

Dave Cope's

Shakespeare Course Handouts & Cues

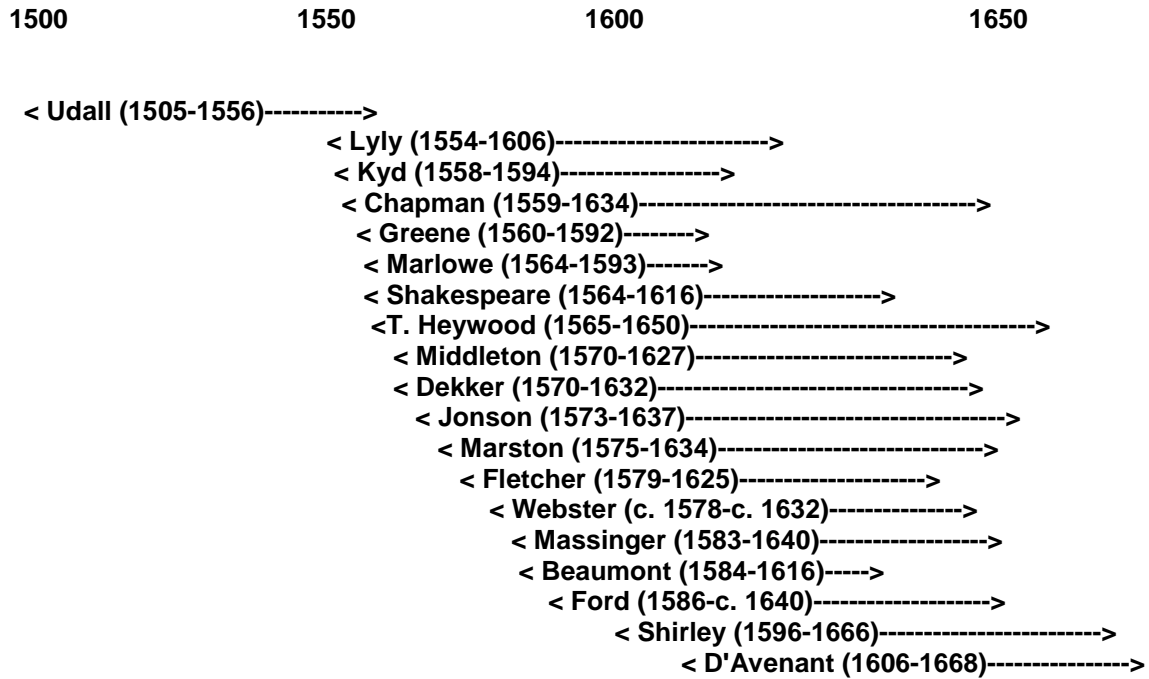
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Chief Elizabethan and Jacobean Dramatists

Chart Courtesy of Professor C. J. Gianakaris



Some Basic Sources for Shakespeare Criticism

Note: This list is intended to give those unfamiliar with the vast range of writing about Shakespeare a few good initial sources for research. Students should refer to the Selected Bibliography in *The Riverside Shakespeare* for a more comprehensive listing.

Some Other Authoritative Scholarly Editions

The Arden Shakespeare. [Texts of individual plays with authoritative introductions, notes and commentary, and appendices—particularly useful in the 2nd and 3rd editions, as they are more up-to-date].

The Oxford Shakespeare. The Oxford edition has as much claim as the Riverside to being the "standard" edition, and though its editors sometimes have made some peculiar choices in editing individual plays—deciding whether to include or reject lines from earlier quartos, for example—there are also times when their choices are superior to the Riverside's, as in their inclusion of a powerful passage in *Pericles* 4.6, which is excluded in the Riverside.

Variorum editions of individual plays. [Claiming to be *the* authoritative editions, variorum editions are also useful for their extensive introductions, notes, commentary, etc.—again, the more recent editions are—obviously—more up-to-date.]

Handy Reference Texts

Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. New York: Riverhead, 1998.

[Though he's a bit old-fashioned, sniping at modern critics without always understanding what they're about, as well as unabashedly bardolatrous, Bloom's insights into the plays are often brilliant, and his prose sparkles with enthusiasm.]

Boyce, Charles. *Shakespeare A to Z*. New York and Oxford: Facts on File, 1990. [A good basic introduction for those unfamiliar with the plays—alphabetized.]

Drabble, Margaret, ed. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Fifth ed. Oxford U P, 1985.

Saccio, Peter. *Shakespeare's English Kings: History, Chronicle, and Drama*. London, Oxford, and New York: Oxford U P, 1977.

Biography

Honan, Park. *Shakespeare: A Life*. Oxford and New York: Oxford U P, 1998.

Schoenbaum, S. *Shakespeare: His Life, His Language, His Theater*. New York: Signet / Penguin, 1990.

General Criticism

Barber, C. L. *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1959.

Bowers, Fredson. *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587-1642*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1940.

Bradley, A. C. *Shakespearean Tragedy*. Third ed. London: Macmillan, 1992.

Doran, Madeleine. *Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama*. Madison: U of Wisconsin, 1954.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1957.

Halliday, F. E. *The Poetry of Shakespeare's Plays*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1964.

Holland, Norman. *Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.

Spurgeon, Caroline. *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1935. repr. 1993.

Wright, George T. *Shakespeare's Metrical Art*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: U of California P, 1988.

Source Study

- Bullough, Geoffrey. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. 8 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Columbia U P, 1966.
- Muir, Kenneth. *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays*. New Haven: Yale U P, 1978.

Contemporary Criticism

- Drakakis, John, ed. *Alternative Shakespeares*. London and New York: Methuen, 1985.
- Dollimore, Jonathan. *Radical Tragedy*. Second ed. Durham: Duke U P, 1993.
- , and Alan Sinfield, eds. *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*. Second ed. Ithaca and London: Cornell U P, 1994.
- Dusinberre, Juliet. *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*. New York: St. Martin's, 1975.
- Garber, Marjorie. *Coming of Age in Shakespeare*. New York and London: Routledge, 1981.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California, 1988.
- Hawkes, Terence, ed. *Alternative Shakespeares: Volume 2*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Kolin, Philip C. *Shakespeare and Feminist Criticism: An Annotated Bibliography and Commentary*. New York and London: Garland, 1991.
- Lenz, Carolyn Ruth Swift, et al, ed. *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*. Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois, 1983.
- Young, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Middle Tragedies*. New Century Views. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1993.

The Stage, Stage History, and Film

- Bate, Jonathan, and Russell Jackson, eds. *Shakespeare: An Illustrated Stage History*. Oxford and New York: Oxford U P, 1996.
- Boose, Lynda E., and Richard Burt, eds. *Shakespeare The Movie: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, and Video*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Davies, Anthony, and Stanley Wells. *Shakespeare and the Moving Image: The Plays on Film and Television*. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1994.
- Rothwell, Kenneth S., and Annabelle Henkin Meltzer. *Shakespeare on Screen*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1990.
- Shaughnessy, Robert, ed. *Shakespeare on Film*. New York: St. Martin's, 1998.
- Speaight, Robert. *Shakespeare on The Stage: An Illustrated History of Shakespearean Performance*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1973.

Useful Journals

- Shakespeare Quarterly*. See year-end index of articles.
- Shakespeare Survey*.

From *Anatomy of Criticism*: Northrop Frye on Comedy

The plot structure of Greek New Comedy, as transmitted by Plautus and Terence, in itself less a form than a formula, has become the basis for most comedy, especially in its more highly conventionalized dramatic form, down to our own day. . . . What normally happens is that a young man wants a young woman, that his desire is resisted by some opposition, usually paternal, and that near the end of the play some twist in the plot enables the hero to have his will. In this simple pattern there are several complex elements. In the first place, the movement of comedy is usually a movement from one kind of society to another. At the beginning of the play the obstructing characters are in charge of the play's society, and the audience recognizes that they are usurpers. At the end of the play the device in the plot that brings hero and heroine together causes a new society to crystallize around the hero, and the moment when this crystallization occurs is the point of resolution in the action, the comic discovery, *anagnorisis* or *cognitio* (163).

The appearance of this new society is frequently signaled by some kind of party or festive ritual, which either appears at the end of the play or is assumed to take place immediately afterward. Weddings are most common, and sometimes so many of them occur, as in the quadruple wedding at the end of *As You Like It*, that they suggest also the wholesale pairing off that takes place in a dance, which is another common conclusion, and the normal one for the masque (163-64).

The tendency of comedy is to include as many people as possible in its final society: the blocking characters are more often reconciled or converted than simply repudiated. Comedy often includes a scapegoat ritual of expulsion which gets rid of some irreconcilable character, but exposure and disgrace make for pathos, or even tragedy. *The Merchant of Venice* seems almost an experiment in coming as close as possible to upsetting the comic balance. If the dramatic role of Shylock is ever so slightly exaggerated, as it generally is when the leading actor of the company takes the part, it is upset, and the play becomes the tragedy of the Jew of Venice with a comic epilogue (165).

The question . . . arises of what makes the blocking character absurd. Ben Jonson explained this by his theory of the "humor," the character dominated by what Pope calls a ruling passion. The humor's dramatic function is to express a state of what might be called ritual bondage. He is obsessed by his humor, and his function in the play is primarily to repeat his obsession. . . . The principle of the humor is the principle that unincremental repetition, the literary imitation of ritual bondage, is funny. In a tragedy—Oedipus Tyrannus is the stock example—repetition leads logically to catastrophe. Repetition overdone or not going anywhere belongs to comedy, for laughter is partly a reflex, and like other reflexes it can be conditioned by a simple repeated pattern (168).

The humor in comedy is usually someone with a good deal of social prestige and power, who is able to force much of the play's society into line with his obsession. Thus the humor is intimately connected with the theme of the absurd or irrational law that the action of comedy moves toward breaking (169).

Some Common Comic Types

Senex iratus: the angry old man, miserly, full of pointless rage and obsessions, yet gullible.

Miles gloriosus: the braggart soldier, a man full of stories of his own bravery, usually a coward.

The Vice or Lord of Misrule: the usually colorful instigator of troubles in the play's society.

Dolosus servus: the tricky slave, who often directs or manages his master's accounts, generally for his own purposes.

The Parasite: a servant or hanger-on whose whole purpose is to sap the master's funds.

The Gull: a person whose naivete or stupidity has made him fit to be fooled.

The Killjoy: often misanthropic or puritannical, a character who tries to stop the fun.

Poetics: Aristotle on Tragedy (Excerpts)

1449b A tragedy . . . is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions. 1450a There are six parts . . . of every tragedy, as a whole (that is) of such or such quality, viz. a Fable or Plot, Characters, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, and Melody; . . . 1450b We maintain . . . that the first essential, the life and soul, so to speak, of Tragedy is the Plot; and that the characters come second. . . . Third comes the element of Thought, i.e. the power of saying whatever can be said, or what is appropriate to the occasion. . . . One must not confuse it with Character. Character in a play is that which reveals the moral purpose of the agents, i.e. the sort of thing they seek or avoid, . . . [while] Thought, on the other hand, is shown in all they say when proving or disproving some particular point, or enunciating some universal proposition. Fourth among the literary elements is the Diction of personages, i.e. . . . the expression of their thoughts in words, which is practically the same thing with verse as with prose. As for the two remaining parts, the Melody is the greatest of the pleasurable accessories of Tragedy. The Spectacle, though an attraction, is the least artistic of the parts, and has least to do with the art of poetry.

1452a Tragedy, however, is an imitation not only of a complete action, but also of incidents arousing pity and fear. Such incidents have the very greatest effect on the mind when they occur unexpectedly and at the same time in consequence of one another; there is more of the marvelous in them than if they happened of themselves or by mere chance. . . . Plots are either simple or complex, since the actions they represent are naturally of this twofold description. The action . . . I call simple, when the change in the hero's fortunes takes place without Peripety [change in situation] or Discovery [sudden awareness of situation on the hero's part]; and complex, when it involves one or the other, or both. These should each of them arise out of the structure of the Plot itself, so as to be the consequence, necessary or probable, of the antecedents.

1453a (The tragic hero) There remains, then, the intermediate kind of personage, a man not preeminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgment, of the number of those in the enjoyment of great reputation and prosperity; e.g. Oedipus, Thyestes, and the men of note of similar families. . . . Though the poets began by accepting any tragic story that came to hand, in these days the finest tragedies are always on the story of some few houses, on that of Alcmeon, Oedipus, Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes, Telephus, or any others that may have been involved, as either agents or sufferers, in some deed of horror. 1453b Whenever the tragic deed [arousing horror or pity] is done within the family—when murder or the like is done or meditated by brother on brother, by son on father, by mother on son, or son on mother—these are the situations the poet should seek after.

--Translated by Ingram Bywater.

Shakespeare: Motifs & Characters Involving Women, Patriarchy, & Desire

Women who must seem to die (to force their lovers to value them or as *deus ex machina* resolution)

1. <i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	Aemilia (Egeon)	deus ex machina (reward)
2. <i>Much Ado</i>	Hero (Claudio)	forcing Claudio to value her
3. <i>All's Well</i>	Helena (Bertram)	forcing Bertram to value her
4. <i>Pericles</i>	Thaisa & Marina (Pericles)	deus ex machina (reward)
5. <i>The Winter's Tale</i>	Hermione/Perdita (Leontes)	forcing him to value Hermione; putting him through penance; deus ex machina (reward)—both mother & daughter.

Women who must disguise themselves for empowerment

1. <i>Two Gentlemen</i>	Julia / Sebastian	to find her supposed lover, Proteus
2. <i>Merchant of Venice</i>	Portia / Balthasar	to rescue Bassanio from Shylock
3. <i>As You Like It</i>	Rosalind / Ganymede	to find Orlando & get his love
4. <i>Twelfth Night</i>	Celia / Aliena Viola / Cesario	to seek refuge with Duke Senior to seek refuge with Orsino / to get his love
5. <i>Cymbeline</i>	Imogen / Fidele	to escape her father & Cloten / to find Posthumus

Bed Trick Plays (two women exchange places to "catch" an unworthy lover)

1. <i>All's Well</i>	Helena & Diana	Helena consummates marriage with Bertram
2. <i>Measure for Measure</i>	Isabella & Mariana	Mariana spares Isabella & consummates marriage with Angelo

Other Assertive Daughters, Young Women, Servant Women

1. <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Katherina	defies Petruchio, her father, is "tamed"
2. <i>MND</i>	Hermia	defies her father for Lysander
3. <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	Jessica	defies her father for Lorenzo
4. <i>The Merry Wives</i>	Ann Page	defies her parents & suitors for Fenton
5. <i>Much Ado</i>	Beatrice	defies love, Don Pedro, her uncle, and Benedick
6. <i>Twelfth Night</i>	Maria	engineers plot against Malvolio, runs off with Sir Toby Belch
7. <i>Romeo & Juliet</i>	Juliet	defies her parents for Romeo
8. <i>Othello</i>	Desdemona	elopes, defies her father for Othello
9. <i>King Lear</i>	Cordelia	defies her father for the sake of truth
10 / 11. <i>King Lear</i>	Goneril, Regan	villainous older sisters, dominating their husbands, crushing their father
12. <i>Pericles</i>	Marina	a quick thinker, she escapes murder by Dionysa, refuses to play the whore when sold, & makes her way as a singer

13. <i>Cymbeline</i>	Imogen	defies her parents & Cloten, disguises herself & makes her own way
14. <i>The Tempest</i>	Miranda	naive, yet assertive daughter of Prospero, she pursues & asks Ferdinand for his hand

Some Strong Older Women

1. <i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	Aemilia	bereft of husband & children, she makes her way as a nun
2. <i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	Adriana	shrewish wife of Antipholus E., she nevertheless questions why men should have more liberty than women.
3. <i>MND</i>	Titania	Queen of fairies, she unsuccessfully defies her husband Oberon
4. <i>MND</i>	Hippolyta	Queen of Amazons, she is defeated in war by Theseus & is forced to marry him
5. <i>The Merry Wives</i>	Alice Ford /	wives who repeatedly trounce Falstaff &
6. <i>The Merry Wives</i>	Margaret Page	fool their husbands as well
7. <i>1, 2, 3 Henry VI, and Richard III</i>	Margaret	the "she-wolf" of France, wife of Henry VI, enemy of the Yorks, prophetess
8. <i>King John</i>	Constance	defiant mother of Arthur
9. <i>Titus Andronicus</i>	Tamora	ambitious queen of the Goths
10. <i>Hamlet</i>	Gertrude	Queen of Denmark, mystery character
11. <i>Othello</i>	Emilia	grows & learns to defy both her husband, Iago, and Othello
12. <i>Macbeth</i>	Lady Macbeth	villainous wife of Macbeth
13. <i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Cleopatra	Queen of Egypt, genius politician, fabled lover
14. <i>Coriolanus</i>	Volumnia	strong mother of Coriolanus
15. <i>Pericles</i>	Thaisa	bereft of husband & daughter, she makes her way as a nun
16. <i>Cymbeline</i>	Queen	deceives her husband in effort to put her son on the throne
17. <i>The Winter's Tale</i>	Paulina	defies Leontes & names his sins; forces him to do penance for murdering his wife, & engineers the reconciliation

Witches, Weird Women, Amazons

1. <i>I Henry VI</i>	Joan de Pucelle (of Arc)	self-important "visionary" witch,
2. <i>II Henry VI</i>	Margery Jordan	witch, unknowing bait to trap Gloucester through his wife's foolishness
3. <i>MND</i>	Hippolyta	Queen of Amazons
4. <i>Macbeth</i>	Weird Sisters	quintessential tools of the devil
5. <i>Timon of Athens</i>	Amazons	Male maskers impersonating Amazons
6. <i>The Tempest</i>	Sycorax	Not present in play, but characterized; mother of Caliban

Whores & Bawds

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>The Comedy of Errors</i> | Courtezan |
| 2. <i>I & II Henry IV, Henry V</i> | Mistress Quickly |
| 3. <i>Measure for Measure</i> | Mistress Overdone, a bawd |
| 4. <i>Othello</i> | Bianca, a courtezan |
| 5. <i>Timon of Athens</i> | Phrynia & Timandra, mistresses to Alcibiades |
| 6. <i>Pericles</i> | Bawd |

Censorship and State Control of the Arts and Printing: Some Key Dates

- 1529:** Henry VIII's proclamation against heretical and seditious books.
- 1533:** Act regulates sale of foreign-printed books.
- 1538:** Proclamation requiring that books be licensed by the Privy Council or other royal nominee.
- 1547, 1549:** Edward VI's orders prohibiting popish books of prayer and instruction.
- 1555:** Mary forbids the importation of works by reformers.
- 1557:** Stationers Company is incorporated, regulating all publication.
- 1559:** Elizabeth's Injunctions require that no book may be printed without her license or that of the Privy Council or certain specified churchmen.
- 1564:** Elizabeth directs Bishop of London to seize imported subversive books.
- 1586:** Star Chamber orders that prohibit copyright sans the "hand" of an official licenser, and that apart from London, only Cambridge and Oxford could have printing presses.
- 1588-89:** Martin Marprelate controversy: Puritans satirize Archbishop Whitgift, who had tried to impose liturgical uniformity on their sects; setting off a vogue in satire that extended far beyond the initial issues.
- 1596:** James writes from Scotland, expressing "great offense" at Spenser's portrayal of his mother as Duessa in *The Fairie Queene*.
- 1597:** Thomas Nashe's *The Isle of Dogs* declared seditious and suppressed: theatres closed, Nashe driven out of town, and the actors Ben Jonson, Robert Shaw, and Gabriel Spencer jailed.
- 1597-98:** Shakespeare forced to change the name of Sir John Oldcastle to Falstaff because of protests by Oldcastle's descendent, William Brooke, Lord Cobham.
- 1599:** Edict by Archbishop Whitgift and the Bishop of London requiring that satirical works by Harvey and Nashe (among others) be burned, and demanding the end of printing satirical works.
- 1601:** Essex's rebellion; *Richard II* played for Essex and his supporters the night before their attack, prompting Elizabeth to claim that she was "Richard."
- 1603:** James comes to the throne and immediately takes Shakespeare's company into direct control as the "King's Men" while simultaneously naming Jonson as his court's primary writer of masques.
- 1604:** Jonson hailed before Star Chamber for possibly glancing at the Howards and at the trial of Raleigh or representing an allegory of the Essex rebellion in his *Sejanus*.
- 1605:** Jonson and Chapman jailed for derogatory references to Scots in *Eastward Hoe!*

Shakespeare's use of masque elements

This list merely suggests some of the sites that demonstrate Shakespeare's use of the motifs of masque (courtly entertainment) to create the "special effects" that were prominent in entertainments, interludes, and masques during the period (especially as noted in the court masques of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones). Shakespeare generally uses masque elements as metatheatric devices to provide plot variation and/or to illustrate some quality of character (as in the wedding masque of *The Tempest* or King Henry's masqued dance for Ann Boleyn in *Henry VIII*); as devices to effect a change in a character (as with Ariel's harpy act in *The Tempest*, where she frightens the villain Alonso into recognizing the loss of his son as payment for his own sins); or as resolution (as in the forest masque in *Merry Wives*, the minimal wedding masque in *As You Like It*, and the unveiling and coming-to-life of the statue of Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*). Both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* may be seen as "large canvas" versions of the motifs of anti-masque and masque. In each play, interior and exterior grotesques and disorders (e.g. impure spiritual conditions in the main characters and grotesques such as the ass-headed Bottom or Caliban) must be cleared away or put in their places so that the purified characters may emerge as themselves. Two plays—*2 Henry VI* and *Macbeth*—present anti-masque elements which stand apart from the ritual purifications usually associated with the grotesque.

Love's Labour's Lost

5.2,157ff: Masque of Russians and Blackamoors (interrupted)

5.2.533-725: Play-within-play—"The Nine Worthies"

A Midsummer Night's Dream

<Oberon, Puck, Titania and her train all participate in the "fantastic" masked-quality of masque, and, as noted above, the play itself ritually works out an anti-masque and masque.

5.1.108-261 Play-within-play—"Pyrrhus and Thisbe" by the Mechanicals.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

5.5.37-102: Locals dress as the Queen of the Fairies and her court, pinching Falstaff into mending his ways.

As You Like It

5.4.107ff: Hymen joins Rosalind et al in a very brief touch of masque.

2 Henry VI

1.4: The witch Margery Jordan conjures a spirit which prophesies dire events in thunder and lightning, a kind of anti-masque in miniature.

Richard III

5.3.116-76: Procession of ghosts curses Richard on the night before the battle of Bosworth.

1 Henry IV

3.1. Interlude with songs by the Welsh lady.

Hamlet

3.2 Dumb show and play-within-play, "The Mousetrap."

Macbeth

4.1 Hecat and witches enact a witches' sabbath for Macbeth, with apparitions—employing elements of anti-masque.

Timon of Athens

1.2: Masque of Amazons during the banquet

Pericles, Prince of Tyre

2.1, 3.1, 4.4, 5.2: Chorus and dumbshow

2.2: Procession of knights

5.1: Vision of Diana appears to Pericles

Cymbeline

5.4 Procession of ghosts (incl. Leonatus, Posthumus' mother, and two brothers) appears to Posthumus, followed by the descent of Jupiter—a vision—who gives Posthumus a riddle which is key to the resolution.

The Winter's Tale

4.3: The spring sheep-shearing festival, featuring dance and song, with Perdita as May Queen.

5.2: The statue of Hermione "comes to life" when Leontes is properly penitent.

The Tempest

<Ariel and Caliban are, by their appearance alone, characters straight out of masque: a delicate nymph/spirit and a grotesque monster, the offspring of a witch and the devil.

3.2: Prospero's dumb show and vanishing banquet: Ariel appears as harpy to accuse the three "men of sin."

4.1: The wedding masque with Juno and nymphs and reapers, followed by the spirit hounds that chase Caliban and his confederates.

Henry VIII

1.3 King Henry and his courtiers as "maskers, habited like shepherds."

4.1: The coronation parade of Ann as she is made queen.

4.2: Katherine's vision of "six personages, clad in white robes."

5.4: The christening parade of Elizabeth

The Two Noble Kinsmen

1.1: Hymen, nymphs, et al enact a wedding masque for Theseus and Hippolyta, which is cut short by the appearance of the three distressed queens.

5.1: Petitions by Palamon, Arcite, and Emilia at the altars of Mars, Venus, and Diana produce some spectacular special effects. .

1. Politics and the play:

<The play not only explores the rise of the Machiavellian villain, Richard, but as a political vehicle, makes a national savior of Queen Elizabeth I's ancestor, Henry Tudor (Richmond, later Henry VII).

<The play begins after the Yorks have defeated the Lancastrians in the decisive battle of Towton, 1461, and ends with the battle of Bosworth, 1485.

2. Background:

<**Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick**, was known as "the kingmaker," supported York's claim to the throne and helped to establish Edward IV as king. In Shakespeare, his attempts to find Edward a suitable French noblewoman for his wife are turned aside when the king marries a commoner, Elizabeth Woodville. Furious, he joins forces with Margaret and Henry VI, but is killed at the battle of Barnet. His daughter Anne is thus an important prize for Richard Gloucester to claim as wife, because as the kingmaker's daughter, she brings with her the influence and power of the Neville name.

<**Queen Margaret**, formerly of Anjou, is the widow of Henry VI. Although she never returned to England after the fall of her husband, Shakespeare brings her back to serve as a Nemesis figure: cursing and prophesying what will happen to others. Nicknamed the "she-wolf of France," she is directly responsible for much of the havoc at the heart of the War of the Roses; a martial figure, she led her husband's armies and in *3 Henry VI* took an unnatural pleasure in verbally torturing Richard of York with the tale of how she killed his son Rutland before finally stabbing York himself to death. Thus, when we see her cursing Richard Gloucester for killing her husband and son Edward, there is an intense irony here: she had done the same to Richard's father and brother.

3. Connections to *3 Henry VI*:

- 1.4: Margaret and Clifford capture Richard, Duke of York (father of Rutland, Edward, George, Richard); and she mocks him with a napkin stained with Rutland's blood, saying "prithce grieve, to make me merry" (86) before stabbing him to death (pages 716-18).
- 4.6: Henry VI recognizes young Richmond (Henry Tudor) as "England's hope" (68 ff) (page 736).
- 5.5: Margaret must watch helplessly as York's three sons each stab her son Edward (Anne Neville's first husband) to death (page 742).
- 5.6: Henry VI prophesies that Richard Gloucester will tyrannize England and cause untold suffering in the land (35-56) before Richard stabs him to death. Afterwards, Richard proclaims that he will seek the crown, that "I am myself alone" (83) and that he will kill both of his brothers (pages 743-44).

4. The Machiavel: a villain who is a strategic thinker, "subtle, false, and treacherous"

Richard Gloucester is Shakespeare's first masterful portrait of the Machiavel, a character type he would return to throughout his career in characters as varied as *Hamlet's* Claudius, *Lear's* Edmund, and most masterfully in *Macbeth*. Such a character schemes and kills others as a means to get political power, and once he has it, employs treachery while maintaining a persona of innocence to consolidate it. The character is also allied with the earlier morality character type of the Vice, and is based on English oversimplifications of *The Prince*, the 1513 treatise on political power and its use written by Niccolo Machiavelli.

5. **Style:** the play represents Shakespeare's early (more formal) style of writing, developing:
- a. **stylized scenes** such as the ritual oath-taking of 2.1, procession of messengers in 4.4, or the procession of ghosts attacking Richard in 5.3.
 - b. **formal rhetorical techniques** such as anaphora (see the opening soliloquy in 1.1 or Margaret's lament, 4.4) and stichomythic patterns of dialogue (as between Richard and Anne, 1.2).

6. **Note the importance of dreams, prophesies, and curses** as major motifs of the play. Margaret is of course the major focus of any studies of curses and prophesies, but dreams and other kinds of premonitions also play a major role, as in Clarence's dream of drowning and of the kingdom of death in the sea (1.4), or in Stanley's dream premonition that "the boar had rased off his helm" (3.2.11). **Ghosts** are used as catalysts of the crisis; throughout the play, there is an underlying fascination with death and the significance of life and one's choices in it, whether in Clarence's dream and final recognition of his foolish trust, the various murders, or Richard's visions of the ghosts—the terrifying return of his conscience—or actual ghosts—as a nemesis forcing recognition.

7. **Feminist issues:** the play's a major early site for examining the representation of patriarchy and Shakespeare's women. Major points of focus include the wooing of Anne (1.2), the role and character of Margaret (1.3), the character of the Duchess of York, Richard's mother (2.2), the women at the Tower, sharing a sense of helplessness (4.1), and Margaret's return to grieve with the York women (4.4); yet one should also note how Richard uses women and for what purpose. Madonne M. Miner also explores perversions of birth metaphors—the womb as tomb, for example—abounding in the play.

8. **Foregrounding and Backgrounding:** Foregrounding is giving the audience greater access to a character, either through his or her major role in the play, through a greater proportion of speeches and actions, and most especially through a greater number of soliloquies and asides. By contrast, backgrounding is distancing the character by removing him / her from the main action, reducing our knowledge of the character by restricting his/ her presence to hearsay or minor action.

In *Richard III*, Alexander Leggatt claims that Richard is at first foregrounded through the great number of his direct addresses to the audience—letting us in on his plans, almost as though we were co-conspirators—yet his movement is a gradual process of backgrounding (through the murders of his allies after he has attained the power he desires) until finally Richmond emerges to end his life. He does emerge one last time, tormented by ghosts and reaching the recognition that he has destroyed his own humanity. Richard is quintessentially "alone," yet first we and then later such characters as Hastings and Buckingham must learn that we cannot truly enter his private domain.

Margaret, on the other hand, emerges only twice in this play—first as the cursing nemesis who prophesies the ruin of all those present, and later as the comforter to the weeping women: yet her presence is kept before us as each of the characters recalls her prophecy just as they meet their ends: though backgrounded, her presence is never far from the center of the action.

9. Other Dramatic considerations:

a. scene variations (public spectacle v. intimate interviews v. overhearing asides v. soliloquy)

<Pay attention to how Shakespeare manages our perceptions through these variations: in 1.1, for example, Richard is alone and right in our faces, then meets Clarence (we see his dissembling in relation to his earlier stated aims: the dramatic hook is the question of whether Clarence will see through him, and we are both fascinated and alarmed at Richard's smoothness. (**soliloquy and intimate interview**)

In 1.2, we are treated to another intimate interview, prompted when Richard frightens Anne's retainers away from the corpse of Henry VI: and our perception of fascination and alarm is reinforced. (**debate in intimate interview**)

In 1.3, the scene changes to one of courtly pomp, introducing many characters, yet many quickly fall back as spectators to the duels between Richard and Elizabeth and Richard and Margaret (**debate before a court—spectacle; overhearing asides and debate**).

1.4 contrasts to the pomp of the former scene: here in prison we see Clarence almost alone, talking almost to himself until the murderers come: again there is debate, but here it ends with action: the stabbing of Clarence. (**semi-soliloquy before jailer; debate and horrifying action**)

b. the "two-tent scene" of 5.3 and the problem of creating the illusion of armies gathered and later clashing.

10. Richard's arc:

1. (1.1) Cast suspicion on Clarence through an obscure prophecy he has planted in Edward's mind.
2. (1.2) Get Anne to marry him (Warwick connection)
3. (1.3) Blame Queen for plotting Clarence's death; divide the court.
4. (1.3-1.4) Hire murderers who kill Clarence.
5. (2.1) Destroy Edward's attempt to bring the court together (with news of Clarence's death)
6. (2.2; 3.1) Enter Buckingham as kingmaker: once Edward is dead, make sure the little princes (Edward & Richard) go to the Tower (under pretext of protection).
7. (2.4; 3.3) Send Rivers, Grey, and Vaughn to Pomfret and have them killed.
8. (3.2) Have Catesby sound out Hastings re Richard taking the crown; if Hastings opposes it, kill him.
9. (3.4) Strawberry Scene: Richard accuses Hastings of guilt by association with the Queen and Ms. Shore, whose witchcraft, he says, blasted his arm: "off with his head!"
10. (3.6; 3.7) Richard instructs Buckingham to infer the bastardy of the little princes, and to sound out the citizens re Richard's drive to the kingship; they oppose it.
11. (3.7) At Baynard Castle, Richard pretends to have taken on a life of contemplation, claims he's not needed (before the Mayor and citizens; Buckingham "reminds" him that the little princes are "bastards," and he and Catesby beg Richard to take the crown, prompting the citizens to join them. Richard accepts.
12. (4.2) When Buckingham refuses Richard's request to kill the little princes, Richard aims at him.
13. (4.2) Richard has Catesby rumor it about that his wife Anne is sick; he needs to marry the Queen's daughter Elizabeth to cement his claim to the throne.
14. (4.2) Richard hires Tyrrel, who kills the little princes; Anne is also mysteriously dead..
15. (4.4) After drowning out the women's complaints with trumpets, Richard gets the Queen alone and presses her for her daughter's hand; she finally agrees, but quickly leaves and joins Richmond..
16. (4.5; 5.1; 5.2) Richard holds Stanley's son as hostage to ensure that he won't join Richmond; Richmond returns; the country rises up in arms, yet Buckingham is taken and killed.
17. (5.3; 5.4; 5.5) Bosworth: contrast—Richmond's noble concern for Stanley, for his men, and with a pleasant night's sleep and stirring pre-battle speech; Richard's night of being attacked by ghosts of the dead, recognition of his loss of humanity, base speech to his men. Battle—and Richard's death.

Richard III and Disability as Stigma

from a Letter to Jim Cohn, 22 June 1999

I'd suggest that one must be *very* careful in assigning a specific political role (e.g. "continuation of stigma" as purpose of representing disability in text) to a text whose complexity may involve ambiguities and political themes not reducible to a simple indictment. The text itself is, at least in the case of a major author, so complex as to develop a variety of arguments about what it represents. Most authors usually reflect ideas current during their time, sometimes calling them into question. In Shakespeare's case, for example, students in the 60s would've been presented with the old historicist notion that Shakespeare reflects "the Elizabethan world view" of an hierarchy in which every being has his or her place, and our outward forms indicate our inner selves. Later critics have shown just how oversimplified this view is, exploring how Shakespeare and his contemporaries subverted and called this view into question: see Dollimore's introduction, "Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism, and the New Historicism," in *Political Shakespeare*.

Consider Richard III and his disability as an example: in the *Henry VI* plays and in *Richard III*, he is not simply reducible to his disability (his withered arm and hunchback), and in fact that disability serves more than one purpose in the play. Old historicists would have seen it as the outward sign of his inner corruption, but such a view not only misses the ways in which his disability (in view of normative perceptions) contributes to shaping him *and* the uses to which Richard puts his disability, but also totally ignores the major events that are much more important in shaping Richard's personality—as with any tragic hero or hero/villain, he is developed in such a way that his trajectory toward kingship, his tyranny as king, and his end are all contained in the ways he has been shaped. At one point, his disability is one of the crutches by which he manipulates those around him (as in his indictment of Hastings through the latter's sexual relationship to Mistress Shaw, whom Richard damns as a witch who withered his arm "like a blasted sapling" (3.4.69). In the three *Henry VI* plays which precede *Richard III* and show him as the younger brother valiantly leading the Yorkist troops so that his older brother might reap the benefits of his toils, Richard displays real psychological isolation within his own family, both as a result of his *difference* from the others and as a result of his risktaking so that another may take the spoils. He is both shaped by his *otherness* via disability, and uses it as a prop for his political desires.

Further, when one considers that he has endured the savage slaughter of his father and brother Rutland by Margaret and her lover Clifford—and seen his father's head stuck on the gate of York castle; when in the heat of battle he has, with his brothers, slaughtered Margaret's son Prince Edward as she looked on; when he has had to butcher his family's way into power—one begins to understand that his disability is a minor contributing signifier of his state of mind. This is a man who has grown up in an age where physical butchery, machiavellian intrigue, and raw power plays are the norm: he is the product of his time, and to reduce his rather complicated (and horrifying/horror-struck) personality to a sign of his disability is to miss the man himself for a minor motif (his disability)—which is also, in itself, *not* a simple signifier: it too may be interrogated not simply as *sign* of spiritual corruption, but both as a contributor to his isolation via *difference* *and* as one of the *excuses* in an extraordinary panoply of rationales the man uses to manipulate others.

Romeo & Juliet

Frye, Northrop. "Romeo and Juliet." *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*. New Haven and London: Yale U P, 1986.

Spurgeon, Carolyn F. E. "The Imagery of Romeo and Juliet." *Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism*. Ed. Leonard F. Dean. New York: Oxford U P, 1967.

1. *Romeo & Juliet* is Shakespeare's youthful "tragedy of love" (also sometimes called "lyric tragedy," probably for the lyric qualities of its language. In *Antony & Cleopatra* we'll see the mature version of this style of tragedy, and at that point we'll be able to note comparative uses of the themes as they are associated with youthful and mature love, the ways in which the world defines, limits, and finally destroys the lovers: perhaps we'll see differences in Shakespeare's attitude toward love itself.

2. Two Features of this Plot:

a. **Motifs from Medieval Romance** (e.g. Lancelot & Guinivere, Troilus & Criseyde, Tristan & Isolde, Paolo & Francesca, as well as the patterns of amor in the Italian sonnet sequences).

1. **Amor as "forbidden fruit":** romantic love is adulterous or forbidden love in a world where marriage is a negotiated settlement based as much or more on economic or political benefit as on real affection. The medieval romance generally involves two lovers whose emotion interferes with an already declared alliance: thus Juliet's infatuation with Romeo is directly opposed to her father's agreement with Paris.

2. **Amor as a physical process:** The troubadours had followed Andreas Capellanus's description of love as "a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embraces of the other" (*The Art of Courtly Love*. Columbia UP, 1990: 28). Thus, the motif of love embodied in the lover's face and entering the eyes to strike the heart is a troubadour motif raised to a religious impulse by Dante, Cavalcanti, and those who followed: it not only describes "love at first sight," but explains the hyperbolic effect Juliet has on Romeo (page 1112--1.5.41-53) and the passion of their exchange in the orchard scene (2.5).

3. **Amor as religion/the metaphors of sainthood:** after the Albigensian Crusade, which destroyed the courts of amor in Provence, poets refined their appreciation of amor and of female beauty, reducing the sensual element and emphasizing the spiritual qualities: thus the lover becomes a "saint," the progress of love a "pilgrimage," and the lady's physical form her "shrine." As Meg Bogin claims in "Courtly Love: A New Interpretation" (*The Women Troubadours*. New York: Norton, 1980), the *stilnovisti* and those who came after them created a Beatrice or a Laura who "was no longer *midons*, she was *Madonna*" (61).

<In *Romeo & Juliet*, notice the religious metaphors in the first meetings between the lovers (page 1112--1.5.93-109 and in the balcony scene, page 1114--2.2)

4. **Use of the pandar or galeotto:** a go-between who enables the romance. In *Romeo & Juliet*, both the Nurse and Friar Laurence fill these roles. The galeotto is often an older relative or friend who takes a kind of meddler's pleasure in bringing the pair together, and whose actions are not clearly thought out—thus contributing to the tragedy through their thoughtless complicity: notice how this pattern is repeated in the Nurse and the Friar.

5. The Quick Progress and "Night of Love": in the medieval story, the lovers have one night of love, after which the world thwarts them and the story spirals quickly down into tragedy. This pattern is a major psychological "hook" for the audience: the author manipulates us so that we want the lovers to succeed, and their night of love seems to give us satisfaction that they have found each other and come together, after which the cynical world around them crushes them—and brings us to tragic catharsis.

<Note that, as in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, the lovers consummate their love in the third act (or book), the fourth and fifth acts (books) devoted to the process of their separation and tragic ends.

6. Chance as contributing factor: unforeseen events or the actions of those far more powerful—and unaware or heedless of the lovers—contribute to their downfall. In Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, for example, her father's suggestion that the Greeks exchange Antenor for his daughter brings Criseyde to the Greeks, separating the lovers forever. In *Romeo & Juliet*, chance plays a part in (a) their first meeting, (b) the death of Tybalt by Romeo's hand, (c) Balthasar getting to Romeo before the Friar's messenger, and (d) Romeo killing himself before Juliet awakes.

<Peculiarity of this plot: Chance v. Fate ("the stars") v. Amor (as uncontrollable force) v. Madness/Desire (Dreams) v. Fortune v. Individual Will: one may count the references to each of these (as conflicting forces controlling or contributing to individual destinies) at work in the play. Chance as determinant is noted above; other refs. include:

1. 1104: Prologue: "star-crossed lovers" (Fate)
2. 1107: 1.2.185-94: "Love is a fume. . . (Amor)
3. 1110-11: 1.4.53-94: Mercutio on dreams (madness)
4. 1111: 1.4.106-13: "some consequence yet hanging in the stars (Fate)
5. 1112-16: 2.2 entire balcony scene: (Amor)
6. 1117: 2.4.13-16: "his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft" (Amor)
7. 1122: 3.1.136: "O, I am fortune's fool!" (Fortune)
8. 1127: 3.5.60-64: O Fortune, Fortune, all men call thee fickle" (Fortune)
9. 1129: 4.1.239-42: "I'll to the friar . . . if all else fails, myself have power to die" (will)
10. 1134: 5.1.24: "Then I defy you, stars!" (will)
11. 1136: 5.3.109-12: "here will I set up my everlasting rest, and shake the yoke of inauspicious stars" (will)

<Because these other forces seem supra the individual will, the theme of free will v. determinism (of a variety of kinds) becomes an important theme in this play--a theme that will be addressed even more explicitly later—in Macbeth. Note that Shakespeare implies all these conflicting forces as determinants while seeming to give his characters free will within the nets in which they find themselves ensnared: he refuses to give us an simple answer for this problem, expecting us to struggle with the question as his characters do.

b. Inversion of the romantic schema for comedy: the lovers are destroyed by the blocking characters or situations. In *Romeo & Juliet*, the blocking characters—the parents—are not cast out, but live to be reconciled—not through the triumph of the younger lovers, but through their deaths. Finally, while a new society is announced at the end of the play, bringing the people together (as in comedy), the situation is the funeral of the lovers, not their wedding or a party. See Northrop Frye on comedy, page 4.

Other Important Elements:

1. 5 Distinct Motifs in the language:

- a. **Religious metaphors associated with love** (already mentioned).
- b. **Bawdy**: language specifically given to Mercutio and the Nurse: their eroticized "play" contributes much to the tenor of the first three acts, both as subversive voices and as comic relief; when they are eliminated, the tonic key shifts to tragedy.
- c. **Light and Dark, sun and moon**: night is generally associated with love & death, with light images associated with the lovers; daytime, by contrast, presents routines of a cynical adult world: negotiation, hatred, public violence, decrees, etc. See Spurgeon and Frye.
- d. **The language of foreknowing / binary pairings of love and the grave** (watch for these—they pop up often and in many mouths).
- e. **Bird imagery**: raven, dove-feathered raven, nightengale, lark—associated with the lovers.

2. Comic Characterization: "The Ridiculous" / "Humour" in Characters:

Tybalt: a character associated with anger and a delight in chaos—motiveless? Or does he live by some primitive notion of "honor" connected to male macho?

Mercutio: a cynic with a strong sense of loyalty to the Montagues, and prone to madness through an excitable nature. (Note that Shakespeare sets up a folk construction of the psychology of madness here—Queen Mab—akin in some ways but in others unlike the more profound and complex madneses of Hamlet, Lear, and Macbeth.

The Nurse: one of Shakespeare's most memorable characters: by turns pragmatic, short-sighted, well-meaning, long-winded, pained (as in her memories of Susan and her husband), given to erotic humor, loving, cynical, etc. As we enter the play, watch how her actions and speeches mold our perceptions of Juliet while at the same time providing key moments where Juliet may define her own needs.

3. The Priest as Well-Meaning Deceiver. In Shakespeare, religious figures often appear as connivers, equivocators and deceivers. Generally, high-ranking officials are machiavels, priests are either fools or well-meaning deceivers, and puritans are fools to be mocked. Note also that religious figures are more predominant in the first half of Shakespeare's career. After *Hamlet*, there are no priests until 1612-13's *Henry VIII*, which could argue that such representations may have become politically unwise, given the tighter restrictions at the end of Elizabeth's reign and the even tighter controls as James came to power. On the other hand, the absence of priests could simply argue that Shakespeare was attracted later to plots which did not feature them.

Some examples:

1. *I and II Henry VI*: Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester and later Cardinal: machiavel.
2. *Richard III*: Cardinal Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury—dupes of Buckingham and Richard; Thomas Rotterham, Archbishop of York—attempts to hide Elizabeth from Richard.
3. *King John*: Cardinal Pandulph, the Pope's legate: stereotype of the hypocritical Jesuit, equivocator.
4. *Richard II*: Bishop of Carlisle: defender of Richard, later conspirator anti-Henry; Abbot of Westminster--conspirator anti-Henry.
5. *Romeo and Juliet*: Friar Laurence—well-meaning deceiver and equivocator.
6. *I and II Henry IV*: Archbishop of York—conniver against Henry.
7. *MWW*: Sir Hugh Evans, a Welsh priest—a self-important dolt.

8. *Much Ado*: Friar Francis: well-meaning deceiver.
9. *Henry V*: Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of Ely: self-interested connivers.
10. *Hamlet*: priest as compassionless literalist, churlish.
11. *Twelfth Night*: Malvolio as satirical portrait of the puritan; one sincere priest as touchstone of truth, confirming Olivia's marriage, as well. Note Feste's comments on priests.
12. *Henry VIII*: Cardinal Wolsey and the Bishop of Winchester--arrogant and conniving villains.

4. Character and Trajectory of the Lovers:

- a. **Juliet: what is her arc?** She has been described as a timid teenager who enters love naively, but who grows as circumstances change, realizing that her needs can't be met by parental directives or the advice of her old nurse, confronting her own fears in her choice to follow the friar's plan, waking at last to pursue her love even in death.
 - <process of individuation? process of self-destruction initiated by illusion?
 - <themes associated with disobedience of parental authority?
 - <problem of the karma of her household, inability to transcend social determinism?
 - <how is she defined in relation to her father and mother, the nurse?
- b. **Romeo: what is his?** the melancholy Petrarchan lover is smitten with Cupid's arrow and is transformed into a husband, made fortune's fool by upholding his friend's honor (killing Tybalt), given a night of passion and banished, only to learn that his love has died—which sends him off in pursuit of a death that would place him by her side.
 - <hyperbolic character? Does he grow through his troubles, as Juliet seems to, or is he merely one driven by love, buffeted by chance and his affections to more and more desperate acts?
 - <as with Juliet, how is he hemmed in by the karma of his house, his inability to transcend social determinism?
 - <how is he defined in relation to his parents, Benvolio, Mercutio?

A Midsummer Night's Dream

The Problems of Free Will and Indeterminacy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Thanks to the Summer 2005 Class

Initial Concern: When we discussed the trajectories of the lovers in *MND*, I noted that, while Hermia and Helena both experience mental states very different from those they begin with, Demetrius and Lysander (in addition to showing antagonistic behavior toward each other) both display infidelities toward their lovers. We noted that Demetrius, before the play begins, has shown a betrayal of Helena's love for him by asking Egeus for Hermia's hand in marriage. Lysander, on the other hand, is actually in love with Hermia, and the two of them plan to escape through the woods and to marry beyond the reach of the Athenian law. In the woods, Lysander does attempt to get Hermia to sleep with him; she demurely refuses, as Hippolyta refused the advances of Theseus before their wedding day. The problem begins when he is drugged with the fairy love juice; he wakes and betrays Hermia for Helena—the first woman he spies. In our class, Emily Allen noted that Lysander's betrayal is not his own choice, and therefore he could not be held accountable for his behavior during that portion of the play. Emily raises an interesting point, but it does have some complications:

1. The boys are drugged; the girls are not: if Lysander cannot be held accountable for his lust for Helena, it follows that Demetrius's love for her is not free choice either. The question then becomes whether Demetrius's love can be called real and true.

<Free will is also an important consideration in *Macbeth*. After meeting the weird sisters, Macbeth is apparently swayed from his loyalties to Duncan and begins plotting to become king. If he is merely demon-possessed, he cannot then become a tragic hero, for such an hero must act from his own impulses. Most commentators suggest that the sisters merely reawaken an ambition that was already slumbering in his breast, thus freeing us to observe his struggle with himself and his eventual fall.

<The "Lysander-Demetrius problem" cannot be resolved in terms of free will unless we conceive of the fairies as psychological projections of the boys' own impulses. Yet this is also problematic because it may distort the play's apparent agenda (that human love is altogether unexplainable and that agents beyond our own impulses seem to drive us to behaviors we cannot justify or explain). We are left with the problem of indeterminacy: the inability to come to a specific conclusion about the boys because the textual evidence points to unresolvable conundra.

<To write about the young men, then, we must likely take the problematic nature of their trajectories into account, perhaps using Hippolyta's notion that in some unexplainable manner they have come to terms with their desires and returned to the lovers they were meant to have.

2. The problem of indeterminacy is also apparent in the girls' final position. In Act 5, they are now wives, and while the boys have taken their place as mature young men—joking and laughing with Theseus at the expense of the mechanicals—the young women remain silent. In class, we discussed the fact that silence may signify many different things, ranging from a refusal to engage in conversation which doesn't interest them, the silence of women who have achieved their apparent goal of marriage, or the silence that merely indicates their pleasure in the situation in which they find themselves—watching a play with the Duke, Hippolyta, and their husbands.

<The problem of silence also figures in *Measure for Measure*. After Isabella has come from the nunnery to save her brother and experienced Angelo's sexual harassment and threat against her brother, the Duke's "game" which threatens and later saves them, the bed trick in which Mariana takes Isabella's supposed place with Angelo, the Duke proposes to Isabella in the finale. She is silent and does not respond in any way that would indicate either pleasure or refusal, and as a result, the actress playing her has a choice of surprised shock, anger that yet another man is after her, or pleasure that she has found a husband in the worthiest man in town.

Writing about such characters and situations can be a struggle for those who want a simple or explainable path and a determinate ending, but I suggest that the best way to handle these kinds of complications is to acknowledge them: to show the complexity inherent in the text and that fact that sometimes it refuses pat answers and simple endings. As Katherine Marty noted in class, these are actor's questions, and yet like an actor, we must do textual analysis to determine what the text gives us and to explain the characters and the implications of their trajectories as clearly as possible. Unlike the actor, however, we cannot speculate on those elements which remain indeterminate, rather confronting the fact that in some situations one cannot resolve the difficulties.

Deconstructing the Dream

Thanks to the 2003 GRCC class

Note: Deconstruction is a brand of literary criticism that looks for *aporia* or gaps in the text— inconsistencies, apparent character changes effected with no textual clarification (in which the reader/audience must make a "leap" to make sense of the text). The deconstructionist is essentially a skeptic who does not take the apparent textual "project" (its aim or agenda) at face value, but rather points out the problems inherent in the text. The 2003 GRCC Shakespeare class offered some of the following deconstructionist observations in their discussions of the text:

1. Oberon and Titania both accuse each other of committing adultery with Theseus and Hippolyta (2.1.68-80), yet it appears that Theseus and Hippolyta are ignorant of their existence. Theseus

even goes so far as to claim that all imaginative thoughts—including characters borne of the imagination or the dream—are the work of "seething brains, . . . shaping fantasies that apprehend more than cool reason ever comprehends" (5.1.4-6). Theseus later contradicts his own statements, claiming at the end of the play (when he is anxious to begin his wedding night) that "'tis almost fairy time" (5.1.364)—suggesting he doesn't believe his own earlier claim.

Also, if the king and queen have not in fact dallied with Titania and Oberon, could this fact argue that Oberon's and Titania's claims about Hippolyta and Theseus are mere pretexts in the two fairies' bids to dominate each other?

2. The lovers seem to experience a partial amnesia when they wake at the end of the night (4.1.165-71, 187-99), yet in the following scene they have apparently recalled enough—possibly even the intervention of the fairies—so that Theseus is able to infer that such lovers are maddened to the point where their "strong imagination, . . . if it would but apprehend such joy, it comprehends some bringer of that joy" (5.1.18-20).

3. The resolution of Titania's and Oberon's argument is fraught with problems. First, Oberon recounts having taunted her for falling in love with an ass (4.1.46-63), thus getting her to give up her changeling boy. Given that she has earlier sworn—apparently in deadly earnest—that she would keep and raise the boy herself because he was the child of her devotee who died in

childbirth (2.1.122-137), it seems strange that she should so easily give him up in the later scene, merely for being taunted. One student suggested that perhaps this is part of the effect of the drug that made her fall in love with the ass-headed Bottom—and this may be so, if one can find other evidence of the drug's memory-effacing effect. Even if this is explainable, there is still the problem that Oberon's tale of upbraiding her and getting the child *precedes* the time period when she sleeps with Bottom and when Oberon wakes her. She had, just before he recounts to Puck how he got the boy, gone to bed with that same assheaded Bottom, claiming she would "wind thee in my arms" (4.1.40). If she has already been upbraided for loving this ass—to the point that it causes her to give up the boy (4.1.57-63)—why has she reverted to giving him obvious sexual attention? When she wakes, later on, he "catches" her and embarrasses her again, this time gently forgiving her for her foolishness, yet she shows no awareness that she either gave up the boy or reverted to loving the ass until Bottom is pointed out to her.

One student pointed out that this time sequence—taunted, giving up the boy, followed by going to bed with Bottom, followed by Oberon waking her and forgiving her a second time—may not be a problem; if she's not truly embarrassed, she would give up the changeling in order to get rid of Oberon and get back to her interest in Bottom. Another suggested that she may have been bothered by Oberon to the point where she gives up the changeling without modifying her behavior with Bottom (perhaps initially as revenge, followed later—when exposed—by regret).

None of this can be verified by the text, given that Oberon reports the earlier conversation and we don't see it from Titania's point of view. In any case, there may be explanations for these changes in behavior and apparent memory loss (as in the psychoanalytic perception that the conscious mind, especially in its neurotic formations, represses memories it does not want to confront), but the text does not produce them.

The end result of these queries may be, finally, to point out that many of these characters have character flaws and inconsistencies that are not explainable via the text's apparent project or even by close textual study. This discussion certainly points out important questions for both actors and scholars: those who would enter the *Dream* must decide how memory and character inconsistencies contribute to or detract from the project of this play, as well as the extent to which readers must (or can) leap the gaps in a text in order to make sense of it.

Dream Interpretation: The Liminal

The Liminal: a threshold between two states; a situation "in which social distinctions are temporarily suspended," involving an exchange between the physical desires—often expressed in the liminal state via masks, animal transformations—and the social norms which regulate them (Patterson 169): the idea of such spaces involves "the notion that to integrate the personality and become fully civilized we must experience a return of our repressed animal nature and come to terms with it" (Calderwood 85-86). In this view, the sexual rites of passage to adulthood and wedding purity in *MND* involve passage through the green wood of the dream state, where the lovers' desires are explored and transcended. Titania's seduction of the transformed Bottom is the most obvious manifestation of the exposure of nagual (animal) nature, but note how much animal imagery crops up in the speech of others—e.g. from Hermia's dream of the serpent to Helena's request that Demetrius use her as his "spaniel."

Some Sources re the psychology of the green world

Barber, C. L. *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*. Princeton, 1959. [Barber argues that Oberon and Titania take the place of the Lord and Lady of May in the English folk custom of maying (which could happen throughout the summer). In this holiday custom, young couples would celebrate with maypole and dancing, racing into the country for whole nights of moonlight and loving.]

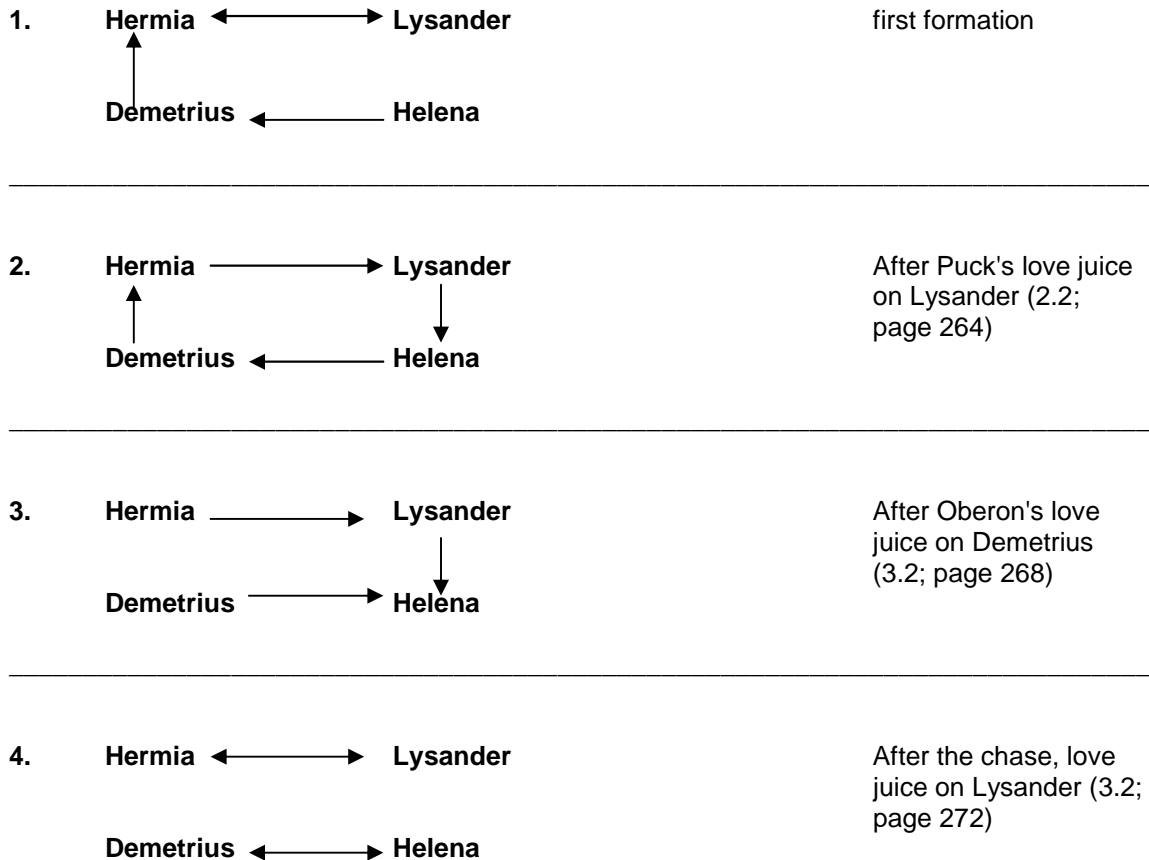
- Calderwood, James L. "Liminality: Puck's Door." *Twayne's New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream*. New York: Twayne, 1992. [Calderwood's exploration of nagual nature, derived from the Tzotzil Indians' concept of the "animal" nature in man, as well as from Topsell's interpretation of Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*, develops a clear picture of the liminal rite of passage: "some by youthful pleasures become beasts, and afterward by timely repentant old age are reformed men again. Some are in their lives Wolves; some Foxes, some Swine, some Asses. . . . This world is unto them an enchanted cup of Circes, wherein they drinke up a potion of oblivion, error and ignorance; afterwards bruitizing in their whole life, till they taste the Roses of true science and grace enlightening their minds" (Topsell, quoted in Calderwood 85).]
- Carroll, William C. *The Metamorphoses of Shakespearean Comedy*. Princeton, 1985. [Carroll explores how *MND* "places its characters in its own forest of symbols, the world of a liminal period. . . the realm of primitive hypothesis, where there is a certain freedom to juggle with the factors of existence" (143). Carroll's essay is particularly useful for its exploration of metamorphosis, the "persistent encroachments of the animalistic upon the human" (144), which he sees as a "trial of the monstrous" or "transformational stage" which must be transcended before love can be properly consummated.]
- Frye, Northrop. "The Argument of Comedy." *The English Institute Essays*. 1948. [Frye shows not only individual, but social reconciliation, and explores Shakespeare's "green world" as a space where individuals are released from social restrictions to explore their own agons & find themselves.]
- Patterson, Annabel. "Bottom's Up: Festive Theory in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Critical Essays*. Ed. Dorothea Kehler. New York and London: Garland, 1998. [Patterson explores three festive theories re *MND* (as wedding entertainment, folk ritual, and as ritual liminal inversion, in which body parts and social roles are temporarily inverted in importance (Bottom is up, physically and socially) as expression of normally repressed fantasy: serving the purpose of "social regeneration and reconciliation" when the passage through the liminal is complete (169).

Notes for Reading

- 1. Pattern of Masque:** the play was probably written as an entertainment for a wedding, and features some of the prominent characteristics of masque: the emphasis on spectacle, fantastic costumes, etc.; the plot involving ritual purification (clearing away some fault to make way for true love, proper order, marriage).
- 2. Pay attention to the plotting:** because Shakespeare has to introduce three different sets of characters (and three separate sets of conflicts), acts 1.1-2.1 are taken up with exposition and initial conflicts; acts 2.2-3.2 develop the complications, ending in the climactic chase of 3.2; Act 4 develops the exposure and recognition, and Act 5 is really an extended resolution: the lovers and Theseus get their multiple weddings; the mechanicals get to act out their play, make some money and get recognition; and the fairies, newly harmonious in love, bless all involved.
- 3. Follow characters and the ways their relationships reflect on the theme of love:** Theseus and Hippolyta, Hermia and Lysander, Demetrius and Helena, Oberon and Titania and, briefly, Bottom and Titania. What do all these trajectories say about Love as an emotion? Are there fundamental differences between the loves and struggles of older and younger couples?

4. Hermia, the assertive daughter: Shakespeare is renowned for placing assertive women in a patriarchal social milieu, exploring their problems with gender restrictions through the problems they encounter in the plays. See chart, "Shakespeare, Women, and Patriarchy, pages 7-9.

The Lovers' "Dance"



Other Key Motifs for this play:

1. Lovers overcoming a blocking figure: Hermia and Lysander must find a way around Egeus (and, incidentally, Theseus) to validate their love and make a place for their generation as legitimate heirs to (and rejuvenators of) the represented society.

2. Frame tale with four intertwined plots, three of them exploring the disorders of Love—and pursuing an elusive harmony that is promised by Love.

<Frame tale: the already resolved story of Theseus and Hippolyta, with their wedding to come in four days.

<The Lovers' Plot: Hermia's and Lysander's problem; Helena's problem with Demetrius.

<Oberon's and Titania's argument over infidelity and the changeling boy (with larger implications).

<The Mechanicals' Plot: will they pull their play together, and will they get to perform it at the wedding?

3. Three "worlds": the courtly world of restrictions, inhibitions, and hierarchies; the green world of fairies, dreams, and uninhibited license; the workaday world of the mechanicals.

4. **Locus amoenus:** the "plesaunce," or green world as a liminal space where inhibitions fall away and Eros may have free play.
5. **Motif of dream (the whole play) and of sleeping and waking** (Bottom, Titania, the lovers).
<Hermia's dream of the serpent (2.2.145-50) / Bottom's "dream"
6. **Overlooking:** Puck (3.1); Oberon and Puck (3.2)
7. **Transformations:** outer (Bottom as ass); lovers (changing partners, seemingly unaware of their capriciousness); Titania (falling for Bottom). How are all changed when the play ends?
8. **The chase:** the lovers, never quite catching those they love, or those with whom they quarrel.
9. **Play within the play,** with characters as audience doing commentary on the play they watch, while we as audience are farther removed, seeing both.
10. **Imagery:** the play is rife with imagery of **flowers, fields, greenery,** and with **animal imagery:** ass, dogs, serpent, lion, etc.—as though there is something animalistic about the personality trapped in the green world; and **moonlight,** contrasting the lunar dream world with the daylight world of the law-bound and rationalistic city.
11. **Physical comedy:** the play's humor depends in many ways on physical comedy: Hermia's short, Helena's tall; Oberon and Puck are generally tall and short, and all the fairies must appear physically strange; Bottom's asshead is a key "centering device" for all the jokes about asses.

Language Notes

1. **Stichomythic patterns:** (258) 1.1.16-19 / 1.1.193-201
2. **Chant formulas** involving 7-8 syllable chants or 3 syllable lines, in couplets.
3. **Class division:**
 - <poetry for court personages and spirits (blank verse or rhymed couplets)
 - <prose for mechanicals.
4. **Malapropisms:** Bottom
5. **Oaths:**
 - <Theseus to Hippolyta (256) 1.1.16-19
 - < Hermia to Lysander (258) 1.1.169-78)
6. **Inventories:**
 - <Egeus (257): 1.1.28-34
 - <Bottom (260): 1.2.93-96
 - <Puck and Fairy (261): 2.1.34-57
 - <Titania (261): 2.1.88-113
 - <Oberon (262): 2.1.180-81
 - <Titania (263): 2.2.3-7
 - <Puck (266): 107-11
8. **Soliloquy:**
 - <Helena (259) 1.1.226-51
 - <Oberon (262) 2.1.176-87
 - <Hermia (265) 2.2.145-56

King Richard II

Events of the Reign

- b. 1367: son of the Black Prince (hero of Crecy), grandson of Edward III.
- 1377: **Accession** on the deaths of his father and grandfather. Three factions in his court:
- John of Gaunt, who had helped rule during Edward III's last years (the king having sunk into senility and Gaunt being his most powerful lord).
 - Richard's "favorites": Michael de la Pole, Edward de Vere, etc.
 - The Lords Appellent (Gloucester, Warwick, Arundel, with Mowbray and Henry Bullingbrook, son of Gaunt, as junior members).
- 1381: **The Peasant's Revolt** (or Wat Tyler's Rebellion), Kentish peasants marching on London as a result of increased taxes.. Richard distinguishes himself by facing down the rebels in the streets of London.
<Also, Richard marries his first wife, Anne of Bohemia.
- 1387: **The Battle of Radcot Bridge**: the Lords Appellent rise against Richard's favorites and defeat them in this battle.
- 1388: **The Merciless Parliament**: the Lords Appellent take charge, executing Richard's favorites. Richard resumes leadership the following year.
- 1389: Richard declares his minority ended, takes full control of the government
- 1394: Pacification of Ireland; death of his first wife, Anne of Bohemia.
- 1396: Truce with France, including marriage to the king's daughter, Isabel; gets the pope's promise to excommunicate his opponents.
- 1397: Emergence of a new group of "favorites," including **Mowbray** (formerly a Lord Appellent), Aumerle, Bushy, Bagot, Greene, and others). **Arrests** of Gloucester, Arundel, Warwick; Gloucester (Thomas of Woodstock, Richard's uncle) mysteriously murdered. [Shakespeare implies Richard (1.2.37-41) and/or Mowbray (1.1.97) were behind it.]

In Shakespeare's Play:

- 1398: Mowbray, now Duke of Norfolk, advises Henry Bullingbrook that they're next to be arrested; Henry accuses Norfolk of treason to the king, which leads to their banishment.
- 1399: John of Gaunt's death; Richard confiscates Henry's property and titles, alarming the lords; he then moves to put down an Irish uprising.
<**In July**, Northumberland (Percy) and others join Bullingbrook, who lands at Ravenspur to "come for his own." Richard returns, and is taken at Flint Castle.
<**In August, Richard is officially deposed.** Henry assumes kingship and puts down an earls' rebellion supporting Richard. Richard is killed, probably to avoid further rebellions by his adherents.

For Debate: Some Critical Statements

Forker, Charles A. Introduction. *Edward the Second*. By Christopher Marlowe. Ed. Charles A. Forker. Manchester and New York: Manchester U P, 1994: 36-38.

It is hardly necessary to dwell at length on the obvious debt that Shakespeare owed to [Marlowe's] *Edward II* in the most lyrical of his histories—*Richard II*. Lamb wrote long ago that "The reluctant pangs of abdicating Royalty in *Edward* furnished hints which Shakespeare scarce improved in his *Richard the Second*," and everyone has noticed that the two plays are similarly structured, audiences being alienated by the wilful irresponsibility of the title figure in the early scenes and then gradually drawn into sympathy with him as he loses first his crown and then his

life. The minions of the king are executed in both plays, and both end with funeral rites in which the hearse or coffin of the slain monarch is borne in procession. Other parallels are obvious enough. Shakespeare, very nearly at least, seems to take over Marlowe's exclusion of comedy as well as the emphasis on sorrowful parting—although, unlike Marlowe, he uses this latter to underscore the king's devotion to his queen rather than to favorites such as Gaveston and Spencer. . . . Shakespeare's insight that Richard's very identity is symbolically bound up with his crown also has a precedent in Marlowe's character, who in his torment finds no comfort "But that I feel the crown upon my head," and therefore begs to "wear it yet a while" (V.i.82-83). Richard II is also shown as physically attached to the crown, holding on to it tenaciously in the bucket-and-well speech.

. . . [Yet] Shakespeare's play, unlike Marlowe's is almost wholly devoid of violence, and the one physical assault that does occur (Richard's murder) rouses the king to an act of heroic resistance that contrasts markedly with Edward's helpless abjection. *Richard II* employs the language and tone of ritual in conjunction with the visual formalism of pageantry. The theme of divine right and of the sacredness of royalty imparts to the central figure and to the ethos that surrounds him what Coleridge called an "attention to decorum and high feeling of the kingly dignity," all of which helps to associate the deposition less with political necessities than with sacrilege and its attendant guilt. His tyrannies set aside, the verbal fancy and theatrical self-indulgence of Richard complicate our response to his sacramental claims, but the play nevertheless enacts a martyrdom, however partially self-induced—a "passion" that makes the comparisons to Christ and Pilate something more than childish or absurd hyperboles.

Howard, Jean E., and Phyllis Rackin. *Engendering a Nation: a Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997: 140-41, 142-43.

All of the female characters in *Richard II* come from the top of the social and political hierarchy, but their interests are delimited by the private affective bonds of family loyalty, and the women are entirely preoccupied by concerns for their male relations. . . . Like the bereaved and grieving women of *Richard III*, the Duchess of Gloucester and the queen in *Richard II* dramatize the private emotional costs of the men's public, political conflicts; and, like the women in *Richard III*, they are powerless to affect the outcome of these conflicts. When Gaunt refuses to avenge her husband's murder, the Duchess of Gloucester leaves the stage to die of grief. The queen does not even learn that Richard is to be deposed until she eavesdrops on the gardeners' conversation. When Bullingbrook pardons Aumerle, the Duchess of York becomes the only woman in the play who manages to influence the action, but her farcical wrangling with her husband also reinforces the separation between the public, political concerns of men and the private, affective loyalties of women. The bickering between the duke and duchess—and with it the lowering of the dramatic register—begins in V.ii when York struggles frantically to get his boots so he can ride off to warn the king about Aumerle's participation in a conspiracy to assassinate him, while the duchess, equally frantic, struggles to prevent him. In the following scene the domestic quarrel resumes in the royal presence, and this time the humor is explicitly identified with the inappropriateness of the duchess's intervention. . . . Significantly, it is the woman who is blamed for initiating both the generic lowering of the drama and the social lowering of the action (Hodgdon 1991: 139). The solemn dignity of the court (and of the history play) has no place for domestic quarrels or the shrill-voiced supplications of an anxious mother.

What is less frequently noted [than the conflict between two models of royal authority] is how thoroughly the binary opposition personalized in the conflict between Bullingbrook and Richard is implicated in an early modern ideology of "masculine" and "feminine." . . . Although Shakespeare does not literalize the gendered opposition between the two antagonists, his Bullingbrook . . . plays the "man" to Richard's "woman." A master of military and political strategy, Bullingbrook is shown in company with a noble father, and he alludes to the existence of an "unthrifty" son

(V.iii.1); but we hear nothing of his wife or mother, and he is never represented in association with women. Richard, by contrast, has a wife but no son. . . . Richard is effeminate because he prefers words to deeds, has no taste for battle, and is addicted to luxurious pleasures. His rapid fluctuations from overweening confidence to the depth of despair (III.ii) recall early modern misogynist denunciations of feminine instability (Ferris 1981), but even his virtues are represented in feminine terms: York's sympathetic description of Richard's behavior in adversity—his "gentle sorrow" and "His face still combating with tears and smiles,/ The badges of his grief and patience" (V.ii.31-33)—draws on the same discourse of suffering feminine virtue as the description of Lear's Cordelia smiling and crying at once as "patience and sorrow [strove] / Who should express her goodliest" (IV.iii.16-17). Bullingbrook speaks few words but raises a large army. Richard is a master of poetic eloquence, unsurpassed in what Mowbray calls "a woman's war . . . of . . . tongues" (I.i.48-49), but he surrenders to Bullingbrook without waging a single battle.

Paris, Bernard. *Character as a Subversive Force in Shakespeare: The History and Roman Plays*. London and Toronto: Associated U Presses, 1991: 61, 64-65.

[Through much of the play,] Richard has been oscillating between his idealized and his despised self-images. His idealized image is that of a king, and in order to feel like a king, he must be above the human condition and must partake of God's omnipotence. Anything that frustrates his claims throws him into a state of despair. Despair is hopelessness about actualizing—or, in the case of the narcissist, maintaining—one's idealized image. Richard's fragility and his resilience are both characteristic of narcissism, in which the idealized image is in large part an introjection of a grandiose conception of self provided by others. Because the narcissist has not *done* anything to warrant his self-exaltation, his feelings of grandiosity are quite vulnerable; but because he has always been made to feel special, his illusions about himself are persistent. Richard alternately sinks into despair and reaffirms his claims as he is assaulted by piece after piece of bad news. The final blow to his idealized image is his accession to Bolingbroke's demands. This marks a new stage in his psychological crisis and leads to his self-deposition. . . .

Richard presents himself above all as the king of grief. This is partly an effort to induce guilt by showing others what they have done to him and partly a means of thwarting their objectives by controlling the emotional situation. Both of these motives are operative in the mirror episode. How can Northumberland insist that Richard read the accusations against him when he is already so devastated? Richard says that he will read his sins in his face, but he dwells instead upon his sorrows, which others have inflicted upon him, and upon the contrast between his former glory and his present humiliation. He is disappointed that his face looks much the same, since he wants to be a pitiable spectacle, and he dashes the glass to the floor as a symbolic expression of "the unseen grief / That swells with silence in the tortured soul" (4.1). It is extremely important for everyone to know how much he is suffering.

Being the king of grief enables Richard to turn his downfall into a new source of glory. He not only accuses his former subjects of having delivered him to his "sour cross," but he sees himself as being even more of a martyr than Jesus, since "he, in twelve, / Found truth in all but one; I, in twelve thousand, none" (4.1). Because the lower he falls the greater his sense of injustice, Richard keeps focusing upon his state of nothingness. His lack of even a title or a name makes him all the more pitiable. He longs for death partly as an escape from his pain and partly because this will complete his victimization.

The 1597 Quarto Edition of *Richard II*: The Deposition Scene (4.1.107-end)

107 *Yorke*: Great Duke of Lancaster I come to thee,
From plume-pluckt Richard, who with willing soule,
Adopts the[e] heire, and his high-scepter yeeldes,
110 To the possession of thy royall hand:
Ascend his throne, descending now from him,
And long liue Henry fourth of that name.
Bull. In Gods name Ile ascend the regall throne.
Car. Mary God forbid.
115 Worst in this royall presence may I speake,
Yet best beseeming me to speake the truth,
Would God that any in this noble presence,
Were enough noble to be vpright iudge
Of noble Richard. Then true noblesse would
120 Learne him forbearance from so foule a wrong,
What subiect can giue sentence on his Kinge.
And who sits here that is not Richards subiect?
Theeues are not iudgd but they are by to heare,
Although apparant guilt be seene in them,
125 And shall the figure of Gods Maiesty,
His Captaine, steward, deputy, elect,
Annoited, crowned, planted, many yeares
Be iudgd by subiect and inferiour breath,
And he himselfe not present? Oh forfend it God,
130 That in a Christian climate soules refinde,
Should shew so heinous black obsceene a deed
I speake to subiects and a subiect speakes,
Stird vp by God thus boldly for his King,
My Lord of Hereford here whom you call King,
135 Is a foule traitour to proud Herefords King,
And if you crowne him let me prophesie,
The bloud of English shall manure the ground,
And future ages groane for this foule act,
Peace shall go sleepe with turkes and infidels,
140 And in this seate of peace, tumultuous warres,
Shall kin with kin, and kinde with kind confound:
Disorder, horror, feare, and mutiny,
Shall heere inhabit, and this land be cald,
The field of Golgotha and dead mens sculs.
145 Oh if you raise this house against this house,
It will the wofullest division proue,
That euer fell vpon this cursed earth:
Preuent it, resist it, let it not be so,
Lest child, childs children, crie against you wo.
150 *North.* Well haue you argued sir, and for your paines,
Of Capitall treason, we arrest you heere:
My Lord of Westminster, be it your charge,
153 To keepe him safely till his day of triall.

* * * * *

319 *Bull.* Let it be so, and loe on wednesday next,
 We solemnly proclaime our Coronation,
 320 Lords be ready all. *Exeunt.*
Manent [Abbot of] *West. Carleil, Aumerle.*
Abbot. A wofull Pageant haue we heere beheld.
Car. The woe's to come, the children yet vnborne,
 Shall feele this day as sharp to them as thorne.
Aum. You holy Clergy men, is there no plot,
 325 To ridde the realme of this pernitiuous blot?
 326-27 *Abbot.* My Lo, before I freely speake my mind heerein,
 You shall not onely take the Sacrament,
 To burie mine intents, but also to effect,
 330 What euer I shall happen to deuise:
 I see your browes are full of discontent,
 Your harts of sorrow, and your eies of teares:
 Come home with me to supper, Ile lay a plot,
 Shall shew vs all a merrie daie. *Exeunt.*

Dutton, Richard. *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama.* Iowa City: Iowa U P, 1991: 124-25.

If it was Shakespeare's play the conspirators commissioned, what version of it did the actors perform? Specifically, did they show the abdication of Richard (4.1.146-310), which is not present in the printed versions of the play prior to that date (it first appears in the 1608 quarto). The traditional explanation for its absence is censorship—that Shakespeare included the scene from the beginning, but that it was excised, either by [Master of Revels Edmond] Tilney or by the bishops' censors for the press. The strongest argument for press censorship is that, almost immediately after the excision, the Abbot of Westminster says: 'A woeful pageant haue we here beheld' (311), an apparent reference to Richard's histrionics, which would surely have to be changed by the actors if Tilney had insisted on the cut for the stage. On the other hand, as David Bergeron first proposed, the 'woeful pageant' *might* refer to Bolingbroke's self-conscious assumption of the throne prior to the passage in question, in which case the cut might have been enforced by either Tilney or the press-censors, or (this is the really radical possibility) there never was a cut at all: the abdication scene is Shakespeare's later addition. This possibility is given more force by the growing acceptance of the proposition (inspired largely by studies of the texts of *King Lear*) that Shakespeare did sometimes deliberately revise his plays, not merely for practical reasons, but in order to realize alternative possibilities inherent in his material. This possibility gives fresh life to the observation of A. W. Pollard and P. A. Daniel, that the 'new' scene is not actually inflammatory in nature: it depicts an abdication, not a deposition, emphasizing Richard's self-pity rather than enhancing the subversiveness of the text. Those who would argue that depicting the removal of a monarch from the throne in any circumstances was potentially subversive have to explain how the abdication scene in Marlowe's *Edward II* was allowed into print in both 1594 and 1598, with no apparent interference from any censor.

I Henry IV

I Henry IV presents three major plot lines: first there is the serious plot involving Henry's struggle with the rebellion of the Percy family and, in Wales, Owen Glendower; after taking the crown from Richard, Henry is a troubled king who cannot make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land because of this rebellion, and he is in danger of losing all that he has gained. The second plot involves the rebellion itself, with the rise of Harry Percy, the "Hotspur of the North," and his tense and fragile alliance with Glendower. Deserted at the last by all his allies and even his father and villainous uncle, Hotspur—who is sometimes a strutting peacock—rises at last to stand for the lost cause that others deserted; in death, he is true to his own word. The third and most important plot involves the maturation of Prince Hal, who will in due time grow up to be one of England's most beloved kings, Henry V. In this plot, Hal is a prodigal son, a neglectful prince slumming in Eastcheap—drinking and joking with Falstaff, the commoners and prostitutes, and in the action of the play, he is confronted with the seriousness of the role he must play in life, standing finally by his father and striking the blow that will ensure that his father's kingdom will be secure.

The play is a fine example of Shakespeare's mixing of comic and serious elements, and in order to fully grasp its genius (and the genius of *II Henry IV*, its companion play), one must review how comedy "works," especially through the characters of Hal and his inimitable companion, Falstaff, whom Harold Bloom characterized as one of the three greatest characters created by Shakespeare (the others being Hamlet and *As You Like It's* Rosalind).

Comedy: A Primer

1. presentation of recognizable types with ordinary human failings.
2. Use of departures from an understood norm, making game of 'serious' life (Sypher 38).
3. Disguise as a plot device.
4. Plays on language: puns, wit combat, dialect as a source of humor, etc.
5. Plot types:
 - (a) **satiric exposure** of human folly as a corrective, typical of Jonsonian realism (Doran 149).
 - (b) **romantic**: lovers endangered by a blocking figure, who is later eliminated or reconciled, giving love its triumph (Frye).

Some Comic Types

Senex iratus: the angry old man, miserly, full of pointless rage and obsessions, yet gullible.

Miles gloriosus: the braggart soldier, a man full of stories of his own bravery, usually a coward.

The Vice / Lord of Misrule: the usually colorful instigator of troubles in a play's society.

Dolosus servus: the tricky slave, who often directs or manages his master's affairs, generally for his own purposes.

The Parasite: a servant or hanger-on whose whole purpose is to sap the master's funds.

The Gull: a person whose naivete or stupidity makes him fit to be fooled.

The Killjoy: often misanthropic or puritanical, a character who tries to stop the fun.

Aristotle on comedy: "it is . . . an imitation of men worse than the average; worse, however, not as regards any and every sort of fault, but only as regards one particular kind, the ridiculous. . . . The ridiculous may be defined as a mistake or deformity, not productive of pain or harm to others" (1449a).

The Theory of Humours: based on Galenic medicine, this theory attempted to explain the faults and excesses of human psychology in terms of imbalances in four bodily fluids, resulting in four different troubled personality types. Thus, a person with an excess of blood developed a sanguine, or passionate personality, while an excess of phlegm produced a sluggish disposition; melancholy types were the product of too much black bile, while too much yellow bile would

produce a choleric disposition. Ben Jonson developed a dramatic theory of humours involving characters whom he'd pump up, expose, and deflate in his comedies: humour characters are always gulls awaiting exposure and correction. In *I Henry IV*, Hotspur and Glendower display the singular excesses of humor characters: the first is choleric by disposition, while the second is sanguine. The clash of these humourous dispositions (in 3.1) displays the fact that neither of them is fit to rule. In modern comic theory, Henri Bergson's idea of a character's "mechanical inelasticity" making him a comic butt resembles the Jonsonian concept (see "Laughter." *Comedy*. Ed. Wylie Sypher. Garden City: Doubleday, 1956).

Three Comic Processes

1. **Repetition:** A variation of situations . . . with a repetitious element introduced into all the variations. In *I Henry IV*, Hotspur's serious ambition and dismissive treatment of his wife (2.3) is ridiculed by Hal in the bar room of the following scene. Falstaff's re-readings of honor also display repetitive variation.

2. **Inversion:** A situation is reversed and the roles of the characters are inverted, creating comically reflexive ironies (Bergson 122). In *I Henry IV*, Shakespeare presents us with a tour-de-force of this process: two successive comic inversions (Falstaff as king, Hal as himself, and Hal as the King, and Falstaff as Hal), each of these not only an inversion of their roles with each other, but both of them as inversions of the natural role of Henry and Hal.

3. **Juxtaposition:** Placing two scenes together in such a way that each echoes, ironically re-reads, or jabs at the other. This process may be found in the placement of Act One's scenes one and two: the serious situation of scene one is both ironically re-read by and ironically comments on the holiday of scene two. Similarly, Henry's rebuke of Hal (3.2) parallels Hal's rebuke of Falstaff (3.3), though in a different tonic key.

The Comic Element in Words (Bergson 133-43)

Bergson names several effects of word usage as inherently comic, but in *I Henry IV* the claim that "transposing the natural expression of an idea into another key" (140) is especially important. As you read the play, note how the word *honor* resonates in the mouths of different characters. Pay special attention to Falstaff's reading of honor in 5.1.127-41 and later in 5.4.138-43).

The Subversive Voice / Mastering a Language

In "Invisible Bullets," Stephen Greenblatt claims that in an era of "unembarrassed repression" suppressed alien voices may be recorded or tested in the texts of that era (*Shakespearean Negotiations*. Berkeley: U of Cal., 1988). Thus, Prince Hal may be the "ideal image" of English character, yet he constantly subverts that image (in the bar and at Gadshill) while simultaneously containing that subversion: he is seen as the type of testing. Falstaff, on the other hand, records the alien voice, and Hal's debauchery with him is seen as "a union based on the momentary bracketing of the hierarchical order" in which the young prince is gaining "access to a world normally hidden" from that of kings. He is learning how "to function . . . in another social world" in order to know how to contain it. Thus as an ideal prince, Hal must learn the language of commoners as a means to know his people, yet he must inevitably reject and contain Falstaff and the others if he is to assume his place as a king. Key speeches in this process include 2.4.5-19, where Hal boasts of becoming so proficient at tavern slang that he can "drink with any tinker in his own language," and lines 376-481 of the same scene, where Hal not only tops Falstaff at his own game, but forewarns him that he will banish him "and all the world."

In *II Henry IV*, Warwick states Hal's purposes in learning the ways of commoners even more chillingly and directly: "The Prince but studies his companions . . . to gain the language" which he'll later cast off, just as he will "cast off his followers, and their memory shall as a pattern or a measure live, by which his Grace must mete the lives of other, turning past evils to advantages" (4.4.68-78). Hal's sensitivity to the commoner's voice is never fully quelled, however: Michael Williams' famous rebuke of the king (*Henry V* 4.1.134-221) is countered by Hal's disputation, but Williams also spurs him to agonized self-justification in the following soliloquy: troubled, he *must* clear his conscience.

Finally, Shakespeare's concern with producing, testing, and containing the subversive voices of the nation is not only one of the primary ways in which he explores the relationships of social class, the clash of ideologies, and the ambiguities inherent in the nature of leadership, but it is also a key to his entire understanding of what it is to be human: Gonzalo's vision of paradise admits no letters nor social organization, yet Caliban's understanding of these key attributes of *humanitas* is a curse: "the red plague rid you for learning me your language!" (*The Tempest* 1.2.363-64).

Shakespeare's Historical Deviations

1. Hotspur actually was around 20 yr. older than Hal, who served under him in earlier Scottish campaigns.
2. Hal never came into combat against Hotspur (Rogers 52).
3. Hotspur's wife was named Elizabeth, not Kate (52).
4. Glendower was actually not a self-important eccentric, but an educated, polished, talented man, a genius in border warfare.
5. Shakespeare conflates the uncle and nephew Mortimers, though his character is named Edmund, youngest son of Edmund and Philippa Mortimer—a boy of eleven during the actual period of the play (see page 630 of *The Riverside Shakespeare*).
6. Falstaff is a conflation of character types, not an historical personage. In his original incarnation (Sir John Oldcastle), Shakespeare takes the name of an actual Lollard martyr and perhaps generates some topical satire—some of it rather gruesome—of the hypocrisy of Puritans or of the current lords of Cobham (the Brooke family), whose title was once held by Oldcastle. (See Alice-Lyle Scoufos, *Shakespeare's Typological Satire: A Study of the Falstaff-Oldcastle Problem*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1979.)

Other Historical Keys

1. Both Mortimer and Henry may claim descent from Edward III (see page 630), so part of the quarrel between them involves Henry legitimizing his claim to the throne by eliminating another claimant.

2. The rage of the Percies: In *Richard II*, Henry and Mowbray had accused each other of treason; Richard banished them both and, when he needed cash for his Irish wars, seized Henry's lands (see 856-57). The Percies and other lords were enraged at this seizure of a peer's land, and joined Henry when he returned to reclaim it. Yet Henry overthrew Richard and claimed kingship; many lords—especially the Percies—felt betrayed by this and turned against Henry for overthrowing an anointed king (or they may have also felt they could overthrow Henry for their own gain).

Background: because Henry has taken the throne from Richard II, forcing him to abdicate and later having him killed, Richard remains an important presence for him:

1. In the opening scenes, note Henry's discomfort at not being able to do penance by defending the faith on pilgrimage; he is **haunted by the means he used to take the throne**, fearful of others usurping his place.

2. Thus his weariness at the weight of the crown, coupled with a quick sense of self-preservation (addressing threats from Glendower, Worcester, the Percies, and others) seem to be the major poles of his personality.

3. In Henry's rebuke to Hal (pages 909-10, 3.2.29-91) Richard resurfaces as the false model of kingship used by Henry to make Hal recognize his responsibilities. Though haunted by his own act, Henry is fully cognizant of what it takes to remain on the throne, and what caused Richard's downfall.

Major Characters

1. **Henry IV:** as noted, a serious, troubled, scheming, yet wholly resolute king.

a. **Note Richard II as continuous presence:**

1.1: discomfort at not being able to do penance for killing him (haunted by the means by which he got the throne)

3.2.39-91: Richard used as measure for Hal's neglect (rebuking Hal)

4.3.52-105: Hotspur uses Richard's deposition as theme for his rebellion.

5.1.30-71: Worcester retells the story of the deposition--with Henry's breaking of his oath) to rebuke Henry in negotiation.

b. **self-preservation and suspicion as motives:**

1. Spots Worcester as instigator of rebellion (1.3.15-21)

2. Testing loyalty: commands Hotspur to give up prisoners (means of ascertaining his loyalties & submission.

3. refusing to ransom Mortimer (noted later by Worcester and Northumberland as coming from Mortimer's potential claim to throne--1.3.145ff)

c. **His concern for his people and seemingly generous terms for the rebels**

(e.g. 5.1.101-114)—re-read later by Worcester: "he will suspect us still, and find a time to punish this offense in other faults" (5.2.6-7)

2. **Hal: a maturation story which focuses on Hal as prodigal son.**

The play develops give and take between an anxious and authoritarian father and his prodigal son, yet other influences also work on Hal as he matures, ranging from the corrupting influence of Falstaff, to his brother John of Lancaster as the contrasting "model son," and Hotspur as the type of the honorable and serious warrior son. Scenes operate to contrast and integrate all these influences on him—the play's a machine constantly interposing conflicting forces. Note too the shifts in credibility: Hotspur is raised as the type of honor at the beginning, and as the play progresses, our perception of him changes; Hal's sense of honor and responsibility are lower at the beginning, and his arc rises.

3. **Falstaff: a character built from several motifs:**

a. **the Lord of Misrule**, from folk sources: a "mock king" in the social inversions of the "feast of fools" such a character records and represents "alien voices" antithetical to order, and must be given free rein and later contained if the play is to reify social norms.

b. **the Vice**, in morality play tradition, a character representing the temptations of evil.

c. **the miles gloriosus**, from Roman comic traditions, the "braggart knight" who is usually a coward, shameless, and yet fully capable of defending himself verbally.

d. **a burlesque of knighthood** representing the decline of the ideals of chivalry.

e. **The "Oldcastle problem"**: originally named after the Puritan martyr hanged and later burned by Henry V, the character serves as topical satire of the Cobham/Brooke family, and of puritans generally. Much of this humor is grisly: jokes about

hanging, burning (or broiling), and the references to Gadshill, where the Cobhams had apparently engaged in robberies of foreign dignitaries for their own political purposes. Question: is this topical humor relevant to our contemporary understanding of the play? (see Alice Lyle-Scoufos' *Shakespeare's Typological Satire*. Athens: Ohio U P, 1979).

- 4. Hotspur:** a "humour" character in the vein of Jonson (a character dominated by one humour—in this case, anger—which is the defect that renders him ridiculous and / or unfit for serious claims to our affections).
- <Hotspur is also a spur to redeem Hal:** Henry measures Hal against him in 1.1 and uses him to shame Hal into redeeming himself in 3.2.
- a. 1.3** Henry's angry that his power's being undermined by disobedience. Hotspur's speech begins rather controlled and gradually turns into a rant; Worcester and Northumberland finally calm him down and deliver their plan).
 - b. 2.3.** Hotspur tells his wife nothing, "married" to his horse. Note how in 2.4 (98-112) Hal mocks Hotspur vis-a-vis this former scene.
 - c. 3.1** Hotspur's scepticism of Glendower—his outright mockery of Glendower's pretensions—shows his more level-headed side (though his choleric nature played against Glendower's sanguine effusions is also a measure of their alliance, and of their fitness to rule). Note that both Mortimer and Worcester have to calm Hotspur down at the end of this scene.
 - d. 5.4** He is the foil by which Hal proves his worth; his corpse is disgraced by Falstaff.
- 5. Glendower: another "humour" character**—a sanguine man so puffed up with his self-importance that his deflation is pleasurable to us. Important as foil to Hotspur in 3.1.

Balancing the plot / battlefield spectacle / the problem of the resolution

The comic / potentially tragic interior tensions dominate until 3.3, after which the play swings toward action, ending in battlefield spectacle (with comic undercutting).

The play ends with battlefield spectacle, as with 10 other Shakespeare plays: this is one of his favorite devices to excite the audience with action and drive the play to its climax. The list includes:

<i>Troilus and Cressida:</i>	battlefield carnage before Troy
<i>II Henry VI</i>	First Battle of St. Albans (1455)
<i>III Henry VI:</i>	Battle of Tewkesbury
<i>Richard III:</i>	Battle of Bosworth Field
<i>I Henry IV</i>	Battle of Shrewsbury
<i>Henry V</i>	Battle of Agincourt
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Battle of Philippi
<i>Lear</i>	Battle near Dover
<i>Macbeth</i>	Siege of Dunsinane
<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Battle of Alexandria
<i>Edward III</i>	Battle of Poitiers

The Merry Wives of Windsor

Readings: Barton's intro, Frye

Barber, C. L. *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*. See especially "The Lord of Misrule" (24-30), and Chapter 3--"Misrule as Comedy; Comedy as Misrule" (36-50).

Roberts, Jean Addison. *Shakespeare's English Comedy: The Merry Wives of Windsor in Context*. Lincoln and London: U of Nebraska, 1979

1. **Dating:** 1597 seems most probable (because of Shakespeare's trouble over the name of Oldcastle in the Henry plays, the character's name changed to Falstaff); Ford's disguise as Brook—family name of the Oldcastle descendents—seems to argue a pre-Oldcastle name-change date.

2. Nature of the Play:

<romantic entanglement: the lovers must avoid a variety of blocking characters (Dr. Caius, Slender, Anne's parents); similarly, the wives must trick blocking characters (Falstaff, Mr. Ford) so that Ford will see the nature of love; Page and his wife become blocking characters in their deceptions of each other. In the end, Falstaff must be cast out and reconciled, and the others must all be reconciled to the final alignment.

<farical elements: laundry basket, Mother Prat, "dis-horning the spirit"

- Yet Jeanne Addison Roberts argues that the tight method of plotting and the use of recognizable stock characters with relatively reasonable motivations transcends farce.
- **Farce:** "forced humors and unnatural events" plots "loose and disengaged," emphasis on the ludicrous and improbable, lacking social themes.

<city comedy elements (as in plays by Jonson, Dekker, Middleton):

- **English middle class setting**, yet a variety of social classes, especially hustlers and "street people." Here, "foreigners"—Evans, Caius, the "Germans" who steal the host's horses.
- **a gallant (or gallants) trying to seduce housewives.**
- **a father who wants to marry his daughter into wealth;** daughter and son-in-law evading parents.
- **multiple comments on the nature of love** (Page marriage v. Ford marriage; older couples v. young lovers; nature of the courtship ritual: what makes a lover "worthy"?)

<festive elements: Masque-like fifth act enacts the casting out of the Vice, purifying society.

3. Note the distinctive "verbal tics" given to many characters.

English ethnocentric humor:

<Evans: "Welsh"

<Dr. Caius: "French"

Characters typed by verbal mannerisms:

<Pistol: grandiloquent flowery speech, bombast. Note "base."

<Nym: "humor"

<Quickly: bawdy malapropisms

<Host: "bully" and "bully rook."

4. The Windsor Falstaff

<Comp. to 894-905, 918-19 ("What is honor?") etc.

5. Variations on the London city comedy pattern:

- <town, not city setting: much of the humor trades on city dwellers' prejudices re bumpkins. (such humor also informs Jonson's *EMI* and *EMO*).
- <emphasis on local legends: Herne the hunter, fairies, etc.
- <masque-like final scene.

6. Opening: for different tonality from *Twelfth Night*. Note ridiculousness of characters.

7. CIRCUITRY: TRICKING THE TRICKSTER(S): note how everyone who's out to trick or "catch" someone else is tricked—some, like Falstaff, over and over again. Even Fenton and Anne, to get what the marriage they want, must trick her parents. The "tricking" pattern also centers the minor characters:

- Pistol and Nym trick Falstaff by exposing him to the husbands
- Host tricks Caius and Evans
- "Germans" trick Host
- Quickly tricks / assists Caius and Evans

Note "glue" characters: Host and Quickly—who make connections, bring people together, etc.

8. NATURE OF COMEDY / CIRCUITRY IN THIS PLAY VS. THAT IN A "MATURE" COMEDY, E.G. *TWELFTH NIGHT*

- <the lovers and the nature of love?
- <Viola v. Anne
- <Societies of the two plays & resultant tonality? middle-class energy & variety of odd types vs. aristocratic languor & light melancholy?
- <Toby vs. Falstaff?
- <Nature of disguise in each?
- <Kinds of humor?
- <Differences in language?
- <Differences in plot structure?

9. Motivations and Relationships of Ms. Ford and Ford? Page & Ms. Page?

10. COMIC TRIAL: THE FOREST MASQUE OF THE FINAL SCENE

Generally, masque is the opposite of carnival: if the latter gives license to vice before putting it in its place, the latter (except in Jonson's antimasques) ritually excludes vice and celebrates the "right" hierarchy. Masque involves:

- **Entertainment** in which "a procession of masqued or otherwise disguised figures represented a highly imaginative action interspersed with speeches and songs." Fantastic, divine, or grotesque figures predominate, and metamorphosis is a common theme.
- **Emphasis on Spectacle:** Fantastic costuming, dances, songs, processions, other elaborate props.

- **Some plot features:**

<**Ritual purification** (as in Somerset Masque or Masque of Queens): clearing away rumor, false charges, or someone's real or imagined faults to make way for true love, proper order, marriage, etc.

<**Apotheosis of the court:** court personages (usually the wives of King and nobles) assume forms of allegorical divinity who enact a triumph, unmasking at last to show the splendor of the real court reflected in them.

<**Antimasque**, a preliminary masque of grotesques who must be cleared away to make room for the divinities of the masque (gives carnival a place and then routs it)—perfected by Jonson. Shakespeare uses anti-masque elements in both *2 Henry IV* and *Macbeth* for their own qualities, unrelieved by the purification ritual of masque.

MASQUE-LIKE QUALITIES IN FIFTH ACT OF *MERRY WIVES*:

<**Fairies and their Queen played by actual personages of the play's "world"**

—Note middle-class displacement of royal entertainment

<**Ritualized comic punishment of transgressor**

<**Song; chant-like qualities of much of the poetry (heavily stressed syllables with couplets)**

<**Reordering of social hierarchy and unmasking.**

NOTE THAT THE REORDERING BREAKS DOWN:

<because the purification does not include Page and his wife, who are still up to their tricks.

<ANNE herself must preside over the final unmasking of her parents, with Fenton as accuser.

<Only then can all be reconciled and go to dinner.

<Part of the geniality of this play: Falstaff, the blocking character, is invited to dinner—to be accepted in the middle class society of the play—once he recognizes his own faults.

King Henry V

Henry V and History

A play may be studied as an aesthetic whole, but history plays are also representations of historical events. Some studies have interrogated such plays in relation to the history they represent, searching for intellectual agendas and justifications in a text. Others may be interested in how the represented text reflects the political pressures under which an author may have worked, especially in a society whose intellectual life was controlled through government censorship. Such studies often begin by establishing—as much as one is able—the cultural context in which a play is produced, relating that cultural context to textual representations. *Caveat*: These studies sometimes are so caught up in history and context that they neglect the complexities of the play itself: remember the primacy of the text.

1. English claims to areas of France begin with William the Conqueror's conquest of England in 1066. Henry II claimed Anjou through his mother (Matilda, who married the Count of Anjou) and Aquitaine through his wife, Eleanor. **The Hundred Years' War** (roughly, 1337-1453) was fought on the basis of English claims to French lands. Thus, Henry's battles were fought over his belief that England must defend her own territories, though the French and others would interpret his actions as the adventurism of a rogue nation.

2. Henry attacked France during a period when the French monarchy was divided against itself. Not only was the King, Charles VI, prone to bouts of madness, but the Armagnac faction had recently contained the Burgundians in a civil war at the time when Henry entered France. None of this figures directly in the play, where division among the French lords appears primarily as a battle of competing egos.

3. After taking Harfleur, the historical Henry did not "use mercy to them all" (3.3.54), but rather turned out all the poorer citizens to fend for themselves and sent the rich to England to be ransomed (Seward 160). Further, instead of compelling his men to treat the French with kindness (3.6.107-113), Seward reports that the path followed by the English was marked with burned farmhouses (161). At Agincourt, when Henry learned that some Frenchmen had attacked his baggage and forced the boys guarding it to flee, he ordered the execution of all but the most valuable prisoners. This was accomplished by braining them with poleaxes and mauls, stabbing them, and in one case, by setting a hut full of prisoners on fire (Seward 169). In the play, an apparently renewed French attack prompts Henry to order that his soldiers kill their prisoners, most likely to free them to join the battle; shortly thereafter, the French attack on the baggage is inflated into the murder of the boys, with attendant moral outrage that causes Henry to once again command that the French prisoners be executed.

4. The scene involving the Treaty of Troyes and the wooing of Katherine follows immediately after the victory at Agincourt, but historically the two events were separated by five years (1415 / 1420). Shakespeare's play makes the victory at Agincourt decisive in the defeat of France, but in fact it was only the concluding event of his first foray into France. A subsequent expedition (1417-19) laid waste to all of Normandy and starved Rouen into submission, after which the Duke of Burgundy formally allied himself with Henry. The treaty with the Armagnacs followed, yet Henry would further engage in sieges at Montreuil and Melun before formally entering Paris.

Henry V: Critical Issues

1. **Agenda:** As T. W. Craik points out in the introduction to the Arden edition of *Henry V*, critics and directors have, from the time of Hazlitt and Schlegel until now, disagreed about what this play represents: "Is it a celebration of national glory, with Henry a truly heroic warrior prince? Or is it a dark satire on warfare and the abuses of power, a prelude to the tragedies soon to follow?" (69). As the "heroic ruler," Henry displays his statesmanship, thoughtfulness, ability to lead men and discern their qualities, and above all to exhort them to bravery (occasionally appealing to their anxiety about their families and homeland). Further, his concern for following God's will—and his sense of guilt and the doing of penance for his father's usurpation of the crown and murder of Richard II—is never far from him: he is thus righteous. Yet the text also shows another side to Henry and to his enterprise, as seen in the self-interest of the clerics (who's manipulating whom?) and the death of Falstaff—which is blamed on Henry's having rejected him. His vitriolic threats at Harfleur (3.3.1-43) and his order to kill the prisoners at Agincourt (4-7.62-64) further show him in a vicious light, as does his murder of Bardolph for stealing from a church, justified in the name of discipline. Thus, the play may be seen to either justify the acts of the heroic king, or as an exposure of the cruelty of Machiavellian leadership and the waste in life and resources that flows from it. Most importantly, the play exposes the hard choices involved in taking on such a role—and the agonies that such leaders experience when they must confront the ends to which their choices have led them.

Further, *Henry V* is loaded with ironies and examines the horrors of war (and its effect on both populace and soldiers) about as closely as any play from this period. There is a continuous re-reading of patriotic assumptions throughout, and while the "triumph" is established, those countering mechanisms developed by Shakespeare remain as caveats for the would-be monarch and the mindless patriot. Consider:

- **Chorus:** though the chorus generally links actions with an intensely patriotic line, he presents two ironies:
 1. **The reference to Essex's return to England** at the beginning of Act 5 (22-35), which is perhaps a sincere tipping-of-the hat, but certainly became an ironic subtext when Essex's rebellion led to his beheading (all of this playing against the problem of loyalty and betrayal that surfaces and resurfaces throughout this play).
 2. **In the epilogue**, the Chorus points out that, after all this glory and achievement, Henry's son "lost France and made his England bleed" (12)—as though, whatever one thinks of the effort, it was, in a very real sense, all for nothing.
- **The church is presented as a conniving, self-interested institution** that only backs Henry for its own reasons.
- **The appeal to patriotism** does not show a fully engaged and ennobled people: some Englishmen prove traitors; some are thieves; some are horrified by what the king has gotten them into. Secondly, Henry's own use of language displays a psychological grasp of how to manipulate the anxieties of others as means to get his own way: he is not always "noble," nor is his patriotism without its terrible ironies (see below).
- **The ever-present wrangle between English, Irish, and Scots** is represented and, while it is contained, it is not extinguished.
- **The debate with the common soldier, Michael Williams (4.1.126-224)**, tells the officially unacknowledged truth about warfare—that bodies are hacked to bits, that

men die horribly and that there's little hope of heaven "when blood is their argument." Though this is one of the most moving passages about warfare in all of literature, Henry seems unshaken by it, arguing with Williams as though he were in a classroom debate—yet later, when he is alone, both the depth of his uncertainties and his mind's quick rationalizations of his imperialist agenda suggest that, though he may deny it, the same kinds of fears and horrors grip him: war is not what the official line makes it out to be.

- **Of Henry's childhood drinking friends**, Falstaff, Bardolph, Nym, the Boy, and Mistress Quickly all die: the irony of Pistol's early speech, "let us condole the knight, for, lambkins, we will live" (2.1.127-28) should be apparent.
- **The appeal to "the disciplines of war,"** placed in Fluellen's mouth, always center on the campaigns of Pompey, who was in fact soundly whipped by Julius Caesar.

2. The problem of conflict in a Pageant Play: Both the Riverside and the Arden editions point out that conflict in this play cannot center on an uncertain outcome—the battle of Agincourt was as well-known to Englishmen as Gettysburg is to Americans; thus the central external source of conflict in an action play is removed. Secondly, unlike *I Henry IV*, Hal is presented with no true opposite: in that play, Hotspur is so constructed (through his exploits, Hal's father's praises and Hal's own dissolution) that the final conflict between he and Hal becomes one of mighty opposites. In this play, the Dauphin is presented as an overweening carpet knight full of braggadocio, hardly one worthy to be opposed to Henry. This play's conflicts, then, must be of a more subtle nature if the play is to succeed, and center on the following:

<the pattern of learning—the hard way—the responsibilities of a monarch. The maturation theme of the earlier Henry plays continues here, but in a less obvious way. Hal has shown that he is able to command and that his subjects will be loyal, but will he steer a narrow course necessary to judicious leadership and eventual victory?

- **Watch his behavior** with Montjoy, with the drunkard and the traitors, with Bardolph, with Fluellen, and most especially with Williams and Bates (and afterwards, when his conscience has been stung).
- **undercutting:** Note Henry's appeals and threats centered on fathers, mothers and children (he knows how to motivate his men and strike fear into his enemies by appealing to their anxieties about those closest to them).

<the problem of harmony and subversive elements always threatening disorder.

- **traitors** (Cambridge, Scroop, Grey)
- **former drinking companions** (Bardolph, Pistol, Nym)
- **ethnic captains** (Fluellen/Welsh Macmorris/Irish, Jamy/Scots) Note that Gower and Erpingham, the English captains, serve different purposes here.
- **fears of the common soldiers** (Williams, Bates)

<the theme of Love and conflict

- (in Henry's "capital demand" (5.2.96) and courting dance with Katherine—an undercurrent throughout the play, given that the French King has offered her hand as a negotiating ploy to forestall the ruin of Harfleur (see Chorus, Act 3 (29-30), and in Katherine's English lessons (3.4): the final courting scene presents a sort of comic

epilogue to the battle and counterpoint to the dramatically uninteresting negotiations, but it also ends of the play *connecting* the love theme, the national theme, and the theme of language.

- in the apparently resolved conflict between Nym, Pistol, Quickly, and Doll Tearsheet, involving a curious aporia in text.

<Pistol's and Quickly's marriage is at first a struggle to balance previous friendships and liasons (especially Quickly with Nym, and Pistol with Doll); Pistol and Nym must, with Bardolph's help, resolve their quarrel, and Pistol must swear off Doll (2.1.75-80).

< Pistol's and Quickly's love is also a refrain on sorrow and loss, especially, in the death of Falstaff (where Quickly is a chorus to the memories of the mourners) and later in her own death, though her death *is* complicated by the aporia in text, as follows:

a. (In 5.1.81: though the Riverside names her as "Doll," the note on page 1016 suggests that this is an aporia in text—that indeed she should be referred to as "Nell," her name; the Arden follows Johnson in restoring "Nell.")

b. A further problem is raised by 2.1.74-80, where Pistol not only names Doll as a whore unequal to Nell, but also points out that she's already in the "spittle" (a reference that is repeated in 5.1.81) a hospital for the diseased: in this interpretation, Pistol may have seen Nell as the "only she," but the loss of Doll to "the French disease" (syphilis) has reawakened his affection for her (and thus the loss is not Nell, but Doll—and love is thus returned to its earlier, undefined state, prior to the marriage).

Other Notes on Style & Character:

1. **The Chorus:** This is the only Shakespeare play in which a chorus appears as prologue, enters before every act, and returns as epilogue. The Chorus's speeches, of course, summarize action to come or make a point out of what has transpired (and, as noted above, present topical allusions), but what is perhaps most interesting are the ways in which the action deflates or "re-reads" the assumptions of the Chorus, as in the movement in Act 2 from "all the youth of England are on fire" to the quarrels of the Eastcheap gang in 2.1.

2. **Intertextual relationship with the earlier *Henry* plays.** The play makes much of Henry's "wilder days" when it opens, and indeed the two *Henry IV* plays both center on his early wildness with Falstaff and the Eastcheap boys (even as his father is beset with enemies on all sides). Those plays trace the maturation of Prince Hal (Henry) as he learns to put away his foolishness and accept the responsibilities that life will inevitably lay on him, and it is useful to know those plays when one first meets this one, but it is *not* necessary. Note that this play involves a different kind of maturation: learning the necessity of "standing for one's own" while discovering that the choices a king must make are often personally horrifying, troubling, without reward. The development here is not the external change from dalliance to accepting responsibility, but the *internal* struggle to accept what that responsibility means.

Note, too, that in the condemnation of Bardolph for stealing a pax (3.6. 107-13), there are two textual ironies from the earlier plays: Henry's joke to Falstaff that he, not Henry, shall "hang a thief" (*I Henry IV* 1.2.61-62, page 891) and Bardolph's jest about the "fire-brand" delivered by Althea: "And you do not make him hang'd among you, the gallows shall have wrong" (*II Henry IV* 2.2.96-97).

3. **Long speeches:** T.W. Craik points out that these speeches (two of which—"Once more unto the breach" in 3.1 and the Crispin's Day speech of 4.3—are famous for their stirring exhortations) are appropriate to the play, whose "public, demonstrative nature" is suited to them (67).

4. **Dramatic compression:** Note Shakespeare's use of time, place, and action (in opposition to the established "unities") and his compression of history for the sake of dramatic form.

5. **The Continuous discourse on LANGUAGE:**

a. **characteristic speech:** not only what is "good English," but also language as key to national or ethnic identity, as a problem of communication and expectation, as verbal tic. note:

1. "Good English"—with Katherine
2. As signifier of identity: the ethnic captains (especially Fluellen)
3. as problem of communication and identification: Katherine's English lessons
4. As verbal tic: note especially Fluellen, Pistol and Nym

b. **rhetorical variations:** lofty speeches appealing to patriotism, negotiations varying from threats (at Harfleur) to statecraft, academic disputation (as with Williams and with himself).

6. **Memorable characters and the ironies associated with them (many of them dominated by one "humor"):**

<**The Dauphin:** developed with the Constable as the bearer of the French "false pride," he is at once comic (see his praise of his horse before Agincourt, 3.7, pages 997-98), irritating, presumptuous; he often serves as a foil (rebuked by the Constable and by Exeter in 2.4; after his vitriolic speeches in defense of France, forced by his father, *like a child*, to remain in Rouen—though he disobeys the order; again rebuked by the Constable in 3.7, swelling like a turkey cock in 4.2, bewailing his shame and suggesting the French should stab themselves in 4.5, page 1006, after which he disappears from the text.

<**Montjoy the herald:** ostensibly only a conduit, Montjoy serves his prince well and earns the respect of Henry; his speech is not without wit and irony (as in his farewell to Henry—"thou never shalt hear herald any more"—in 4.3.127, page 1005).

<**Exeter:** though most of the nobles with Henry are individually indistinguishable, Exeter emerges as Henry's "right-hand man": as T. W. Craik points out, Exeter reports the Dauphin's jest (tennis balls), "arrests the conspirators, confronts the French King and the Dauphin, enters Harfleur as its new governor, is reported to have captured the bridge and to have sentenced Bardolph, relates the deaths of York and Suffolk, announces the names of the captured French lords, and in the final scenes recites in French and Latin the title that King Henry has acquired" (62). He is, in short, a man who resolutely stands by his prince.

<**Fluellen:** his humor centered on the "disciplines of war," his Welsh dialect is aped (as in earlier Welsh characters, Owen Glendower and Sir Hugh Evans) by his occasional "bending" of English—"falous" for valorous; "Cheshu" for Jesu, etc. (See 3.3, page 993), or in some speeches, his use of "p" for "b": "All the water in Wye cannot wash your Majesty's Welsh plood out of his pody . . . God pless it" (4.7.106-08, page 1008).

<**Macmorris**: of the ethnic captains, he is most easily riled (perhaps because of the history particular to the Irish in their relation to the English?); like Fluellen, he occasionally maims his English—"Chrish" for Christ, "'tish" for 'tis, etc. (Again, see 3.3)

<**Jamy**: is as Fluellen has said, valorous and full of his honor; like the others, maims his English—"gud" for good; "sall" for shall; "grund" for ground, etc. (Again, see 3.3)

<**Pistol**: blustering bombast, as in older styles of dramatic language, Pistol is both the comic center of the English camp and one of those bearing its sense of loss, both through the loss of Falstaff and later through the losses of Bardolph, Nym, the Boy, and the reported loss of Nell. Though he's easy to find fault with and ultimately embittered by all that happens, he is an endearing, if not particularly complicated character.

Some Scholarly and Film Sources for *Henry V*

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Film Studies

Note: Historically, *Henry V* is the text for two of the most important film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays; Olivier's 1946 version of the play is the first to fully recognize "the difference between cinema and theatre as media for the expression of drama" (Davies, in Shaughnessy 43), while Kenneth Branagh's 1989 adaptation is generally recognized as the first of the current wave of Shakespearean films. Each of these adaptations, of course, treats the subject *very* differently, but in any case, because the *Henry V* films are important in filmic Shakespearean criticism, the following studies are duly noted.

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Julius Caesar

For a timeline of political events related to *Julius Caesar*, please refer to "A Chronology for *Antony and Cleopatra*," file two, page 39

Introduction

Well-made, yet heavily nuanced, subtly ambiguous, publicly rhetorical and emotionally "cold"—*Julius Caesar* has been called all of these for centuries, as if to affirm the reader-response notion that ultimately criticism reflects the predilections of the critic. Yet the play was a big hit both in its author's time and ever since, its appeal somehow central to the problems of power in any society. I suggest that three approaches to the play are most rewarding: first, there are the questions of its political stance, of the proper (and improper) uses of power, and the nature of government; second, there is the immense ambiguity of its four leading characters—and the question of how that ambiguity affects our understanding of the play; and third, perhaps most interestingly, is its construction of gender, with an exploration of how untrammelled patriarchy not only circumscribes and destroys women, but also how it distorts and ultimately destroys men in such a highly charged milieu.

1. Politics, power, and government: politically, *Julius Caesar* presents a society unsettled after Caesar's victory over Pompey and his faction, a society with a power vacuum he seems destined to fill. Caesar's path to power has also involved courting the commoners, antagonizing many in the patrician class: thus, the play opens with plebians celebrating his triumph over a fellow Roman at the feast of the Lupercal. In representing the conflict between republican ideals and the imperial ambitions of a monarch-to-be, with the spectre of civil war overshadowing the power struggle, Shakespeare represents a theme considered dangerous in late-Elizabethan England. Indeed, some have suggested that the play extends the contention over tyrannicide stirred by *Richard II*—that in *Julius Caesar* "the tyrant in view is not hard to find," involving "parallels between [Elizabeth] and a tyrannical Caesar" (Daniell 25), with the soon-to-be rebellious Essex circle roughly analogous to the republican conspirators. Such an allegory would be perilous to its author if it too unambiguously pointed to the monarch, yet perhaps by removing the subject to Rome and, more importantly, by giving the alien notion of a republic its due and then *containing* it, a tactic best explained by Stephen Greenblatt (See "The Subversive Voice / Mastering a Language," page 27 of these notes), Shakespeare avoids the charges of sedition which later, for example, dogged Ben Jonson for his first Roman tragedy, *Sejanus*. Harold Bloom has, perhaps, the best approach to the play's political implications:

It may be that Shakespeare subtly marks the limits of judgment on tyranny: who is to decide which monarch is or is not a tyrant? The people are a mob, and both sides in the civil war after Caesar's death seem worse than Caesar, which does suggest a pragmatic support for Elizabeth. Yet I am uncertain that the tyrannicide controversy was a prime inhibitor for Shakespeare in this play, wary as he always was of alarming state power. (115)

The play *has* been used for a variety of political purposes over the centuries, perhaps most famously by John Wilkes Booth, who long identified himself with Brutus (Samples 3-4) and, after killing President Lincoln, was celebrated in song as "Our Brutus" across the south (Furtwangler 98). In his 1898-1913 adaptation, Beerbohm Tree saw Caesar's Rome as a decadent state in need of a reformer like Caesar, the play itself a comment on Roman/Victorian "carpet knights, these leaders of society in the saloons and the circus, the party of property and privilege" (Berry 155). Frank Benson, in a famous 1916 royal performance enacted during the battle of Verdun, used the play as an affirmation of the struggle to find proper social order during

a period in which hundreds of thousands of young men were being shelled, machine-gunned and gassed on the continent. Orson Welles' famous 1937 Mercury Theatre performance became a statement of his political views:

Our *Julius Caesar* gives a picture of the same kind of hysteria that exists in certain dictator-ruled countries of today. We see the bitter resentments of freeborn men against the imposition of a dictatorship. We see a political assassination, such as that of Huey Long. We see the hope on the part of Brutus for a more democratic government vanish with the rise of a demagogue (Antony) who succeeds the dictator. Our moral, if you will, is that not assassination, but education of the masses, permanently removes dictatorships. (Leaming 140)

2. Ambiguity of the leading characters: perhaps the most important strand of *Julius Caesar* as a political drama is that how we perceive it depends on the emphasis given each of its leads—each of whom is complex, subtly nuanced, and difficult to assess. Ernest Schanzer suggests, for example, that our perception of Caesar depends not only upon his own attitudes, but also upon whom we believe among the many who assess him: "there are the two Caesars of Cassius [the "colossus" and the man with a "feeble temper" who cries "like a sick girl"], there is Casca's Caesar [a monster whose rise signals the horrors of an apocalypse], Brutus' Caesar [a valiant soldier who, despite being like a father to Brutus, represents a threat to the republic], Artemidorus' Caesar [a just man whose "virtue cannot live out of the teeth of emulation"], and finally Antony's Caesar"—"the great warrior, the Mirror of Knighthood, the noble Emperor" who is faithful, generous, a military genius, compassionate to the poor (211). Further, we have Caesar himself, who is alternately an insensitive husband, a shrewd politician and judge of men, a genius who exploits the passions of the mob, and a man who is either humanized or made to seem frail through his disabilities—deafness in one ear and epilepsy—depending on how we interpret his disabilities. Finally, we have the Caesar who refused a crown three times at the Lupercal, and yet who seems tempted by the prospect of such a crown on the Ides of March (2.2.94-95): is he indeed the threat to Rome that Cassius, Casca, and Brutus see in him, ambitious to the point where power might "change his nature" and "put a sting in him that at his will he may do danger with" (2.113, 16-17)? Or is he the charismatic leader he seems elsewhere, a man of destiny whose rule would bring order to a troubled and disordered society?

Brutus, Antony, and Cassius are somewhat less complex than Caesar, yet each is far more than the simplistic tags that often follow them: Brutus as the "noblest Roman of them all," a good-hearted but deluded patrician; Cassius as the Machiavellian villain in the vein of Iago, Antony as the party-boy whose loyalty to Caesar makes him an eloquent demagogue in his rage. These characters are all of these things—but each is, to the careful reader, much more. One may, as well, trace the beginnings of the Antony-Octavius relationship which will later culminate in their final collision, in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

3. Gender: This play, like *Troilus and Cressida*, features men and women functioning in a time of great civil stress and in a society that is heavily patriarchal. In both plays, women struggle to "get through" to husbands and lovers who do not take them seriously: just as *Troilus and Cressida's* Cassandra and Andromache foresee the horrors to come even as Priam and Hector dismiss them *because* they embody "womanish" fears, so too both Calphurnia's and Portia's fears are dismissed by their husbands. Both plays subject the masculine mystique, as constructed in such a patriarchal hierarchy, to heavy critique: as Jan Blits, Coppélia Kahn, and others have pointed out, the public self of such a man is divided between a seemingly cooperative ethic of honor and an emulation borne of individualized envy and ambition, in which one's place in the hierarchy heavily influences one's psychology. In this divided self, private feelings—and especially one's fears and moral scruples—become feminized, and thus are liable to dismissal—and the male, deprived of access to that side of himself, distorts his view of reality and—in dangerous contexts like those of Julian Rome or besieged Troy—makes decisions that destroy his own life.

Other Key Issues

1. View of the populace: In this play, the commoners have what could be described as a "collective personality." Given that the idea of a republic—and of freedom from tyranny—is one of the key themes of the play, how does one characterize the commoners, and how does that character affect our understanding of the political issues of the play? Alexander Leggatt, for example, points out that the plebs in the funeral oration scene "have no names, only numbers" and that "even in moments of relaxation they are half way to becoming that single organism, the mob" (157). Their ultimate political act—killing Cinna the poet because his name is the same as that of the conspirator—underlines the dangers of civil disorder, which they come to represent. Such a conclusion suggests that they are part of the equation when one considers what kinds of leadership are proper to the Roman society of Shakespeare's play—or it may suggest a measure of the leaderless decadence of that society, and the elevation of a tyrant as the natural consequence of such disorder, a prediction Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates in his *Republic*.

The commoners figure significantly in any director's approach to playing *Julius Caesar*, too. The crowd scenes are ready-made for on-stage spectacle, which was first exploited fully by Edwin Booth in his 1871 and 1872 performances of the play—though the Saxe-Meiningen troupe's enormous choreographed crowd sequences (Speaight 108) and the 1883 Cincinnati Dramatic Festival's 226 extras hired for the crowd scenes (Winter 610) carry that desire to an extreme. The 1999 London Globe Theatre production shows an opposite approach: there, the audience itself became the crowd at Brutus's and Antony's funeral orations, and actors strategically placed among us were there to shout the lines spoken by the various plebians in that scene. The effect was metatheatrically inclusive—drawing us, as audience, further into the drama itself.

2. The Ghost of Caesar and the Question of Revenge. After Caesar's death, he becomes, in effect, the "god" that Cassius had feared and as Antony predicted—returning with Ate, the goddess of discord and vengeance, to "cry 'Havoc,' and let slip the dogs of war" (3.1.273). This perception of Caesar as a disembodied god or "evil spirit" has contributed to an understanding of the play's unity and to a better grasp of Caesar as a dominant character in the play: "freed of its mortal body, the spirit of Caesar dominates the second half of the play with new and frightening power" (Leggatt 155), yet it has also led to a debate as to whether, like Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* or Shakespeare's own *Hamlet*, the play can be seen as that specialized genre of Senecan tragedy, the revenge play. The argument depends, I think, on how narrowly one wishes to define the genre. The recent Arden introduction to the play claims that despite the fact that many of the motifs of the genre are present—"a noble, wronged victim; the dedicated pursuit of the murderer or murderers . . . ; a supernatural visitation; the sense that by the final deaths some great wrong has been avenged"—the play is not a revenge tragedy because "the avenger is not a flesh-and-blood prince who comes down to the audience to take us so much into his confidence that, as Hazlitt said, 'it is we who are Hamlet'" (Daniell 78). More importantly, unless one accepts the notion that Brutus was Caesar's natural son (see Bloom, below), the play does not involve crimes of blood, and lacks the feigned or real madness and the numerous hesitations on the part of the avenger—three key components of the Senecan play (see *Hamlet* notes in the second file). Still though the play lacks these motifs, one could argue that the *chief* motives of both Antony and Caesar's ghost, in the second half of the play, are to avenge that death, that Antony as the corporeal agent and Caesar as an avenging ghost appearing to Brutus create, in the context of war, the same kind of vengeance and havoc that mark those plays formally styled as revenge dramas.

3. The Supernatural, Prophecies, Dreams, Signs and Portents. Caesar's ghost is the most dominating image of the supernatural in the play, but despite the fact that in many ways *Julius Caesar* happens on a realistic—almost naturalistic—stage, the play is also marked by its soothsayer and augurers (1.2.12-24, 2.2.37-40), its signs and portents—and people's reactions to

them (1.3, 2.2), and by dream and its interpretation (2.2.76-90). Significantly, signs and dreams serve many functions in Shakespeare's plays. In *Richard III*, for example, all of Margaret's prophecies come true, and the dreams of Clarence and Richard foretell their deaths, while Stanley heeds his dream that "the boar had rased off his helm" and lives. In *Troilus and Cressida*, no one believes Cassandra's prophecy that Troy will fall, and when Andromache, like Calphurnia in *Julius Caesar*, dreams of her husband's death, he ignores it—and is killed. In *Macbeth*, the prophecies of the weird sisters all come true despite their equivocations, and in *Lear*, the signs that Gloucester takes for portents of the coming havoc are dismissed by his son Edmund—who becomes one of the primary agents of that havoc.

Thus it would seem that Shakespeare, though ambiguously questioning the assumptions that underly society, religion, the ways in which we see ourselves, strikes a curious pose when it comes to foreknowing and fate, that those who do not pay attention to dreams, signs, portents, etc., will have to learn the truth through death or bitter experience. The central dramatic question connected to the notions of fate and foreknowing involve the major characters and their motivations: is the character a puppet whose *agon* is merely the working out of a preordained fate, or does he or she act from free will, affected only through suggestion or parallel by signs, dreams, portents? If the former, the play fails because we have no reason to follow something foredoomed; if the latter, the play acquires a secondary set of associations, echoes which tease the audience with epistemological possibilities that are never given closure.

Some Recent Critical Views of *Julius Caesar*

Harold Bloom lists the play, with *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*, as one of Shakespeare's "apprentice tragedies"—laying down foundations for the masterpieces to follow. Bloom notes that the play is "so well made, so apparently direct, and so relatively simple" that it's easy to overlook its subtleties and ambiguities (104). He insists that though Caesar is "the grandest figure Shakespeare will ever represent" (106), like most commentators he feels the play belongs to Brutus, whose *agon* is central to its entire structure. Commenting on the play's long-noted public, rhetorical quality—what he calls its "cool disengagement" (110-11), Bloom believes that *Julius Caesar* is one of the few plays in which Shakespeare missed an opportunity to develop the deeper psychological crux that Freud and others have seen—mistakenly, Bloom thinks—in *Hamlet*. Both Suetonius and Plutarch believed that Brutus was Caesar's "natural" son, and if so, killing Caesar would involve not only the public rationale of saving Rome from a potential tyrant, but for Brutus it would involve the famous oedipus complex critics have associated with *Hamlet*—yet "Shakespeare makes no use of this superb dramatic possibility," allowing no "significant contact" between Caesar and Brutus "until the murder scene" (115). Shakespeare *does*, however, point out that Brutus is made "Caesar's angel" (3.2.181; Bloom 117), a reference that could be taken by the "elite in the audience" as a reference to Caesar's paternity regarding Brutus. Nevertheless, Bloom points out that "Brutus is an unfinished character because Shakespeare exploits the ambiguity of the Caesar-Brutus relationship without in any way citing what may be its most crucial strand" (118).

Alexander Leggatt believes that Brutus insists that "self-knowledge is impossible in any other terms" than "on what others think of him" (142), pointing out that once Brutus assumes leadership of the conspiracy, he "goes to insisting that what he sees in those eyes must be approval and acquiescence" (143), over and over again overruling Cassius' pragmatic assessments of what must be done: "As Caesar is trying to construct an artificial kingship, Brutus (on republican principles) has constructed a more insidiously artificial world in which he is the custodian and exemplar of Roman values" in which "the function of other men is to agree with him" (144).

Connected to that, Leggatt comments on the famous public quality of the play, asking "Is there anything but performance here? Do these people have private lives, private relationships, or are they on show all the time?" (146). Leggatt notes that "in love, as in politics, appearances count" and "the strongest emotional attachments are between men" (147); he believes that in the marriage of Brutus and Portia, "there is genuine love breaking under the strain of the man's

involvement in public affairs," but that this agony is given primarily to Portia, who "goes from self-mutilation to suicide, swallowing fire." For Brutus, on the other hand, her death is "a way of displaying his Stoic integrity," for though his sorrow may be real, he "feels it incumbent upon him to suppress it as part of his performance" (148).

Jan Blits, commenting on gender relations in the play, points out that "No one in *Caesar* has a good word for women" (155). In this world where "manliness in Brutus's Rome means more than love or friendship as signaled by his quarrel with Cassius," manliness becomes "a contentious virtue" (159), "'self-consuming' and unaffectionate" (161; Kolin 147). Further, "as Cassius's suicide points to the limits of closeness among Roman men, so Portia's shows the limits of sharing in a Roman marriage" (162): she is cut off from Brutus's affections, separated by his commitment to his (male) project of controlling men around him and, through his political rationale, the fortunes of the state. As such, the play explores the effects of untrammelled patriarchy both on its men and its women.

For Debate: Coppélia Kahn on Gender Relations in *Julius Caesar*

Kahn, Coppélia. *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds, and Women*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997: 89-90, 95-99.

Kahn sees the construction of masculinity in a heavily patriarchal society such as the Rome of *Julius Caesar* as involving a psychology of *emulation*, a term that Shakespeare employs several times in this play and in *Troilus and Cressida*. She defines *emulation* thus: in a patriarchy whose central codes involve *virtus* (an "upright" manliness based on hierarchized linear thinking) and honor, "it is relations between men, not between men and women, that inculcate *virtus*, and male friendships are indistinguishable from politics itself, from which women are formally excluded. Like politics, they [these men] are innately rivalrous, shifting ambivalently between alliances and enmities, because the concept governing them is emulation, from the Latin *aemulari* to rival. . . . The OED defines emulation as 'to copy or imitate with the object of equalling or excelling.' Joel Fineman comments on the tension between those two aims: 'emulation is the paradoxical labor of envy that seeks to find difference in imitation' (Fineman, 1980). As Rebhorn notes, emulation is "an unstable combination of identification and rivalry, love and hate' (1990: 77)" (Kahn, *Roman Shakespeare* 89-90).

The concept of *emulation* may bear some comparison to "Heidi Hartmann's definition of patriarchy: 'relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women'" (quoted in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* 3). The selections quoted here explore Brutus as an emulator and Portia, his wife, as the bearer of those fears he denies in himself.

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Throughout *Julius Caesar*, Brutus is presented as the one Roman to whom the conspirators look for leadership. Cassius casts him in the ancestral role of Rome's savior; Cinna yearns, "O Cassius, if you could be win the noble Brutus to our party" (1.3.140-41); and Casca thinks Brutus's participation "will change to virtue and to worthiness" whatever appears offensive in the conspiracy (1.3.157-60). The conspirators want Brutus to *represent* the republican principles of egalitarian liberty that the daily agonistic practices of their own social and political life contradict. Brutus readily supplies that representation, suppressing emulation by binding them together as a group, rejecting individual oaths to rely on their internalized, collective commitment to the republic.

Superseding Cassius as the instigator of the conspiracy, Brutus becomes its architect. At precisely those points at which he fulfills his function as the voice of republican purism, however, he also pursues a not-so-subtle one-upmanship against Cassius. In a single line, Cassius

suggests that the conspirators take an oath; Brutus, in a twenty-five-line rebuttal appealing to the virile courage, faultless honesty, and Roman birthright of his fellows, deems it superficial. Cassius urges that Cicero be included in the conspiracy; Brutus vetoes it on the grounds that Cicero won't take direction. Cassius proposes killing Mark Antony as well; Brutus opposes him, in a long speech fashioning the murder as a ceremonial sacrifice and the conspirators as its priests. In each instance, as many critics have noted, Brutus makes a tactical error. This succession of blunders marks the ideological fault line of *Julius Caesar*, the point at which republican idealism and emulation meet and clash. . . . Republican principle has become the stake in a contest of emulation in which Brutus competes to distinguish himself as the Roman most devoted to the republic. His character no less than that of Cassius, and that of Caesar, is conceived and shaped in terms of the contradiction between republican virtue and Roman emulation. . . .

Brutus, of course, isn't so firm as he appears to his co-conspirators. And it is precisely his reluctance to murder Caesar that brings out the feminine in the play—that gives rise to the famous scene between Brutus and Portia on the eve of the assassination. Here his image of himself as savior of the republic is splintered by those "passions of some difference" he reluctantly alluded to in his first encounter with Cassius, passions now reflected in Portia's observations of his behavior and anxieties about what it portends.

The scene depends on our prior knowledge that, as Portia suspects, Brutus does have "some sick offence within [his] mind." We realize that her intuitions are well founded, for in two brief soliloquies following the long one in which Brutus justifies the murder, he admits—but only to the audience—that his "genius" (immortal spirit) and his "mortal instruments" (his powers as a man) are at war in contemplating "the acting of a dreadful thing" (2.1.91-9), a conspiracy that is "monstrous" (2.1.77-85). . . . [Further,] the scene between Portia and Brutus can't be contained within a public-private opposition . . . because though Brutus, ruminating in his orchard, has already admitted his scruples about killing Caesar, he has done so in the fully politicized context of the nascent conspiracy. Rather, since Portia's suspicions echo Brutus's earlier admission that killing Caesar seems "a dreadful thing," her appearance privatizes and more importantly, feminizes his hesitation. In terms of "the general good" as Brutus's republicanism defines it, individual moral scruples must be overcome; if such scruples are associated with a woman, and voiced only in the home, all the more reason to disregard them. An opposition between private scruples and public action, however, does parallel an opposition between feminine fear and masculine constancy. It is such distinctions that underpin the construction of Brutus as a tragic hero who, though he entertains moral strictures against killing that are associated with the feminine and the private, must embrace a man's duty and repress them in the name of defending an abstract concept of the public weal. Portia and Calphurnia worry and warn husbands who actually share at least some of their fears but who, once those fears are voiced by women, gain as if it were a heroic warrant to override them and act in accordance with "masculine" virtue.

Daniel J. Kornstein on the Oral Advocacy of Brutus and Anthony

Kornstein, Daniel J. *Kill All The Lawyers? Shakespeare's Legal Appeal*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1994: 112-13.

Note: Kornstein sees the two funeral orations appealing to the Roman mob (Brutus in 3.2.13-61, and Antony in 3.2.73-261) as object lessons for lawyers in their appeals to juries. Kornstein's argument relies heavily on Richard Posner's *Law and Literature: A Misunderstood Relation*. Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard, 1988. The selection quoted here is his conclusion.

Brutus's speech is, as Posner explains convincingly, weak for several reasons. It is conspicuously rhetorical, which puts the audience on guard. It fails to engage the audience by dialogue. It is abstract and lacks detail or anecdote. It fails to appeal to the concrete self-interest of the audience. It fails to present evidence to support the crucial charge (Caesar's ambition). Finally, Brutus waives rebuttal by leaving before Antony speaks.

Antony avoids these weaknesses and adds a number of powerful strengths of his own. Offhandedly and without pomp, he tries to defuse a hostile audience. He promptly deals with Brutus's charge of ambition, attempts to answer, and knows that Brutus will not be around to rebut what Antony says. Unlike Brutus, Antony displays emotion. He uses props, physical evidence, and visual aids. He tells an anecdote. He proceeds in dramatic fashion. He disclaims oratorical ability in a successful attempt to disarm the audience. He uses the terms of the will to appeal to the audience's concrete interests and sense of gratitude. He invites frequent interruption to create the impression of conversation rather than monologue. He moves about the stage.

The key to Antony's success and Brutus's failure in oral advocacy goes beyond technical and stylistic differences. Why one failed and the other succeeded in moving his listeners was a direct result of one's failure and the other's success in understanding his audience. Antony knew what to touch in his audience, how to appeal to each listener. Antony did not bury his points in abstractions, but clad them in the garb of truly permanent human problems. And Antony did all this without the audience becoming aware of him or his artistic technique.

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As You Like It

Rosalind, Cross-dressing and Some Recent Criticism

Recent criticism on the phenomenon of cross-dressing in Shakespeare's comedies has tended to center on the plays as sites for social commentary, usually viewing it as arousing the audience's anxieties either through the decentering of gender or of class distinctions and then reifying the normative order by discarding the device. At times, one feels that the humor and technique of the play as created artifact are lost in the sociological discussion, and yet many of these essays *do* go a long way toward describing the psychology of comedy itself, including the manipulations of audience emotion through the presentation of recognizable types, their roles in the plot, and the use of departures from an understood norm as means of positioning us to be moved, gratified and often reduced to laughter (see Frye 4-5). Sypher notes that in comic presentation such departures must always "make game of 'serious' life" (38), and as such, current criticism should focus more specifically on the *comic* effect of the sociological and psychological displacements such critics have been trumpeting in recent years. Cross-dressing may indeed be a symptom of "a radical discontinuity in the meaning of family" (Belsey) and of cultural anxiety over the destabilization of hierarchy (Baker, Howard, Garber), or it may be a means for a woman character to be assertive without arousing hostility (Clara Claiborne Park), yet it's also important to note that such destabilization was and is a source of humor—and in the case of those who have desired more freedom in gender and class relations, such presentations could be said to relieve anxiety, not produce it. The first problem we are confronted with is determining the norm. The appearance of the transvestite is *understood* as a "category crisis" (Garber 17), for transvestitism presupposes that dress is gendered and that deviance involves the flouting of convention. Yet this is immediately problematic; the phenomenon may inspire radically different interpretations. Cross-dressing has been seen as a symptom of "deep-seated fears that the self was not stable" (Levine), as the natural result of a culture that was "teleologically male" (Greenblatt), and as homoerotic arousal (Jardine). McLuskie argues that "the sex of the actor is irrelevant," while Dusinberre claims that such texts are sites where women are free to play with their gender identities, and Claiborne Park believes that the "spunky" woman's willing resumption of a submissive role is gratifying to male gender expectations (summarized in Howard 419).

Given this variety of contradictory positions, Howard explores the period's normative practices to determine a more precise way of approaching what the text says about the phenomenon. First she notes that in 1620, James I "ordered the preachers of London to inveigh . . . against the practice of women dressing mannishly" (420); the same year saw the publication of *Hic Mulier*, an attack on female cross-dressing, and *Haec Vir*, "an answering defense which attacks male foppishness" (Woodbridge 139). Woodbridge feels that "the transvestite controversy began, as nearly as we can tell, in about the 1570s, when some women began adopting masculine attire" (139). Howard traces these developments through the Aldermen's Court, where women dressed as men were apprehended between 1565 and 1605, most of them accused of prostitution. Cross-dressing was not merely a working class phenomenon, and besides transgressing gender expectations, it also flouted the system of state-regulated dress that served as "precise indicators of status and degree" (Howard 421). Phillip Stubbes (*Anatomie of Abuses*, 1583) argued that transgressions of the dress code "don't just *signal* social disruption; they constitute" it; further, he felt that "when women dress as men and when men dress effeminately, distinctions between sexual 'kinds' are also obliterated" (summarized in Howard 422). Howard sees these manifestations as reifications of the hierarchical social order that permeated English renaissance society. The regulation of dress was part of the "apparatus for producing and marking gender difference" (423) as a way of keeping women subordinated to men: "when women took men's clothes, they symbolically left their subordinate positions . . . and this threatened overthrow of hierarchy was discursively read as the eruption of uncontrolled sexuality" (424).

At the same time, the fact that many women did flout the convention points to the fact that the system was under enormous stress, and this raises the question of the role played by the

theatre in the dispute. According to Howard, *Twelfth Night* embodies "a fairly oppressive fable of the containment of gender and class insurgency and the valorization of the [willingly submissive] 'good woman'"; Viola's cross-dressing is a form of refuge, "a practical means of survival in an alien environment," not a form of defiance (431). *The Merchant of Venice* presents a different rationale for Portia's transvestite disguise, which is "not a psychological refuge but a vehicle for assuming power" in a way that does not challenge the patriarchal norm but aims "at making her own place in a patriarchy more bearable" (433). Howard sees *As You Like It* as more complex, for Rosalind-Ganymede "could be a threatening figure if she did not constantly, contrapuntally, reveal herself to the audience as the not-man," retaining "a proper feminine subjectivity" and eventually accepting the submissive role of wife. Interestingly, while Rosalind does not escape the patriarchal curb, she does call attention to the fact that boys were playing the roles of women—and as such destabilizes the reinscription of each character's "proper" social position (435).

Belsey also notes how *As You Like It* toys with gender expectations, pointing out that in the epilogue "both a male and a female character is speaking" (181) and that the source of comic pleasure for the audience is to be found where the disguised character escapes "from the limitations of . . . femininity" by playing with stereotypical concepts; Rosalind as Ganymede plays the male role of negotiating with Corin while Celia-Aliena plays the role of woman as the weaker vessel—exhausted and in need of protection (182). Belsey claims that male anxiety over Rosalind's cross-dressing is reduced because she is "so firmly in control of her disguise that the emphasis is on the pleasures rather than the dangers implicit in the transgression of sexual difference" (184). While closure demands that the hierarchy of sexual difference be reified, the play has somewhat disrupted "the system of sexual differences on which sexual stereotyping depends" (Belsey 190). Unlike Belsey and Howard, Clara Claiborne Park sees the use of male disguise not as destabilizing or disrupting sexual difference, but as "the most useful dramatic device for mediating the initiatives of the female" (108). Rosalind's behavior can encompass a much broader sphere of activities when she is in disguise, and the other characters "will accept her behavior because it does not offend their sense of propriety" (108); neither audience nor characters are put off by what would otherwise be read as "feminine assertiveness," but "the temporary nature of the male disguise is of course essential" (108). Park also points out Rosalind's limits in the fact that though she is a witty and high-spirited character, her wisdom is confined "to love matters, a proper feminine sphere" (107). Susan Baker points out a further quality that mutes the possible offensiveness of the disguised assertive woman; in all of Shakespeare's plays, disguised characters "never of their own (represented) volition disguise up the social scale" (313). Even given this fact, audiences realize that the character retains her status despite the disguise; thus "Ganymede and Aliena seem to be acknowledged by other denizens of the forest as superiors" and "are treated deferentially" (315). Such representation may "arouse and then . . . assuage a potent anxiety" and yet does not question the rightness of the hierarchy (316).

To conclude, all of these positions view the plays from the position of the dominant class and gender; cross-dressing involves, they say, the arousal and containment of anxiety—and yet none of them has considered the possibility that the presentation of the cross-dressed female character / male actor may indeed be a way of deliberately blurring gender distinctions, only forswearing the representation precisely because English society was so oppressive. I do not suggest that Jardine's thesis of homoerotic arousal is necessarily correct, but rather that such representations open the door to less rigidly defined gender roles by the very fact of their presentation. Further, it is important to recall that theatrical cross-dressing is ultimately a means to an end: it opens up the possibilities for numerous multileveled comments, ironies and comedic applications, and works by playing the oppressive norm against a deliberate comic representation. The boy actor plays Rosalind, who plays Ganymede, who impersonates Rosalind to instruct Orlando in the ways of love, and even in the epilogue, which supposedly should cap the closure by forswearing the decentering antics of the play, Rosalind reminds us that she is a boy; thus all identity and gender fixations are spun in the wink of Shakespeare's eye.

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Other Motifs

1. Pastoral: *AYL* is a play that relies for success on its relaxed pace, its musings, wit, and song, as well as its varied motifs & comic repartee, rather than on plot or force of character. It *does* have two memorable characters—the quintessential Shakespearean comic heroine, the incomparable Rosalind, and the melancholic Jaques, who doubts the meaning of everything, yet in the end departs to learn something from the newly converted villain. This is a play that, above all, should emphasize *delight* more than *instruction*. It does have conversions, a lover testing and training her beloved, journeys to find oneself, and themes revolving around friendship, though ultimately one should be left with the pleasure of a multifaceted encounter with the pleasures of wit and laughter: it is pastoral, whatever ironies it contains subsumed in light-hearted sincerity.

2. Brothers, paired in contrast:

- **Duke Senior**, the older brother banished by his usurping sibling; the type of generosity.
- **Duke Frederick**, the younger brother usurping his brother's throne; the type of avarice. Note that Senior gets his dukedom back without real effort, seems only intent on having a good time. Frederick, on the other hand, seems brutally vicious, but gives up the dukedom even as he is leading an army to destroy his brother: perhaps he isn't as sure of his love of rule as he has appeared to be, because his conversion is sudden, his giving up what he'd schemed for rather abrupt.
- **Oliver**, the older brother who has inherited Sir Rowland's estate and abuses his younger brother and servants; he schemes to kill Orlando and seems the true Machiavel. Yet like Frederick, he is converted—when he pursues Orlando, his younger sibling saves him from a lion; he asks forgiveness and is converted.
- **Orlando**, the younger brother who must fight to prove his worth, but is driven out by his sibling and by Duke Frederick. Before he leaves, Rosalind is smitten by him and he by her—thus leading to the major plot movements of the play.

3. Cramped, corrupt, sophisticated city versus expansive, innocent, rustic and sometimes dull countryside:

The Machiavellian intrigues of the city give way to a **green world which features many tonic keys**: generosity and expansiveness (Senior's camp), boredom (to Jaques and Touchstone), simplicity and kindness (Corin), ridiculousness and unsophisticated foolishness (Silvius and Phebe, Audrey), or lack of character (William).

4. Two women (cousins) who carry the themes of friendship, defiance of a tyrannical parent, resolution, and questing individuation between them. Their separation and maturation via life partners is not so traumatic a passage as that between Helena and Hermia, but they do go through that same passage.

5. An Unbalanced Character: Jaques is mildly melancholy, a lord who seems to lack any purpose in life and whose entire project seems to be to undercut the enthusiasms of others—though he is likeable enough for them to tolerate, accept, and even sometimes welcome his mild gibes. One gets the feeling that his entire persona of sophisticated ennui is a cover for his own uncertainty and fear that life indeed may have no meaning—note the ending of the "seven ages of man" speech (2.7.139-66). In the end, his decision to leave the newly restored duke and the multiple married couples could turn on two possible drives: a need to be in the presence of change rather than resolution, and/or a realization that he needs to find whatever it is that led Duke Frederick to abandon his machiavellian ambitions and convert to religion

6. A "wise fool": Shakespeare's famous for his stable of "wise fools," ranging from Touchstone to Feste and, most famously, the fool in *Lear*. Touchstone is less wise than many: he sees the foolishness of others well, but is blind to his own. A sophisticated city clown, he is loyal to Celia and Rosalind but alternately amused, arrogant, and deceitful to the denizens of the forest of Arden. His loyalty to the young heroines is undercut by his plan to marry Audrey solely for his lust and later to leave her (3.3.35-94). He also proves a bully when he drives the simpleton William away from Audrey (5.1.46-57). In the end, Rosalind is wise to his game and consigns his marriage to "wrangling, for thy loving voyage is but for two months victuall'd" (5.4.191-92).

7. Music and love poems: This is one of Shakespeare's more musical plays; Amiens is the singer, though Jaques sings satiric response. Similarly, Orlando writes the love poems, and Touchstone recites satiric response. The 2nd lord also sings a song, Phebe writes a "love" poem to Rosalind, and Hymen recites an invocation and sings a song..

2.5.1-8, 38-45, 50-57 "Under the greenwood tree" (theme and Jaques' satire)

2.7.174-189 "Blow, blow, thou winter wind"

3.2.88-95, 100-12 Orlando's love poem; Touchstone's satire

3.2.125-52 Orlando's love poem

4.2.10-18 "What shall he have that kill'd the deer?" (sung by 2nd lord)

4.3.40-63 Phebe's "love" poem to Rosalind / Ganymede

5.3.16-33 "It was a lover and his lass"

5.4.107-46 Music, Hymen's invocation to the lovers, and song ("Wedding is great Juno's crown")

8. Stichomythic riddling chant: As a prelude to the exposure, Silvius, Phebe, Orlando, and Rosalind engage in a series of chants about love and the beloved: "And I for...", ending with Rosalind's chorus, "And I for no woman" (5.3.85-107), ending with Rosalind's promise to each of the lovers (110-21). The comic crisis—such as it is—seems to be enfolded into these possibilities, yet Rosalind seems to be firmly in control of all the plots at this point, as if she has figured out how to give each character what he or she deserves—and of course that resolution will come when she reveals herself in the comic exposure of the marriage day.

9. Marriages: Shakespeare seems to comment on the various states of mind that marriage can embody through the way he presents these four couples in their finale:

Rosalind and Orlando (romance, she in charge, he the object and goal of her pursuit)

Celia and Oliver (a marriage of convenience and propriety—"land, and love, and great allies"—5.4.189)

Audrey and Touchstone (a marriage of wrangling and deceit, which Rosalind foresees will end badly)

Phebe and Silvius (a "well-deserved bed" based on Silvius' unflinching—if unsophisticated—love for Phebe)

10. Journeys (and, in the cases of the two villains, conversions):

Senior: journeys to Arden and idyllic banishment; his loss does not affect his disposition, and indeed he gathers friends and allies while in this seeming disgrace.

Orlando: departs to escape the murderous plots of Frederick and Oliver, but his journey also involves expressing his infatuation for Rosalind—and going through trials and tests to find what that love implies.

Rosalind and Celia: both depart to escape Frederick and, in Rosalind's case, to find her father. Rosalind discovers that she can handle herself quite well as an independent young woman in disguise, and when she meets up with Orlando and the other sets of lovesick youth in the wood, proves she can lead them all to the proper resolution.

Oliver: enters the wood in pursuit of Orlando, yet when attacked by a lion, is defended by his younger sibling; he has a conversion experience and learns both mercy and compassion from Orlando and Duke Senior. Later, he is rewarded by falling in love with and marrying Celia.

Duke Frederick: brings an army into the wood for the purpose of routing and killing his brother Senior; but he too is converted—he by a priest—and gives up his power to seek for grace.

Jaques: as the play ends, Jaques plans to set out on a journey to find Duke Frederick and learn what wisdom from the new "convertite" that he can.

Two Areas of Critical Disagreement:

1. Character of Rosalind / nature of her disguise: political need? homoerotic or sexual chafing? as site of gender instability? Metatheatrical comment on *acting*?
2. Character of Orlando: Lovesick Petrarchan lover? Lack of *project* to win Rosalind? Characterized by failure to articulate his feelings?

For Debate: Marjorie Garber: from "Rosalind the Yeshiva Boy"

Rosalind differs from Viola in a crucial way: she returns to the stage dressed as a woman. In the last scene of the play she leaves the stage as Ganymede and returns, led by Hymen, in a "sight and shape" so unmistakably female as to give joy to Orlando and consternation to Phebe. In the Epilogue that follows "she" deliberately breaks the frame to acknowledge the "real" gender of the actor ("If I were a woman, I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me, and breaths that I defied not") [AYL 5.4.214-17], and by calling attention to her underlying male "identity" as an actor ("If I were a woman") Rosalind opens up the possibility of a male/male homoeroticism between male audience member and male actor that is the counterpart of the male/"male" homoeroticism animating Orlando's conversations with Ganymede, as well as the converse of the female/female homoeroticism figured in the play by Phebe's infatuation.

But in returning dressed as a woman she also allows for the possibility of a recuperative interpretation . . . that suggests a transformed woman now "reabsorbed" into the community and

thus capable of "vanishing." Rosalind, according to this recuperative fantasy, has finished her job of education and self-instruction . . . and can now take up her wifely role. As for the male Rosalind of the Epilogue, he doesn't need or want Ganymede either. . . . Neither ending—that of the onstage pairs in marital ranks, nor that of the Epilogue and its wink to certain members of the audience—acknowledges the "other" transvestite, the one who is *not* there in either final scene or Epilogue. Yet it is "Ganymede" who is the plays locus of desire, "Ganymede," not Rosalind, with whom Phebe falls so hopelessly in love, "Ganymede" who enchants the audience. How are we to account for "Ganymede"? For the erotic?

Here, then, is the paradox. Only by looking at the transvestite on the stage, in the literary text, can we see clearly that he or she is not there. Only by regarding Ganymede, and Cesario and Dorothy Michaels in *Tootsie* as instated presences—not as other versions of Rosalind, or Viola, or Michael Dorsey, or Dustin Hoffman, but as constructs that have a subjectivity and an agency—can we understand something of their relation to narcissism, desire, and possibility. (76-77)

- **CROSS-DRESSING / DISGUISE (as noted above): the heroine disguises herself as a man as a means of empowerment.** Practically speaking, this was an easy way for the boy actor playing the heroine to act as a boy, yet the device in and of itself raises issues about gender and its representation—for whoever's playing her, Rosalind *is* a woman, caught in the hierarchies of gender typical of the period, and struggling to make her own way—to find herself, her place in society, and to fulfill her wishes.

<In Shakespeare:

1. <i>Two Gentlemen</i>	Julia / Sebastian	to find her supposed lover, Proteus
2. <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	Portia / Balthasar	to rescue Bassanio from Shylock
3. <i>As You Like It</i>	Rosalind / Ganymede	to find Orlando & get his love
4. <i>Twelfth Night</i>	Viola / Cesario	to seek refuge / find love with Orsino
5. <i>Cymbeline</i>	Imogen / Fidele	to escape her father & Cloten / to find Poshumus

<Other important plays of this kind:

1. Middleton, Dekker: *The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse*. (not disguise, but deliberate identity & defiance).
2. Jonson: *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman*. (disguise as misogynist means to bring down an obnoxious misanthrope).

<A New Historicist approach: Cross dressing as cultural expression:

<In 1570s, some women adopted masculine attire: women dressed as men were tried as prostitutes in Alderman's Court (1565-1605)

<Howard sees a social breakdown: women of all classes flouting a system of state-regulated regulated dress.

<Conservative complaints also centered on men dressing effeminately. **Philip Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses* (1583)** claimed that transgressions of dress code "don't just signal social disruption; they constitute it."

<**The proclamation against "inordinate apparel" (1597)** stated that subjects must dress according to their social class (see Riverside 2004).

<It would seem to follow from these cultural markers that in presenting cross-dressed heroines onstage, the playwrights were taking a political stance supporting the flouting of dress codes, and opposed to Puritan and conservative complaints about this change.

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The Masque-like Finale (Hymen and the Wedding Celebration)

Generally, masque is the opposite of carnival: if the latter gives license to vice before putting it in its place, the latter (except in Jonson's antimasques) ritually excludes vice and celebrates the "right" hierarchy. Masque involves:

- **Entertainment** in which "a procession of masqued or otherwise disguised figures represented a highly imaginative action interspersed with speeches and songs." Fantastic, divine, or grotesque figures predominate, and metamorphosis is a common theme.
- **Emphasis on Spectacle:** Fantastic costuming, dances, songs, processions, other elaborate props.
- **Some plot features:**
 - <**Ritual purification** (as in the *Somerset Masque* or *Masque of Queens*): clearing away rumor, false charges, or someone's real or imagined faults to make way for true love, proper order, marriage, etc.
 - <**Apotheosis of the court:** court personages (usually the wives of King and nobles) assume forms of allegorical divinity who enact a triumph, unmasking at last to show the splendor of the real court reflected in them.
 - <**Antimasque**, a preliminary masque of grotesques who must be cleared away to make room for the divinities of the masque (gives carnival a place and then routs it)--perfected by Jonson. Shakespeare uses anti-masque elements in both *2 Henry VI* and *Macbeth* for their own qualities, unrelieved by the purification ritual of masque.
- In *As You Like It*, the appearance of Hymen (god of marriage) at the wedding celebration adds an element of masque to the finale, though there is little in the wedding ceremony to suggest the spectacle of true masque.

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Shakespeare's Sonnets

The greatest of all sonnet sequences, Shakespeare's sonnets were written in the years following Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, a sequence which had opened up many new formal possibilities while employing a standard Petrarchan plot line. Shakespeare was beginning to emerge as a playwright of great substance in the 1590s, and while most of the sonnets are probably from this period of his career, they were not published until 1609. That edition appeared and went quickly underground; in 1640, John Benson would publish an edition in which the sonnets were "rearranged, in many cases combined into longer 'poems,' given titles, and altered so that most of those addressed to the young man were made to seem addressed to a woman" (Smith 1747-48). The original poems would not reappear until 1711, when Bernard Lintott published them from an original copy once owned by William Congreve, the playwright (Giroux 5), and Malone would publish the first "reliable" edition with commentary in 1780 (Smith 1748).

Shakespeare's sonnets stand out from all others for a number of reasons. Other than in sonnets 99, 126, and 145, he exclusively used the English pattern of three quatrains and couplet invented by Surrey. The sonnets do not show anywhere near as much formal variety and experimentation as Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, yet like Sidney's work, the Shakespearean sonnet is "more colloquial in tendency, more fluent, more suggestive of spontaneous utterance" than earlier sonnets; further, "it rarely produces the exquisite sense of highly wrought perfection, as of an ivory carving," but "at its best the three quatrains seem like incoming waves of imagery, each following upon its predecessor and rising a little higher; then there is a pause, when the couplet more quietly sums up or comments on the meaning of the three" (Alden, *Shakespeare* 126-27, quoted in Booth 17). The main character to whom most of the poems are addressed is a young man, not a woman, as in other sequences, and when the poems do address the famous "dark lady," we discover a vastly different character than the conventional Petrarchan mistress. Further, Shakespeare's sonnets display the compression of language, his characteristic vivid metaphors and choice of images, and most importantly, show a tension that can only come from real emotional commitment.

The sequence itself does not follow the usual Petrarchan scheme of an unrequited love for an unattainable woman, but seems to involve a love affair or at least a very close friendship between two young men, plus the love for a raven-haired woman, the "dark lady," who is alluring but not beautiful in the usual sense. The sequence also includes poems admonishing the young man—who in sonnet 20 is described as the "master mistress" of the poet's passions—to marry (sonnets 1-17), poems exploring the shame and anger of untrue love (33-36 and 40-42), poems against a rival poet, possibly Marlowe or Chapman (78-86), and a "Mortal Moon" sonnet (107), supposedly written in 1603 as a tribute after the death of Queen Elizabeth.

Other poems explore the plight of the actor and include a reference to Robert Greene's attack on Shakespeare as an "upstart crow" among playwrights (110-112). That most vituperative of the university wits had written that "there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that, with his *tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and, being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is, in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in a country" (Greene 22); Shakespeare admits in sonnet 110 that he has made himself "a motley to the view" and "gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear," turning to his lover for redemption. In number 111, he complains of "public means which public manners breeds," speaking of the penance and correction he must undergo; sonnet 112 develops a pun on Greene's name as he begs, "what care I who calls me well or ill, so you overgreen my bad, my good allow?"

There is also a "gross" sonnet (151), as well as sonnets playing on the triple meaning of the word *will*—its significance as Shakespeare's own name, as the "will" of willfulness, and also as an Elizabethan slang term for the sex organs (135, 136). Finally, there are two Bath sonnets (153, 154) ending the sequence with meditations on the power of Love in human and divine affairs; in different ways, each of these poems tells the story of how Diana's votaress stole Cupid's fire and quenched it in a "cold-valley fountain." Despite this, the heat of the fire would not die and

transformed the fountain into a "seething bath" which cures "strange maladies." The poet next asserts that the fire had burned anew in his mistress's eyes, that he went to the bath for help but could find none because "the bath for my help lies where Cupid got new fire—my mistress' eyes."

As with Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, one can roughly trace a story in the sonnets: they begin with the poet's admonition to his friend to marry, which leads to the two friends' apparent emotional entanglement with each other. After this, there is some act on the friend's part that necessitates forgiving him: in number 34, the poet complains that the friend has made him "travel forth without my cloak" and "let base clouds o'ertake me in my way, hiding thy brav'ry in their rotten smoke." Number 35 forgives the friend for his act, claiming that the poet has authorized "thy trespass," excusing the friend's "sensual fault." The poet is apparently not satisfied by his own forgiveness, however, and in the following poem tells the friend that "we two must be twain, although our undivided loves be one" because "these blots" that remain with the poet are his concern alone. The interpretation of these poems has been central in the debate over whether Shakespeare is portraying gay love in his sequence; the rancor of the debate can be seen in discourse concerning sonnet 20, which sees in the friend's face "a woman's face with Nature's own hand painted." This same poem has been cited by critics who support a gay interpretation as proof of the affair (Giroux 20-21), and by those who oppose such interpretation as proof that the love between the friends is "platonic" and not "any kind of homosexual attachment" (Smith 1746). In his usual manner of snorting at those who disagree with him, Rowse claims "it is not worth commenting on the vast amount of nonsense this sonnet has given rise to, when it is perfectly clear what it says and what it means" (43). J. Dover Wilson explains that platonic declarations of love between men were in Shakespeare's time cordial statements, not indicative of homosexuality; in support of his assertion, he repeats the claim once made by Malone:

Such addresses to men, however indelicate, were customary in our author's time and neither imported criminality, nor were esteemed indecorous. To regulate our judgement of Shakespeare's poems by the modes of modern times, is surely as unreasonable as to try his plays by the rules of Aristotle. (quoted in Wilson 34)

Wilson does mention that the friend's admirable and wanton qualities are elicited in 126 poems in the entire sequence, but does not explore the significance of that quantity and of the breadth of feeling the poet displayed for the friend. That number of protestations, hopes, dreams and despairs connected with the friend's love for the poet in itself implies something more than cordiality or simple decorum. Giroux correctly points out that the closing lines of the poem explicitly state that "physical love between him and the young man is out of the question" (20) despite what he sees as an obvious attachment between them, arguing that this love progresses later to the friend's "trespass" in sonnets 33-36.

I am inclined to follow Giroux rather than Smith and the others; whether the love between poet and friend begins as a sexual affair or is simply "platonic," it's clear that their love is an attachment and passion beyond mere casual camaraderie. Further, it seems fairly certain that in sonnets 33 to 36 there has been a physical encounter involving the friend's "sensual fault," and that the poet has since experienced contrary feelings about that encounter, necessitating an emotional retrenching on his part. Rowse claims the encounter refers to the friend's later involvement with the dark lady (71), claiming proof in the fact that the story beginning in sonnets 33 and 34 is "duplicated and viewed from the point of view of Shakespeare's relationship to his mistress precisely one hundred sonnets later in the numbering" (71). In the first place, there are no clear references to the dark lady in sonnets 33 to 36; indeed, she does not appear until sonnet 127. Secondly, even if one grants that the ordering of the sonnets is beyond question, there is no structural reason why Shakespeare should purpose such a cross reference. Thirdly, Rowse's numerical claim flies in the face of the fact that most commentators have admitted that the ordering of the sonnets cannot be authoritatively proven. L. C. Knights goes so far as to suggest that the whole idea of the sonnets as an ordered sequence should be

abandoned, calling them "a miscellaneous collection of poems, written at different times, for different purposes, and with very different degrees of poetic intensity" (174). Knights' claim overreaches the mark, but does show that Rowse's idea of numerical ordering is suspect. Hallet Smith provides a more balanced view of the order of the poems: "the order in which the 154 sonnets are printed in Thorpe's [1609] edition cannot be said to have the authority of the poet himself, but attempts by various editors to rearrange them have failed to carry conviction to others, and the original order is therefore followed in most modern editions" (1745). Thus, because there is no clear reference to the dark lady and because the one-hundred poem cross reference theory is suspect even in its conception, I conclude that the friend's sensual trespass involves not the dark lady, but the poet himself. Their relationship could thus be seen as the heterosexual poet's experimentation in gay love and his subsequent confusion and withdrawal as a result of his own feelings of guilt; in any case, the love was *real* for a time.

After this, the sequence features poems about betrayal, meditations on the identities of lo-ers and the problem of love and aging. Among these last, sonnet 73 is probably the most famous, presenting the theme of *carpe diem* in terms of love and age. The narrator is an older man who in three successive quatrains points out that he is like an autumnal leafless tree whose boughs no longer contain "sweet birds," like twilight heralding that rest that imitates death, and like the ashes of a fire "consum'd with that which it was nourished by." Each of these quatrains underlines the brevity of the narrator's time; the summary couplet ties this to a request that the beloved to whom the poem is addressed "love that well, which thou must leave ere long."

Next come the problems with the rival poet—a rival in love and perhaps in patronage; number 79 remembers when the friend listened only to the poet's verse, worrying that now "my sick Muse doth give another place." In number 80, "a better spirit" has taken the poet's place, and in this poem and in number 86, the poet's muse is "tongue-tied" by the rival poet's ability to enshrine the friend in verse. The rival poet's work is described in terms of "the proud full sail of his great verse" (86) with "a style admired every where" (84), and Shakespeare feels his own poetry is "inferior far to his" (80). Biographical critics have long argued over these lines, claiming they refer to either Chapman or Marlowe, whose "mighty line" was universally admired by English playwrights in the early nineties. Hallet Smith is quick to point out that "no one has found any evidence that either Chapman or Marlowe wrote verse to either Southampton or Pembroke," the two major candidates for the friend's identity (1746). Smith also admits that much of the verse from the period has not survived, and consequently we may never know who either the rival poet or the friend may be—partisans of each candidate will thus continue to press forward with their favorites. In any case, the poet narrator is clearly upset by the competition; he reminds the friend that the rival poet's verse only reflects the friend's own natural beauty (79), admits that he deserves the greater praise the rival poet can give him (79) and that the friend is not "married to my Muse" (82), ending in a farewell in which the friend is seen as "too dear for my possessing" (87).

Once this rivalry is resolved, there are poems of departure and return, and poems written to the raven-haired mistress, the most famous of which begins "my mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" (130). This poem has always intrigued me; it can be read as a serious reflection on the fact that beauty and the inner heart cannot be seen in outward features, which can only be "belied with false compare," yet it also satirizes all those "beauties" who populate Petrarchan sequences with their ruby lips, ivory teeth, snowwhite skin and souls as vapid as their eyes must be glazed over; it deconstructs the concepts of love represented in all those stereotypical "ideal" women *and* the men who dote on them, and as such is a comment on the entire set of conventions so many poets had echoed. Both the poet and the friend become entangled with the dark lady, and many of the later sonnets explore the jealousy and despair excited when a sexual affair involves such a threesome. In number 133, the poet asks the lady about the extent of her cruelty: "is't not enough to torture me alone?" In number 134, he confesses that "he is thine," apparently accepting the loss of both friend and lady. Numbers 135 and 136 explore the triumph of the will over reason in puns on the poet's name, and in the poems following these he meditates on love as a hell of desire (144), as "the centre of my sinful earth" (146), and as a fever (147); the two Bath sonnets conclude the sequence in a formalized meditation on the nature of sexual love.

Shakespeare's sonnets thus involve an immense variety of emotional stances and actual entanglements—he is never the static and patient lover bemoaning the fact that an idealized mistress won't come down to him, but is always involved in and experiencing the action, the physical as well as emotional distresses of a complicated love life involving both a male friend and a dark lady who represent his "comfort and despair" (144). Scholars have argued endlessly about the identity of these lovers, whether the apparently gay poems are in fact expressions of homosexual love, and what individual lines refer to. It's probably safe to say they were mostly written in the early 1590s, during the same period as the composition of *Love's Labour Lost* (which also contains several sonnets), and that they were written under the patronage of the young Earl of Southampton, a noted dandy and reckless lover, protege of the soon-to-be ill-fated Earl of Essex. Giroux speculates that Southampton is the young man of sonnets 1-126 (59-102), citing two letters and the similarity between one of these to sonnet 26. The exact identity of the lovers is unimportant, in the end; the point of the writing is its meditation on the problems and excesses that love, and especially youthful love, is sometimes ensnared in.

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Du Bellay, Joachim. *Defense et Illustration de la Langue Francaise / oeuvres poetiques diverses*. Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1987. [Du Bellay's 1549 essay was both a defense of the common tongue. much like Dante's earlier *De vulgari eloquentia*, and the prosodic and theoretical foundation text of the French Pleiade. Chapter four recommends sonnets as

a "plaisante invention Italienne" appropriate for French authors. The sonnet was first introduced into France in 1536 by Clement Marot, who with Mellin de Saint Gelais and Jacques Peletier popularized the form].

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Aspects of the Sonnets

Some Connections to Two Plays: Sonnets and sonnet-like constructions

<First, Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost* has long been noted as having similarities to the dark lady of the sonnets.

<Love's Labour's Lost

- 1.1.149-61 (181): 13 lines--3 q. + 1 line
- 1.1.162-76 (181): 15 lines--3 q. + 1 couplet + 1 line
- 4.3.25-40 (195): 16 lines--3 q. + 2 couplets
- 4.3.58-71 (195): sonnet

<Romeo and Juliet

- Prologue* (1058): sonnet
- 1.5.93-100 (1066) 2 quatrains (answering parallels)
- Chorus: Act II (1067): sonnet

Tradition (individual form / nature of sequence)

<Italian practice (per Dante and Petrarch) : octave and sestet (mental divisions)

<English practice

1. awareness of form in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*: "Canticus Troili" (l.400-20) translates Petrarch's Rime 132 into rime royale (14 lines > 21 lines).
2. Sir Thomas Wyatt's translations
3. Earl of Surrey's refinements
4. The Pleiade: vogue in sonnets in France mid-century (Du Bellay, Ronsard, etc.)
5. Spenser's *Amoretti*, Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* set off a vogue in England.
6. Shakespeare's sequence (probably 1590s, some later)
<All but 99, 126, and 145 in English form.
7. Form: three quatrains and couplet (mental divisions)

Other Important Aspects:

<Multifaceted meditations on Love, Time, Age and loss, Action (*carpe diem*), Immortality/ mutability, Art, etc.

<Critical foolishness: arguments over identity of the lovers, the rival poet, Mr. W. H., etc. (substitution of topical gossip for theme of meditation)

<Arguments about the homoeroticism of the poems: centering on numbers 13, 19-23, 25, 30, 33-36, 50-51, 108. Consult Giroux, Sedgwick, and Hallett Smith for opposing views.

<Shakespeare's originality:

- a. more fluid lines than earlier work--ease of expression
- b. expansion to deal with both young friend and dark lady
- c. dark lady unlike any other lady in tradition
- d. actual involvement of lovers rather than meditation on unattainable lover
- e. variety of other concerns beyond single-voiced focus on one story.

Important Divisions, Sequences, and Famous Sonnets among The Sonnets:

<Rough Division:

- a. 1-126: to the young man
- b. 127-154: sonnets involving the "dark lady"

<Other divisions, Sequences, etc.:

- a. 1-17: Admonitions to the young man that he marry.
- b. 20: the "master-mistress" sonnet (focus of debate over homoeroticism).
- c. 33-36, 40-42: shame and rage over untrue love
- d. 78-86: Sonnets on the rival poet (Marlowe? Chapman?)
- e. 107: The "Mortal Moon" sonnet, supposedly written in 1603 to commemorate Queen Elizabeth's passing.
- f. 110-112: Plight of the actor ("o'ergreene" ref to Greene's attack--see page 1835)
- g. 116: "Let me not to the marriage of true minds" standard of love
- g. 130: "My mistress' eyes"--satire on conventions.
- h. 133, 134: cruelty of love, betrayal of lady & friend
- i. 135, 136: sonnets on triumph of will (pun: willfulness, S's name, sex organs)
- j. 144: Love as a hell of desire
- k. 146: Love as the "centre of my sinful earth"
- l. 147: Love as a fever
- m. 151: the "gross" sonnet
- n. 153, 154: the "Bath" sonnets--emblematic meditations on contrary nature of love

