fellow Southerners. The very McLendon who strikes his wife is the McLendon who attacked Willie Mayen.

What we might do, in short, and follow the lead of these responses to my essay, is attempt to find in Faulkner's work those fictional strategies that address the problem of race indirectly (through distorted form or syntax) or by omission (through silence) as a way of learning how cultural pressures materially shape the artistic product and, perhaps, reverberate through the artistic imagination. I am struck, for example, that when Faulkner wishes to give us a picture of a black family which, though poor and distant from Bayard Sartoris, nevertheless welcomes him on Christmas Day near the end of *Flags in the Dust/Sartoris*, Faulkner is enabled to picture a black family life because he does so through the white man's eyes which he knows, and uses Bayard to describe their family life through the racial stereotypes that call attention to Bayard's shortcomings. In much the same way, he gives us a black church service—which in the 1920s he would not have known by witness; I still find very few whites at such services in Oxford now—through Benjy's eyes and through the reactions of a Dilsey based on a Mammy he knew well. What Toni Morrison calls "the gaze" or, later, "white constructedness," may not be just a matter of limitation but also a matter of authorial choice. Not one or the other—but both. We should not be content to see it only as an attitude or limitation but also as a dynamic tool or technique to analyze.

Knights is right, of course, that I stop with *Go Down, Moses*. I did so because I think the weight of ancestral miscegenation on both Faulkner's paternal and maternal sides was the burden that finally forced the powerful analyses of this in that novel and in *Absalom, Absalom!* (although there is no way of knowing for sure); and I also think that later works, in a sense, avoid the powerful problems that miscegenation engenders. *Intruder in the Dust* may be an exception—it makes racial discrimination bearable by subjecting it to the fore of a murder mystery; if so Faulkner won that gambit because the town of Oxford, the model

for Jefferson, allowed Hollywood to film the novel there—but still this novel lacks the pain and agony of the earlier work. And *The Reivers* paints Ned Beauchamp as black Sambo: what a falling-off is there unless, again, this is meant like the passage on the mule to paint attitudes Grandfather would have had and which would constitute the only story he would, in the 1920s, want to pass on to his heirs in acculturating them.

In saying this, I do not want to find ways to explain Faulkner that will seem to excuse him; none of us does. But I think *Knights* is right in her suggestion, and Cooley and Cohen right in their examples, to direct us to reread Faulkner as a cultural heir himself struggling with that very culture. He chose not to leave Mississippi (at least until the last two or three years when living near Jill was better than living away from her, and with Estelle). Then the conflict will tell us even more, and go some way to explain why even Toni Morrison herself felt attracted to start with a white writer from the American South. Nor is the matter limited to Faulkner. The same day the editors of *Connotations* sent me an advance copy of Philip Cohen's response, the local mailman delivered our free Amherst weekly newspaper. A lead story tells about my neighbor Carl Vigeland, a freelance writer who has made two trips to Mississippi this year to research a thirty-year-old murder case in Hattiesburg where a black man involved in helping other blacks to register to vote was killed when his house was firebombed, allegedly by members of the Ku Klux Klan who even today have not been convicted despite previous indictments. "The human story is so compelling that it's beginning to take over my life in a way I still haven't been able to grasp," Vigeland is quoted as saying. The racial issues Faulkner's works raise are also too compelling—and too vital—to ignore.

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Sidney Kaplan's essay, "The Miscegenation Issue in the Election of 1864" appeared in the *Journal of Negro History* 34:3 (June 1949) and is reprinted in part in my forthcoming *Critical Essays on William Faulkner: The Sutpen Family*.

"Competing Discourses in *The Winter's Tale*": Two Letters*

Dear David Laird,

This is a note of belated thanks for the copy of your essay in *Connotations*, "Competing Discourses in *The Winter's Tale*." I found it an engaging and provocative piece. Many years ago I proposed that Caliban's word "scamel"—a word that editors had tried in vain to decipher—was meant to be indecipherable, a sign of Caliban's foreignness, but of course that proposal seems modest indeed next to the more extravagant arguments that you have taken it upon yourself to criticize.

I have one puzzlement and one reservation: the puzzlement has to do with the relation between your exposition of the competing discourses in *WT* and your theoretical argument. In order to make your case against Orgel, wouldn't you have to give a coherent reading of one of Leontes's mad speeches rather than Hermione's "verily"? And even if you gave such a reading, would that in itself demolish his proposal that the audience was meant to find it tortured and confused? My reservation has predictably to do with my own small role in the essay. I cannot quite bring myself to go back to that old chestnut, "Invisible Bullets," but I don't think that even in my most enthusiastic Foucauldian moments I was ever arguing that "subversive doubts are silenced" in the theater of absolutism; on the contrary, I proposed both that such doubts were actually generated by that theater, as a positive condition of its articulation, and that the term "subversion," as we tend to use it, was

*Reference: David Laird, "Competing Discourses in *The Winter's Tale*," *Connotations* 4.1-2 (1994/95): 25-43.

trickier than it appeared, since we identified those things as subversive that posed no particular threat to our own assumptions.

Sincerely,

Stephen Greenblatt

Dear Stephen Greenblatt,

I was delighted to get your note about *The Winter's Tale* piece. Good of you to read it and to trouble to say what you did. I suspect that our friend Nancy Hutcheon had a hand in bringing it to your notice and I'm grateful to you both. To respond with equal generosity, I suppose, I should pursue matters no further, stop before falling more deeply into debt. I don't seem able, however, to resist a couple of comments and then to make a request.

I like your suggestion that the piece should have included a reading of one of Leontes's mad speeches. An earlier version did include a fairly detailed discussion of a speech which some have read as, if not mad, at least nonsensical or absurd. Since you spotted the omission in the published version, I'd like you to see a portion of what was deleted.

The inclusion of the reading of Leontes's speech would not, perhaps, have settled the argument. If, in your view, Caliban's "scamel" is indecipherable, is it not also the case that, since as you put it, it counts as a sign of foreignness, it becomes decipherable to the extent that it works within a larger structure of meanings? If I understand Orgel's argument, he's disinclined to consider the possibility of a "comprehensive" connection between one element and another. It's not the fact of the mad speeches that I would deny but rather Orgel's featuring of them in an effort to warn us away from what he calls a common sense interpretation that would endeavor to bring various elements of the text into a coherent relationship or anything that might turn in the direction of a unified or coherent reading.

About your second point—what you graciously refer to as a reservation—let me say that you're right and I am wrong. I should *not* have characterized the argument in "Invisible Bullets" by saying that "subversive doubts are silenced." I'd have been closer to the mark if I'd made it clear that the argument holds that such doubts are expressed, and, in the process of representation, not silenced, that's the wrong word, clearly, but neutralized, defanged, disabled. The word I was trying to avoid was "contained." I wanted to say that the motive seems to me less the containment or redirection of political energies than the interrogation of absolutist aims, theatrical, monarchical, and linguistic, but that's another story and besides the case is closed.

Sincerely,

David Laird

Melville and Grabbe: A Letter*

Dear Editors,

As regards Grabbe's *Don Juan und Faust* as a possible source for Melville, I'm afraid there is no evidence whatsoever that Melville read German and Professor Cook makes no mention of an English translation of Grabbe's play that would have been available to Melville. (I assume that the English translation she offers in brackets is her own.)

Professor Cook's suggestion that Grabbe is the source of Melville's words about the Godhead is striking indeed, but it leaves other possibilities that need further exploration. (1) Behind Grabbe is an ultimate source, available both to him (in German?) and to Melville (in English). (2) Grabbe's lines were translated into English by another author whose work Melville knew. (3) Some friend of Melville who read German, such as George J. Adler, knew Grabbe's writings and called Melville's attention to the lines in question. (4) The similarities are purely coincidental. I think that the second of these possibilities is the most likely, and I hope that another contributor can settle the matter by coming forth with some hard evidence.

Sincerely yours,

Merton M. Sealts, Jr.

*Reference: Eleanor Cook, "Herman Melville and Christian Grabbe: A Source for 'The Godhead is Broken,'" *Connotations* 4.3 (1994/95): 225-27.