

Connotations

A Journal for Critical Debate



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Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate

EDITORS

Inge Leimberg, Lothar Černý, Michael Steppat,
Matthias Bauer, Christiane Lang-Graumann
Managing Director: Dieter Kranz
Editorial Assistant: Susanne Eilks

EDITORIAL ADDRESSES

Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Institute for Bibliography and the
History of the Book, Breite Gasse 39-41, D-48143 Münster, Germany

Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Department of English
Johannisstr. 12-20, D-48143 Münster, Germany

Fax: +49 (251) 8324827; e-mail: connotations@uni-muenster.de
WWW homepage: http://anglisti.uni-muenster.de/conn/con_home.htm

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Each issue consists of articles and a forum for discussion. The forum presents, for instance, research in progress, critical hypotheses, responses to articles published in *Connotations* and elsewhere, as well as to recent books.

Contributions will be published within five months after submission so that discussion can begin without delay.

Articles and responses should be forwarded to the editors. As a rule, articles should not exceed 12,000 words and follow the MLA Handbook. Responses should be limited to 4,000 words. If possible, all contributions should be submitted by e-mail or on diskette (preferably in WordPerfect or Word for DOS/Windows), accompanied by a hard copy; they should be in English and must be proofread before submission. Manuscripts and disks will not be returned.

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A Place Revisited: Editor's Preface

When, in 1991, I revisited my hometown Halberstadt after a 35 years' absence, the impact was of a kind to make me wish for seeing the motif or theme of revisiting a place reflected in literature. The result was a *Connotations* symposium in Halberstadt, in July 1997, where scholarly talks and discussions on *A Place Revisited* were shaded off by the *genius loci* of a place none of the participants had ever thought to either visit or revisit.

My coeditors and I have agreed to present the Halberstadt talks not in a body but successively in three issues of *Connotations*. Otherwise we should deviate from our programme of mixing *Articles* and *Discussion* and, moreover, from keeping our promise to publish the contributions we have accepted for publication as soon as possible. It is hoped that, in the three instalments of talks on *A Place Revisited*, the chronological order of the symposium can still be grasped.

When it comes to the talks themselves readers will find that the authors have responded to the overall thematic question in different ways: to some of them the revisited place is a *locus* of memory, to others "revisiting" means a writer's focusing on a certain place and, last but not least, the revisiting of a place is found and discussed as a thematic unit in a literary work. This last aspect is what I had originally thought of, only to realize, by way of bibliographical research, that the motif or theme is as good as critically unexplored; it is generally taken to mean a critic's turning (again) to a literary subject.

The theme *A Place Revisited*, which is certainly of poignant relevance in the present world, is, strangely enough, far from being exhausted in literary criticism. It is a challenge in more than one respect. If, therefore,

readers take issue with the absence of critical debate (and I could not agree with them more) they are invited to come and fill the gap by submitting responses or any other kind of contribution germane to the subject. We did, of course, discuss the talks there and then in the *Gleimhaus*, even so much so, that no one volunteered for taking notes and writing a report instead of participating. It goes without saying that, for such a policy, I do not claim our readers' approval, but hope that they will understand.

Inge Leimberg

Revisiting Halberstadt, July 1997

JOHN RUSSELL BROWN

The idea was simple compared to the event: an international symposium on "A Place Revisited," to be held at the Gleimhaus library-museum at Halberstadt, the town in rural Saxony where the founder-editor of *Connotations*, Professor Dr. Inge Leimberg, had grown up before moving to the other side of the East/West divide. In the German Democratic Republic, such a meeting of scholars and critics from around the world for open and historically conscious discussions of literature in English would have been unthinkable. Now, once conceived and presented, the project attracted funding from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and the Kultusministerium des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt. Invited members of the symposium were warmly greeted at the Gleimhaus whose staff offered every possible facility and help.

Nothing could have prepared us for this visit. Halberstadt has been bruised during the centuries but is still a city of fabulous riches. At the head of a long open space surrounded by lime trees, stands a great Gothic cathedral, built on the site of two previous ones and presided over by a huge crucified Christ. Its treasury has a temporary roof replacing that blasted away during an air raid that shattered the town in 1945 during the very last days of the war when the American army was advancing as rapidly as it could to meet the Russian forces coming from the East. We were fortunate to be let in to the double cloisters on its south side by an aproned caretaker and then to hear the first guide-tour to be given in English by her young and knowledgeable colleague. Dust lay in the great church itself, a place of worship unused for more than fifty years and with little chance of ever being used again for its intended purpose. We had

time and silence in which to look up into its roof and along the aisles, to gaze at a pair of twelfth-century tapestries each about thirty feet long, and sculptures and paintings by masters of the late middle ages and Renaissance, to study meticulous workmanship in gold, silver, ivory, and precious stones.

On the Sunday morning of our visit, late in July, I entered a calm and spacious church in another quarter of town to find a white-haired congregation of thirty or so people, mostly women, gathered together in the sanctuary at prayers. A little later, in the cathedral there was no one at all. The great square before it was almost empty at mid morning: two or three parked cars, a couple of bicyclists, and one portly, elderly man sweeping the stone steps at the front door of a handsome and decaying eighteenth-century house. On my return an hour or so later, he was sat on the top step with his broom beside him staring across the street at the twin towers of the Church of our Lady which dates from the year 1005.

That night a concert was given in this Romanesque church by a forty-member choir of singers in their twenties and thirties, dressed in urban dinner jackets and black dresses of very individual styles. They were on tour throughout united Germany and sang mostly early and religious music well-suited to the lofty and hugely arched nave built with experienced skill and used for worship by former generations who rated holiness the highest human good. Sounds seemed to be perfected in that space.

Each day of the symposium papers were read and discussed about literary revisitings: by poets, Spenser, Marvell, Keats, Wordsworth, Hopkins, Eliot, and Californian Buddhists; and by novelists, Dickens, James, Conrad, Joyce Carol Oates; and varied works by other writers and some painters, from recent and much earlier times, over centuries shared by this magnificent town which was offered to our appreciation. As our discussions examined the interfaces between persons and places, and between the world of the mind and that of daily business and affairs, the huge question of what should be done with our great inheritance of thinking and living as evidenced across Europe during the last thousand years was bound to fill our minds. That was a conjunction of place and

study we did not anticipate and our new awareness of it will now help to direct our next steps through on-coming time and the building of a new Europe and a new world fit for generations unlike any that have come before.

We were revisiting a Europe from before the last war. Papers prepared for a scholarly attempt to deal with the writings of past times were read in a place that led thought toward the future when Halberstadt will be developed and exploited as other beautiful towns have been. As educators as well as scholars, we knew we were all, in some small way, responsible for what had happened and that we might, in still smaller or at least less noticed ways, be able to have some influence on the next generation that will make that future. How will Halberstadt find means and inspiration to use that great cathedral and its other inheritance of gracious houses, of winding streets with companionable wooden-framed houses and shops, of craftsmanship and art, and of the bomb-cleared building sites in the process of redevelopment as part of adventure capital's competitive programmes? As we considered where we were, our discussions about revisitings were also about all our futures.

The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor

Colin Clout's Homecoming: The Imaginative Travels of Edmund Spenser

DONALD CHENEY

Let me begin by expressing my sense of gratitude and pleasure at being able to address you today. You will of course recognize the conventionality of this remark: it may seem little more than the sort of polite noise we expect from a visitor, especially perhaps from the first speaker on the programme. So I must persuade you that I am sincere, that there is something special about today. I remind you that we are gathered in a quiet place to listen to one another, like shepherds whose sheep are otherwise cared-for; and that this is no typical academic convention where we have the distractions of a big city and the excuse of a crowded programme, where we can pretend to be listening to someone else's paper when we are not listening to anyone's. And to this invocation of pastoral *otium* I now add the romance motif of return, by appealing to those of you who were at an earlier *Connotations* symposium, asking you to bear witness to my genuine pleasure at returning to an hospitable and nourishing setting.

By now, you will recognize that our symposium is well and truly under way, and that the subject of "a place revisited" has been opened. It is important to note how profoundly, and how unquestioningly, we respond to rhetorical appeals to a return or recurrence. Knowledge and memory are so intimately intertwined that it seems as though we cannot know anything that we haven't previously known; that cognition depends on recognition. A sense of *déjà vu* awakens unpredictably deep and reassuring senses of *déjà su*, so that the revisiting of a place almost inevitably suggests patterns completed and an orderly repose that is a bulwark against the randomness of everyday experience.

A canonical text for this is the *Odyssey*, for behind all other invocations of places revisited is the overarching motif of home-coming. In the tragic vision of the *Iliad*, Achilles is forced to confront the isolation of the human condition in all its bleak meaninglessness; by contrast, the *Odyssey* offers the consolation of romance, tracing the process by which a man *can* return to his home, reclaim his past, and assert his personal identity, albeit at the price of denying a claim to immortality. Although both Homeric poems end with an acceptance of death, the *Odyssey* softens or counteracts the tragic vision. The death of Odysseus' faithful dog when he senses that his master has finally returned sets the sentimental tone for the poem's final episodes: for every place revisited is in some measure a figure of the place from which we come and to which we must return. Douglas Frame has suggestively reconstructed the etymology of the Greek word *nóos*, "mind," associating it with the Greek verb *néomai*, "return home," and its associated noun *nostos*, "homecoming": he posits an early form of *nóos* as **nos-os*, deriving from a verbal root **nes-* which he also sees in the name of the wise and aged Nestor.¹ The *Odyssey's* subject is the *nostos* or homecoming of an Odysseus whom Zeus characterizes as "surpassing all other mortals in his *nóos*" (i.66). Odysseus is *polútropos*, a "man of many turns" as the earlier English translations had it, in the sense of his mental agility as well as his roundabout passage home. Our subject will be the various turns, or tropes, by which literature in English revisits its moments of *gnosis*.

The intimations of mortality that I have attributed to Odysseus' homecoming are explored and criticized by Dante in the familiar passage of *Inferno* XXVI when he imagines the aged hero assembling his comrades for a final, hubristic voyage. Tennyson's sympathetic imitation is true to a strong current in the original: for like Francesca and some of the other denizens of Dante's hell, Ulysses expresses a powerful humanity. In continuing to realize his polytropic nature, he finds death; like Dante himself in the opening lines of the poem, he comes up against the mount of Purgatory, the mass of his all-too-human, not-quite-damnable errors.

The post-classical or early mediaeval urge to revisit canonical texts and to complete them is seen here, and in Vegius' "completion" of the *Aeneid*,

and in the legend whereby the three Magi are separately called to one final journey where they will again encounter one another and be baptized by Prester John, and so die and achieve salvation. Here their earlier adventure is rewritten as a prefiguring of their sacramental encounter with Christ and their enjoyment of His salvific power. But it remains for the early modern period, in its aspect of experiencing a rebirth or rediscovery of the classics, to be peculiarly sensitive to the labours and rewards of this textual archaeology, and to cultivate its nostalgia for lost glories. In fact, the very word itself was coined by Roman doctors in the Renaissance, to name a malaise of homesickness affecting members of the papal Swiss Guard. The present essay will provide an overview of how one poet of the English literary Renaissance, Edmund Spenser, explored a sense of departures and returns that constituted a dominant theme of his time and place. The "poet's poet" was certainly *polútropos* in terms of his mastery of artistic turns; I will suggest that he was committed from early in his career to a sense of *nostos* that informs the returns of his pastoral persona, Colin Clout, both in the sixth book of the *Faerie Queene* and in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*.

If English pastoral seems to have an undeniable tone of dignity and importance, this quality was defined late in the tradition by Milton and his Romantic heirs. Milton's story of a primal garden lost and regained makes fully explicit the pastoral metaphors in the Biblical stories, by expressing them in terms of the Homeric dyad I have just mentioned, legends of alienation and return. Milton collapses or denies the traditional distance between warrior and shepherd, high and low styles; after Milton it becomes difficult to take seriously the condescending language with which earlier critics had spoken of the pastoral. We now read the earlier shepherd poems looking for hints and prefigurations of the "true" pastoral strain, echoes of a true classic line that was probably first clearly drawn in the later seventeenth century.

The poetry of Spenser is of particular interest in anticipating (and perhaps enabling) these transformations of pastoral value in the seventeenth century. By comparing the pastoral of the *Shepheardes Calender*, focusing on Colin's loss of paradise, with the pastoral romance of Colin's (and

Spenser's) return at the end of the poet's career, we can see more clearly Spenser's version of poetic survival, his story of homes lost and regained.

As it stands, *The Shepheardes Calender* begins and ends with wintry thoughts. The poem's four "plaintive" eclogues, to use E.K.'s terminology, are the first, sixth, eleventh and twelfth. Their wintry thoughts are expressed by the poem's protagonist, Colin Clout, whom E.K. is careful to identify, in his first gloss to "Januarye," as the name "vnder which . . . this Poete secretly shadoweth himself." It is this autobiographical persona who "compareth his carefull case to the sadde season of the yeare," as the argument to "Januarye" puts it.

In "June," Colin also compares his case to that of Adam unparadised. He responds as follows to Hobbinoll's praise of the harmony and pleasures of the pastoral setting:

O happy Hobbinoll, I blesse thy state,
That Paradise hast found, whych *Adam* lost.
Here wander may thy flock early or late,
Withouten dreade of Wolues to bene ytost:
Thy louely layes here mayst thou freely boste.
But I vnhappy man, whom cruell fate,
And angry Gods pursue from coste to coste,
Can nowhere fynd, to shroude my lucklesse pate. (9-16)²

The sorry condition of Colin, totally undone by his unrequited love for Rosalind, has been something of an embarrassment to almost all readers of the poem. Although we can see that the *Calender* is a calendar for every year, Colin cannot see himself as getting past December. We may be aware of the *rota Vergiliana*, whereby an eclogue book becomes an advertisement of a new poet's readiness to emulate Vergil and compose an epic as soon as he gains patronage; and encouraged by E.K.'s assiduous advertisements for poem and poet, we can agree with A. C. Hamilton³ that the argument of the *Shepheardes Calender* is "the rejection of the pastoral life for the truly dedicated life in the world"—at least this is one of the poem's arguments, or conversational gambits. But Colin shows no readiness to leap over the garden wall, only to leap into the grave. Again, we may agree with Paul Alpers' emphasis on the ability of pastoral song to give pleasure and

reconcile man to his mortal limits.⁴ Colin himself does manage, in the present-time sequence of the poem's action, to provide a pastoral elegy for Dido that, in its motion from careful to happy verse, seems to fit Alpers' description almost as well as does *Lycidas*, its best exemplum. Yet this is sung in "November," and by December Colin is back to bemoaning his own lot with no sense of any spring beyond his present winter.

In short, the plot of *The Shepheardes Calender*, if not its argument, traces the triumph of death and isolation over the forces for life and love in the pastoral milieu. Spenser's eclogue book gives great prominence to an element present in earlier examples of the genre: a sense of a paradise which if not lost is at least threatened by the various penalties of Adam: seasons' difference, death, an obsessive and sterile eroticism. Even in Arcadia, the ego finds its discontents. A reluctant shepherdess, or even more a girl who scorns pastoral guises, provides a telling critique of the pastoral premise. We like to imagine a world in which our songs are effectively tuned to the water's fall—our *carmen* becomes thereby a charm capable of making us at one with the easy and shameless flow of energies found in nature, the guiltless fall of water on its way to the sea. We dream of being able to tell—measure out, confess, express—our loves without shame or envy. But we need a willing shepherdess to share our dreams if the magic is to work.

The Colin Clout of *The Shepheardes Calender* is not presented as willing to change his dreams to fit his circumstances. He refuses either to stop loving Rosalind or to begin loving her as a chaste and inaccessible figure. The flowery metamorphoses of defunct lovers such as those that Spenser places at the fringes of the *mons Veneris* in *Faerie Queene* III.vi are not for Colin: he doesn't want to love a rose as Petrarch came to love the laurel, or as Apollo similarly chose to end his race, hunting Daphne that she might laurel grow. Rather, he is consistently, tiresomely true to his desire, frustration, and pain.

It must be admitted that however petulant the wrath of Achilles may come to seem at times, the alienation of a pastoral lover is far harder for the spectator to take seriously. It is a given of the *Iliad* that Achilles must die young; he has something to complain about even if Agamemnon and

the other Greeks are not wholly appropriate objects of his wrath. But we survive our unrequited loves, and most of us choose to forget our sufferings; our spouses do not encourage us to rehearse them. Furthermore, most of us, like the Theocritan shepherds, like Colin Clout, like Romeo during a bad time with his own Rosalind, are surrounded by sympathetic friends. Spenser is careful to point out how decorous and well behaved are all the other shepherds. In "Febrvarie," Thenot and Cuddie respond to the season in ways that are suited to their respective age and youth; when Colin talks like an old man in "December" we feel like telling him this is rather bad form. Everyone wants to help Colin, in a spirit of altruistic friendship, especially poor old Hobbinoll who loves Colin as hopelessly as Colin loves Rosalind and yet listens meekly when Colin laments his isolation from the paradise that Hobbinoll has found in nature. In fact, Colin is quite right when he says that the mind can make its own heaven or hell, and Colin is alone in refusing to muster the self-control or good humor to enjoy the balm of a June day among friends.

Perhaps we have to wait for James Joyce before we find a portrait of the young artist so disagreeable, so humorless, so commendably honest in refusing to deny or redirect the agonies of adolescence. Both authors seem to have sensed that their creativity, what Spenser would call their daedale art, depended on the recognition and maintenance of this youthful and alienated self. Silence, exile, and cunning are in fact characteristic of the later history of Colin Clout.

Perhaps this is an overstatement of the role of Colin as a partially comic but finally grand figure of alienation in *The Shepheardes Calender*. But awareness of this role makes us end the early poem expecting him to return later in the poet's work: Colin's energies remain unresolved. When he does return, it is at a time when his creator was courting and marrying Elizabeth Boyle. Spenser gives his readers more than enough encouragement to see the second Mrs Spenser in the lady conjured up by Colin in the midst of the Graces in *Faerie Queene* VI.x, as well as in the lady celebrated by Colin at the centerpoint of *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*. The later works of Spenser weave the fact of his remarriage into a highly intricate fiction of public and private loves, responsibilities, conflicts, and divine or royal

jealousies. A concern over Envy—what today would be called misreading or deconstruction—blossoms into a phantasmagoria of allusions to the various Elizabeths worshiped and served by Spenser and by his friend, virtually his alter ego, Raleigh: Spenser's mother, his bride, his queen; Raleigh's bride and jealous queen; behind them all, perhaps, Eli-sabbat, the Sabbath God whom Spenser longs to see at the ending of the *Cantos of Mutabilitie*, and who suggests the figure that Freud was to speak of as the third woman in a man's life, after his mother and his wife: the grave.

The homecoming enacted in Spenser's *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* suggests a syncretic view of this worship of multiple Elizabeths which Spenser treats in more tense and problematic fashion elsewhere in his later works. The first problem is its title. We may hypothesize three principal kinds of homecoming for this figure who "secretly shadoweth" the poet. First, Colin has returned to the pastoral genre and to the friends he had left behind in the *Shepherd's Calendar*. Seeing him seated among them once again, in what they had called his characteristic role prior to his falling in love with Rosalind, we may feel he has returned to his youth, to his youthful community or dream of community. Secondly, in more strictly geographical terms, Spenser's own visit to his native England is described in the poem: a temporary homecoming may well be what an English reader of a book published in London would make of the title. But it is not the point of view explicitly taken by the poem: Colin (in the poem itself) and Spenser (in his dedication of it to Raleigh) both speak of themselves as dwelling in Ireland, to which they have now returned after a visit across the sea. Thestylis in fact mentions the first and third of these referents in asking Colin why he has returned to "this barrein soyle" (656) of Ireland and of pastoral, leaving England and an occupation as court poet which had been available to him.

Spenser so obviously mingles actual autobiographical fact (such as his visit to England in the company of Raleigh) with literal falsehood (such as Hobbinol's or Harvey's presence in Ireland) that we must despair of finding any single consistent frame of reference. Rather, a blurring equivocation of reference seems present almost everywhere. One effect of the delayed publication of the poem in 1595, albeit describing a visit

of 1589-91 and with a dedication dated 1591, is that apparent allusions to Raleigh's and Spenser's marriages and other incidents in the interim have an uncertain status as foreshadowings or afterthoughts. Furthermore, we may hover between taking each of the three ladies praised in the poem as specific individuals or as distinct feminine qualities. The poet's own lady at the center, in lines 464-79, may simply be Elizabeth Boyle, or she may be a more generalized figure of reciprocated love; the repeated formula, *euer onely, euer one: / One euer . . . one euer*, is close enough to the Queen's motto, *semper eadem*, to suggest a perilous ambiguity. Colin's praise of Cynthia clearly refers to the Queen, but to a Queen who also is and is not the cause of quasi-erotic anxieties in her courtiers, especially Raleigh. And the Rosalind praised equally absolutely at the end of the poem may be both the specific Rosalind of the *Shepheardes Calender* and the part of every beloved that eludes possession by the lover. We may be reminded of Donne's roughly contemporary statement in "The good-morrow":

If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desir'd, and got, 't was but a dreame of thee.

—with the crucial difference that Rosalind is the beauty that the lover never gets.

Doubtless there are other possibilities as well, and other ways of naming them; what seems certain is that the poem hymns love and the feminine both generally and under a broad range of apparently exclusive aspects. Elsewhere Spenser dramatizes the conflicts and contradictions; here Colin undertakes a harmonious union which denies all distinctions. At the beginning of the poem Hobbinoll describes Colin's return as something akin to Proserpina's a return of energy and vitality to the earth; Colin's songs of love implicitly enact this life-giving magic, by saying yes, yes to love in all its forms. Colin has finally gotten past December into a new year; and he has done so at a time when Edmund Spenser is celebrating his own rebirth through love.

At the opening of the poem, Colin's exchange of songs with the Shepherd of the Ocean provides natural myths of the poet's survival. The story of the marriage of Bregog and Mulla, like that of Fanchin and Molanna in

the *Mutability Cantos*, is facilitated and punished by essentially the same device, an underground disappearance which permits survival at the cost of losing one's name. On the one hand, the stories recall that of Alpheus and Arethusa in Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 5.577-641), and serve as Spenser's myth of the translation of pastoral from England across the sea to Ireland. At the same time, Bregog's name means "deceitful" and this plus his loss of name recall the wiles of *outis*-Odysseus. The wily marriage of rivers is presented not only as an example of the free and guiltless sexuality of the pastoral dream mentioned earlier, but as guiltless incest: it is the most natural thing in the world that brother and sister streams, born of the same father Mole, should couple as they fall toward the plain, intensifying name and force thereby. In general, Spenser's songs of his Irish countryside celebrate a rediscovery, or a recovery, of a sexual landscape that seems safely distant from the envious misdeemings of Elizabeth's court.

At the same time, Colin's identification with the watery fluidity of "my river Bregog" is set against the experience of the Shepherd of the Ocean, Walter or "Water" Raleigh, whose relationship with Cynthia is deeply troubled. The chaste but ever-changing moon exerts her power on the unstable waters. As shepherd of the ocean Raleigh is a master mariner; but he is also identified with the water itself in the manner of water-gods and nymphs. The extensive description of the "world of waters" in lines 196 ff. is at once a comic portrayal of a rude shepherd's crossing over to England, and a metaphor for the emotional strains of service to Cynthia, of combining his English and Irish selves. The storm-tossed Colin navigates his round trip to and from court successfully, achieving at the end the homecoming celebrated in *Colin Clout* and the courtship and marriage celebrated in *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*.

Seen in the context of his other poems of this period, *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* combines the various modes and voices of an eclogue book—plaintive, moral, and recreative—into a single tour-de-force celebrating what amounts to an act of universal love. The poet survives and returns to all that he has ever been, superimposing his entire record of loves. He suggests that every woman he has loved or worshiped he has loved utterly and solely, precisely because all these loves are one and the

same, differing only in such negligible details as social estate or a willingness to become châtelaine of Kilcolman. Each Elizabeth is thus every other.

In Fairyland we know that this is not the case, and especially not in the troubled Fairyland of the later books of *The Faerie Queene*. Belpheobe feels no such identity with an Amoret who is in fact her twin sister. But Colin's songs admit of no such particular jealousies or envies. Spenser's treatment of pastoral characterization permits him to ventilate some of these incongruities here: there is an endearing virtuosity to a Colin Clout who is ready to frame his song to every topic, being driven finally to the absurdity of declaring he is still dying single-mindedly for love of Rosalind. He may rightly speak of "the languours of my too long dying" (948) if he has been holding this particular note since 1579, at the end of "December." Yet for all that may be amusing in this return to the adolescent enthusiasms of Colin, Spenser's announcement of his return heralds a serious refocusing of his energies. The poet is returning, however briefly or permanently he cannot really say, from his long service to the *Faerie Queene*, in midst of his race; his gaze is now turned homeward and inward; the pastoral and domestic muses have somehow made the crossing to what had earlier seemed a land of exile but now, briefly, will be a home and a garden he had once left, long ago. And the reader feels, in defiance of logic, the strong pull of a familiar topic or *locus communis*: it is good to be back.

The pastoral revisiting in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* is sufficiently close to what appears in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene* that the two works may be usefully compared. Near the end of the 1596 instalment of Spenser's grand project, Colin is directly introduced into the poem as a familiar if unexpected figure—"who knowes not Colin Clout?" (VI.x.16)—summoning up the object of his affections, "that iolly Shepheards lasse." If we know Colin Clout as the protagonist of the 1579 *Calender*, we can know the lass as Rosalind; if we know him from E.K.'s note to that poem as secretly shadowing the poet Spenser, we are encouraged to take the lass as Elizabeth Boyle; if we know the 1595 *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* we may know that we don't know if she is both or neither.

In returning to the commonplaces of his earlier pastoral, Spenser seems to be suggesting that the middle-aged poet approaching remarriage is experiencing a renaissance of his own, recovering earlier feelings and earlier forms of self-expression. When Calidore intrudes on the scene of Colin's performance and accidentally breaks up the scene (as he has broken up earlier scenes of lovemaking), Colin "for fell despight / Of that displeasure, broke his bag-pipe quight" (VI.x.18), revisiting thereby an earlier *topos* of sexual frustration ("Januarye" 72).

Spenser invites us, I think, to collate our evidence for "knowing" Colin Clout, so that we can see the similarities and differences between the young and old lover and poet. Like the returned Colin of 1595, the Colin who sits down to talk with Calidore is more mellow, more ready to accept the joys and frustrations of love. "She made me often pipe and now to pipe apace" (VI.x.27). This has some of the overtones of the *donna angelicata* of the Petrarchan tradition, desire transformed into poetic abstraction. But this unnamed "she" is not the distanced Laura or Beatrice, but an amalgam of those sublimated objects of poetic desire with the earthiness of Boccaccio's Fiammetta, figuring a poet who serves one Elizabeth and marries another. When Colin concludes his speech by asking Gloriana to

Pardon thy shepheard, mongst so many layes,
As he hath sung of thee in all his dayes,
To make one minime of thy poore handmayd (VI.x.28)

he brings the public and private worlds of Edmund Spenser, and of Elizabethan poetic genres, into a moment of uneasy encounter. We know how unwilling the Queen had been to pardon Raleigh for diverting or sharing his affections with another Elizabeth. Rather as he had done in the preface to *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, Spenser once again seems to invite a comparison with Raleigh's heretical behavior.

And in fact Book VI ends with a scene of homecoming that deliberately imitates that of Odysseus. After Calidore rescues Pastorella from the Brigants, who have destroyed her pastoral world, he brings her to the Castle of Belgard which turns out to be her parents' home. There, in the

best tradition of romance, it is the old nurse Melissa who bathes Pastorella and recognizes her as the lost child of her mistress:

For on her brest I with these eyes did vew
The litle purple rose, which thereon grew,
Whereof her name ye then to her did giue. (VI.xii.18)

Critics of *The Faerie Queene* seem not to have noticed the aptness of the parallel here to Book 19 of the *Odyssey*, where the nurse Eurykleia recognizes Odysseus while bathing him, from the scar on his thigh which was associated with his naming by his maternal grandfather Autolykos. Here too it is the birthmark which gives the true, "original" name of the maiden we have known as Pastorella until now. Spenser gives us only the briefest of descriptions of her restoration to her true parents, Claribell and Bellamour (who like such other Spenserian couples as Britomart and Artegall or Scudamour and Amoret seem to have been destined to be joined from the day of their naming). Leaving them "in ioy" (VI.xii.22) the poet turns quickly to the story of Calidore's pursuit of the Blatant Beast which concludes the Book. But although he does not tell us the "real" name of Pastorella, it seems likely that the rosy mark on the breast of this child whose parents had stealthily gathered roses without benefit of clergy or parental approval, points once more to the figure of Rosalind, the inaccessible but still worshiped object of desire. This time around, Rosalind as Pastorella no longer disdains pastoral devices, but is successfully courted by Calidore after he puts on the disguise of a shepherd. Mysteriously, but with a curiously satisfactory sense of a place revisited and a pattern completed, Spenser has returned to his pastoral self and achieved a union of public and private, court and courtship, that was to elude the greater subject of *The Faerie Queene*, Arthur's pursuit of Gloriana. The 1596 installment of the poem ends with a strikingly Odyssean kind of homecoming, but one that does not dare to speak its name openly, since the Blatant Beast continues to rage,

Ne spareth he the gentle Poets rime,
But rends without regard of person or of time. (VI.xii.40)

It is strongly implied here that the poet has to rely on his readers' ability to recognize the motifs of romance. If we can respond fully to the emotions invoked by Pastorella's return to Belgard, and trace its literary genealogy, we will know where we are, and will understand better why we have a strong sense that the poem has in fact come to an end, here. As I suggested at the outset, there is a peculiar satisfaction to recognizing where we are, to being able to name a place revisited.

University of Massachusetts
Amherst

NOTES

¹Douglas Frame, *The Myth of Return in Early Greek Epic* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1978).

²Edmund Spenser, *Poetical Works*, eds. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (Oxford: OUP 1912).

³A. C. Hamilton: "The Argument of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*," *ELH* 23 (1956): 171-82.

⁴Paul Alpers, "Pastoral and the Domain of Lyric in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*," *Representations* 12 (1985): 83-100; and the fuller discussion of pastoral in Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1976).

Old England, Nostalgia, and the "Warwickshire" of Shakespeare's Mind

MAURICE HUNT

"He was wont to go to his native country once a year," the seventeenth-century biographer John Aubrey pronounced concerning the playwright Shakespeare's relationship with his native place, the Midlands town Stratford-upon-Avon.¹ No one can gauge the accuracy of the gossipy Aubrey's anecdotes; but considered in light of the Elizabethan difficulty of negotiating the nearly one-hundred miles between Shakespeare's rural home and the largest city in Renaissance Europe, Aubrey's claim may very well be true. Russell Fraser has memorably taken us hand-in-hand with Shakespeare on an imaginative, late-sixteenth-century journey from the Stratford home over the muddy, sometimes flooded, highwayman-threatened roads that Shakespeare probably took to Newgate.² This trip one-way took at least four days, even if the traveller normally walking occasionally hired horses between inns. But, as Fraser comments, "at three pence a mile this [probably] wasn't an option available to young Shakespeare."³ In any case, walking was how players travelled on their provincial tours.

The journey most likely took Shakespeare initially east through Compton Wynyates to Banbury, past "stone farmhouses, grayish brown . . . dark against the fields"⁴—poor pelting villages—through Buckinghamshire and the hamlet of Grendon Underwood. John Aubrey, getting his Shakespeare plays wrong, proclaimed that "the humour of the constable in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he happened to take at Grendon in Bucks . . . which is the road from London to Stratford, and there was living that constable about 1642, when I first came to Oxford: Mr. Josias Howe is of that parish, and knew him."⁵ From there, a bemuddled, tired Shakespeare

passed over the Chiltern Hills, through the Vale of Aylesbury, to Uxbridge, twelve miles northwest of London Wall, where the Banbury road joined the Oxford road. From there he walked through Southall and Acton, along the edge of today's Hyde Park and the sixteenth-century Tyburn gallows, through St. Giles in the Fields, to the vicinity of Gray's Inn and Holborn Bars.

Fraser's detailed imaginative reconstruction of Shakespeare's journey makes Aubrey's report of a single annual visit to Stratford believable. No record or report of Shakespeare's presence at his son Hamnet's internment exists. Given the ardors of the journey, one would be surprised to learn of his attending a dying son's body and then corpse. Moreover, Shakespeare's inclination to visit his "native country"—to use Aubrey's quaint phrase—may have been negatively colored by any one or more of the plausible reasons for his original leaving Stratford for London. These may include John Shakespeare's apparent financial debts and the loss of young William's patrimony (the mortgaging of the land and property which had been bequeathed to his mother); the probable lack of living space (and livelihood) for a newly married minor with two children—Hamnet and Susanna; and the conjectured legal persecution of the Catholic-hating Sir Thomas Lucy for deer-poaching on his grounds.

Despite these possible negative overtones, Stratford was most likely never far from Shakespeare's thoughts in London. His brother Edmund followed him there to the trade of actor, to be buried in 1607 near the Globe Theatre in Southwark Cathedral; and Richard Field, the Stratford tanner's son and three years Shakespeare's senior, in London printed Shakespeare's carefully prepared *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. Field, in fact, at one time lived "on Wood Street in Cripplegate ward, just around the corner from Shakespeare."⁶ Still, Edmund Shakespeare and Richard Field could not have helped Shakespeare home during those moments that all men and women suffer, when they wish for whatever reason that light or time could instantaneously convey them back to the countryside, to the town, to the house where they first lived, where they first met the world, typically on their own, fresh terms. Like them, Shakespeare generally could only return vicariously, in his case through his art. The

often fanciful way in which he did so constitutes what could be called a Warwickshire of the mind.

For centuries commentators on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have located the comedy's folklore in the Warwickshire countryside; they have imagined young Shakespeare listening to illiterate Stratfordites telling of the fairies' mischief, of Robin Goodfellow's beguiling village maidens and housewives in their dairy labors; and they have supposed that the nascent playwright himself experienced in his native woodlands something like the Athenian youths' amorous adventures. Less speculative, however, is the apparent allusion to a celebrated event that occurred only fourteen miles from Stratford on Monday, July 18, 1575, when Shakespeare was eleven years old. "My gentle puck, come hither," Oberon beckons early in Act II of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,

Thou rememb'rest
Since once I sat upon a promontory
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid's music? (II.i.148-54)⁷

James Boaden in 1832 was the first Shakespearean to assert in print that certain details of this remarkable passage configure elements of a Summer 1575 allegorical pageant presented by the Earl of Leicester to Queen Elizabeth at the estate she had given him—Kenilworth.⁸ According to separate accounts of this entertainment written by Robert Laneham and George Gascoigne, the Queen, returning to the castle after late-afternoon deer-hunting, at a small lake came upon "*Triton, Neptune's blaster*," seated "upon a swimming mermayd (that from top too tayl was an eyghteen foot long)."⁹ (Gascoigne, in *The Princely Pleasures at the Courte at Kenelwoorth, 1575*, however, asserts that "*Tryton, in likenesse of a mermaide*, came towards the Queene's Majestie as she passed over the bridge, returning from hunting.")¹⁰ Triton tells the Queen that her mere appearance will be sufficient to make the captor of the Lady of the Lake release the maiden. After several allegorical speeches and the appearance of the Lady of the

Lake herself, Elizabeth, passing farther onto the bridge, encountered Arion "ryding alofte upon hiz old freend the dolphin."¹¹ (Gascoigne, however, states that "Protheus appeared, sitting on a dolphyn's back.")¹² One concludes that the impressions made on eye-witnesses of this pageant did not exactly correspond. Nevertheless both Laneham and Gascoigne agree that the mythological personage seated upon a dolphin sang a lyrical song and that especially ravishing music issued from a consort hidden within the sea creature.

No account exists of the size of the crowd surrounding Leicester's lake. If it was large, it is not difficult to imagine one of the most prominent officials of a town fourteen miles away and his eleven-year-old son watching.¹³ Recollection plays tricks with Laneham and Gascoigne (and the minds of their possible informants). Recollecting in relative tranquility, Shakespeare may have thought he "heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back / Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath / That the rude sea grew civil at her song." Triton, in Laneham's account of the 1575 entertainment, charges "both *Eolus* with al his windez, the waters with hiz springs, hiz fysh and fooul, and all his clients in the same, that they ne be so hardye in any fors to stur, but keep them calm and quiet while this Queen be prezent."¹⁴ Likewise, Gascoigne has Triton "commanding . . . the waves to be calme." "You waters wilde, suppresse your waves, and keepe you calme and plaine," he orders.¹⁵

To this developing collation of details should be added a final ingredient from Leicester's pageantry: the spectacular fireworks that blazed on different July nights in the Warwickshire sky. Laneham describes "very straunge and sundry kindez of *Fier-works*, compeld [on the night of Thursday, July 14th] by cunning to fly too and fro, and too mount very hye intoo the ayr upward, and also too burn unquenshabl in the water beneath. . . ."¹⁶ On the previous Sunday, Jupiter displayed "hiz mayn poour; with blaz of burning darts, flying too and fro, leamz of starz coruscant, streamz and hail of firie sparkes, lightninges of wildfier a water and lond, flight & shoot of thunderbolz, all with such countinauns, terror, and vehemencie, that the Heavins thundred, the waters soourged, the earth shooke."¹⁷

The reconstruction of the mermaid-passage out of details of the Kenilworth pageantry suggests a Coleridge-like imaginative recollection on Shakespeare's part, rather than a reaction to texts read such as Laneham's or Gascoigne's. The clear allusion to Queen Elizabeth in the passage following this one in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the "fair vestal thronèd by the west" (II.i.158), may in some way be linked with the Kenilworth context of our primary passage, either as provoking it or, more likely, as stimulated by the likely resonances of the Queen in the mermaid-dolphin recollection. If the focused allusion amounts to Shakespeare's Warwickshire journey of the mind, it is also Oberon's—or rather Shakespeare-Oberon's—for Oberon is Shakespeare's surrogate in the play, an authoritative stage manager trying to script the lives of his characters: the four Athenian youths and their love relationships. "Thou rememb'rest," Oberon prefaces the lyrical poetry under discussion; "I remember" (II.i.154), Robin Goodfellow concludes it. Memory thus becomes part of the passage's thematics, just as it does in the discrepancies among Laneham's, Gascoigne's, and their possible informants' recollections of what they saw and heard during several Warwickshire late July 1575 nights. If Puck is confirming the accuracy of Oberon's memory, a thick unintended irony materializes; for the human witnesses to the Warwickshire equivalent of Oberon's pageant apparently could not remember accurately. This irony applies to Shakespeare, who most likely forged a poetic composite out of elements that, as experienced, had the quality of a dream in a young boy's mind—a midsummer night's dream, in fact. From the beginning the problem of distortion involves itself in Shakespeare's Warwickshire of the mind.

Critics rarely note that it is the near-divine harmony of the mermaid's song that gives Oberon a supernatural vision of Love—armed Cupid—and of the means to control erotic desire (through the juice of the flower love-idleness, the flower given that power by Cupid's potent arrow, which missed the heart of the "imperial vot'ress" Elizabeth).¹⁸ A sociopolitical allegory likely informs the passage about Cupid, his arrow intended for Queen Elizabeth, and the purpled "little western [English] flower" (II.i.166), an allegory perhaps involving Leicester, his missed amorous intentions

with regard to the Queen, and his love-affair with a western flower, Lettice Knollys, Countess of Essex.¹⁹ But political allegory is too intellectually detached, too cold a signification to throw over the warmly resonant meaning of the mermaid/dolphin passage. Shakespeare's Warwickshire of the mind in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is about the knowledge of how to control falling in and out of romantic love, an irony if we are to judge the inference by the anguished feelings of helplessness concerning the Dark Lady's amours that are registered in the Sonnets. Still, in this early comedy Shakespeare suggests that the secret to controlling one's love lies hidden in the memorial reconstruction of an event occurring early in life, in recollections of—to use Aubrey's phrase—one's "native country."

The lyrical power and dramatic importance of the recollection of a mermaid singing upon a dolphin's back in my reading derive from memory's distortion of far-off events, a distortion typically traced to nostalgia. Shakespeare self-consciously interrogates this association in certain dialogue between Shallow, Silence, and Falstaff in 2 *Henry IV*, and he does so in a context that has the distinctive feel (if not the actuality) of the Warwickshire countryside.²⁰ In the folksy details of their talk about times past, the two Justices could be petty country officials about Stratford:

SHALLOW And how doth my cousin your bedfellow? And your
fairest daughter and mine, my god-daughter Ellen?

SILENCE Alas, a black ouzel, cousin Shallow.

SHALLOW By yea and no, sir, I dare say my cousin William is
become a good scholar. He is at Oxford still, is he not?

SILENCE Indeed, sir, to my cost.

SHALLOW A must then to the Inns o' Court shortly. I was once
of Clement's Inn, where I think they will talk of mad
Shallow yet.

SILENCE You were called 'Tusty Shallow' then, cousin.

SHALLOW By the mass, I was called anything; and I would have
done anything indeed, too, and roundly, too. There was I, and
little John Doit of Staffordshire, and black George Barnes, and
Francis Pickbone, and Will Squeal, a Cotswold man; you had
not four such swinge-bucklers in all the Inns o' Court again.
And I may say to you, we knew where the bona-robas were,
and had the best of them all at commandment. Then was Jack

Falstaff, now Sir John, a boy, and page to Thomas Mowbray,
Duke of Norfolk.

SILENCE This Sir John, cousin, that comes hither anon about
soldiers?

SHALLOW The same Sir John, the very same. I see him break
Scoggin's head at the court gate when a was a crack, not thus
high. And the very same day did I fight with one Samson Stock-
fish, a fruiterer, behind Gray's Inn. Jesu, Jesu, the mad days
that I have spent! And to see how many of my old acquaintance
are dead.

SILENCE We shall all follow, cousin.

SILENCE Certain, 'tis certain; very sure, very sure. Death, as the
Psalmist saith (III.ii.5-34)

This homely talk has qualities of a Shakespearean Warwickshire of the mind: the knowledge of villagers' habits and the desire and ability to follow the course of their lives; the good-natured (but not deeply seated) inquiry after the welfare of countrymen and women; the sudden *non sequiturs* in a narrative, generally to focus on rural matters such as the price of bullocks and ewes; the sheer loquaciousness of men isolated in the countryside, replete with folksy repetitions. Added to the list might be the self-indulgent recall of hare-brained adventures a younger self enjoyed:

SHALLOW O, Sir John, do you remember since we lay all night
in the Windmill in Saint George's Field?

FALSTAFF No more of that, good Master Shallow, no more of
that.

SHALLOW Ha, 'twas a merry night! And is Jane Nightwork alive?

FALSTAFF She lives, Master Shallow.

SHALLOW She never could away with me.

FALSTAFF Never, never. She would always say she could not
abide Master Shallow.

SHALLOW By the mass, I could anger her to th' heart. She was
then a bona-roba. Doth she hold her own well?

FALSTAFF Old, old, Master Shallow.

SHALLOW Nay, she must be old; she cannot choose but be old;
certain she's old; and had Robin Nightwork by old Nightwork
before I came to Clement's Inn.

SILENCE That's fifty-five year ago.

SHALLOW Ha, cousin Silence, that thou hadst seen that that this
knight and I have seen! Ha, Sir John, said I well?

FALSTAFF We have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow.

SHALLOW That we have, that we have; in faith, Sir John, we have. Our watchword was 'Hem boys!' Come, let's to dinner; come, let's to dinner. Jesus, the days that we have seen! Come, come. (III.ii.179-202)

Obviously these poetic recollections are soaked in nostalgia, a mental process that distorts the past to make it satisfy present wishes and needs. Falstaff names Shallow's memorial recreations a lie:

... I do see the bottom of Justice Shallow. Lord, Lord, how subject we old men are to this vice of lying! This same starved justice hath done nothing but prate to me of the wildness of his youth and the feats he hath done about Turnbull Street; and every third word a lie, duer paid to the hearer than the Turk's tribute. I do remember him at Clement's Inn, like a man made after supper of a cheese paring. When a was naked, he was for all the world like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife

And now is this Vice's dagger become a squire, and talks as familiarly of John o' Gaunt as if he had been sworn brother to him, and I'll be sworn a ne'er saw him but once, in the Tilt-yard, and then he burst his head for crowding among the marshal's men. (III.ii.275-84, 286-90)

In many respects, *2 Henry IV* is a play about the distortions of nostalgic remembrance as characters struggle in hard times to recreate a past ideal England in their minds.²¹ Lady Percy, for example, in recollection refashions the flawed Hotspur playgoers perceived in *1 Henry IV* into the perfect mirror of chivalry, a model whose thick accents aspiring youth once imitated (II.iii.10-44). Nostalgic memory makes Hotspur "the mark and glass, copy and book, / That fashioned others"—a "miracle of men" (II.iii.31, 33). The self-consciousness of Shakespeare's exploration in *2 Henry IV* of nostalgia's false warping of memory, conducted partly in the context of what might be called a Warwickshire of the mind, suggests that when through his art the playwright again journeys to his native country, the resulting images will be less nostalgic, more unsentimental, more

truthful to the recollections of life actually lived in and around Stratford. Such indeed is the case in *As You Like It* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, wherein the playwright makes an appearance as the character William who possesses some of the notorious traits later attributed to Shakespeare himself.

In Shakespeare's time, the Warwickshire Forest of Arden was so dense that it has been said that a squirrel could journey from Stratford to the vicinity of Birmingham without once touching the ground. Hunters, gatherers, masterless men and women, and cottage industries populated this forest more densely than has been commonly recognized, a fact justifying Shakespeare's locating there in *As You Like It* a cast of characters ranging from exiled courtiers to simple country folk such as William and his love Audrey. In many respects, *As You Like It* concerns the problematical process of personal ripening under the influence of time and love, and of learning how to recognize *kairos*, the moment for realizing one's ripened being.²² Touchstone's complaints about rotting in the Forest of Arden and Jaques' portrait of humankind waxing and waning through the seven ages of life are only two of many contexts in the play that focus the issue of ripeness and its relationship to seizing the opportune moment. Orlando seizes that moment when he chooses love over hate and intervenes to save sleeping Oliver from the lioness and serpent threatening him.

My thesis precludes a full exploration of these ideas, but reference to them becomes necessary for grasping the significance of Shakespeare's imaginative journey home in creating William, a comic younger self. Jaques has earlier persuaded Touchstone against being married to Audrey irregularly by the priest Sir Oliver Martext, and Touchstone begins Act V by protesting, "A most wicked Sir Oliver, Audrey, a most vile Martext. But, Audrey, there is a youth here in the forest lays claim to you" (V.i.5-7):

AUDREY Ay, I know who 'tis. He hath no interest in me in the world. Here comes the man you mean.

Enter William

TOUCHSTONE It is meat and drink to me to see a clown. By my troth, we that have good wits have much to answer for. We shall be flouting; we cannot hold.

WILLIAM Good ev'n, Audrey.

AUDREY God ye good ev'n, William.

WILLIAM And good ev'n to you, sir.

TOUCHSTONE Good ev'n, gentle friend. Cover thy head, cover thy head. Nay, prithee, be covered. How old are you, friend?

WILLIAM Five-and-twenty, sir.

TOUCHSTONE A ripe age. Is thy name William?

WILLIAM William, sir.

TOUCHSTONE A fair name. Wast born i'th'forest here?

WILLIAM Ay, sir, I thank God.

TOUCHSTONE Thank God—a good answer. Art rich?

WILLIAM Faith, sir, so-so.

TOUCHSTONE So-so is good, very good, very excellent good. And yet it is not, it is but so-so. Art thou wise?

WILLIAM Ay, sir, I have a pretty wit.

TOUCHSTONE Why, thou sayst well. I do now remember a saying: "The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool." The heathen philosopher, when he had a desire to eat a grape, would open his lips when he put it into his mouth, meaning thereby that grapes were made to eat, and lips to open. You do love this maid?

WILLIAM I do, sir.

TOUCHSTONE Give me your hand. Art thou learned?

WILLIAM No, sir.

TOUCHSTONE Then learn of me: to have is to have. For it is a figure in rhetoric that drink, being poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one doth empty the other. For all your writers do consent that *ipse* is he. Now you are not *ipse*, for I am he.

WILLIAM Which he, sir?

TOUCHSTONE He, sir, that must marry this woman. Therefore, you clown, abandon—which is in the vulgar, leave—the society—which in the boorish is company—of this female—which in the common is woman: which together is, abandon the society of this female, or, clown, thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, diest; or, to wit, I kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life into death, thy liberty into bondage. I will deal in poison with thee, or in bastinado, or in steel. I will bandy with thee in faction, I will o'errun thee with policy. I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways. Therefore tremble, and depart.

AUDREY Do, good William.

WILLIAM God rest you merry, sir.

Exit

"Wast born i'th'forest here?" Touchstone asks and William replies affirmatively. Like this namesake, William Shakespeare could be said to have been born in the vicinity of the Forest of Arden. By 1599—the date usually assigned to *As You Like It*—William Shakespeare, again like his namesake in the play—was said to have "a pretty wit." Francis Meres had essentially said so in print in 1598, terming Shakespeare an English Ovid.²³ "Art thou learned," Touchstone asks and receives a negative answer. In *2 Henry IV*, Shallow asks Silence, "I dare say my cousin William is become a good scholar. He is at Oxford still, is he not?" (III.ii.8-9). Warwickshire-like recollections are drenched in nostalgia in *2 Henry IV*, and Shallow's question receives a positive reply. Nostalgia, however scarcely colors Shakespeare's creation of a comic alter ego in *As You Like It*, and the charge of "small Latin" that Ben Jonson would later level against Shakespeare was perhaps beginning to characterize the playwright as early as the 1590s. "For all writers do consent that *ipse* is he," Touchstone sarcastically lectures William. "Now you are not *ipse* [the successful lover of this woman], for I am he." "Which he, sir?" William thickly replies.²⁴

Why would Shakespeare distort a recreation of himself in a plain, naked manner at the other extreme from aggrandizing nostalgic recollection? What positive value could an imaginative return to his native country and an unnostalgically seen self have? After all, Touchstone insults William by calling his age of twenty-five "ripe." William may have a pretty wit, but an uncultivated life in Arden has never ripened it, as Oxford might have (the university town through which William Shakespeare likely passed a number of times on the road to-and-from Stratford and London). Twenty-five was an age at which most Englishmen who attended Oxford or Cambridge had matriculated B.A. or M.A. At age twenty-five, the thirty-four or thirty-five-year-old creator of *As You Like It* was most likely writing—by Shakespearean standards—aesthetically immature works such as the *Henry VI* trilogy, which the playwright almost certainly must have recognized as unripe compared to intervening plays such as *The Merchant of Venice*.²⁵ In a play in which ripeness is much, if not all, of what matters in life, William, like his twenty-five-year-old playwright namesake, is

unripe—a self-deprecating foil accentuating the noble ripeness of Orlando and Old Adam, among others.

Shakespeare's Warwickshire of the mind in *As You Like It* deeply involves the question of artistic ripeness in the context of the poet's origins and death. "I am here with thee and thy goats," Touchstone tells Audrey in Act III, "as the most capricious poet Ovid was among the Goths" (III.iii.5-6). Exile among the barbarous Goths may have precluded Ovid's full ripening as a poet; conversely, an origin among goatherds and peasants might seem to threaten the full flowering of the English Ovid, William Shakespeare. Twice in *As You Like It* Shakespeare alludes to his former rival, Christopher Marlowe. Quoting a verse from Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (V.i), Phoebe, concerning her passion for Ganymede, exclaims, "Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,/ Who ever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight" (III.v.82-83). "When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a good man's wit seconded with the forward child, understanding," Touchstone tells Audrey, "it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room" (III.iii.9-12). For decades, Shakespeare scholars have recognized an allusion in Touchstone's final phrases to Marlowe's death by stabbing in a small room in a likely alehouse in Deptford, purportedly over "the reckoning," the bill.²⁶ Shakespeare thus focuses on Marlowe's art preserved by memory and on his premature death in 1593, when he was twenty-nine. In a play about ripening, the force of the allusions is clear: Marlowe may have written single lines or passages of memorable poetry but his early death precluded his ripening into the rare poetic dramatist that Shakespeare may have hoped he could become (and was in the process of becoming). Touchstone's allusion to details of Marlowe's death appears only seconds after (only 3 lines, in fact) his reference to himself in Arden as "honest Ovid among the Goths." This proximity is not accidental when considered in the larger context of Shakespeare's return to Warwickshire in the person of the bumpkin William. If "a man's good wit is [not] seconded with the forward child, understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room." The intellectual understanding that an education at Pembroke College, Cambridge had developed, had "seconded" Marlowe's "good wit"—but he was dead. The lack of that

enriched understanding might strike William Shakespeare *more* dead, in the sense that his dramatic and non-dramatic poetry might not be quoted by after-ages to the degree that prematurely dead Marlowe's apparently would be. The William of the Forest of Arden at twenty-five has "a pretty wit," but it is not "seconded with the forward child, understanding," especially as the developed knowledge of the Classical languages and of rhetorical tropes facilitates that process.

At this point, my reader might object that in 1598 or 1599 Shakespeare had demonstrated to everyone (including himself) that he had acquired as much (or more) mastery of Classical ideas and rhetorical tropes as Marlowe ever did. After all, Meres had complimented Shakespeare lavishly. One might argue that Shakespeare's attitude in *As You Like It* to the recreation of a Warwickshire self is tongue-in-cheek, completely self-confident in its evocation of a younger self that the playwright felt no longer resembled him in the slightest. The recreation in this reading would reassuringly allow him to measure the immense distance that he had professionally traveled. One may grant these arguments and still maintain that the recreation of young William by its very process precipitated an old anxiety within Shakespeare about whether his humble origins might someday, somehow, become the obstacle to enduring artistic greatness.

I have argued elsewhere that impiety in *As You Like It* partly results from certain failures and inadequacies of language, especially courtly language, and that conversely pious deeds replace this speech as an expressive medium.²⁷ William's answers to Touchstone's progressively hostile and abusive speech are straightforward, pious, and charitable. The play's William answers the jester's query "Wast born i'th'forest here?" with the reply "Ay, sir, I thank God." "Thank God—a good answer. Art rich?" Touchstone continues; "Faith, sir, so-so" is William's reply (V.i.21-24). William's "Faith," coming soon after his "I thank God," reinforces auditors' impression of his piety. Touchstone's increasingly violent threats regarding William's presence and his status as Audrey's lover cannot shake William's charitable disposition. Threatened by Touchstone with death "a hundred and fifty ways," William exits goodnaturally, exclaiming "God rest you merry, sir."²⁸ Touchstone's Ovid is "honest Ovid . . . among the Goths";

the poet-playwright whom Francis Meres would term the English Ovid was "honest" because of his simple origins. At least the logic of Shakespeare's figurative journey home and recreation of a comic self suggests so. Obedient, hat-in-hand, William often replies "Ay, sir" (V.i.22, 27) or "No, sir" (V.i.36). Essentially William dramatizes a version of Celia's humorous notion of an ideal uttered response to life. When Rosalind begs her to answer all of her huddled questions about Orlando in one word, Celia jokes, "You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first, 'tis a word too great for any mouth of this age's size. To say ay and no to these particulars is more than to answer in a catechism" (III.ii.205-07). William in effect says "ay" and "no" in his unequivocal genial speech. Heard within the context of her remark about catechism, Celia's "ay" and "no" allude to simple, direct spiritual speech. King Lear judges that "'Aye' and 'no' too was no good divinity" (IV.vi.98). In his madness and disgust over Regan and Goneril's flattering abuse of these terms, Lear denies the truth of a passage found in James 5:12—"... let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay." Celia less distinctly but nonetheless certainly refers to this Biblical passage in her joke about "ay," "no," and catechism—a joke that gets lightly staged in the rustic William's "divinely" declarative speech.²⁹ If Shakespeare's Warwickshire of the mind anxiously includes his lack of higher education and its potential troubling significance for his art, in *As You Like It* it also includes his rediscovery of a native goodness, a piety, perhaps not appreciated by a worldly court and London.

Shakespeare's inclusion of an even younger alter ego William in the 1597 comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor* anticipates the implication that the playwright's "native country" bred a piety and relative innocence but in this case that it was challenged very early by the knowledge of evil. Commentators often remark that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is the only Shakespeare comedy located in England. Set in and about Windsor, the play nevertheless involves Stratford. "The dozen white luses" (pike) that Slender mentions in Shallow's coat of arms, the fish that Sir Hugh Evans calls a "dozen white louses" (I.i.14, 16), have been heard as a satiric allusion to the coat of arms of Sir Thomas Lucy, a notorious Warwickshire persecutor of Catholics and, according to John Aubrey, the nemesis of

young William Shakespeare caught poaching deer and rabbits on his estate.³⁰ Stratford reemerges later in *The Merry Wives* when young William's "small Latin" becomes the dramatic focus of Act IV, Scene i. Critics of this play have been hard put to explain the overall relevance of the following dialogue:

Enter MISTRESS PAGE, [MISTRESS] QUICKLY, [and] WILLIAM Page

...

MISTRESS PAGE I'll but bring my young man here to school.

Enter [Sir Hugh] EVANS

Look where his master comes. 'Tis a playing day, I see.—How now, Sir Hugh, no school today?

EVANS No, Master Slender is let the boys leave to play.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Blessing of his heart!

MISTRESS PAGE Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits nothing in the world at his book. I pray you ask him some questions in his accidence.

EVANS Come hither, William. Hold up your head. Come.

MISTRESS PAGE Come on, sirrah. Hold up your head. Answer your master; be not afraid.

EVANS William, how many numbers is in nouns?

WILLIAM Two.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Truly, I thought there had been one number more, because they say "Od's nouns".

EVANS Peace your tattlings!—What is 'fair', William?

WILLIAM 'Pulcher'.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Polecats? There are fairer things than polecats, sure.

EVANS You are a very simplicity 'oman. I pray you peace.—What is 'lapis', William?

WILLIAM A stone.

EVANS And what is 'a stone', William?

WILLIAM A pebble.

EVANS No, it is 'lapis'. I pray you remember in your prain.

WILLIAM 'Lapis'.

EVANS That is a good William. What is he, William, that does lend articles?

WILLIAM Articles are borrowed of the pronoun, and be thus declined. *Singulariter nominativo: 'hic, haec, hoc'.*

EVANS *Nominativo: 'hig, hag, hog'.* Pray you mark: *genitivo: 'huius'.* Well, what is your accusative case?

WILLIAM Accusativo: 'hinc'—

EVANS I pray you have your remembrance, child. *Accusativo*:
'hing, hang, hog'.

MISTRESS QUICKLY 'Hang-hog' is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.

EVANS Leave your prabbles, 'oman!—What is the focative case,
William?

WILLIAM O—*vocativo*, O—

EVANS Remember, William, focative is *caret*.

MISTRESS QUICKLY And that's a good root.

EVANS 'Oman, forbear.

MISTRESS PAGE [to MISTRESS QUICKLY] Peace.

EVANS What is your genitive case plural, William?

WILLIAM Genitive case?

EVANS Ay.

WILLIAM *Genitivo*: 'horum, harum, horum'.

MISTRESS QUICKLY Vengeance of Jenny's case! Fie on her!
Never name her, child, if she be a whore.

EVANS For shame, 'oman!

MISTRESS QUICKLY You do ill to teach the child such words. He
teaches him to hick and to hack, which they'll do fast enough
of themselves, and to call 'whorum'. Fie upon you!

EVANS Oman, art thou lunatics? Hast thou no understanding
for thy cases, and the number of the genders? Thou art as
foolish Christian creatures as I would desires.

MISTRESS PAGE [to MISTRESS QUICKLY] Prithee, hold thy peace.

EVANS Show me now, William, some declensions of your pro-
nouns.

WILLIAM Forsooth, I have forgot.

EVANS It is '*qui, que, quod*'. If you forget your '*qui*'s, your '*que*'s,
and your '*quod*'s, you must be preeches. Go your ways and
play; go.

MISTRESS PAGE He is a better scholar than I thought he was.

EVANS He is a good sprag memory. Farewell, Mistress Page.

MISTRESS PAGE Adieu, good Sir Hugh. [Exit EVANS]

Get you home, boy. [Exit WILLIAM]

[To MISTRESS QUICKLY] Come, we stay too long. *Exeunt*
(IV.i.1-73)

Eric Sams has recently challenged T. W. Baldwin's hallowed reconstruction of the Classical curriculum of the Stratford grammar school the boy Shakespeare almost certainly attended, describing how "small" indeed the student's acquisition of Latin language and literature most likely was.³¹

Despite his timidity and Mistress Quickly's comic interruptions, young William does quite well in his Latin recitation. Still, he erroneously pronounces that "hinc" rather than "hunc" is an accusative article. More important, Hugh Evans's Welsh skewed pronunciation of English and Latin and Mistress Quickly's ignorance of Latin heard by a ribald understanding abruptly make this episode a demonstration of how the knowledge of evil can misconstrue a relatively innocent understanding (William's and those of playgoers of the Latin uttered). Assaulted by an adult harangue involving coarse sexual euphemisms, William not surprisingly has trouble with his declension of pronouns.

The Merry Wives of Windsor is a play partly about how the knowledge of evil vilely misconstrues reality (one recalls Frank Ford's jealous idea of his wife's adultery and Falstaff's conviction that the wives would reciprocate his lust), and about how the knowledge of evil poisons its bearer and redounds to his or her discredit (one recalls Falstaff burnt and pinched by the fairies). "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*" (V.v.66): "Shame to him who thinks evil of it." *The Merry Wives* very likely was written to commemorate the installation of knights of the Order of the Garter, and the quotation in the comedy—by Mistress Quickly of all people—of the Order's motto makes Shakespeare's comedy a Garter play.³² In this case, Shakespeare has writ the Order's motto large, throughout the play's characterizations and dramaturgy—even to the scene of young William's short-circuited attempt to parse his Latin.

Shakespeare's Warwickshire of the mind thus concentrates upon the countrified context of young William's "small" Latin, upon unlettered townspeople, and upon the suggestion that earthy, peasant minds, rather than representing simply charming amusements, can perceive or imagine evil where none exists. It is likely that Robin, Falstaff's diminutive page, originally doubled as young William Page in the episode just analyzed. The doubling has a thematic relevance, besides the obvious pun on "page/Page." Falstaff's and his cohorts' urban immorality threatens to corrupt Robin, whereas Mistress Quickly comically introduces young William to the knowledge of evil at the same time that she would keep him from it. In both *As You Like It* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Shakespeare figuratively returns home and to his younger selves to realize the educational disadvantages of his origins and yet, in the 1599 play at least, an original strength of character that the older playwright may have imagined partly compensated for them.

1595, 1597, 1599—these are the years of the plays in which Shakespeare figuratively returns to his native place. For some reason, they cluster in comedy near the end of Elizabeth's reign. Jeanne Addison Roberts, in an essay titled "Shakespeare's Forests and Trees," has noted that the representation of trees virtually disappears in those plays that Shakespeare wrote presumably between the year 1600 and the composition of *The Winter's Tale*.³³ Yet trees are often lushly depicted in plays such as *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *As You Like It*. It is as though Shakespeare's imagination between 1600 and 1610-11 was either unable or unwilling to revisit figuratively the wooded countryside of his youth. In fact, one could say that Shakespeare's only significant imaginative revisiting of Warwickshire during this period occurs in *Coriolanus*, in the plangent allusions to 1597-98 social disturbances occasioned by Stratford Maltsters' and farmers' hoarding of corn.³⁴ Shakespeare's mind does not richly recreate figurative Warwickshire until certain pastoral scenes of *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, wherein Stratfordesque speech rhythms, dialect, and the details of planting and growing, sheep-shearing, and animal husbandry can be heard in the talk of the Old Shepherd, Perdita's clownish brother, Mopsa, Dorcas, the sturdy rogue Autolycus, and finally in that of the magician Prospero.

Modally, Renaissance pastoral entailed mythic archetypes and the backward running of time to recover a golden age (or golden world). In *The Winter's Tale*, the evocation of realistic Stratfordesque talk jars with the conjuring of Flora, Apollo, the myth of Proserpina, and the recovery of a symbolic spring and a lyrically pure love (heard in Florizel's aria "what you do/ Still betters what is done").³⁵ The realistic Stratfordesque dialogue of *The Winter's Tale* upon analysis does not resonate with the thoughtful meanings generated by the recreation of Young William in the Forest of Arden. Serving mainly to qualify the idealization of the mythic pastoral

of *The Winter's Tale*, this talk never becomes a vehicle for Shakespeare's figurative return home.

Prospero's emotion-laden, loving portrayal in Act IV of *The Tempest* of the bounteous fields and hills of the English countryside, including the pasturing of sheep and harvest time (IV.i.60-138), might seem to represent the exception to these claims. Theater audiences through the centuries have sensed that in certain aspects of the magician/artist Prospero's characterization Shakespeare begs a comparison between himself and this near-omnipotent creator of scripts for others' lives, primarily as regards abandonment of their art and their professional retirement. John Russell Brown has suggested in conversation that, considered in light of this comparison, Prospero's rich agrarian word picture, uttered during the Masque of Ceres, constitutes Shakespeare's figurative return home, a nostalgic final trip to the world of "rich leas, / Of wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats, and peas," of "nibbling sheep, / And flat meads thatched with stover, them to keep," of "Earth's increase, and foison plenty, / Barns and garners never empty, / Vines with clust'ring bunches growing," of (finally) "sunburned sicklemen of August weary" (IV.i.60-64, 110-12, 134).

Nevertheless, this imaginative return to the native place—if it is that—is patently unreal, false in fact. The fancy motivating the recreation may be Prospero's (IV.i.120-22), but its enactment, its material shape, is that of his magical spirits, airy beings who dissolve along with the fantastical landscape and its non-human inhabitants when Prospero suddenly remembers Caliban's plot against his life. Moreover, as a version of pastoral, the evoked countryside entails mythic archetypes—Juno, Ceres, and Iris; nymphs and naiads; the specters of Persephone and Dis, Venus and Cupid—all of which once again universalize rural details and natural processes so that any trace of Warwickshire vanishes in the image of a golden-age paradise that Ferdinand identifies for us, a paradise that quickly proves a depressing illusion.

Whatever possessed Shakespeare through his art to recreate a Warwickshire, complete with himself in it, in comedies written in the last years of the sixteenth century did not move him to do so afterwards. His investing the countryside in his late romances with universality becomes

equally apparent in the c.1612-13 romance history *King Henry VIII*. Cranmer's play-ending vision of the infant Elizabeth's mythic identities of Sheba and the Phoenix colors his prophecy that

In her days every man shall eat in safety
Under his own vine what he plants, and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours. (V.iv.33-35)

The nostalgic recollection of Queen Elizabeth that especially determined her representation between 1610 and 1615 is Cranmer's (and perhaps Shakespeare's), compounding the nostalgic distortion latent in pastoral in the above-quoted verses.³⁶ Many Elizabethans starved beneath the vines they had planted, whose fruit and revenue typically went to a landlord. Cranmer's vision predicts a miraculous future for Henry VIII's heir, yet it amounted to Old England in 1612, the Old England of Shallow's rambling reminiscences. Old England conclusively swallowed Shakespeare's Warwickshire of the mind, his figurative trips home, and the function of self-definition such imaginary journeys made possible.

Baylor University
Waco, Texas

NOTES

¹John Aubrey, *Brief Lives* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 1993) 286.

²Russell Fraser, *Young Shakespeare* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988) 79-86.

³Fraser 80.

⁴Fraser 81.

⁵Aubrey 285-86.

⁶Fraser 30.

⁷All quotations of Shakespeare's plays come from the texts in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 1997).

⁸Boaden's claim has been further established and developed by N. J. Halpin, *Oberon's Vision in The Midsummer-Night's Dream, Illustrated by a Comparison with Lylie's*

Endymion (London: Shakespeare Society, 1843) 16-25, 90-95; George Brandes, *William Shakespeare; A Critical Study*, trans. William Archer, Mary Morison, and Diana White (1898; rpt. London: William Heinemann, 1905) 65-66; John Dover Wilson, *Shakespeare's Happy Comedies* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962) 195; and Roger Warren, "Shakespeare and the Princely Pleasures at Kenilworth," *Notes and Queries*, N. S. 18 (1971): 137-39.

⁹Robert Laneham, *A Letter: Whearin, part of the Entertainment, unto the Queenz Maiesty, at Killingworth Castl, in Warwik Sheer . . . iz signified . . .*, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. John Nichols (1788-1805; rpt. London: Printed by N., 1823) 1:420-84, esp. 457.

¹⁰Nichols 1:485-523, esp. 498.

¹¹*A Letter*, Nichols 1:458.

¹²*The Princely Pleasures*, Nichols 1:500.

¹³Halpin makes a strong case for the likelihood of the boy Shakespeare's presence at Kenilworth in 1575 (20-25, 43-46).

¹⁴*A Letter*, Nichols 1:457.

¹⁵*The Princely Pleasures*, Nichols 1:499.

¹⁶*A Letter*, Nichols 1:440.

¹⁷*A Letter*, Nichols 1:435.

¹⁸See Maurice Hunt, "The Voices of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 34 (1992): 218-38, esp. 218-19.

¹⁹See Maurice Hunt, "The Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the School of Night: An Intertextual Nexus," *Essays in Literature* 23 (1996): 3-20, esp. 13-14.

²⁰This is the conclusion of both C. Elliot Browne, "Master Robert Shallow: A Study of the Shakespeare Country," *Fraser's N. S.* 15 (1877): 488-98; and Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990) 141.

²¹For an excellent account of the role of nostalgia in Shakespeare's recreation of English history, especially in the Second Henriad, see Rackin 86-145.

²²See Maurice Hunt, "Kairos and the Ripeness of Time in *As You Like It*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 52 (1991): 113-35.

²³"As the soule of *Euphorbus* was thought to live in *Pythagoras*: so the sweete wittie soule of *Ouid* lives in mellifluous & hony-tongued *Shakespeare*, witness his *Venus* and *Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his private friends, &c." (Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* [1598] [New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1938] 281b-282).

²⁴For more on the identification of the William of *As You Like It* as William Shakespeare, see William Jones, "William Shakespeare as William in *As You Like It*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 11 (1960): 228-31; and Howard Cole, "The Moral Vision of *As You Like It*," *College Literature* 3 (1976): 26-27.

²⁵Hunt, "Kairos and the Ripeness of Time" 124.

²⁶Eric Sams, in *The Real Shakespeare: Retrieving the Early Years, 1564-1594* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1995), has remarked that "[i]n the inquest on Marlowe's death the key word was 'le recknyng,' which was given as the cause of the quarrel. . . . The reckoning was not mentioned in contemporary accounts of Marlowe's death and this detail was

not discovered until 1925, so the author of *As You Like It* must have had more than common knowledge about the Deptford incident" (238).

²⁷Maurice Hunt, "Words and Deeds in *As You Like It*," *Shakespeare Yearbook* 2 (1991): 23-48.

²⁸Hunt, "Words and Deeds" 39-40.

²⁹Positive traits of William's character have been described by R. Chris Hassel, Jr., *Faith and Folly in Shakespeare's Romantic Comedies* (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1980) 113-14; and by A. Stuart Daley, "The Dispraise of the Country in *As You Like It*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 36 (1985): 300-14, esp. 306.

³⁰See Sams 44-48, 206-9; cf., however, Leslie Hotson, *Shakespeare versus Shallow* (London: Nonesuch P, 1931) 85-92.

³¹*The Real Shakespeare* 17-18.

³²See Jeanne Addison Roberts, *Shakespeare's English Comedy: "The Merry Wives of Windsor" in Context* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1979) 27-50 passim; and William Green, *Shakespeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1962) esp. 7-72.

³³Jeanne Addison Roberts, "Shakespeare's Forests and Trees," *Southern Humanities Review* 11 (1977): 117-23.

³⁴Richard Wilson, "Against the Grain: Representing the Market in *Coriolanus*," *The Seventeenth Century* 6 (1991): 111-48, esp. 111-21.

³⁵See, for example, F. David Hoeniger, "The Meaning of *The Winter's Tale*," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 20.1 (1950-51): 11-26.

³⁶This nostalgic recreation of Elizabeth appears, for example, in Fulke Greville, *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*, ed. John Gouws (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1986): 127.

Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey": From Self-Consciousness to Sympathy

LEONA TOKER

In "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798," the speaker, biographically identified with Wordsworth himself, contemplates a landscape well-remembered since a visit to the same spot five years previously, does not quite recognize the view, and is perplexed by his subdued reaction to it. This initial response stimulates his reflections upon a change in himself, and the speaker comes to terms with this change through a process common to the Romantic nature lyrics that "explore the transition from self-consciousness to imagination" and "achieve that transition while exploring it."¹ One of the unique features of "Tintern Abbey," not yet sufficiently recognized in critical discussions, is that it integrates the revisitation topos² into an enactment of a complementary transition—from an intense consciousness of the self to sympathy for another.

The change of the speaker's attitude is an enacted theme, or, in a sense, thematized "plot" of the poem: a larger biographical change, a shift of commitment, is *simulated* by a micro-biographical event, the speaker's temporally unfolding, trial-and-error response to his revisitation of a memorable spot.

The starting point of this dynamic poetic experience is the "sad perplexity" (l. 60) at the failure to reproduce the intensity of the emotional heightening experienced during the speaker's 1793 visit, when his love of nature did not depend "on any interest / Unborrowed from the eye" (ll. 82-83). Indeed, on the scene of his micro-biography, during the interval spent under "this dark sycamore" (l. 10) on the bank of the Wye, the speaker's attention is constantly wandering away from the data of direct

perception—his “interest” is claimed by memories, thoughts, and surmises. In a class on “Tintern Abbey” given in the School for Criticism and Theory in 1985, Professor Ralph Freedman pointed to the ambiguity of the repeated word “again” in the first verse paragraph: its direct meaning in the context—“now, five years from the first visit”—is supplemented by the connotations of reminding oneself to actually look and listen. This is suggested by collocation: the word “again” is always followed by a reference to sense perception. The poem opens by memories—“Five years have passed; five summers / With the length of five long winters!”—and only then does the attention shift to an immediate auditory image: “and again I hear / These waters.” Yet the thought moves out in space, to the sources of the river Wye in the “mountain springs” and perhaps to the sea invoked by its opposite—“a soft inland murmur.” The speaker then redirects his attention to the scene: “Once again / Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs”; but immediately afterwards the perception blends into thoughts of “more deep seclusion.” The word “connect,” placed in an emphatic position at the end of line 6 (the cliffs “connect / The landscape with the quiet of the sky”), pertains to the spatial frame of the scene, but it also connects the present moment with a fleeting thought of the interval of time between the two visits: “The day is come when I again repose / Here, under this dark sycamore.” And almost immediately after the tactual and visual senses are appealed to (through the image of reposing under the sycamore to view the “cottage grounds” and “orchards”), the direct language of the sense is replaced by personifying metaphors: the cultivated plots are “clad” in the same green color as the natural “groves” and “copses” among which they “lose themselves,” creating an emblem of man’s cooperation with nature. The next “again,” l. 14, draws the speaker out of his incipient musings and back to perception: “Once again I see / These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines / Of sportive wood run wild.” Here lies one of the poem’s many ambiguities: it is not clear whether the speaker actually remembers his earlier impression of the man-made hedge-rows yielding to the impulses of nature (“running wild”)³ or whether this impression modifies the earlier “picture of the mind” (l. 61). In other words, it is not clear whether the correction introduced by

"hardly" simulates the micro-biographical adjustment of concept to perception or points to the difference between the remembered "picture of the mind" and the newly observed landscape.⁴

Thus the first verse-paragraph effects a telescoped re-enactment of the vast in the contracted, the biographical in the micro-biographical: seeing the view again after five years of memories is condensed into looking at it again—and again—after wandering away into memory and reflection. This kind of re-enactment is then brought into high relief by the apostrophe in lines 55-56: "How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, / O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods, / How often has my spirit turned to thee." While recollecting his recourse to the memories of the river during the past five years, the poet is actually turning to the river perceived at the very moment, re-turning to it, while—as the etymology of the word "apostrophe" suggests, *turning away* from the audience.

But to return to the second verse paragraph. Here one can observe a transition from biography to micro-biographical episodes of the past when, from enumerating the "gift[s]" that the memory of the landscape granted the speaker during the intervening five years, the poem passes on to tracing the movement towards a mystical experience occasionally achieved during that melancholy time:

. . . that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things. (ll. 37-49)

The most "sublime" achievement of the past micro-biography, the mystical seeing "into the life of things," is then partly subverted by the present

doubt—"If this / Be but a vain belief" (ll. 49-50), followed by the compensatory bliss of *turning* to the river at the present micro-biographical moment. The apostrophe thus re-enacts the numerous occasions on which, "in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din / Of towns and cities" (ll. 25-26), Wordsworth turned to remembered landscapes as to a refuge from the vexations of the spirit; it also re-enacts his ideological shift following his disappointments with social struggle and with his own philosophical doubts.⁵

In the fourth verse paragraph the handling of time in the poem is reversed. Memories are replaced by thoughts about the future ("in this moment there is life and food / For future years"), and the account of the micro-biographical movement towards mystical insight is replaced by the survey of larger biographical stages in the development of the speaker's love of nature. These stages are macro-biographical steps towards "seeing into the life of things," from complete identification with nature in childhood (ll. 73-74), through a passion for it in the early 1790s, to the present calm love. Mystical insight is no longer a matter of separate flights of the spirit achieved through the "via negativa" of the hermit-like "laying asleep" of the body; rather, the "sense sublime / Of something far more deeply interfused" is an integral part of aesthetic experience.⁶ Moreover, whereas the mystical trance referred to in the second verse paragraph depended on jamming "the din of towns and cities," the insight approximated in the fourth paragraph incorporates a metaphorically transformed auditory image, "the still, sad music of humanity" (l. 91), Wordsworth's 1798 alternative to *the music of the spheres*. Wordsworth's present contemplation of landscape is "oftentimes" (l. 90) accompanied by an ethical awareness, whose inclusion signifies an ideological change.

The metaphysical/ethical "presence" which Wordsworth has learned to feel is "disturb[ing]," albeit it "disturbs" him "with the joy / of elevated thoughts" (ll. 94-95). This kind of joy, this heightening of faculties, does not reach the peak intensities of the "aching joys" and "dizzy raptures" of his earlier visionary passion. In the immediate context the verb "disturbs" pertains to the disruption of his calm contentment in the presence of the "sublime" (l. 95); in the broader context it may pertain to

the speaker's discontent with the lowered pitch of his excitement—hence the wavy structure of the poem, with the sense of an aborted climax recurring in each verse paragraph. However it might be, the new "gifts" (l. 86) of ethics and metaphysics in the aesthetic response to nature are presented as compensatory ("for such loss, I would believe / Abundant recompense," ll. 86-87), yet ethical awareness "disturbs," because it is the awareness of human suffering.

The biographical turn from a search of an aesthetic and metaphysical communion with nature to attitudes "chasten[ed] and subdue[d]" (l. 93) by the ethical awareness is simulated by the speaker's turn to the sister in the present micro-biographical time. The trial-and-error process enacted in the poem may be roughly summarized as follows: having sought out the spot where he had once experienced visionary rapture, the speaker does not re-live the same elevation of the spirit; his memory repeatedly recapitulates the steps that had once led him to unrestrained joy, turning back to the perceived scene after each iteration; finally, he shifts to a different spiritual endeavour, one that includes human commitment. His turning to address Dorothy is a transition from a frustrated experimentation with autonomous emotional capabilities to care for another human being.

The reader has the option of identifying the two successive addressees, the river and Dorothy, in terms of their symbolic roles. What argues in favour of such an identification is that Dorothy's function at certain periods of Wordsworth's life was comparable to maternal sustenance and care; in his poetry he attributed such a function to nature. What argues against it, however, is that the first addressee, the river Wye, is still there when the speaker turns to Dorothy, only now it is in the shape of the third-person deictic presence ("on the banks / Of this fair river"), excluded from the I-Thou relationship.⁷ Read as a simulation of a trial-and-error spiritual development, the poem suggests that, eschewing the possibility of an emotional dead end, the speaker has actually turned away from the "fair river" and, instead, has turned to the sister, the nearest *human* presence, the natural object of affection and a representative of more remote objects of sympathy.

This ethical shift is not unanticipated. Though five years previously the speaker sought nature *in lieu* of human commitments—he had come to this spot on the bank of the Wye as if “Flying from something that he dreads”—the language used in the second verse paragraph to describe the feelings aroused by the memories of the Wye during the five years has a distinct ethical tinge. These feelings are likened to the diffuse satisfaction with one’s active benevolence: “feelings too / Of unremembered pleasure: *such*, perhaps, / As have no slight or trivial influence / On that best portion of a good man’s life, / His little, nameless, unremembered acts / Of kindness and of love” (ll. 30-35; italics mine). In “An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals,” David Hume writes that “the immediate feeling of benevolence and friendship, humanity and kindness, is sweet, smooth, tender, and agreeable, independent of all fortune and accidents”;⁸ this valorization of the benefits of sober benevolence comes in the context of objections to the belief that “life, without passion, must be altogether insipid and tiresome.”⁹ Wordsworth seems to have worked his way to a similar conclusion: with passion lost, life need not become insipid. There remains a “sweet, smooth, tender, and agreeable” love of nature, “independent of all fortune and accidents.” It might prove insufficient, but there is also the care for the loved ones. Whereas the relationship with nature was characterized by a collaboration, a human commitment is characterized by reciprocity: the speaker is thinking not only about what Dorothy can do for him (remind him of what he has been and thereby convince him of the reality of former enthusiasms) but also of what he can do for her—help to steel her against inevitable future suffering—if by no more than laying the ground for compensatory memories of love.¹⁰ Hence the importance of the ruins of Tintern Abbey—invisible, several miles away, with the “bare ruined quires” that remind one to love that well which one will lose ere long; hence also the duly re-processed echoes of Psalm 23, “I will fear no evil, for thou art with me . . .”: Dorothy should fear no evil, not because it will not come but because Nature and memories will be with her.¹¹

Yet Wordsworth swerves away from Hume’s psychological egoism. The above quotation from “An Enquiry” continues as follows: “These virtues

are besides attended with a pleasing consciousness of remembrance, and keep us in humour with ourselves as well as others; while we retain the agreeable reflection of having done our part towards mankind and society."¹² Though towards the end of the poem Wordsworth will talk about the view of the valley giving him not only "the sense of present pleasure" but also "pleasing thoughts" about long-term effects and though he will express the hope of being remembered by his sister, in the second verse paragraph the little nameless acts "of kindness and of love" are "unremembered" acts—not so much in the sense of not producing gratitude in the recipients as in the sense of not leading to a Humean utilitarian complacency.

Whereas in the second verse paragraph Wordsworth uses the language of moral philosophy to describe the after-effects of a landscape, in the fourth verse paragraph he uses the language of sense perception, his "anchor" (l. 109), to mark the confluence of the metaphysical insight with the newly activated ethical sense: the ethical presence, the "music of humanity" is "nor harsh nor grating" (l. 92), and "the motion" that impels "All thinking things, all objects of all thought" is the spirit that "rolls through all things" (ll. 100-12), like the waters of the Wye that are "rolling from their mountain springs" in line 3 (*italics mine*). The two semantic fields converge in the fifth paragraph's address to Dorothy, a micro-biographical instance of the larger change in the speaker's ethical program.

Wordsworth's attitude to his sister in "Tintern Abbey" is sometimes described as exploitative: the poet, it is argued, seems to wish to arrest his sister's intellectual development, so that her "wild" spirit should re-invigorate his own.¹³ This reading, however, neglects the suggestion made at the beginning of the last paragraph: Dorothy could have been relied upon to sustain the speaker's "genial spirits" *had he not previously learned to fuel them by new interests*: "Nor perchance, / *If I were not thus taught*, should I the more / Suffer my genial spirits to decay: / For thou art with me here" (ll. 111-14; *my italics*). From his point of view, her presence is a bonus; his creative power does not depend on it. Dorothy herself is the main beneficiary of her presence on the bank of the Wye on this summer day.

Particularly controversial—not to say misleading—on at least three counts is John Barrell's argument that the words "yet a little while / May I behold in thee what I was once" (ll. 119-20) are "a prayer to nature to arrest Dorothy's development, and for his benefit."¹⁴ First, it implies an identification of Dorothy with "nature" as the addressee of the prayer—whereas the address to Dorothy *replaces* rather than replicates the earlier apostrophe to the river. Second, "the prayer" actually begins later, in line 134 ("Therefore let the moon / Shine on thee in thy solitary walk"); it is anticipated and prefaced by "this prayer I make" in line 121. In line 120, the syntactic inversion "May I behold" need not be read as the word order typical of prayers, blessings and curses: in Wordsworth's times, more than in our own, such an inversion was demanded by the placing of an adverbial of time like "for a little while" at the beginning of a sentence, so that 'yet for a little while I may behold' would verge on the ungrammatical. It is the use of the word "may" that introduces the ambiguity concerning the illocutionary force of the sentence (an emotionally charged statement or a quasi-religious request). However, if one interprets Wordsworth's address to his sister as a respectful and sympathetic turning to a fellow subject, then the use of "may" emerges as determined by a more diffident attitude than what would have been suggested by its alternative, the self-reliant "can." The ethical flavor of the line would be radically different if Wordsworth had said "I can behold in you what I once was"—the sense of the mystery of the mind of another would have been lost. And third, and most important, even if the sentence were read as a request rather than a statement, it should invite a micro-biographical as well as a biographical reading. The words "yet a little while" are as ambiguous as "again" in the first paragraph: they may mean not "for a few more *months or years*" but rather, telescoping a macro-phenomenon into a micro-impression, "for a few more *minutes*—before we move on."

The micro-biographical pause ("yet a little while") likewise projects a biographical interval before Dorothy has to return to the "dreary intercourse" with the "selfish men" with whose "evil tongues," "rash judgments," "sneers," and greetings without kindness (ll. 129-31) both

the brother and the sister are familiar. His prayer is that she might have the strength to resist the oppression of middle-class society: not accidentally, foreseeing that "solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief" might fall to her lot, he refers to her destiny by a word with legal-financial connotations—"thy portion" (ll. 143-44). The only portion, or dowry, that he himself can offer her is the memories of "lovely forms" (l. 140), "sweet sounds and harmonies" (l. 142). The words "thy portion," however, also refer back to the word portion used in the meaning of "part" earlier in the poem: "that best *portion* of a good man's life, / His little, nameless, unremembered acts / Of kindness and of love" (ll. 33-35; my italics): the discourse on the love of nature is again conducted in the language of ethics.

This is also the case in Dorothy Wordsworth's own poem "Thoughts on my Sickbed," a late response to "Tintern Abbey" as well as her brother's other poems, such as "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal." In one of the middle stanzas Dorothy Wordsworth recollects her excursions with her brother, approximately pertaining to 1798:

Our cottage-hearth no longer our home,
Companions of Nature were we,
The Stirring, the Still, the Loquacious, the Mute—
To all we gave our sympathy.¹⁵

Here the "sympathy" which a philosopher like Hume would reserve for fellow human beings is extended to the world of nature. The change traced in "Tintern Abbey" proceeds in the opposite direction: nature has educated the sensibilities of the perceiver in a way that would make him more keenly and sympathetically aware of the various hues of sadness in human experience.¹⁶

The "still, sad music" is the music of "humanity"—not of "towns and cities," not of a "world" of "getting and spending" (cf. "The World is Too Much with Us"). The final verse paragraph of "Tintern Abbey" has been read as betraying an *égoïsme-à-deux*: "'Our' integrity is not seen as something to be defined in the interpersonal world, but a privately held bulwark against it: 'we' occupy a privileged position, separate from and superior to 'evil tongues,' 'rash judgments,' 'the sneers of selfish men,'

and 'all / The dreary intercourse of daily life.' This is a sense of self which has been implicit from the opening section, with its distancing of those human presences which might call forth 'kindness' and 'love' into the features of a landscape, its seemingly inevitable movement towards a telling final image" of the hermit.¹⁷ This comment likewise is misleading: the "evil tongues" and "rash judgments" pertain to the socially privileged members of the middle and upper classes, those of whose malice and incomprehension Wordsworth and his sister have been the victims. By contrast, the true objects of the speaker's sympathy, people whose memory makes its way into the poem through "the still, sad music of humanity," are the poor, the protagonists of poems like "The Ruined Cottage," "We Are Seven," "Michael," "Resolution and Independence." The image of voluntary exposure to the elements in the speaker's prayer—"let the misty mountain-winds be free / To blow against thee" (ll. 136-37) is, of course vastly different from the memory of the destitute "vagrant dwellers of the houseless woods" (l. 20), yet the only "mansion" (l. 140) Dorothy will have is that of her own mind with its cherished memories.

It is true that in "Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth distances himself from the predicament of the poor—if only by walking several miles upstream, away from the beaten tourist track, to a familiar spot from which one *cannot* see the ruins of the abbey haunted by destitute beggars and from the town of Tintern with its massive unemployment:¹⁸ meditative nature poetry would not have been morally possible at the time and place where aggregated human misery stared one in the face, and calling for concrete "acts of kindness"—in the shape of alms charitably "unremembered" a short while later ("But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," Matthew 6: 3). What "Tintern Abbey" turns away from is not human suffering but the struggle for social change that would purport to put an end to some forms of human suffering only to generate new ones. In the debate between the Yogi and the Commissar—the change from within and the change from without—the Wordsworth of 1798 (though not of 1789) would have placed himself at the side of the Yogi.¹⁹

Which is not to deny that, in more general terms, the exploration of the relationship between aesthetic experience and social responsibility is a piece of "unfinished business" that the poem has left behind,²⁰ or that there may be a tinge of paternalistic condescension in the fifth verse paragraph of "Tintern Abbey." Indeed, the commitment explored and re-enacted in the poem is a product of paradoxes and tensions: it is through a self-secluding fragmentation of the world of experience that the speaker had achieved the holistic vision of "something far more deeply interfused," and it is after wending his way aside from the loci of acute human misery that, in the presence of his sister's joy, he can afford to admit an awareness of suffering as an integral part of his poetic mood.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

NOTES

¹Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Romanticism and 'Anti-Self-Consciousness,'" *The Centennial Review* 6 (1962): 562. See also M. H. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric," *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle*, ed. Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (New York: OUP, 1965).

²The topos of revisiting was amply present in eighteenth-century topographical poetry; see M. H. Abrams, *Doing Things with Texts* (New York: Norton, 1989) 382. For a guide to Wordsworth's reworking of this and other topos see John O. Hayden's cento "The Road to Tintern Abbey," *The Wordsworth Circle* 12 (1981): 211-16.

³See also Russell Noyes, *Wordsworth and the Art of Landscape* (New York: Haskell House, 1973) 245.

⁴The latter interpretation is the more widely accepted one: "Because [Wordsworth] is interested in the stages of growth, he often juxtaposes two widely separated periods of time in such a way that we are made dramatically conscious of the degree of growth that has taken place between Stage One and Stage Two. It resembles the effect that might be produced by our seeing a double exposure on photographic film, where the same person appears in the same setting, except that ten years have elapsed between exposures." Carlos Baker, "Sensation and Vision in Wordsworth," *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. M. H. Abrams (London: OUP, 1960) 106.

⁵Cf. Geoffrey H. Hartman's discussion of Wordsworth's metaphysics: "Nature is second best, a substitute heaven." *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* (London: Methuen, 1987) 27.

⁶Cf. Harold Bloom's more radical belief that these passages represent "not mysticism but, rather, a state of aesthetic contemplation," *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1963) 142.

⁷Robert J. Griffin notes "the displacement of the poet's youthful response to nature onto Dorothy" yet goes on to "speculate" that "the father (Pope's text) was transformed by repression first into a mother (nature), and then into a younger sister." "Wordsworth's Pope: The Language of His Former Heart," *ELH* 54 (1987): 704, 705. I accept Griffin's argument about Pope's troubling influence on Wordsworth but not the view (suggested by the term "transformation") of the replacement of one "object" by another as a psychological process divorced from will and choice.

⁸David Hume, *Enquiries*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1902) 282.

⁹Hume 281.

¹⁰See also James Soderholm's discussion of Dorothy Wordsworth's poem "Thoughts on My Sickbed" as gratefully confirming Wordsworth's prediction, "Dorothy Wordsworth's Return to Tintern Abbey," *New Literary History* 26 (1995): 309-22.

¹¹Cf. Abrams, *Doing Things with Texts* 387. I am indebted to our student Aliza Raz for a detailed discussion of the echoes of Psalm 23 in her paper on "Tintern Abbey."

¹²Hume 282.

¹³This view is most extensively argued by John Barrell in Chapter 5 of *Poetry, Language & Politics* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988).

¹⁴Barrell 162.

¹⁵Text quoted from Soderholm 317.

¹⁶The address to Dorothy, though not, strictly speaking, a case of apostrophe, actually performs a function comparable to that of apostrophe in Homer, which usually stands for the flow of sympathy for the person addressed. See Elizabeth Block, "The Narrator Speaks: Apostrophe in Homer and Virgil," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 112 (1982): 14-17.

¹⁷Heather Glen, *Vision and Disenchantment: Blake's Songs and Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983) 257.

¹⁸In *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems: Four Essays* (Cambridge: CUP, 1986) 20-57, Marjorie Levinson, for instance, asks how it is that Tintern Abbey itself, let alone the unemployment-ridden town of Tintern, is not reflected in Wordsworth's poem (for a spirited rebuttal of Levinson's and Barrell's critiques of the poem see Helen Vendler, "Tintern Abbey: Two Assaults," *Bucknell Review* 36.1, 1992: 173-90). The homeless, the vagrant charcoal burners, the poor who haunted the ruins of the Abbey, already a tourist spot in the late eighteenth century, are, indeed, absent from the poem; as are the social issues that they represent: poverty, unemployment, enclosures. More important: detonating what M. H. Abrams has called Mary Moorman's "time-bomb" remarks (see Abrams, *Doing Things with Texts* 375) on Wordsworth's and his sister's itinerary down to Bristol, Levinson echoes Mary Moorman's suggestion that Wordsworth unconsciously uses the word "above" Tintern Abbey instead of "below" Tintern Abbey (see Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1957] 1: 401-02) and goes on to interpret this as a search of the Pisgah view from which the social eyeshores represented by the ruined and poverty-infested Abbey are looked over and overlooked (see Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems* 55). Yet the point

is that the words "several miles above Tintern Abbey" in the title refer not to the place in which Wordsworth was composing the poem while pacing towards Bristol but to the location of "this dark sycamore" (l. 9), the precise spot in which he remembers reposing five years ago (see also Abrams, *Doing Things with Texts* 380 and Noyes, *Wordsworth and the Art of Landscape* 243), one from which *one cannot see* the ruins of the Abbey: human misery is *not* staring Wordsworth in the face when he indulges in meditations on the development of his response to the landscape—Jerome McGann's suggestion that it does in *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983) 86, would not have been possible to make if McGann had visited the place and noted that the ruins could not be seen from as far as half a mile upstream.

¹⁹Kenneth Johnston has suggested that, in actual fact, the poem may have been completed not on the date of the title, July 13, but on the far more explosive date of July 14, the implications of which Wordsworth may have wished to avoid; see "The Politics of 'Tintern Abbey,'" *The Wordsworth Circle* 14 (1983): 13.

²⁰Johnston 13.

A Place Revisited: The House at *The Jolly Corner*

URSULA BRUMM

The Jolly Corner, published in 1908, is one of Henry James's late stories; it is also one of the most autobiographical of his fictions and—a strange combination—one of his “ghost stories.” It is based on his experience of a country and a “place revisited”: James had visited his native country in 1904/05 after a European absence of about twenty years. Similarly, his protagonist Spencer Brydon, aged 56, returns to New York after 33 years in Europe.

The narrator opens the story very “realistically” with Brydon's reply to the standard question addressed to visitors: “Every one asks me what I ‘think’ of everything . . .” and he evades the answer by replying that it is “so silly a demand on so big a subject, my ‘thoughts’ would still be almost altogether about something that concerns only myself.”¹ He is talking to a friend of his youth, Alice Staverton, who with sympathy and empathy remains his partner in dialogue throughout the story; it is strongly suggested that she loves him and has waited for him through the years of his absence. Brydon is both impressed and disturbed by the change he observes: “the difference, the newness, the queerness, above all the bignesses . . . assaulted his vision where ever he looked.” There is also a feeling of guilt about this long absence; yet “the swagger things, the modern, the monstrous . . . were exactly his sources of dismay” (726).

Brydon has returned for a purpose: “to look at his ‘property’” (727): two houses, one of which provided the income which enabled him to live in Europe, the other is the house on the Jolly Corner in which he was born and lived through his adolescence, it is his ancestral home “in which various members of his family lived and died” (727). The first one is under

"reconstruction as a tall mass of flats" (727). As he visits it to check on the progress, he discovers to his own astonishment virtues which "had been dormant in his own organism": "a capacity for business and a sense for construction." He finds himself "ready to climb ladders . . . and ready 'to go into' figures," "to walk the plank, to handle materials and look wise about them, to ask questions" (728), even "standing up" to the incompetent representative of the building firm (729).

Alice Staverton, who lived all her life in New York in rather modest circumstances challenges him with the insight "that he had clearly for too many years neglected a real gift. If he had but stayed at home he would have anticipated the inventor of the sky-scraper" (729-30). Something in Brydon is touched off by these words: the image of "some strange figure" in his American home haunts him; it develops in his mind into the action of opening a door to empty rooms until finally meeting "some quite erect confronting presence, sometimes planted in the middle of the place and facing him through the dusk" (730). Brydon has decided not to convert the house at the Jolly Corner for "beastly rent values" (732), he keeps it empty so that it remains in "absolute vacancy," a "great gaunt shell" in which gas and electric light are off. When he meets Alice Staverton he tries to convey to her the mystification he feels about this house. During their talk at this time both have "ghosts" on their mind, at first used metaphorically, then concretely: "Oh Ghosts—of course the place must swarm with them" (734). As it turns out the only ghost to be encountered is "the erect confronting presence" Brydon has anticipated. Consequently Brydon becomes obsessed with the question what life would have made of him had he stayed. "It comes over me that I had then a strange *alter ego* deep down somewhere within me" (736). Yet at the same time he is convinced that this personage which he imagines as monstrous is a "totally other person. But I do want to see him . . . And I can. And I shall" (738).

Thus Spencer Brydon surrenders to the obsession to find, call up, encounter his other hidden, or undeveloped, self. More and more his search develops into a hunt. Part II of *The Jolly Corner* is the story of this hunt, conducted in the ancestral house, and told as an adventure and suspense story in which Brydon "pursues," "stalks" his prey like "any beast of the

forest." He tries to "waylay" his *alter ego*, which he perceives as "walking" in "the house of the past, of that mystical other world that might have flourished for him had he not, for weal or woe, abandoned it" (740). The search thus depends on a mysterious relation between house and self as territory; the house serving as a frame of self and as agency of this hunt.

The Jolly Corner is the story of a special kind of adventure, a ghost hunt which is conducted in Brydon's mind and consciousness in search for the latent qualities within his personality, the stages and result of which are self-produced. What we learn about them is what Brydon as center of consciousness experiences or imagines he experiences. It is therefore proper that the story of this hunt for his other self is told to a large degree in the form of *Erlebte Rede*, "free indirect discourse," a discourse in which the narrator surrenders to the protagonist by moving almost imperceptibly from third person to a blending of third and first person narration. As action and events are largely projections of Brydon's consciousness the story has to be retold by making rather extensive use of his "free indirect discourse."

Brydon conducts the search for his *alter ego* as a ritual of "haunting" the house—in the basic sense of the word, which means to revisit habitually as by a ghost. He sometimes even comes twice, first in the hours of "gathering dust" (769) and late at night between his dinner at the club and the return to the hotel, moving through rooms, vistas of a "mystical other world," up and down staircases, through passages of rooms which are like compartments of his consciousness.² Finally he is certain of success: "I've hunted him till he has 'turned.' He's . . . brought at last to bay" (744). "He has been dodging, retreating, hiding, but now worked up to anger, he'll fight" (745) Brydon applauds himself.

The final encounter on the last night of pursuit is brought about by a confusion of identities, that is of the two selves within him. When Brydon revisits the flight of four rooms at the top of the building, the fourth room, which is without exit to the corridor, has its single door closed—while Brydon is certain to have it left open: ". . . why what else was clear but that there had been another agent?" (748). "Ah this time, at last they were . . . the two opposed projections of him, in presence . . ." (749). At this point,

Brydon loses courage. He opens a casement to let the outside night air in and contemplates escaping by an outside ladder to the street, if this were possible. As it is, he has to traverse the house, "making blindly for the greater staircase, to uncontrollably, insanely, fatally take his way to the streets —" (753). In his panic, he reaches the black and white marble squares of the entrance, which several times had reminded him of his childhood. "This was the bottom of the sea," and he feels the "thrill of assured escape" when he discovers that the inner doors of the vestibule are open, which he believes to have closed. Advancing in the feeling "that here was at last something to meet, to touch, to take, to know" (755) which meant either liberation or defeat, in the dim light a figure presents itself: "rigid and conscious, spectral yet human, a man of his own substance and stature waited there to measure himself with his own power of dismay" (755). The "dismay" is directed at the apparition which is of his own making, created in and brought forth from his own unconscious. This is what we learn about how Brydon "took him in": while he perceives the ghost's face at first as dim "from the pair of the raised hands that covered it" the figure presents itself to him in a hard and acute light in the

queer actuality of evening dress, of dangling double eye-glass, of gleaming silk and white linen, of pearl button and gold watch-guard and polished shoe. (755)

Actually, we are led to assume, a copy of his own gentlemanly evening appearance. The figure impresses itself on Brydon more intensely than any "portrait by a great modern master." At the same time Brydon's revulsion becomes immense as he "gapes at his other self," at "the splendid covering hands," one of which "had lost two fingers which were reduced to stumps, as if accidentally shot away" (756). When the hands are dropped and the face is left uncovered

Horror, with the sight, had leaped into Brydon's throat, gasping there in sound he couldn't utter; for the bared identity was too hideous as *his*, and his glare was the passion of his protest. (756)

Brydon rejects the apparition he has cornered: "Such an identity fitted his at *no* point, made its alternative monstrous." He now regards his efforts

as "a grotesque waste" and the "success of his adventure an irony" and he rejects the apparition as a stranger whom he regards as "evil, odious, blatant, vulgar" (756). In other words, Brydon, who from the beginning had expected the American version of his personality as monstrous, now rejects not only the result of his search but his whole effort of self-discovery: "He had been 'sold,' he inwardly moaned, stalking such a game as this." In this shock, the puzzling motif of the missing fingers plays a role as a confirmation of identity,³ as is underlined "when Brydon winced—whether for [the apparition's] proved identity, or for his lost fingers" (762). "Sick with the force of his shock," he collapses into unconsciousness.

The specter which appears to Brydon is a peculiar kind of ghost: not an unbidden guest from a nether world, but a projection of his psyche, which he has rigorously, methodically, and relentlessly called forth. The interpretations which have been applied to *The Jolly Corner* are various: It has been linked to "the most appalling yet most admirable nightmare" which Henry James has related in *A Small Boy and Others*, of resisting and then pursuing an "awful agent" through the Galerie d'Apollon of the Louvre.⁴ Some critics detect influences of Hawthorne, Poe, or Irving.⁵ Martha Banta sees self-haunting as a manifestation of inner guilt as the ruling theme in late nineteenth-century fiction and indeed for both Brydon and the author, a sense of guilt for having abandoned their native country serves for a Jamesian "germ" which the story brings to fruition.⁶ Daniel J. Schneider recognizes in James's fiction the repeated effort to express a polarization of his psyche in the pattern of the hunter and the hunted.⁷ Several critics discuss the relation and the difference to such works as *The Sense of the Past* (1917) and the much earlier story *A Passionate Pilgrim* (1871).⁸ Richard A. Hocks links the "literary art" of Henry James to his brother's philosophy,⁹ discussing the "quasi-supernatural" realm of the "ghost pieces" (198-99) as a "deeper penetration into human consciousness." He compares *The Jolly Corner* to *The Beast in the Jungle* and links it to William James' proposition of a "subliminal self" (209). There is no reference to the conceptions of the self as developed in William James' *Principles of Psychology* (1890) or *Psychology: Briefer Course* (1892). Nobody,

as far as I can see, has as yet pointed to these conceptions, as I will in this paper.

It therefore is justified to take account of psychological notions of the time, as well as brother William's psychological research and theories. Americans in the second half of the nineteenth century were fascinated by, involved in, or critically aware of Spiritualism, the belief that the human self after death survives as a spirit which can be contacted in another world. The nature, potentials, and hazards of the self were explored and discussed in the popular arena as well as in the fields of science and literature.

In literature, the age-old *Doppelgänger* motif was revived with the new twists and sophistication in such works as Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), which presented the human personality as an amalgam of good and evil. Dr. Jekyll, a respected and law-abiding scientist who is troubled by the notion of the "duality of man" concocts a drug which transforms him into an *alter ego* which as "pure evil" commits wanton, wholly unprovoked murder.

Henry James commented critically on Spiritualism and related trends in *The Bostonians* and in a short story "Professor Fargo" he drew the portrait of a charlatan who represented the sinister aspects of the movement, while William James, physician and pioneer psychologist, studied its more serious aspects. He attended séances and discussed the functions and talents of mediums. Various forms of "dual nature" found his attention and left results in his psychological theories. Some spectacular cases of "multiple personality" which occurred in France and America at the time were discussed among psychologists. William James participated in the examination of the case of one Ansel Bourne, who suffered a complete change from one identity to another and back again, a case which recently together with related phenomena received a detailed account by Michael G. Kenny.¹⁰

In his *Psychology, Briefer Course* of 1892 William James in Chapter XII develops his conception of "The Self" by distinguishing between "The Me and the I."¹¹ He defines the "I" as "aware of personal existence," while the "me" contains the total self: an empirical self to which belong the

material "me," made up of body, clothes, family, property; the social "me" of fame, honor, social position, and the spiritual "me" which comprises the entire collection of states of consciousness. It is this complex constitution of self which William James links to the phenomena of mutations and multiplications of the self, to all alterations of personality. Since the "me" changes as it grows, identity is only a relative thing, loosely constructed and held together by some common memories. Mutations of the self are therefore possible, of which William James recognizes three types: insane delusions, alternating selves, and mediumships or possessions.

I would like to suggest that for Henry James, who in his long residence abroad had acquired a material, social and spiritual European "me" and had neglected to develop his American self, these thoughts and theories were meaningful and helpful in illustrating the problem which confronted him at his return to a native country that so strikingly had progressed toward modern characteristics of Americanness. And it fits the concepts of this theory that Spencer Brydon tries to acquire the furnishings, the consciousness and missed experience of his American self in the family home, the property in which for him linger the memories of his youth, of the members and social positions of his family. Prowling through the rooms he reads "value"

... into the mere sight of the walls, mere shapes of rooms, mere sound of the floors, mere feel in his hand, of the old silver-plated knobs of the several mahogany doors, which suggested the pressure of the palms of the dead; the seventy years of the past in fine that these things represented, the annals of three generations ... afloat in the very air like microscopic motes. (733)

All this serves to construct the material, social and spiritual equipment of his American self, which haunts him as the spectral figure of a ghost.

Section III serves as a coda to Brydon's haunting experience. Night has changed to daylight when Brydon wakes up from his swoon, his head cradled in the lap of Alice Staverton, who acting on her intuition has found him on the black and white marble squares of the vestibule. In waking up Brydon has a feeling of having returned in peace from a "prodigious journey" (757). He feels as if he had died and assures Alice that she brought him back to life, a mild suggestion that the ordeal of search, hunt, horror

and swoon are taken as a kind of rebirth. When the memory of the horror of the night returns to him, Alice in a role between lover and motherly counselor becomes a healer of his wounded spirit. She also reveals herself as a loving clairvoyant: from the beginning she has had a comprehension of Brydon's putative American self—she claims to have seen it in her dreams—and now assures him “it's not you. Of course it wasn't to have been” (760). While Brydon is unable to accept “this brute black stranger”—the shock of recognition felt in the confrontation with “the bared identity” (756) remains without results—Alice pities him and feels that she “could have liked him. And to me . . . he was no horror. I had accepted him” (762). She repeats her somewhat ambiguous assurance: “‘And he isn't—no he isn't—*you*’ she murmured as he drew her to his breast” (762)¹² as, of course, he has remained his European self.—At first sight one of the rare happy endings in James's work, but on rather slim evidence. As Brydon rejects the American experience the reader cannot but doubt that he will remain in New York, let alone marry the good Alice, but expects him to return to England at the first opportunity.¹³

When Henry James revisited the United States he found the old family house on Washington Place gone and replaced by a new building. His protagonist Spencer Brydon is more lucky: he finds his ancestral home intact but is also shocked by the state of the country, which has changed from the “jolly” to the “modern” and the “monstrous.” The story thus has a political dimension: Brydon, and presumably James, realize that the change meant a change of how life is lived, and that a participation in this change would have resulted in a transformation of the self, a disturbing thought which actually puts their identity in jeopardy. James fictionalized this anxiety by combining such traditional motifs as ghost and *Doppelgänger* with the latest psychological theories about the self and alternate personality which his brother had developed. In 1905 he returned to England to live there for the rest of his life; in 1915 he became a British citizen. The horrid specter of the alter ego as an evil and odious stranger is Henry James' explanation and, to a certain extent, his justification for his return to England.

NOTES

¹Quotations are from *The Ghostly Tales of Henry James*, ed. Leon Edel (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1948) 725.

²From the beginning, Brydon located his talents for business and construction in "a compartment of his mind not yet penetrated" (728).

³Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955-58) notes missing fingers under the heading "Identity Tests": H 57.2 "Recognition by missing fingers." S. Gorley Putt, *The Fiction of Henry James: A Reader's Guide* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977) 48 asks whether "this final proof of identity has been spotted as an instance of long-forgotten castration complex?"

⁴*A Small Boy and Others* (New York: Scribner, 1913) 346-49. Cushing Strout in *Psychohistory Review* (1979) argues against this connection.

⁵As for instance, Walter Shear, "Cultural Fate and Social Freedom in Three American Short Stories," *Studies in Short Fiction* 29 (1992): 543-49.

⁶Martha Banta, *Henry James and the Occult: The Great Extension* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1972) 134.

⁷Daniel J. Schneider, *The Crystal Cage: Adventures of the Imagination in the Fiction of Henry James* (Lawrence: Regents P of Kansas, 1978) passim.

⁸Deborah Esch, "A Jamesian About-Face: Notes on 'The Jolly Corner,'" *Modern Critical Views: Henry James*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987) 235-50.

⁹Richard A. Hocks, *Henry James and Pragmatic Thought: A Study in the Relationship Between the Philosophy of William James and the Literary Art of Henry James* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1974).

¹⁰Michael G. Kenny, *The Passion of Ansel Bourne: Multiple Personality in American Culture* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution P, 1986)

¹¹William James, *Psychology: Briefer Course, The Works of William James*, gen. ed. Frederick H. Burkhardt (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1984) 159.

¹²Some critics regard Alice Staverton merely as a sounding board, a dialogue partner who helps Spencer Brydon to understand and solve his problems. She is more than that. Russell J. Reising, "'Doing Good by Stealth': Alice Staverton and Women's Politics in 'The Jolly Corner,'" *The Henry James Review* 13 (1992): 50-66 attributes prime importance to her role in the story and links her to contemporary feminist movements.

¹³I disagree with critics who think (as Leon Edel, *The Ghostly Tales of Henry James* 725) that Brydon is finally reconciled to the "black stranger," his potential American self. When Alice Staverton assures him that "he isn't you" she obviously refers to his actual self.

The Harrowing of Malvolio: The Theological Background of *Twelfth Night*, Act 4, Scene 2

PAUL DEAN

There is no need at this date to make a laborious case for Shakespeare's knowledge of the Harrowing of Hell play from the medieval mystery cycles. Over thirty years ago, Glynne Wickham showed that the Porter scene in *Macbeth* draws on the iconography of that episode.¹ I wish to suggest that Act 4, scene 2 of *Twelfth Night*, in which Feste as Sir Topaz visits the imprisoned Malvolio, contains some oblique theological allusions which are partly to be understood in terms of the Harrowing and partly in terms of Reformation theological debate. I accept the view, now academically quite respectable, that Shakespeare was at least brought up as a Catholic,² and will suggest that this may colour the tone of the later part of the scene.

It is an article of the Apostles' Creed, inserted by the fourth synod of Sirmium in the middle of the fourth century, that Christ *descendit ad inferos*. The translation of these words which was included in the English Prayer Book from 1549 onwards—"he descended into Hell"—misrepresents the Latin, which actually means "to the people in the lower place," that is, Limbo, the borderline state (*limbus* is Latin for "edge"), neither Hell nor Heaven, in which the holy souls of Old Testament times awaited their redeemer. (The mistaken translation is repeated in the fourth of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.) The crucial proof-text of this doctrine in the canonical New Testament is 1 Peter 3:18 which states that after his death Jesus preached "unto the spirits that are in prison," a text quoted by the Duke in *Measure for Measure* (2.3.1-5). The story is elaborated in apocryphal writings. For instance, in the fragmentary *Gospel of Peter* (not by the Apostle) the resurrection appearance of Jesus is

accompanied by a cross, and a voice is heard from the sky saying, "Hast thou preached unto them that sleep?" to which "an answer was heard from the cross, saying: Yea."³ The fullest surviving treatment occurs in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (otherwise known as the *Acts of Pilate*), which exists in one Greek and two Latin texts and also in a Middle English version.⁴ In the Latin text the story of the visitation of Jesus to the infernal regions, his defeat of Satan, Death and Hell, and his liberation of the souls of patriarchs and prophets, is narrated by the two sons of Simeon, Karinus and Leucius, who have been raised from the dead for this purpose. Remarkably, although they can speak, they ask for paper in order to write their story down (we are irresistibly reminded of Malvolio's request to Feste). Naturally, the contrast between the darkness of Hell and the brightness of Christ's coming is stressed, similarly to the contrast in *Twelfth Night* 4.2, and interestingly Satan is called "the prince of Tartarus" (p. 130), which reminds us of Sir Toby's undertaking to follow his "most excellent devil of wit," Maria, "to the gates of Tartar" (2.5.195-96). Significantly, in the play which in so many ways anticipates *Twelfth Night*—*The Comedy of Errors*—Antipholus of Syracuse is said by his servant Dromio to be "in Tartar limbo, worse than hell" (4.2.32).

The Middle English poem has one or two touches which may or may not be significant in a Shakespearian context: for instance the couplet "Long is o and long is ay / Tille þat comeþ domesday" (MS Bodl. Digby 86, ll. 247-48), which reminds us of the play with the letters "M.O.A.I." in *Twelfth Night* (2.5.115-30). It is tempting to take "A" and "O" in the Middle English poem as Alpha and Omega, and at least one critic has detected the same symbolism in Maria's letter.⁵ It is also interesting that, while in the Digby MS of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* the keeper of Hell-gate calls himself a "gatewarde" (l. 132), in the Auchinleck MS he says, "Ich haue herd wordes hard / whi y no may be no *steward*" (ll. 145-46, my italics).⁶ There is, further, the enigmatic Syriac "Hymn of the Pearl" in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*; this has been connected, on rather flimsy evidence, with the Harrowing, but it mentions, among other items of interest to a reader of *Twelfth Night*, Egypt, a change of clothing, a pearl, and a magic letter, and contains these remarkable verses:

But suddenly, when I saw the garment made like *unto me* as it had been in a mirror.

And I beheld upon it all myself [*or saw it wholly in myself*], and I knew and saw myself through it,

that we were divided asunder, being of one; and again were one in one shape.⁷

—which cannot help reminding us of the meeting of Viola and Sebastian. There is no evidence that Shakespeare had read these apocryphal books, but it may be that he and they share some traditions whose origin and transmission are now lost to us. Certainly the correspondences are striking.

The Harrowing was selected early for dramatic representation; the earliest surviving play on the subject—which is also the earliest known liturgical play—dates from the eighth century,⁸ and it is included in all the extant mystery cycles.⁹ At Chester the pageant was presented by the Cooks and Innkeepers, at York by the Saddlers. The Chester assignment shows an ingenious grim humour, since the cooking-pot or cauldron is a common feature of the iconography of Hell, the “Devil’s kitchen” (the popular imagining of the story must have blurred the distinction between Hades and Limbo).¹⁰ The reformist dramatist, and Bishop of Ossory, John Bale, by his own account, wrote a play on the Harrowing, now lost, which apparently drew on the popular iconography of the event.¹¹ The basic pattern in all the cycles is the same: Jesus approaches the gates of Hell, demanding entrance; the initial incredulity and scorn of the devils gives way to fear and terror, and, in Satan’s case, to indignation at this invasion of his territory; Jesus enters unopposed and preaches salvation to the patriarchs, who acclaim him and are then led off to Heaven.

There are other liturgical reasons why the Harrowing of Hell should be relevant to a play entitled *Twelfth Night*. “A silly play,” wrote Samuel Pepys in his diary for 6 January 1663, “and not relating at all to the name or day.”¹² He could not have been more mistaken. The appropriateness of the feast of the Epiphany to the play has been demonstrated by a number of critics.¹³ The lessons appointed for the feast—from Isaiah 60, Ephesians 3 and Matthew 2, but especially the first two—have strong thematic connections with the play in their emphasis on the dispersal of darkness (and “mist” in Isaiah) by light. This, which reads like a metaphor for

intellectual and spiritual illumination, is echoed in Feste's "There is no darkness but ignorance, in which thou art more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog" (4.2.43-45) and in Malvolio's requests for light. The "Egyptians in their fog" is a reference to one of the plagues in the book of Exodus (10:21-23), and the Exodus was established as a type of the Harrowing of Hell. In the Epistle passage from Ephesians, St Paul writes as "a prisoner of Jesus Christ";¹⁴ this connects with Malvolio's imprisonment, and the fact that the Epistle is sent to the Ephesian church is particularly noteworthy, given that Ephesus is the location of *The Comedy of Errors*, which, as I mentioned earlier, is extensively drawn on in *Twelfth Night*.¹⁵ Furthermore, if one looks beyond the feast of the Epiphany itself to its subsequent season, one finds repeatedly that the liturgical readings strike familiar notes. For the First Sunday after Epiphany the Epistle is from Romans 12, in which St Paul warns his readers "that no man stand high in his own conceit, more than it becometh him to esteem of him self: but so judge of him self, that he be gentle and sober"; for the Second Sunday, from the same chapter, "Bless them which persecute you: bless, I say, and curse not"; for the Third Sunday, from the same chapter, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. For it is written: vengeance is mine, I will reward, saith the Lord."¹⁶ All these are pieces of advice which the proud and vengeful Malvolio might well have taken to heart.

What is the connection between the feast of the Epiphany and the Harrowing? Here we must look, not to scripture or doctrine but to tradition and social custom. The festive dimensions of *Twelfth Night* have been thoroughly investigated by C. L. Barber and, more recently, François Laroque,¹⁷ and we now take for granted the play's subtext of festive licence, the anarchic reign of lords of misrule, and the battle of Carnival and Lent. In pre-Reformation England Epiphany or Twelfth Night marked the conclusion of the Yuletide revels, although their "festive emblems and decorations (ivy, holly and the Yule log) were not taken out of the houses until Candlemas,"¹⁸ that is to say 2 February—interestingly, the date on which the only recorded production of *Twelfth Night* in Shakespeare's lifetime occurred.¹⁹ Laroque observes:

Twelfth Night does convey the general atmosphere of the "misrule" that was latent during the Christmas cycle of festivities and that made it possible to turn the world upside-down. That is why the themes and images connected with the idea of reversal are so important to the play. . . . This was indeed a crossroads in the year, when night won out over day and the interplay of misunderstandings brought forth a comedy of errors and metamorphoses.²⁰

In such a context, we would not look to Shakespeare for a straightforward allegory of the Harrowing of Hell, but rather for a kind of parody of it, and that is what we are given, together with a parody of an exorcism, the ritual which re-enacted the incursion into diabolical territory of the saving power of Christ.

To turn now to 4.2 itself, we should note that the tone of the scene is by no means easy to determine. Warren and Wells describe it as an "extraordinary episode" and infer from the Folio stage direction "*Malvolio within*" that Malvolio was placed under the stage, the traditional location for Hell (as in *Doctor Faustus* and, less certainly, *Hamlet*). Perhaps he was under the trapdoor on which the cauldron in *The Jew of Malta* or *Macbeth* must have stood. Warren and Wells are willing to allow an element of sadistic cruelty and torment to the scene.²¹ By contrast, J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik in their edition detect a slackening of intensity at this point,²² while Joost Daalder in a recent article finds the scene merely farcical, adopting the view that Elizabethan audiences would have found Malvolio's insanity amusing.²³ However that may be, he is clearly not amused, but rather distressed. Perhaps the most subtle reading comes from Alexander Leggatt, who contends that "Malvolio in his dark room is the play's most vivid image of the trapped isolated self. . . . Egotism and loveless solitude are a kind of damnation, and the imprisoned Malvolio is our clearest image of this."²⁴

Glancing at Shakespeare's treatment of a parallel sequence in *The Comedy of Errors* may be of assistance here. The originally comic mistakes of identity in the earlier play result in a degree of psychological disorientation and estrangement on the part of Antipholus of Ephesus which darkens the tone considerably. Ephesus, more blatantly but no less truly than Illyria, is "full of cozenage, / As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye, /

/ Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind" (1.2.97-99),²⁵ a place where people "wander in illusions" (4.3.43). Eventually Antipholus concludes that he has been bewitched. Thereafter he increasingly resembles Malvolio. His companions, thinking him mad and possessed, attempt to pacify him (4.4.48-60); the more he declares "I am not mad" (4.4.59) the more this is taken as proof of his insanity, and Pinch's suggestion that he and his servant Dromio "must be bound and laid in some dark room" (4.4.95) is followed, as he later complains in seeking redress from the Duke (5.1.246-54).

Shakespeare's adaptations of this sequence of events in *Twelfth Night* are revealing. Antipholus's friends sincerely believe him to be insane and undertake what they assume is the standard treatment in such cases, whereas Toby, Maria, Fabian and Feste deliberately set out to "make [Malvolio] mad indeed" (3.4.128). Furthermore, Malvolio, unlike Antipholus, has no companion in his incarceration, and is tormented by a visitor who makes light of (and brings light, but no illumination, to) his predicament. (Is Feste, then, a kind of Lucifer—the light-bearer?²⁶) Shakespeare, then, recast his original idea in such a way as to make the supposed madman's plight more stark and desperate. The callousness with which Malvolio is treated is underlined by the detached attitude taken by the tricksters. Sir Toby envisages the imprisonment as a "pastime" and a "device" (3.4.133-34), and his unease as "this knavery" and "this sport" (4.2.68, 70) proceeds is due not to moral scruples but results from a selfish anxiety not to get into further trouble with Olivia. At the end of the play Feste describes the encounter as an "interlude" (5.1.63)—a game which is also his revenge for Malvolio's contemptuous treatment of him. This gives it a more personal and pointed character, heightened by the absence of Sir Toby and Maria for much of the scene.

This is not to say, of course, that Malvolio is entirely correct in believing himself to be sane. The "self-love" of which Olivia accuses him (1.5.85) is a severe limitation, isolating him in the world of his own mind; his physical imprisonment, as Leggatt's comments, quoted above, imply, is merely the symbol of his psychological and spiritual imprisonment. He becomes narcissistically enslaved to his own image, as constructed in

Maria's letter, "practising behaviour to his own shadow" (2.5.14-15).²⁷ He is no more "free" than Orsino, Olivia, or Viola, all of whom are to varying extents trapped by their own *idées fixes*; and no more temperate than the revellers whom he detests. He speaks the simple truth when he tells Feste "I am no more mad than you are" (4.2.48-49), although he might equally have said "no less." Irrational extremism is one of Shakespeare's targets in this comedy. Malvolio is not the only character whose "devils" require to be exorcised: arguably he is the only character for whom the attempted exorcism fails. Orsino hopes to "entreat him to a peace" (5.1.370), but there is no certainty that he will be softened. As Marion Bodwell Smith well says, at the end of the play he "only knows that he has been made a fool of, not that he has been a fool."²⁸

Feste's opening words as Sir Topaz, "What ho, I say, peace in this prison" (4.2.19), echo, as has often been noted, the formula for the Visitation of the Sick, and also recall the fact that the blessing of houses was traditional at Epiphany.²⁹ Feste is disguising his voice (cf. "to him in thine own voice," 66), and Malvolio is initially perplexed: "Who calls there?" (21). In character, Feste utters an exorcism formula—"Out, hyperbolical fiend" (26), pretending to address, not Malvolio, but the "dishonest Satan" (32) who possesses him.³⁰ He sets out to "prove" Malvolio's insanity by disturbing his confidence in the evidence of his senses, denying the darkness of the prison; then, when invited to engage in logical dispute, puts the question "What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wildfowl?" (50). Lothian and Craik note the link with *Doctor Faustus*, 5.2.107,³¹ and whilst it would be unreasonable to put too much weight on a glancing allusion, given *Faustus's* subject of enslavement to devils it cannot be wholly ignored. There is also an Ovidian reference, as Jonathan Bate has noted: instead of the "constant question" (49) of "formal rational discourse" which Malvolio requested, he is offered "a question that leads to the inconsistencies of Pythagorean metempsychosis,"³² a question, in other words, about a form of dualism, aptly posed to one who is "sometimes . . . a kind of puritan The dev'l a puritan that he is" (2.3.130, 136). In that connection we should consider the possibility that, when Sir Toby accuses Malvolio of opposition to "cakes and ale" (2.3.108)

Shakespeare may be glancing at Puritan opposition to the Catholic understanding of the Mass as a sacrifice.³³ Equally, Feste's Pythagorean question probes Malvolio's reluctance to admit the scholastic distinction between essence and accident upon which the doctrine of transubstantiation rested.³⁴

In the second "visitation" of 4.2, when Feste appears in *propria persona*, Shakespeare evokes the world of Reformation controversy. Feste enters singing a song, "Hey Robin, jolly Robin, tell me how thy lady does," which is based on a poem by Wyatt which also exists in a shorter, probably earlier, version in the so-called *Henry VIII's MS*.³⁵ Like the lady in the song, Olivia is "unkind" and "loves another"; this lady may also be England, whose attachment to the Protestant religion has resulted in spiritual darkness. (Compare Bale's use of the character Widow England for the opposite polemical point in his *King John*.) Feigning sudden recognition of Malvolio, Feste asks pityingly, "Alas sir, how fell you besides your five wits?" (86). As Lothian and Craik note in the New Arden edition, Five Wits was a character in the play *Everyman* (c. 1495). His function there is to insist on the sacred character and spiritual power of the priest, and to expound the Catholic doctrine that there are seven sacraments, rather than the two which Protestantism taught. In the ensuing dialogue Malvolio, the Puritan, is made to ask repeatedly for "a candle," "some light," "light" again (82, 106, 111), so that he may communicate with "my lady" (111, picking up the phrase from the song), who was "Madonna" to Feste (1.5.38-65) when he "catechized" her as he has catechized Malvolio. Malvolio is effectively driven to confess that he is in spiritual as well as physical darkness, and Feste makes his final exit with a piece of doggerel typical of a morality Vice, in which he addresses Malvolio as "goodman devil" (132). The Folio draws increased attention to the contradiction by printing two words, "good man," but according to *OED* the word can also mean the head of an establishment (so a kind of steward—with reference to "stews" as a brothel?) and the keeper of a prison. All this suggests how the puritan has been unmasked for the fiendish hypocrite that he really is.

The "harrowing" depicted in this scene does not correspond point by point to that of medieval tradition. Shakespeare is characteristically elusive

and allusive, working on several levels simultaneously. He presents Malvolio as a soul enslaved to spiritual darkness, who fails to recognise his visitor's true character, while Feste's ministrations only add to his victim's confusion and bewilderment. The tradition of the Harrowing is turned upside-down, not to deny that its liberation is possible, but perhaps to suggest that those who make themselves outcasts set in motion their own exclusion from paradisaical harmony. The name "Malvolio" may then suggest not only ill-will but mistaken faith. After all, when his letter is finally delivered to Olivia, Feste warns that "a madman's epistles are no gospels" (5.1.281).³⁶

Portsmouth Grammar School

NOTES

All quotations from *Twelfth Night* refer to the edition by Roger Warren and Stanley Wells (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994); other Shakespeare plays are quoted, unless otherwise specified, from the one-volume *Complete Works*, ed. Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988).

¹Glynne Wickham, "Hell-Castle and its Door-Keeper," *Shakespeare Survey* 19 (1966): 68-74, rpt. in *Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage* (London: RKP, 1969) 214-24.

²See E. A. J. Honigmann, *Shakespeare: the "Lost Years"* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985) 114-25, and, most recently, Richard Wilson, "Shakespeare and the Jesuits," *TLS* (19 December 1997) 11-13.

³*The Apocryphal New Testament*, tr. M. R. James (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924) 93.

⁴*The Middle English Harrowing of Hell and Gospel of Nicodemus*, ed. W. H. Hulme, EETS Extra Series 100 (London, 1907). Page references are inserted in my text. M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* 94-95, considers that the Gospel cannot be earlier than the fourth century but that the Harrowing episode, which contains material two centuries older, was attached to the rest of the text in the fifth century.

⁵Inge Leimberg, "'M.O.A.I.': Trying to Share the Joke in *Twelfth Night* 2.5 (A Critical Hypothesis)," *Connotations* 1 (1991): 83-84, suggests the letters are an anagram of "[I]M A[lpha and] O[mega]," with reference to Revelation 1:8. (See also the comment by John Russell Brown, and Leimberg's rejoinder, in *Connotations* 1 [1991]: 187-90, 191-96.) It is worth noticing that God's self-naming, "I am that I am," is from Exodus 4:14, a biblical book with much relevance to the prison scene.

⁶*OED*, s.v. "Steward (*sb.*)" section 4, cites "Steward of Helle" as a figurative phrase from a poem of c. 1436; conversely, section 6 cites "Loue is heouene stiward" from the *Ancrène Riwe*.

⁷*The Apocryphal New Testament*, tr. James, p. 414, verses 76-78. The hymn is discussed in J. A. MacCulloch, *The Harrowing of Hell: A Comparative Study of an Early Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930) 302-04.

⁸Richard Axton, *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages* (London: Hutchinson, 1974) 61-62.

⁹In the N-Town cycle (nos. 33 and 35) the Harrowing is, exceptionally, performed by *Anima Christi*, a separate character from Jesus, and, in a striking structural effect, the episode is interrupted by the Deposition from the Cross: see *The N-Town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8*, ed. Stephen Spector, EETS Supplementary Series 11 (Oxford: OUP, 1991). *Anima Christi* also appears in the Greban and Rome Passion plays (Lynette R. Muir, "The Trinity in Medieval Drama," *Comparative Drama* 10.2 [1976]: 124).

¹⁰We may remember not only the Porter in *Macbeth* ("here you may roast your goose") but also the denouement of *The Jew of Malta*.

¹¹Bale mentioned the play when being interrogated for heresy in 1536, and accused of denying this article of the Creed. See Greg Walker, *Plays of Persuasion: Drama and Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991) 192.

¹²Quoted by Warren and Wells p. 2 and n. 1.

¹³Barbara K. Lewalski, "Thematic Patterns in *Twelfth Night*," *Shakespeare Studies* 1 (1965): 168-81; Marion Bodwell Smith, *Dualities in Shakespeare* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1966); R. Chris Hassel, Jr, *Renaissance Drama and the English Church Year* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1979) 82-85; Donna B. Hamilton, *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England* (Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 1992) 86-110. Warren and Wells caution that "perhaps the permissive *What You Will* is intended to qualify too rigorous an insistence upon *Twelfth Night* and its associations of misrule" (6); but those are not its only associations.

¹⁴The Biblical readings are quoted from the Prayer Book of 1559 (the rite of the Church of England throughout Shakespeare's lifetime) as printed in *Liturgies and Occasional Forms of Prayer set forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. for the Parker Society by W. K. Clay (Cambridge: CUP, 1847): here, 88.

¹⁵See the New Arden edition of *Twelfth Night* by J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik (London: Methuen, 1975) xlvii-xlix, and Leah Scragg, *Shakespeare's Mouldy Tales: Recurrent Plot Motifs in Shakespearean Drama* (London: Longman, 1992) 12-36.

¹⁶*Liturgies*, ed. Clay, 89-91.

¹⁷Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1959), esp. 240-61; Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage*, tr. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: CUP, 1993) 227-28, 254-56 (it should be said, however, that Laroque's general survey of festivity is more valuable than his somewhat superficial comments on this play specifically: and his statement that the title "probably owes more to the occasion on which [the play] was performed than to the themes of the play and its internal symbolism" [227] is quite erroneous). See also Warren and Wells 4-8. Illuminating background is also provided by Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (London: Methuen, 1985), esp. 202-04, and Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: the Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).

¹⁸Laroque 153.

¹⁹This was the performance witnessed and commented on by John Manningham (see Warren and Wells 1), and the play was also presented on 2 February 1623 (Warren and Wells 4). Although the use of the name "Candlemas" survived, the Catholic liturgical ceremonies associated with it had been forbidden in 1548 and the feast itself was omitted from the Edwardine prayer books, although pockets of clerical resistance remained into the 1560s and 1570s; see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1992) 459, 589. Leslie Hotson's attempt, in *The First Night of Twelfth Night* (London: Hart-Davis, 1954), to establish the first performance of Shakespeare's play as occurring on 6 January 1601 "has not won general acceptance" (Warren and Wells 4).

In the light of Feste's would-be Pandarism (3.1.50-51) it is interesting to note that a lost play, *Troilus and Pandar*, was performed at Court on Twelfth Night 1516 (Seth Lerer, *Courtly Letters in the Age of Henry VIII: Literary Culture and the Arts of Deceit* [Cambridge: CUP, 1997] 30, 34-35). Pandarus was, we recall, the letter-bearer between the lovers, another link with Feste's role in the prison scene. The first masque of Elizabeth's reign took place on Twelfth Night 1559, with "crows, asses, and wolves dressed as cardinals, bishops, and abbots" (Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1923] 1: 155)—a Pythagorean metempsychosis? Lyly's *Midas*, another play concerned with magical transformation, was acted at Court on Twelfth Night 1590, according to its title-page. See further note 27 below.

²⁰Laroque 227.

²¹Warren and Wells 58.

²²Lothian and Craik lxxv.

²³Joost Daalder, "Perspectives of Madness in Twelfth Night," *English Studies* 78.2 (1997): 109-10.

²⁴Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love* (London: Methuen, 1974) 244.

²⁵This picture of Ephesus derives from New Testament sources. In Acts 19 it is depicted as a place populated by sorcerers, amateur exorcists, and idolaters. The use of St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians for scripture readings at Epiphany has already been noted.

²⁶And is Shakespeare remembering the climactic scene in Marlowe's *Edward II*, the visit of the murderer Lightborn to the imprisoned king?

²⁷For some applications of the Ovidian story of Echo and Narcissus to the play, see D. J. Palmer, "Twelfth Night and the Myth of Echo and Narcissus," *Shakespeare Survey* 32 (1979): 73-78; Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 145-51; Anthony Brian Taylor, "Narcissus, Olivia, and a Greek Tradition," *Notes and Queries* 242 (1997): 58-61. Tantalizingly, court records document the presentation of a play (or two plays) called *Narcissus*, now lost, on Twelfth Night 1572 and 1603 (Chambers 4: 36, 87, 146).

²⁸Smith, *Dualities in Shakespeare* 119. Malvolio's proud refusal of grace is examined by R. Chris Hassel, Jr., "Malvolio's Dark Concupiscence," *Cahiers Elisabethains* 43 (1993): 1-12.

²⁹Lothian and Craik, in their note ad loc., quote from the 1559 Prayer Book: "The Priest entering into the sick person's house, shall say, Peace be in this house, and to all that dwell in it" (ed. Clay 225; cf. Hassel, *Renaissance Drama and the English Church*

Year 84). It might be added that, in the First Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549) the priest then recites Psalm 143, including the words, "For the enemy hath persecuted my soul: he hath smitten my life down to the ground: he hath laid me in the darkness, as the men that have been long dead" (*The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI*, Everyman ed. [London: Dent, 1910] 259, spelling modernised). This Psalm was dropped from the Second Prayer Book of 1552, and from that of 1559.

³⁰Donna B. Hamilton (above, note 13) unconvincingly argues that the episode is related to contemporary interest in the case of John Darrell, a Puritan imprisoned for exorcism in 1598.

³¹Reference to the Revels ed. by David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993). I wonder whether the famous strikes of the clock which punctuate Faustus's last speech could be one reason why a clock strikes in *Twelfth Night* 3.1, causing Olivia to say that "the clock upbraids me with the waste of time" (128).

³²Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* 148.

³³The phrase is tantalizing, but the eucharistic associations are unmistakable. In the mid-15th century Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, the Jews refer disparagingly to the consecrated Host as a "cake" which they attempt to cook in a cauldron (see *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, ed. Norman Davis, EETS Supplementary Series 1 [Oxford: OUP, 1970], Text VI, ll. 285, 495, 700), while in January 1548 the reformer Anthony Gilby disparaged the Catholics for believing that "a vile cake" could be "made God and man" (quoted by Aidan Cardinal Gasquet and Edmund Bishop, *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer*, 3rd ed. [London: Sheed & Ward, 1928] 91). In the Injunctions issued for the "suppression of superstition" in 1559, Elizabeth required the communion bread to resemble "the usual bread and water, heretofore named singing cakes" (quoted in William P. Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation* [Cambridge: CUP, 1968] 112). The medieval practice of choosing the King of the Bean to preside over the Twelfth Night revels, by dropping a bean into cake mix and electing the person who found it in his slice (Hutton, *Rise and Fall of Merry England* 60), re-surfaced once under Elizabeth in 1566 (Chambers 1: 19, 4: 82).

³⁴For a recent brief account of this see David Luscombe, *Medieval Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 1997) 42-43.

³⁵Wyatt, *Collected Poems*, ed. Joost Daalder (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975) 47, no. LV; John Stevens, *Music and Poetry at the Early Tudor Court* (London: Methuen, 1961) 405, no. H49.

³⁶I cannot end without thanking my colleague Martin Cawte for many hours spent in discussing the material in this article. I owe numerous insights to him.

All's Well That Ends Well: On Seeing and Hearing the Opening Scene*

J. L. STYAN

Professor Levin's perceptive reading of the first 76 lines of *All's Well That Ends Well* brilliantly teases out the virtues that Shakespeare ascribes to the pair of elderly characters who enter and inhabit the stage space at the opening of the play. The manners and morals of the Folio's "Old Countess of Rossillion" and her family friend the "old lord Lafew" (3.6.100) are characterized as those of the gerontocracy that determines the conduct of affairs in this social group, and these two are set against Bertram, the Countess's son, the young count of Rossillion, and her ward Helena, as the "unseason'd" young.

The paper uses for evidence the glibness, the stiff figures and the general formality of speech given to the older characters, and the irritating topoi, the conventional parcels of advice to the young, which burden the dialogue. To support the general picture of a strained style, Polonius and his advice to Laertes and Hamlet's ramparts speech are invoked (somewhat unlikely though it may be that the Elizabethan audience would have recalled them from two years before). A short debate is introduced on the topical, but rather literary, issue of the influence of nature or nurture in Helena's upbringing and education, together with another discussion on the conflict of honesty or chastity in women.

All this is of considerable interest, and it must be assumed that the early audiences would have taken good note of the differences between the old and the young in views and attitudes. And yet a suspicion lingers that we have been hearing the thoughts of a reader of the play and not a

*Reference: Richard A. Levin, "The Opening of *All's Well That Ends Well*," *Connotations* 7.1 (1997/98): 18-32.

playgoer. It is likely that an audience would have been less preoccupied with such manifestations of gerontocracy than with things manifestly clear before their eyes, the behaviour of the younger generation. Levin rightly notes Helena's tears, increasing through her silence, and catching the Countess's attention, which in turn draws the audience's own attention to them. And it becomes apparent that if it is true that the beginning of a play has to lay down for the audience what to look for, what characters to focus on, what "theme" or idea to pursue, the maximum interest lies in the mystery behind Helena and the secrets and ambiguities, as yet unexplained, that lie between her and Bertram.

This becomes very apparent as soon as the play's opening scene switches from prose to poetry. After a brief transitional speech given to the Countess in verse as she more emotionally takes her leave of Bertram, at line 75 it is Helena, at last alone on the stage, who breaks fully into poetry:

O were that all, I think not on my father

Not only does the poetry of the play begin with Helena's soliloquy, but the drama too. In fact, we are hearing a structural and histrionic direction in the change from prose to verse, and in Helena the change from silence and tears to emotional expression and poetry. Yet Levin chooses to cut short his opening scene at the point where the whole evidence of the subsequent play begins to justify the early lines of the Countess and Lafew, and partly explains the mystery of the discomforts of the comedy. What follows his perceptions actually puts them in perspective.

The missing dimension of Professor Levin's paper, I would suggest, is that of performance. The paper points to much useful detail for the stage: the black clothing, the force of prosaic speech, the silence of Helena, her tears, the Countess's concern as a mother, and much else. But the spirit of actual performance is hugely subtle, terribly elusive. To identify this spirit is to cage a butterfly, to try to catch steam in a bottle. For the visual and aural elements of performance must fuse and work together.

I would here offer, not an alternative reading of the play's beginning, but a parallel and complementary one calling for a somewhat different emphasis.

It is apparent to an audience that at the start of this comedy all is not at all well. Not only are the characters in mourning, but their disposition about the stage reveals their differences of station, feeling and attitude: first Helena's silence strongly hints that she is not one of the inner circle, then, at line 15, as she is referred to and made part of the group, Bertram's silence separates him in turn. The ponderous and enigmatic prose dialogue may well be a sign of the social proprieties of the speakers, but it also hints strongly at a suppression of thought and feeling that must soon be reversed by a language of rhythm and emotion, even rhyme, reverie and dream. In particular, spoken themes of departure and return, and birth and dying, seem to cloak and cloud a sense of matters unspoken.

The Folio's strong costume directive, "*all in blacke*," controls Shakespeare's performance requirements in many ways, in slow pace and low tone, and in the sombre formality of movement and gesture, all to create a cheerless stage, so that from the start the audience is compelled to seek the sources of such misery and grief. We find these sources everywhere: mother and son mourn the dead husband and father, and everyone regrets the departure of Bertram; Helena too mourns her father's death, but also suffers the pain of unrequited love for Bertram, as will appear. This opening is very like Ibsen, rich with a tangled past, teasing the audience to listen between the lines.

We become increasingly aware of the physical pattern of the actors disposed about the acting space. Helena in particular is marked out by her plainer dress and her lower status, her likely curtsy and her long silence, to the point where the audience begins to see and hear with her eyes and ears, even begins to take her part. When Helena's silence is exchanged for Bertram's, we sense an almost sibling rivalry as the Countess appears to comfort Helena in her tears:

No more of this. Helena: go to, no more . . . (47-48)

But Helena certainly moves apart for her riddling aside

I do affect a sorrow, but I have it too, (50)

only to catch Bertram's scornful and ill-favoured words to her as he departs.

It is Helena who takes up the play's central theme of dying into life—with some of the most beautiful love poetry in the language, enhanced as it is by the contrasting formality of the prosaic opening and underscoring Levin's ideas about the conflict of youth and age in the play:

my imagination
Carries no favour in't but Bertram's.
I am undone; there is no living, none,
If Bertram be away; 'twere all one
That I should love a bright particular star
And think to wed it, he is so above me.
In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.
Th' ambition in my love thus plagues itself:
The hind that would be mated by the lion
Must die for love. (80-90)

Helena lets the poetry speak for her, and thus the audience lets Helena speak for it.

Northwestern University

A Letter in Reply to Marvin Spevack, "The End of Editing Shakespeare"

In his article, Marvin Spevack talks of the Arden Shakespeare CD-ROM *Texts and Sources for Shakespeare Studies* in the following terms:

Just announced is the Arden Shakespeare CD-ROM, which is to contain the second Arden edition of 1946-82 (although already being superseded by the third, the consultant editor of the CD-ROM having himself pointed out the need for the third), "facsimile images" of the appropriate Folio and quarto editions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Abbott's *Shakespearean Grammar* (1869, rev. 1871), Partridge's *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (1955, rev. 1968), to which still other "elements" are "added." It is unlikely that these elements—each with its own set of lemmata and wordforms, differing lineation conventions, and distinctive scholarly perspective—can be connected. That would require an engineering feat beyond the capacity of even all the king's hackers and all the king's netizens. The uninitiated users will doubtless be left to fend for themselves. (82-83)

I am delighted to say that Brad Scott and his team at Routledge, together with the developers DPSL, managed to achieve the engineering feat of which Spevack speaks and produce an unprecedented and widely acclaimed, user-friendly resource for research and teaching which was launched in April 1997. Interested parties are invited to contact me at the email or postal addresses below if they would like to see a demonstration disc.

Nicholas Kind

Electronic Development Manager
The Arden Shakespeare
nick.kind@nelson.co.uk

Nelson House, Mayfield Road
Walton-on-Thames
Surrey KT12 5PL, United Kingdom

*Reference: Marvin Spevack, "The End of Editing Shakespeare," *Connotations* 6.1 (1996/97): 78-85.

Deeper into the Bakhtinian Labyrinth: A Response to Rocco Coronato's "Carnival Vindicated to Himself?"*

YUMIKO YAMADA

I. As "Carnavalesque" and "Grotesque," Yet Not As Positive?

Rocco Coronato's article is a reappraisal of Jonson made against the post-Bakhtinian prejudice, say, of Bristol that Carnival is less applicable to Jonson than Shakespeare; Jonson, who is allegedly learned, is less popular, hence less "carnavalesque."¹ When anatomised according to the method employed in Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* (1965), writers like Jonson are abruptly identified as the spokesmen of power with "idiosyncratic distaste for the popular canon."²

Coronato denounces this sort of "literary prejudice" as "the more revolutionary though question-begging" kind "of ferocious hyperbakhtinizing." The greatest problem, he argues, is its value system consisting of "simplified binary oppositions between the high and the low, the Court and the people, the learned and the popular," which could be epitomised in the Marxist theorem: what is popular is good, and vice versa. Through these two-term oppositions, Jonson has been accused as the enemy of the people, while Rabelais has been extolled as a guardian angel of the communist populace.

What Coronato claims is to depose this kind of "hyperbakhtinizing" in order to establish a new reconciliation between the learned and the vulgar through actual literary and historical contexts, long neglected in the structuralist synchronic value system. He invites us to focus on Jonson's use of "intertextuality" in three test cases belonging to different

*Reference: Rocco Coronato, "Carnival Vindicated to Himself? Reappraising 'Bakhtinized' Ben Jonson," *Connotations* 6.2 (1996/97): 180-202.

genres—*Sejanus*, *Epicoene*, and *Neptune's Triumph*—and to realise how Jonson filled these works with carnivalesque motifs by drawing on “the learned tradition in order to stage the popular element, aiming at depicting the grotesque.” By using his amazingly wide range of reading in the classics, Coronato reconstructs, through “the conflation of sources” after the manner of Jonson, “a sort of second hidden text where . . . people are described in action,” eventually to prove that, far from indifferent to popular elements, Jonson was a writer no less “carnavalesque” and “grotesque” than Bakhtin’s idol Rabelais, at least in his intention or orientation.

Yet despite Coronato’s effort of reappraisal and despite Jonson’s own attempt to express his interest in festivity through “intertextuality,” Jonson seems still far behind Rabelais in offering his readers a positive vision: *Sejanus* reflects nothing but bleak and bloody versions of the carnival in Rhodiginus, Dio Cassius, and Claudian; in *Epicoene*, the carnival has failed to fulfill the same function as it did in its comical sources—such as Plautus, Machiavelli, Aretino—of affecting the society or mending the fissures within its fabric; the borrowing of carnivalesque motifs from Athenaeus and Rabelais in *Neptune's Triumph* are limited to the purpose of satirizing the court culture. But this is not, according to Coronato, Jonson’s own fault; his “failure” in conveying a Rabelaisian positive outlook was simply due to the general depression of his age, when the “Triumph of Lent” was ubiquitous in Europe.

It is true that Coronato has launched a great “début,” in pointing out the necessity of reassessing the post-Bakhtinian value system, in order to make “a longer periplus through the Jonsonian invention”: he has extended Jonson’s festive spirit, which had been restricted to his “exceptionally popular” plays like *Bartholomew Fair*, to his seemingly least popular works—*Sejanus* which was disliked by the vulgar on its first day of performance, *Epicoene* dealing with a middle-class society, and *Neptune's Triumph* written for the court audience.³

But I am afraid that Coronato may be still bound in a “Bakhtinian spell” in his attempt to refute the post-Bakhtinian prejudice; he is compelled to use the selfsame terms or premises which had been used by the school—the

terms "grotesque" and "carnavalesque," which are closely combined with the Marxist belief in what is popular, and which have contributed, not only to breed a "literary prejudice" against Jonson, but also to distort the image of the French Renaissance giant, by extolling him in a wrong way. It seems as if Coronato were entrapped into the same ring, where he has only a restricted use of his own weapon, i.e. his classical knowledge, in his exploration of "a sort of second hidden text," which otherwise might have enabled him to discover more positive aspects in Jonson.

As will be discussed below, what Bakhtin calls the "carnavalesque" or "grotesque" is given only secondary importance by Rabelais himself—it is not almighty, even in accounting for Rabelais's celebration of the human body.

Nor do I think Jonson's pessimistic view of carnival is simply due to the "Triumph of Lent," for Rabelais had to work under a more savage oppression. In his age the academic reformation in the Sorbonne compared so unfavourably with that in Oxford that each time he published a new book it brought him in conflict with the Church. Many times he was forced to take refuge, accused of heresy, for which his friends Étienne Dolet and Jean de Boyssoné were burned.⁴

It should not be overlooked, for all the post-Bakhtinian prejudice, that Jonson is a writer who has a great deal in common with Rabelais in his fundamental literary attitude. Besides Jonson's use of Rabelais in his plays and masques, several affinities between them have been pointed out, including their own versions of Lucianic or Erasmian satire and their verbal explosiveness.⁵ To these we may add their common interest in Hippocratic medicine.

The largest problem with Bakhtin, as has been fully demonstrated in Berrong's *Rabelais and Bakhtin* (1986), is his forced attempt at "popularizing" the French humanist, for the purpose of which he exploited the Romantic cult of the "grotesque," as opposed to the classical or humanistic ideal. It is important to recognise that Bakhtin's idea of *un Rabelais populaire*, greatly influential outside the realm of Rabelais studies, has been generally neglected by academic critics and historians; proving that in the age of Rabelais there was no such cultural segregation between the popular and

the learned as Bakhtin argues, Berrong accuses him of hindering the reader from putting Rabelais in a proper perspective.⁶

What I should like to propose is to take over Coronato's anti-post-Bakhtinian enterprise of restoring Jonson's image, but while Coronato's target is limited to the post-Bakhtinians, I am going to trace the problem back to the very root—Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*.

If we probe deeper into this book, we can detect still other inconsistencies and inaccuracies, besides the historical weakness pointed out by Berrong, which may well develop "prejudice," whether in favour of Rabelais or against Jonson. By pinpointing where the Russian Marxist critic went astray in interpreting the French humanist, I am going to reconstruct the value system advocated by Jonson and Rabelais, which was lost or blurred in the Bakhtinian labyrinth. I believe this also will help to offer a more positive view of the three works of Jonson chosen and discussed by Coronato, i.e. *Sejanus*, *Epicoene* and *Neptune's Triumph*.

II. Breaking the Myth of the "Grotesque"

Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* has established a new image of Rabelais as a writer with an anti-classical and anti-intellectual tendency, whose primary concern is the popular carnival in celebration of the "grotesque" bodily elements. His argument may be summarised as follows:

Rabelais does not embody classicism, but prefers "the lower genres" to "higher levels of literature"; he belongs to "the preclassic times," which still retained the popular (or "lower") tradition of the Middle Ages, where the physical (lower, or popular) aspect of human beings overwhelmed the spiritual or intellectual (higher, or aristocratic). "The concept of the body in grotesque realism," which is "in flagrant contradiction with the literary and artistic canon of antiquity," is manifestly represented in Rabelais's carnivalesque licence. Like ribaldry in festive occasions, it liberates the people from the fear of oppression, even from the fear of death, by making them realise that "death is the 'other side' of birth," and that they are immortal as a mass. By thus depriving "the image of death" of "all tragic or terrifying tones," it eventually invites them to sing in "the laughing chorus of the marketplace" that celebrates "not the rejuvenation of the biological individual but of historic man's culture."⁷

What Bakhtin attempted, as was mentioned, was to make a Marxist idol of the author of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*; a sine qua non for that purpose is to wipe out, ironically, the intellectual image of the Renaissance humanist. Rabelais above all "ought not" to embody classicism, which, in Bakhtin's mind, is closely related to the absolutist reign of Louis XIV.⁸

From this point of view, it seems only natural that Jonson, a champion of classicism and who worked under the auspices of Stuart kings, should be regarded as a spokesman of power and the enemy of "the popular canon." His failure in showing a positive vision of carnival only puts him at a greater disadvantage. In the worst case Jonson is compared to the French politician Richelieu, the founder of Bakhtin's much hated French Academy, eventually to be condemned with him for masterminding the revival of the classical canon for the purpose of oppressing the people with its ideology.⁹

But although Bakhtin's one-sided praise of popular pastimes has been widely accepted and has aroused numerous issues of interest in Jonson scholarship,¹⁰ it still leaves several questions to be answered.

Whatever Bakhtin says, Rabelais's classical erudition, for which he was known as *doctissimus* to his contemporaries, is irrefutable.¹¹ How could Bakhtin claim, in the first place, that Rabelais's books on *Gargantua and Pantagruel* are void of classicism, when they are filled with citations and quotations from classical and Renaissance authors (no less so than the works of Jonson), and a series of encyclopedic issues related to almost every field of learning? As every novice may find, they are by no means easy to read, even for the intellectuals of our time.

Secondly, how could Bakhtin maintain that Rabelais prefers the popular tradition to the literary and artistic canon of antiquity, when the author celebrates the arrival of an age when "the mindes of men are qualified with all manner of discipline, and the old sciences revived, which for many ages were extinct," finding "robbers, hangmen, free-booters, tapsters, ostlers, and such like, of the very rubbish of the people, more learned now, then the Doctors and Preachers were" in the previous generation (*Gargantua and Pantagruel* II.viii)? Thirdly, if Bakhtin so abhors Louis XIV as the embodiment of absolutism and the patron of classicism, how would

he explain the fact that the most powerful protector of Rabelais was Francis I, a monarch influential enough to vie with Charles V for the hegemony of Christendom?

Indeed there is no denying the excess of physical topics in Rabelais which might be regarded as "grotesque," or *obscaenus* as it was called by the Sorbonne authorities, but before joining Bakhtin's "laughing chorus of the marketplace," let us also listen to a voice nearer to Rabelais's age—the 1653 English translator of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*:

He will appear some noble table writ,
In th'old Egyptian Hieroglyphick wit;
Where though you Monsters and Grotescoes see,
You meet all mysteries of Philosophie.
For he was wise and Sovereignly bred
To know what mankinde is, how't may be led:
He stoop'd unto them, like that wise man, who
Rid on a stick when children would do so.¹²

What seems to be most precarious about Bakhtin's uncritical praise of Rabelais's carnivalesque exuberance by naming it "grotesque realism" is that the premise is negated by Rabelais himself, who warns us against putting the primary importance on it. In his prologue to the First Book, Rabelais tells his readers not to come to the hasty conclusion that "there is nothing in them but jests, mockeries, lascivious discourse, and recreative lies" only from its surface, i.e. his "invention, comme *Gargantua, Pantagruel Fessepinte, la Dignité de Braguettes, des Poys au lard cum commento*, etc.":

Therefore is it, that you must open the book, and seriously consider of the matter treated in it, then shall you finde that it containeth things of farre higher value then the boxe did promise; that is to say, that the subject thereof is not so foolish, as by the Title at the first sight it would appear to be.

Far from inviting his readers to indulge themselves in carnivalesque frenzy, he demands their cool restraint for painstaking perusal. It is a "Treatise," not a funny book, the English translator underscores, which requires "a sedulous Lecture [reading], and frequent meditation," for it contains "a doctrine of a more profound and abstruse consideration, which will

disclose unto you the most glorious Sacraments, and dreadful mysteries, as well in what concerneth your Religion, as matters of the publike State, and Life œconomical."

The sincerity of this declaration has also been endorsed by the contemporary biographer Michel Ragon, who points out that Rabelais had the same purpose as Dolet and Clément Marot, i.e. of writing in defence of humanism.¹³ The only difference between them, he explains, is that while Dolet and Marot showed their cards too openly—an act careless enough to incur death or persecution, Rabelais chose to wear a fool's cap. By so doing Rabelais aimed at infusing the spirit of the New Learning into "the very rubbish of the people" who had never opened serious books in their life.

We may notice here that what Rabelais describes as his ultimate purpose—to instruct people in matters of the private and public life by sugarcoating his writings with "Monsters and Grotescoes"—is no different from that of Jonson, who claimed that "*the principall end of poesie*" is to "*informe men, in the best reason of liuing*":¹⁴

The Study of it . . . offers to mankinde a certaine rule, and Patterne of living well, and happily; disposing us to all Civill offices of Society. . . . And, whereas they entitle Philosophy to be a rigid, and austere Poesie: they have (on the contrary) stiled Poesy, a dulcet, and gentle Philosophy, which leads on, and guides us by the hand to Action, with a ravishing delight, and incredible Sweetnes.

(*Discoveries* 2386-2400)

Once liberated from the Bakhtinian myth of "grotesque," Rabelais proves to be a writer very close to Jonson; besides classical erudition and royal patronage, he had an acute consciousness of enlightening his reader on what he believed to be philosophically true.

Both poet's purpose to teach and delight their readers is grounded in their classical learning. As was mentioned above, the influence of Rabelais on Jonson as well as their common liking for the Lucianic or Erasmian satire has already been pointed out, but their interest in the two writers connotes a still deeper classical ideal than is generally considered.

The first thing to be noted is that Rabelais was an ardent follower of Erasmus. Addressing him as his "humane father," Rabelais was to preach the same doctrine, though in a somewhat louder voice.¹⁵ By some coincidence he was to take refuge in the same Church which had sheltered Erasmus, when persecuted under the suspicion of learning Greek, the forbidden language.¹⁶

As far as Erasmus and Tudor humanists (we can include here their successor Jonson) were concerned, the study of the Greek language, which they regarded as the most powerful weapon in their campaign against the old-fashioned scholastic establishment of the day, was primarily related to the works of Lucian.¹⁷ Professedly it was useful for teaching Greek, the language of the New Testament through common dialogue; tactically it carried the potential for undermining the dogmatism of the Church and the despotism of the government in its satiric comments on Greek philosophy, religion, and mythology—especially of the Pythagoreans, the Platonists, and the Stoics who, in Lucian's view, concealed vice under a hypocritical show of virtue.¹⁸ Moreover, Lucian was regarded as an epitome of classicism: in the opinion of Erasmus, none had achieved Horace's ideal, "to teach and delight," better than Lucian, by "reviving the sharpness of Old Comedy (i.e. of Aristophanes), while stopping short of its abusiveness."¹⁹

As a devotee of Erasmus, Rabelais was closely related to both: in the *Defense et illustration de la langue françoise*, Joachim du Bellay praises him as "he who calls Aristophanes to life again, and feigns so well the nose of Lucian,"²⁰ and calls him "L'utile-doux Rabelais" in the same passage, with a reminiscence of Horace.²¹

These descriptions remind us, surprisingly, of the very image we have of Jonson. Besides the keen interest in Erasmus and Tudor humanists, especially More, Thomas Linacre, and Juan Luis Vives,²² Jonson shared with Rabelais the favouring of Aristophanes and Lucian.²³ No doubt Jonson was also well aware that the imitation of these writers leads to the achievement of the classical ideal of Horace, with whom he aspired to identify himself in *Poetaster* and elsewhere, by estimating him as "the best Artist" (*The Masque of Queens* 8) who deserves to be "the first in estimation"

(*Discoveries* 2511). Nevertheless, Jonson is still considered by far the stricter of the two when it comes to classicism: while Rabelais seems to be entirely free from the "bond" of classicism, Jonson appears too aggressive, consistent and self-conscious to be so.²⁴

Here again it is Bakhtin who is largely responsible. Although he once placed Aristophanes and Lucian among writers who are supposed to have inspired the "grotesque" vein into Rabelais, he deletes their names from his list in subsequent modifications. Bakhtin first refers to the ancient Doric comedy, "satiric" drama, Sicilian comic forms, the works of Aristophanes, mimes, Atellanae, Hippocrates, Galen, Pliny, the symposia, Athenaeus, Macrobius, Plutarch and others, as "writings of nonclassical antiquity."²⁵ From his next list, however, the name of Aristophanes is deleted—together with Plautus and Terence—as a promoter of the classical discipline. Now we are given Lucian, Athenaeus, Helius, Plutarch, and Macrobius, who Bakhtin asserts created the "preclassic" climate of the sixteenth century.²⁶ Still discontented with this, he goes on to exclude Lucian from his third list, asserting that Lucian's laughter is more "abstract, ironical, devoid of true gaiety"—i.e. less "grotesque"—than that of Rabelais.²⁷

Most probably in the process of writing Bakhtin noticed that Aristophanes virtually belongs to the classic tradition,²⁸ and that Lucian is nearly fatal to his project, for the name is inevitably linked with Erasmus, the paragon of the intellectual Renaissance and the leader of the humanist movement.²⁹ Through these painstaking reshufflings, Bakhtin has somehow succeeded in burying Rabelais's mastery over Greek and his Horatian classical ideal—as well as his affinity with Jonson—into years of oblivion.

III. Carnavalesque or Cannibalesque?

What remains after the meandering course of Bakhtin's "demonstration" are Pliny, Athenaeus, Macrobius and Plutarch—"the representatives of ancient prandial talks"; to these he adds Hippocrates (or the Hippocratic *Corpus*) who "exercised the greatest influence on Rabelais," whose "main images of the grotesque body and of grotesque bodily processes, such as

"the genital organs, the anus and buttocks, the belly, the mouth and nose" and "dismembered parts"; "eating, drinking, defecation and other elimination (sweating, blowing off the nose, sneezing), as well as copulation, pregnancy, dismemberment, swallowing up by another body" have all been inspired by Hippocrates.³⁰

Having remodelled the learned scholar into a "popular writer" by blotting out his classicism, Bakhtin's next job is to transform the Hippocratic physician into a breeder of the "grotesque" carnival. Yet his last catalogue again is not unproblematic. It is impossible to read any of those "prandial" writers—who are Jonson's favourites as well—without encyclopedic knowledge of classical *belles lettres*, and more importantly, they never encourage unbridled spree at feasts but recommend temperance.³¹

Still less convincing is the idea that the Hippocratic *Corpus* is the main source of the notion of the "grotesque" body in Rabelais's world. Indeed we cannot exaggerate the impact of Hippocrates on Rabelais, who collated the *Aphorisms* and performed one of the first public dissections in France, but it is very difficult to imagine that those who engage in medical science should regard any part of the body or any bodily function enumerated by Bakhtin (save "dismemberment" and "swallowing up by another body") as "grotesque." They know too well that those are something to be observed as inherent in human physical nature—not as ugly or beautiful, abominable or agreeable but as purely physiological phenomena which have to be diagnosed as correctly as possible. If we read the *Corpus* including the passage quoted by Bakhtin without prejudice, we would find "close, even minute, observation of symptoms and their sequences, acute remarks on remedies, and recording, without inference, of the atmospheric phenomena, which preceded or accompanied certain 'epidemics,'" in a "truly scientific" way, "in the modern and strictest sense of the word," for no other purpose than of saving the life of each particular patient.³²

Jonson was no less devoted a student of the Hippocratic school, who, though no medical practitioner like Rabelais, is acknowledged to be "the most learned of poets" of his age in the art of medicine, with his medical

metaphors and allusions as well as the gallery of humours filling his works.³³

What is most misleading for the readers of Rabelais as well as of Jonson is Bakhtin's argument that Rabelais, a devotee of Hippocrates, was also under "some direct influence" of the Neoplatonist school and the Paracelsians, such as Pico della Mirandola, Pomponazzi, Porta, Patrizzi, Bruno, Campanella, and others, because it was one of "the general tendencies of the Renaissance."³⁴ The Hippocratic school of medicine shared the anthropomorphic cosmology with the Paracelsians, Bakhtin claims, which contributed to destroy the hierarchical picture of medieval cosmology based on Aristotle. By demolishing and reconstructing the old vertical system into a "horizontal line of time, from the past to the future"—typical of the Marxist world picture—their cosmology contributed immensely to the creation of the Rabelaisian "grotesque" carnival, where "cosmic life and the life of the human body are drawn intimately together" "in their obvious unity of imagery."³⁵

Now Bakhtin betrays his lack of knowledge of medical history by mixing up the principles of the two opposing schools of medicine in the Renaissance—the Hippocratic (or Galenical) that spread mainly from the University of Padua (therefore the name of Pomponazzi ought to have been excluded from his list)³⁶ and the Paracelsians, closely related to Neoplatonism which thrived at the Florentine court of Medici—which were rarely compatible with each other.³⁷ The crucial difference between the two schools is that while the Paracelsian was deeply imbued with Hermetism combined with Pythagorean and [Neo-]Platonic mysticism, the Hippocratic (or Galenical) held fast to rationalism. Inheriting the attitude of the Milesian natural philosophers, who explained the world in terms of visible constituents without recourse to supernatural intervention, the sixty-odd works of the Hippocratic *Corpus* are virtually free from magic and supernatural elements.³⁸ The Paracelsians, on the other hand, based their doctrines mainly on the *Corpus Hermeticum*, falsely attributed to an ancient Egyptian writer, Hermes Trismegistus, and the *Asclepius*, a book on magic medicine believed to be written in ancient

Greece. They believed in the possibility of the occult arts in accordance with their anthropomorphic cosmology.³⁹

Considering both Rabelais and Jonson were professed anti-Paracelsians, we may imagine how dangerous Bakhtin's confusion could be in interpreting their works. Rabelais's antagonism towards the Paracelsians and the Neoplatonists is most manifestly revealed in his idea of "le mot de la Bouteille trismegiste" (V.xlvi), introduced as a parody of their cult of Hermes Trismegistus. He had written several books of mock astrology prior to *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, and he published his Second Book (practically his first) under the comic pseudonym of "M. Alcofribras, abstracteur de quinte essence [i.e. the alchemist]." He also shows his disapproval of occultism in *Gargantua's* letter to *Pantagruel* where he advises "let passe neverthesse, the divining and jucial Astrology, and the Art of Lullius [i.e. magic and alchemy professed by Raymond Lully]" (II.viii).⁴⁰ In the Fifth Book we are told that the sentence on the temple-gate of the *Bouteille trismegiste* reads: "ἐν οἴνῳ ἀλήθεια, c'est à dire 'En vin verité'" (V.xxxvi).⁴¹ The moral is: words vomited by a drunken man are far more believable—since he not only betrays his true colours but also reveals others' secrets⁴²—than theories that boast, for example, of being able to divine the future, transform base metals into gold and silver, or cure incurable disease. They are ultimately to be reduced to the absurd catalogue of the impossible which are reportedly accomplished by the abstracters of quintessence in Chapter 22 of the same book, such as extracting "Water out of Pumice-Stones," pitching "Nets to catch the Wind," or getting "Farts out of a dead Ass."

Interestingly enough, Jonson declares that he has borrowed the idea of the *Oracle of the Bottle* or *Hogshead Trismegistus* (77-78) in the opening scene of *Neptune's Triumph* directly from Rabelais's Fifth Book, and in precisely the same connotation. In the masque, the architect Inigo Jones is transformed into the Master Cook in a spirit of mockery, after the manner of *Athenaeus*⁴³—a favourite writer of Jonson and Rabelais:

He'has *Nature* in a pot! 'boue all the *Chemists*,
Or bare-breechd brethren of the *Rosie-Crosse*!

He is an *Architect*, an *Inginer*,
 A *Souldier*, A *Physitian*, a *Philosopher*,
 A generall *Mathematician*! (102-06)

As a spiritual successor to the Elizabethan magus John Dee and a friend of Robert Fludd, the Paracelsian doctor, Inigo Jones shared basic ideas with the Neoplatonists and the Paracelsians mentioned by Bakhtin—Pico della Mirandola, Porta, Patrizzi, Bruno, Campanella and others—excluding Pomponazzi.⁴⁴ It is announced that the Poet—supposed to be Jonson himself—has been in the cellar to consult the *Oracle of the Bottle*. Here, too, the *Hogshead Trismegistus* is used in a similar way, to undermine the Neoplatonic ideals of the court shows and the court taste in the presence of the royal sponsor and his guests. It seems more likely that its master architect Inigo Jones is criticised for inspiring the Neoplatonic mysticism into the future king than, as is asserted by Coronato, for his “grotesque pendant.”

There is still another difficulty in Bakhtin’s forced adoption of the Neoplatonic or Paracelsian cosmology; he speaks as if Rabelais ordained that each of the people be incorporated into the plebeian species, for whose maintenance they are requested, ironically enough, to forget their own carnal existence, in an upsurge of “the laughing chorus of the marketplace” which celebrates their immortality as a mass.⁴⁵

And to give “proof” to this, Bakhtin asserts that “bloodshed, dismemberment, burning, death, beatings, blows, curses, and abuses—all these elements in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* are steeped in ‘merry time,’ time which kills and gives birth, which allows nothing old to be perpetuated and never ceases to generate the new and youthful.”⁴⁶

But this myth about Rabelais’s defiance of death is utterly false to his Hippocratic principle. Rabelais engaged in the collation of the *Aphorisms* with peculiar care because inaccuracy in a physician’s book is not merely censurable but criminal: “A single little word added, or struck out, nay, even the inversion of an accent, or its addition in a wrong place, often involves the death of many thousands.”⁴⁷ Nor is it relevant to Jonson to “maime a man for euer for a iest” (*Epicoene* 4.5.135), or to incorporate each

individual into the organic whole of the body politic and kill his or her own individuality. As we clearly see in the titles of his comedies which have been inspired by the Hippocratic (or Galenical) pathology—*Every Man in His Humour* and *Every Man out of His Humour*—his primary concern is the cure of each particular person with his or her own particular humour or peculiarity.

We cannot but wonder whether the notion of the immortality of the masses is perhaps not so very different from the religious abuses of the old Church, or the new occult philosophy of the Neoplatonists and the Paracelsians, which were denounced by Rabelais, Jonson and many other humanists of the day, including their forerunner Erasmus.

It is important to notice that the Hippocratic rationalism of Rabelais and Jonson is closely connected with their admiration of Erasmus, who appreciated Aristophanes and Lucian for scorning the superstitious elements in philosophy and religion. We find Hippocrates (along with his follower Galen) and Erasmus among the writers who rejected occultism in Reginald Scott's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), a book written (at least partly) for the purpose of confuting magical arts professed by the Paracelsians and the Neoplatonists.⁴⁸ Scott also quotes Erasmus's *Colloquia*, one of the main sources of Jonson's *The Alchemist*, which was intended as a counterblast to Paracelsian medicine and its magical arts.

Now we may recognise that Bakhtin's denial of the influence of Aristophanes and Lucian on Rabelais is doubly misleading, in obscuring his classical erudition and his lucid rationalism fostered through the study of Hippocrates and fixed by reading Erasmus.

IV. *Ad aedificandum, non ad diruendum*

Now that Rabelais's motif of carnival has been proved to be more negative and pessimistic than is generally believed, we no longer have to worry because Jonson has "failed" to offer a positive vision of carnival in the three works selected by Coronato.

To begin with *Sejanus*, in representing the Roman Saturnals—"a theatre of martyrdom, where real and metaphorical slaves attend the ludicrous spectacle of the fall of actual slaves and, eventually, of the exalted slave who aspired to power,"⁴⁹ Jonson's aim is equivalent to that of Rabelais, i.e. to reveal the Tacitean "secrets of the Council and Senate," which are no less grotesque than monstrous.⁵⁰

The tragedy seems to give us nothing but "a series of savage mandates, or perpetual accusations, of traitorous friendships."⁵¹ Worse still, things have changed so violently from their former simplicity that people can discern right from wrong, or expedient from disastrous only with the help of "native intelligence" (*prudentialia*). Yet in that sordid monstrosity of power politics, Jonson tells us never to despair, for, though difficult, it is not altogether impossible to work out ways to survive within the compass of human wit, if we keep our sanity and observe "the experience of others" (*aliorum eventis*) with lyncean eyes.⁵² Like the Hippocratic *Corpus*, the tragedy gives us "close, even minute, observation" of the "savage mandates, or perpetuall accusations, of traitorous friendships": their causes and effects, the particular nature, "diet, way of life, . . . speech, silence, thoughts," even "sleep or insomnia, dreams" of each person concerned, who survived, who did not, and how, in the prevalence of carnivalesque or cannibalesque fever under the reign of Tiberius, the tyrant.

Nor do we have to deplore any supposed failure of *Epicoene* to mend the fissure of society, now that we have begun to suspect that the purpose of the comedy lies elsewhere. It may be a little too naive to explain (like Ian Donaldson) *Epicoene's* festivity in terms of the comic spirit which punishes eccentricity to allow the restoration of the order of society.⁵³ In the city everyday is a holiday, with its constant noise which afflicts Morose, where Sejanuses—masculine or feminine, wild or domestic—threatening to depose their masters never cease to appear as *rerum natura*.

After disclosing "the most glorious Sacraments" concerning "the publike State" in *Sejanus*, Jonson reveals in *Epicoene* the "dreadful mysteries" about "Life œconomical," which has also been in carnivalesque disorder. The comedy is focused not so much on legacy-hunting as on Morose-baiting. Morose embodies the Stoic ideals shattered to pieces in *Sejanus*, which

are now transplanted from ancient Rome to Jonson's London; he is the ghost of "the good-dull-noble lookers-on" (*Sejanus* 3.16), the virtuous few who were entirely disabled from living or dying nobly under the rule of "Monsters and Grotescoes." He "loues no noise" because his Stoic father advised him to "collect, and contayne my [his] mind, not suffring it to flow loosely" (5.3.48-50); he would lose "an eye . . . a hand, or any other member" (4.4.8-9) if only he could divorce his boisterous wife.

What the comedy suggests is that we should adapt ourselves to the time and place where we live. Rather than reject and curse the depravity of the age and hurt ourselves like Morose—or go mad like, say, King Lear—and lament because womankind has turned Centaur, we are recommended to turn the monster into the playful lady to entertain us. At length we are instigated to expel the inner Morose from our brains, in order to rehabilitate ourselves to a "Life œconomical" of our own, without losing our wits. The ironic ending concerning legacy-hunting would be a mere excuse for the deviant acts of the wits; the effect resembles that of the sudden appearance of Lovewit at the end of *The Alchemist*.

As for *Neptune's Triumph*, I consider it no small attempt to undermine the Neoplatonic mysticism of the courtly ideal. "The Art of Lullius," rediscovered and united with Neoplatonism in Florence, had thence spread among almost all major monarchs and princes in Renaissance Europe.⁵⁴ It tended to make those in charge of government abandon the care of the minute details of domestic and foreign affairs and retire into an escapist seclusion, where they could indulge in the mystified glorification of their own political power.⁵⁵ In *Neptune's Triumph*, the architect's project for the Neoplatonic idealizing of the court is totally upset by the Rabelaisian nonsense of the *Hogshead Trismegistus*. It is the Poet's Pegasus, from whose hoof flows the spring of the Muses that inspired the whole idea of the masque (77-79). It is highly suggestive that Rabelais stood in direct antagonism to Ronsard, the leader of the Pleiades, who exerted himself to deify the French monarchs according to his Neoplatonic ideal.⁵⁶ Similarly the problem Jonson found with Jones's mystic philosophy was its political influence on the successor to the British throne. That his fear was not groundless was to be proved when Charles I isolated his court of lofty

ideals "from the madding crowd" to begin his personal government just before the Civil War.⁵⁷

Thus the brief survey of the three works from a viewpoint free from the [post-]Bakhtinian prejudice has shown that Jonson as a writer does not essentially differ from Rabelais, but is almost identical to him in making classical ideals his basic principle. As is generally acknowledged by Rabelaisian scholars, Bakhtin and his followers went astray in trying to contrast the popular with the aristocratic by attributing the grotesque trait to the former and the classical to the latter. The Bakhtinians seem to have forgotten that even in the classical tradition there was a conflict between two opposing ideas, e.g. the comic and the tragic, or the realistic [or materialistic] and the idealistic. It may be true that the academic side of Rabelais had been too much exaggerated before Bakhtin, but too violent a reaction is no more commendable, when the truth lies in between, as Coronato claims.

Considering Bakhtin's principle as a structuralist, it may have been unavoidable that he should show an "anti-humanistic" tendency to focus on impersonal systems and, as a result, to minimise the humanist tradition and the individual person. But, as we have seen, his argument is interspersed with too many fallacies and mistaken ideas about classical writings, which are fatal to the study of humanist authors like Rabelais and Jonson; it may even implant misconceptions in the minds of those who have been just initiated into the study of literature.

The "longer periplus through the Jonsonian invention" proposed by Coronato is likely to be a very troublesome journey; we are expected to pay the debt of the anti-humanist bias which has been prevalent for the last two centuries. It tends to reject the cultural heritage of the western world, which had once been "restored unto its former light" from the oblivion brought about by "the infelicity and calamity of the Gothes" (*Gargantua* II.viii). What we have acquired, in exchange for correct knowledge of the classics, is the various literary "criticisms" bent on innovation which have been gaining ground since the restoration of the Gothic spirit in the Romantic era.

NOTES

¹M. D. Bristol, "Carnival and the Institutions of Theater in Elizabethan England," *ELH* 50 (1983): 637-54.

²P. Womack, *Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 135.

³The carnivalesque as well as "grotesque" elements in Jonson have already been discussed in Neil Rhodes's *Elizabethan Grotesque* (London: RKP, 1980), but its main focus is *Bartholomew Fair*, which is extolled as "the apotheosis of the Elizabethan grotesque" (141).

⁴Charles Whibley, introduction, vol. 1 of *Rabelais: Gargantua and Pantagruel*, trans. Thomas Urquhart and Peter le Motteux, 3 vols. (1653-94; New York: AMS, 1967) xi. English quotations from Rabelais hereafter are taken from this edition, and French quotations are taken from François Rabelais, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Guy Demerson (1973; Paris: Éditions du Seul, 1995).

⁵Anne Lake Prescott, "The Stuart Masque and Pantagruel's Dreams," *ELH* 53 (1984): 407-30, at 410.

⁶Richard M. Berrong, *Rabelais and Bakhtin: Popular Culture in Gargantua and Pantagruel* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1986). For the reception and influence of Bakhtin's book on Rabelais inside and outside the realm of Rabelais studies see Berrong 3-4. Gray endorses the correctness of this observation by pointing out that only a limited number of scholars—Michel Beaujour and Jean Paris, for example—have followed Bakhtin: see Floyd Gray's introduction to François Rabelais, *Gargantua* (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1995) 15-16.

⁷Citations from Bakhtin are taken from Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolski (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984).

⁸Bakhtin 107.

⁹For the whole argument see Timothy Murray, *Theatrical Legitimation: Allegories of Genius in Seventeenth-Century England and France* (Oxford: OUP, 1987).

¹⁰Bruce Thomas Boehrer cites those of Ian Donaldson, Peter Womack, Leah Marcus, Peter Stallybras, and Allon White by way of example in his *The Fury of Men's Gullets: Ben Jonson and the Digestive Canal* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1997) 14-19.

¹¹Whibley, introduction xvi.

¹²Quoted from a set of verses dedicated to the English translator Thomas Urquhart signed J. de la Salle; Whibley (introduction lxxix) ascribes it to the translator, Sir Thomas himself.

¹³Michel Ragon, *Le roman de Rabelais* (Paris: Édition Albin Michel, 1933) 187.

¹⁴*Volpone, Dedication to the Universities* 107-09. Citations of Jonson's works refer to *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1925-52), designated H & S.

¹⁵Whibley, introduction xxv, lviii.

¹⁶Whibley, introduction xvii.

¹⁷Douglas Duncan, *Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition* (Cambridge: CUP, 1979) 26-29.

¹⁸Duncan 28-29.

¹⁹Erasmus's dedication of *The Dream*, or *The Cock* to Christopher Urswick, quoted in Duncan 28.

²⁰Quoted in Whibley, introduction xlv.

²¹Whibley, introduction xvii.

²²Both More and Linacre are referred to in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*; for influence of Vives on Rabelais see Madelaine Lazard, *Rabelais et la Renaissance* (Paris: P.U.F., 1979) ch. 4.

²³For the influence of Lucian see Duncan, *passim*.

²⁴Boehrer 16.

²⁵Bakhtin 28n.

²⁶Bakhtin 97-98.

²⁷Bakhtin 386-87.

²⁸Bakhtin 98n. See also Lane Cooper, *An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy: with an Adaptation of the Poetics and a Translation of the Tractatus Coislinianus* (1922; rpt. New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969) 90-92: he points out that despite the coarse appearance, Aristotle nowhere condemns the comedy of Aristophanes, and that Cicero and Quintilian regarded his diction and wit as refined and graceful.

²⁹Duncan 26.

³⁰Bakhtin 354-55, 355, 317-19.

³¹See Pliny, *Natural History* XXIII.xix; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* X. 431-33; Plutarch, *Moralia* I.v.

³²W. H. S. Jones, general introduction, vol. 1 of *Hippocrates*, trans. and eds., W. H. S. Jones and E. T. Withington, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1929-31) xv.

³³Henry Silvette, *The Doctor on the Stage: Medicine and Medical Men in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Francelia Butler (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1967) 121. Jonson is reported to have boasted that he first discovered the circulation of blood and discovered it to Harvey (Silvette 243). For Jonson's devotion to Hippocrates see *Conversations with Drummond* 141.

³⁴Bakhtin 363-65.

³⁵Bakhtin 356, 363-65, 400-01. Here, too, Bakhtin is barely consistent in asserting this; having accused Aristotle as the founder of the hierarchy of the fixed medieval cosmology, he condemns the Areopagite, medieval Neoplatonists, for combining Neoplatonism with Christianity, thus exerting "an important influence on the entire medieval philosophy" and "the metaphysical and moral world order."

³⁶Luce Giard, "Charles Schmitt (1933-1986): Reconstructor of a History of Renaissance Learning," *New Perspectives on Renaissance Thought: Essays in the History of Science, Education and Philosophy*, eds. John Henry and Sarah Hutton (London: Duckworth, 1990) 278-79. Properly speaking, I also should mention Neo-Aristotelianism, but in the present paper there is no space to discuss the relationship between Neo-Aristotelians and Hippocratic medicine.

³⁷See, for example, Silvette 127.

³⁸James Longrigg, *Greek Rational Medicine: Philosophy and Medicine from Alcmaeon to the Alexandrians* (London: Routledge, 1993) 26.

³⁹Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: RKP, 1964) 398-407.

⁴⁰Elsewhere Bakhtin admits that Rabelais took neither seriously (366), which makes his argument all the more confusing.

⁴¹Though the authorship of the fifth book is uncertain, it seems at least certain that it was written according to the principle of the preceding four books.

⁴²Erasmus, *Adages* I.7.7, pointed out in Demerson 1316.

⁴³See H & S 10: 664.

⁴⁴For the relationship between Dee and Jones see Vaughan Hart, *Art and Magic in the Court of the Stuarts* (London: Routledge, 1994) 62-78.

⁴⁵Bakhtin 407.

⁴⁶Bakhtin 211.

⁴⁷Whibley, introduction xxi.

⁴⁸Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), ed. Montague Summers (London: John Rodker, 1930) 162, 212. See especially Hippocrates, *De morbo sacro* and Galen, *De comitiali morbo*.

⁴⁹Coronato 187.

⁵⁰*Conversations with Drummond* 146.

⁵¹Tacitus, *Annals* IV.xxxii-xxxiii; citations are taken from: *Histories and Annals*, trans. C. H. Moore and J. Jackson, 4 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1937).

⁵²See *Sejanus* 4.473, where Lepidus, one of few survivors of the tyranny of Tiberius, is compared to Lynceus, one of the Argonauts whose lynx-eyes were proverbial.

⁵³Ian Donaldson, *The World Upside-Down: Comedy from Jonson to Fielding* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1970) 30-39.

⁵⁴René Taylor, "Architecture and Magic: Consideration on the Idea of the Escorial," *Essays in the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolph Wittkower*, eds. D. Fraser et al. (London, 1967) 81-109.

⁵⁵Hart 192.

⁵⁶Ragon 217.

⁵⁷Kevin Sharpe, *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England: Essays and Studies* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1989) 274.

Carnivalizing Jonson: A Reply to Rocco Coronato*

BRUCE BOEHRER

I admire Rocco Coronato's recent discussion of carnivalesque motifs in the work of Ben Jonson, a discussion that contributes significantly to recent reappraisals of the poet's reputation as the father of English neoclassicism. Since the following remarks will necessarily focus upon certain ways in which my reading of Jonson diverges from Coronato's, I want to begin by marking my general support for Coronato's project. When Coronato urges scholars to "dismiss . . . simplified binary oppositions between the high and the low, the Court and the people, the learned and the popular" (197) in their assessment of Jonson's work, he issues a call echoed by much recent research on Jonson, including my own.¹ To this extent, I would like to propose the present response not as an assault upon Coronato's general undertaking, but rather as an attempt to enlarge upon his work by noting its potential for expansion and its areas of possible instability.

Coronato's article begins by identifying two tendencies in traditional Jonson scholarship that have arguably contributed to an unjust estimate of the poet's relation to the carnivalesque: first, a scholarly inclination to "underline [Jonson's] literary merits, instead of his primary business as a man of the theatre" (180), and second, an assumption that "Jonson's bookish sticking to the learned tradition smacked of his idiosyncratic distaste for the popular canon" (180). As an alternative to these tendencies, Coronato suggests that "studies on Jonson . . . need . . . a new reconciliation between . . . popularesque, theoretical overturning and . . . literary and historical contexts" (197). The body of Coronato's argument, then, is

*Reference: Rocco Coronato, "Carnival Vindicated to Himself? Reappraising 'Bakhtinized' Ben Jonson," *Connotations* 6.2 (1996/97): 180-202.

consumed by three cases that illustrate the need for such a reconciliation: *Sejanus*'s use of classical source-material to allude to moments of popular rage and misrule; *Epicoene*'s invocation of carnivalesque rituals such as the charivari to "expos[e] . . . their alleged power as popular tools of justice" (190); and the conflation of cook and poet in *Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion*, a conflation which rejects learned antecedents in favor of "a popular vein of grotesque display" (196). According to Coronato, such cases "draw upon the learned tradition to stage the popular element" (182), and thus, presumably, resist efforts to construct the popular and learned canons as mutually-exclusive binaries.

My reservations with this argument begin with Coronato's distinction between Jonson's "literary merits" and "his primary business as a man of the theatre." This strikes me as an odd contrast to draw at the beginning of an essay that seeks to avoid "simplified binary oppositions" in Jonson's work. Moreover, Coronato himself seems to be of two minds as to the significance of the contrast he draws. In the early going, he clearly approves of the view that Jonson was primarily "a man of the theatre," and he opposes this view to the "reference-spotting habit[s]" of literary historians who privilege page over stage. To this extent, Coronato would appear to be employing a fairly conventional version of the opposition between literary studies and theatrical performance, an opposition that seems also to underlie Eliot's famous complaint that Jonson's work has been "damned by the praise that quenches all desire to read the book," and that it is in fact thus "read only by historians and antiquaries."² For Eliot, the letter killeth, and Coronato adds that the performance giveth life; thus Jonson needs to be rescued from scholars who think of him in literary rather than in theatrical terms.

As a literary historian myself, I am perhaps predictably suspicious of efforts to lend priority to theater over text. But more interesting than my own prejudices is the fact that Coronato himself abandons his opening stance rather quickly. Thus, after ranging his work against the "reference-spotting habit[s]" of earlier readers, Coronato then proceeds to his own project, which surprisingly enough turns out to involve a good deal of reference-spotting, too. Focussing, for instance, upon the passage in *Sejanus*

that describes the dismemberment of the play's hero by an angry mob, Coronato teases out a series of allusions to Dio Cassius, Claudian, Cicero, Tacitus, and Ludovicus Caelius Rhodiginus in order to detect a "learned retrieval of popular attendance" (185) in Jonson's verse. Again, Coronato reads *Epicoene* against a range of background-texts that include Libanius' *Declamations*, Plautus' *Casina*, and comedies by Machiavelli and Aretino; *Neptune's Triumph*, in turn, emerges as a pastiche of Athenaeus, Vitruvius, Puttenham, John Taylor, Rabelais, and a number of minor carnivalesque texts. Admittedly, Coronato does insist in these cases that "the stress ought to be laid not on direct transmission of passages or stage tricks, but rather on the meaning of the festive occasion" under scrutiny (188-89), but Coronato's own scholarly practice offers readers a distinction without a difference.

After all, if one can only discover "the meaning of [a] festive occasion" through "reference-spotting" behavior, what made reference-spotting such a bad idea in the first place? Coronato's essay never really faces up to this question; instead, it begins by decrying a tendency that it then co-opts in terms of its own critical procedure. This fact may register a certain instability in Coronato's own work: to avoid becoming one more in the long line of "historians and antiquaries" with whom Jonson has been associated at least since the time of Eliot, Coronato must distance himself from traditional "reference-spotting" criticism. Unfortunately, this is tantamount to distancing oneself from the profession of literary history *tout court*, and once Coronato has done this, since he still has an essay to write, he has no choice but to revert at once to literary-historical business as usual.

Nor are Coronato's motives here idiosyncratic or irrelevant. Indeed, I believe they are of the essence, insofar as they refigure a dilemma central to Ben Jonson's own career and productivity. Coronato's essay has discovered, that is to say, that in order to distinguish oneself, one must distinguish oneself *from others*, and that this very process of self-distinction is therefore also a process of self-limitation and isolation. Just as Coronato seeks to differentiate his critical practice from that of (other) "historians and antiquaries," Jonson's career repeatedly manufactured self-defining

moments of confrontation: the Poet's War, the quarrel with Inigo Jones, the quarrel with Gabriel Spencer, the testy relations with audiences both high and low, etc., etc.³ Moreover, just as Coronato is left with the uneasy problem of living with the consequences of his self-differentiation, so was Jonson. Coronato's solution to this problem—a solution also adopted by Jonson, I think, when he silently absorbs precursor-texts and popular motifs into his own work—is to proclaim his own difference from other authors, and then to proceed with their general project as if it were his alone.

I believe this line of analysis explains why Coronato's scholarly practice should undercut his own stated opposition to reference-spotting behavior. Moreover, I believe this analysis may also explain a related peculiarity of Coronato's article: the fact that, while it is committed to "simplified binary oppositions," it should nonetheless begin with the venerable binary of stage and page. One of the great difficulties involved in liberating Jonson's work from the tyranny of binary thinking is that Jonson himself was so fond of drawing distinctions, many of which take binary form. "Thou art not, *Penshurst*, built to envious show";⁴ "Who e're is rais'd, / For worth he has not, he is tax'd, not prais'd" (*Epigrammes* 45.15-16); "I a *Poet* here, no *Herald* am" (*Epigrammes* 9.4): these are self-evidently not the words of an author averse to binary differentiation. Thus, if one wishes (as both Coronato and I do) to tease out relatively fine shades of meaning in Jonson's work, one must nonetheless do so in a way that acknowledges the presence of binary thinking as a powerful and recurring motif in the poet's career. My own inclination is to think of Jonson's binarisms as a consciously-conceived discourse whose inherent difficulties generate a complementary and persistent element of fluidity in the poet's work. Thus, for instance, when Jonson employs the language of regurgitation and defecation to attack Thomas Dekker and John Marston in *Poetaster*, that language serves, on one level, to distinguish Jonson from his opponents (they are "vncleane birds, / That make their mouthes their clysters" ["Apologetical Dialogue" 219-20]; Jonson, presumably, is not). But at the very same time, Jonson's satire betrays a deep interdependence upon the very works and authors it attacks—works whose characteristic diction

Jonson adopts and regurgitates, and authors who figure variously in Jonson's life as friends, enemies, and co-authors. To this extent, *Poetaster* does not simply attack Jonson's enemies in the War of the Theaters; it also, in an odd way, collaborates with them. I believe Coronato's essay is sensitive to such complexities and thus seeks to balance the claims of Jonson's binarisms against those of his polysemous ambiguities. One result is that Coronato espouses a dominant commitment to moving beyond "simplified binary oppositions," while those oppositions quietly repopulate his essay through the old tension between literary history and theatrical performance.

In the end, Coronato adds substantially to the growing case for a more nuanced critical appraisal of Jonson's work. By locating versions of popular festivity within the so-called learned tradition, and vice versa, Coronato has contributed to a line of scholarly analysis—notably exemplified by the work of Peter Stallybrass and Allon White as well as by that of Leah Marcus⁵—that seeks to modify the Bakhtinian distinction between the grotesque and classical bodies so as to render it more open and malleable. Where Coronato's valuable work runs aground, it does so through his own unnuanced dismissal of "the Bakhtinians' trivialising attitude [sic] of universalization" (181), through his concomitant and problematic efforts to distinguish his own work from that of earlier literary historians, and through his incompletely-formulated view of Jonson's fondness for binary discrimination. In this last respect, I believe Coronato's work also suggests a fruitful avenue for further research and writing.

Florida State University
Tallahassee

NOTES

¹Bruce Boehler, *The Fury of Men's Gullets: Ben Jonson and the Digestive Canal* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1997) *passim*.

²T. S. Eliot, *Essays on Elizabethan Drama* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, n.d.) 65.

³See George Rowe, *Distinguishing Jonson: Imitation, Rivalry, and the Direction of a Dramatic Career* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1988) passim.

⁴*The Complete Poetry of Ben Jonson*, ed. W. B. Hunter (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963). Further references to Jonson's verse are to this edition.

⁵Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986); Leah Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of the Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986).

The Search for F. P. Greve/Grove: From First Doubts to a Greve Biography*

AXEL KNÖNAGEL

Frederick Philip Grove (1879-1948) was one of the most important Canadian authors in the first half of this century. With novels such as *Settlers of the Marsh* (1925), *Our Daily Bread* (1928) and *Fruits of the Earth* (1933) he laid the foundations for a tradition of representing life on the Western Canadian prairie as characterized by alienation.¹ More than that, Grove managed to promote himself and his writing so well that in 1945 he was called "by far the greatest philosophical literary artist to emerge as yet in Canada,"² he became one of the first authors from the Canadian West who was canonized³ and has become an indispensable figure in every history of Canadian writing.

Critical interest in Grove waned in the late 1960s when a new generation of Canadian authors began to publish texts that were artistically more interesting than Grove's works which were largely written in the realistic mode developed in the late nineteenth century. The "Canadian Dreiser"⁴ seemed definitely an author about whom relatively little was left to be said.

Since the early 1970s, however, the name Frederick Philip Grove can once again frequently be found in the annals of Canadian literary criticism. But now interest has shifted. Doubts had been raised about the author's identity, and in 1972 Douglas O. Spettigue opened a new phase of Grove criticism when he declared: "Frederick Philip Grove's novels, poems and criticism are the continuation of the novels, poems and critiques of Felix Paul Greve in Europe."⁵ Spettigue had followed his doubts concerning

*Reference: Klaus Martens, *Felix Paul Greves Karriere: Frederick Philipp Grove in Deutschland* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 1997).

the autobiographical *In Search of Myself* (1947) for several years and in fact began the first book-length study on the subject with a whole chapter describing how he had been looking for traces of Grove in Europe.⁶

Spettigue's discovery of Frederick Philip Grove's true identity meant that much traditional criticism had to be revised. Grove frequently insisted that much of his writing was autobiographical. In addition to *In Search of Myself*, the novel *A Search for America* had been read as only thinly veiled autobiography. Grove himself played a large role in provoking and shaping this critical response. In 1945, he lent the as yet unpublished manuscript of *In Search of Myself* to the scholar Desmond Pacey who used it as the basis for what was the only book-length study for 20 years.⁷ Grove's claims that he had grown up in Europe, traveled around the world, stranded in North America, spent 20 years as a migratory farm worker in the United States and began writing his fiction completely cut off from the rest of the literary world was generally used as the basis for evaluating his writings.

The material about Felix Paul Greve that Spettigue managed to gather and published in 1973⁸ suggested a very different background than the one *In Search of Myself* had painted. Greve turned out to have been a very busy translator of modern British and French literature in the first decade of this century who had also published two books of poetry, two novels and several essays on modern writing. In 1909, Felix Paul Greve disappeared from Germany without a trace. According to a letter by his wife, he had committed suicide. Three years later, in December, 1912, a man calling himself Frederick Philip Grove appeared in Winnipeg.

Spettigue's discovery meant that Grove criticism had to be revised in a large measure. Critics had become used to reading Grove's novels in the light of what they knew about his life, following his own statement that "no true artist of the first order will ever emphasize his own individuality: it will pervade his work in spite of himself."⁹ The discovery came at a critical moment. Several studies were about to be published when suddenly much of the supposed basis of those studies broke away. Critics reacted in different ways. Desmond Pacey, who himself had been looking for traces of Grove in Europe, showed reluctance to accept Spettigue's discovery. In his edition of Grove's letters he conceded simply that

Spettigue's research "seems now to have established beyond a reasonable point" that Grove had been Greve.¹⁰ Margaret Stobie, writing at the same time a portrait of Grove for the Twayne World Authors Series,¹¹ acknowledged Spettigue's discovery but focused only on the Canadian writing.

Only very gradually did Grove criticism come to terms with the altered context in which the author was to be put. The 1973 "Grove Symposium" accepted the newly-found background quite naturally and even included an essay on "The German Novels of Frederick Philip Grove."¹² At this early stage, however, a significant critical debate of *Fanny Essler* and *Maurermeister Ihles Haus* was practically impossible since the novels had been out of print for almost 70 years and could be found only in collections of rare books.

The lack of concrete biographical information and of access to the German writings hampered the assessment of Grove's achievement in the light of Greve's literary production quite badly.¹³ Most critical work on Grove focused on his Canadian writing, pieces treating both phases of the author's career were extremely rare.¹⁴

Gradually, the exploration of the German element became the dominant interest in Grove studies. Nobody seriously doubted any more that Frederick Philip Grove was in fact Felix Paul Greve but the different cultures in which he wrote and particularly the different languages of his career seem to be the cause that for a long time no study appeared that treated the works of Greve and Grove as a continuing *oeuvre*. The first comprehensive study appeared in 1990,¹⁵ followed by a study that compares the author to Theodore Dreiser and discusses books such as *Fanny Essler* and *A Search for America* without ever questioning that they were produced by the same author.¹⁶

The last years have seen a remarkable shift in the focus of Grove studies. Ever since Spettigue's discovery, the biographical interest in Felix Paul Greve has been overriding the critical interest in the writings. Grove studies have thus gone against the trend of modern criticism. Reviewing the critical production of the last years one arrives at the conclusion that at least to his critics the author clearly appears more interesting than his work.

The biographical impulse shown by several researchers has been supported by several discoveries in the recent past of texts that add a significant amount of information on the life of Felix Paul Greve. The identification of the New York Dada poet Else von Freytag-Loringhoven as the Else to whom Greve was possibly married until he disappeared from Germany¹⁷ allowed the filling of several gaps in the still sketchy picture we have of his life. In addition, his role in the composition of his texts has been scrutinized in the light of Else's biography—which seems to have been the basis for the plots of Greve's novels—as well as of her own artistic ambitions.¹⁸

The approach to studying the *oeuvre* of Frederick Philip Grove via the biography of Felix Paul Greve has now been given a new impetus through a publication that comes close to being a biography of Felix Paul Greve. Klaus Martens has discovered much of the correspondence between Greve and the publishing firm J. C. C. Bruns where Greve published numerous translations. This correspondence, which lasted from 1902 to 1909, as well as other biographical material such as the annals of the fraternity he had joined as a student in Bonn allows Martens to attempt a continuous narrative centering on the life of Felix Paul Greve between 1897 and 1909.

Martens manages to organize the material, some of which had been published before in various places, to present a coherent narrative of a life undergoing dramatic changes. The intention of the book is "to give new and clearer contours to the still unknown private person as well as to the literary figure Felix Paul Greve in the context of his age and of the literary milieu to which he belonged."¹⁹ Therefore Martens presents not just biographical material but includes passages on the George circle, André Gide, the translation business at the beginning of this century as well as biographical information on some of the characters who played significant roles in Greve's life.

Martens presents him as the figure of a potential self-made man who fails because of his own character weaknesses and because of the highly stratified organization of the society in which this man from a working-class background attempted to become famous, wealthy and hence socially acceptable. Martens manages to present an enormous amount of evidence

about Greve's personality. Beginning with his final year in a high school in Hamburg, Greve is shown in *Felix Paul Greves Karriere* as a figure caught between ambition and ability, between flights of dreamy arrogance and the reality of struggling for bare economic survival. Much of what had been known becomes more comprehensible, significant new facets are being added. The numerous photos Martens presents also make the largely unknown figure of Felix Paul Greve more real.

Felix Paul Greves Karriere is, however, at the same time a rather problematic text. The biographer quite naturally strives for a picture of his object of study that is as complete as possible. Such completeness is, however, still impossible for Felix Paul Greve. Although Martens can present a substantial amount of information, there are still large gaps in the picture. Especially his last years in Germany are still badly documented. The documents about the years after 1906 are particularly few in number and so Martens cannot present an explanation for Greve's decision to emigrate to North America.

Given the lack of coherence in the biographical material about Greve that is known at this point, Martens had to resort to a trick. Hjartarson suggested that *In Search of Myself* should not be regarded as completely fictitious: "Grove [did not] simply bur[y] his past, but . . . he slowly reshaped it in terms of his changing understanding of himself . . . In his autobiography he sets his vision of himself before his readers. *In Search of Myself* will remain a central document in the study of Frederick Philip Grove because in it the novelist sets forth the vision that shaped both his life and his vision."²⁰

Martens picks up and broadens Hjartarson's suggestion when he states that "Greve remains the secretary of his experiences who has his books dictated to him by 'life'—or at least by living persons."²¹ Consequently, he argues that "the literary persona FPG can be compared in his autobiographical writings to a palimpsest under which Greve's life rests as a hidden text."²² From this, he takes the liberty of using *In Search of Myself* and *A Search for America* as evidence to support his own speculations about Greve's career. Sometimes, however, Martens's desire to fill the gaps in the biography leads him dangerously far into speculation even when he

cannot attempt to back it up with a passage from one of Grove's books. From a reference in a letter, for example, Martens concludes that Greve may have owned his debts to gambling: "He could have seen in [gambling] a chance to rid himself of his burdening financial situation He might have taken his publisher as example."²³ The vagueness of the language indicates how insubstantial Martens's claim is. This claim, just like many others, cannot be proven, but Martens repeatedly argues as if his speculations were as good as factual evidence. Equally far-fetched are speculations about Greve's contributions to meetings of the German Archaeological Society in Rome in 1900 and, most notably, about the possibility that Greve met Thomas Mann in 1902 which culminates in the question, "Had Felix Greve's physique become an object of Mann's admiration?"²⁴

These speculations undermine the credibility of *Felix Paul Greves Karriere* to a significant extent. This is unfortunate since they are quite unnecessary and distract from the accomplishment of the book. It is, in spite of its shortcomings, a significant contribution to Grove studies. It comes as close as seems possible from the perspective of 1997 toward establishing the biography of Felix Paul Greve and thus of the formative years of Frederick Philip Grove.

Felix Paul Greves Karriere may not be the great literary biography which allows the reader to comprehend the biographical circumstances of individual literary production. But Martens deserves credit for bringing together the existing material on Felix Paul Greve and arranging them into a largely coherent whole. As a consequence of this book, the figure of Greve has become a lot more three-dimensional.

At the same time, the publication of *Felix Paul Greves Karriere* calls for debate of several issues. Language is the most important one of these. As the subtitle, *Frederick Philip Grove in Germany*, indicates, the object of study is the time a Canadian author spent in Germany. Given this premise in addition to the fact that Greve is at best a marginal figure in German literary history it is clear that the logical audience of this book is Canadian. For that audience, however, *Felix Paul Greves Karriere* is as difficult to access

as Greve's own writing had been. Grove scholars worldwide would have profited had the book been written in English.

Also, the question needs to be asked which service the Greve biography can fulfill in the context of Grove studies. The book quite certainly broadens our knowledge of Felix Paul Greve but it seems to add little that can be of use to the interpretation of Frederick Philip Grove's writings. The literary influences Martens discusses—Wilde, George, Gide—had been known before and the book does not add anything that changes the Canadian texts which make up that part of Grove's *oeuvre* on which his reputation rests. Interesting as the facets of his personality are that emerge from *Felix Paul Greves Karriere*, they bear as yet extremely little direct connection to the author of *Over Prairie Trails* and later works. For this reason, and because the years 1909 to 1912 are still undocumented, *Felix Paul Greves Karriere* cannot be the final word on Grove's life and career before he appeared in Winnipeg in December 1912. It remains to be seen which impulses *Felix Paul Greves Karriere* will give to international Grove studies.

Universität Rostock

NOTES

¹Dick Harrison, *Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction* (Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 1977) 114-42.

²B. K. Sandwell, "Frederick Philip Grove and the Culture of Canada," *Saturday Night* 61 (24. November 1945): 18.

³Grove's *Over Prairie Trails* (1922) was the first text selected by McClelland & Stewart for its New Canadian Library series which served a pivotal role in establishing and making accessible in paperback a canonized body of Canadian writing.

⁴Northrop Frye, "Canadian Dreiser" (obituary), *Canadian Forum* (September 1948): 121-22.

⁵Douglas O. Spettigue, "The Grove Enigma Solved," *Queen's Quarterly* 79 (1972): 2.

⁶Douglas O. Spettigue, *Frederick Philip Grove* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1969) 1-33.

⁷Desmond Pacey, *Frederick Philip Grove* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1945).

⁸Douglas O. Spettigue, *FPG: The European Years* (Ottawa: Oberon, 1973).

⁹Frederick Philip Grove, "A Writer's Classification of Writers and Their Work," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 1.2 (1932): 243.

¹⁰Desmond Pacey and J. C. Mahanti, (eds.), *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1976) ix.

¹¹Margaret Stobie, *Frederick Philip Grove* (New York: Twayne, 1973).

¹²Anthony W. Riley, "The German Novels of Frederick Philip Grove," *Inscape* 9.1 (1974): 55-66.

¹³Greve's first novel *Fanny Essler* (1905) was published in English translation in 1984 (Ottawa: Oberon), his second novel, *Maurermeister Ihles Haus*, appeared under the title *The Master Mason's House* in 1976. The English translation of Greve's essay *Oscar Wilde* (1903) appeared in a small edition in 1984 (Vancouver: William Hoffer). Greve's poetry collections *Wanderungen* and *Helena und Damon* (both 1902) are still untranslated.

¹⁴A remarkable exception is E. D. Blodgett's essay "Alias Grove: Variations in Disguise" in his *Configuration. Essays in the Canadian Literatures* (Downsview: ECW, 1982) 112-53.

¹⁵Axel Knönagel, *Nietzschean Philosophy in the Works of Frederick Philip Grove* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1990).

¹⁶Irene Gammel, *Sexualizing Power in Naturalism: Theodore Dreiser and Frederick Philip Grove* (Calgary: U of Calgary P, 1994).

¹⁷Lynn De Vore, "The Backgrounds of *Nightwood*: Robin, Felix, and Nora," *Journal of Modern Literature* 10.1 (1983): 71-90. Freytag-Loringhoven's autobiography has been edited by Paul I. Hjartarson and D. O. Spettigue as *Baroness Elsa* (Ottawa: Oberon, 1992).

¹⁸See Gaby Divay, "Fanny Essler's Poems: Felix Paul Greve's or Else von Freytag-Loringhoven's?," *Arachne* 1.2 (1994): 165-97.

¹⁹Martens (see reference note) 28. My translation.

²⁰Paul Hjartarson, "Design and Truth in Grove's 'In Search of Myself,'" *Canadian Literature* 90 (1981): 73-90, here 78.

²¹Martens 276. My translation.

²²Martens 18. My translation. The attempt to use Grove's writings as sources for hidden references to his former life is not new. K. P. Stich, for example, used this method to questionable results in his "Narcissism and the Uncanny in Grove's 'Over Prairie Trails,'" *Mosaic* 19.2 (1986): 31-41.

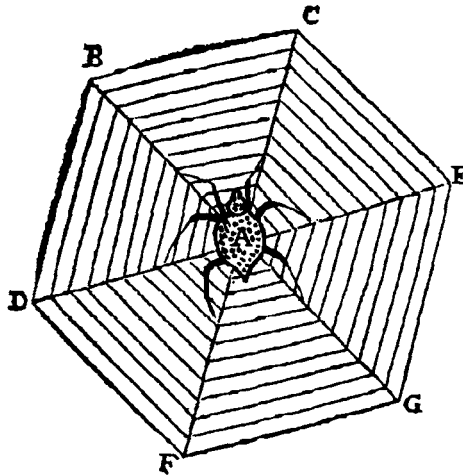
²³Martens 192, 193. My translations.

²⁴Martens 282. My translation. The speculation about the German Archaeological Society can be found in Martens 114-15.

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