

# QUIDDITAS

*Journal of the Rocky Mountain  
Medieval and Renaissance  
Association*

**Volume 24**

**2003**

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Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in PMLA, Historical Abstracts, and America: History and Life.

### FROM THE EDITOR

Quidditas. This is a Latin legal term that originally meant “the essential nature of a thing” and appeared in fourteenth-century French as “quiddite” In the Renaissance, the English adaptation, “quiddity,” came to mean “logical subtleties” or “a captious nicety in argument” (OED) and is so used in Hamlet (“Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quilllets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks?” 5.1.95–97). Thus, the original Latin meaning, together with the later implied notions of intense scrutiny, systematic reasoning, and witty wordplay, is well suited to the contents of the journal.

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# ARTICLES



## God As Androgyne: Jane Lead's Rewriting of the Destiny of Nature

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JANE LEAD [OR LEADE] (1624–1704) was one of the few seventeenth-century Englishwomen bold and radical enough to engage in “God-talk”—to use Rosemary Ruether’s term.<sup>1</sup> When the power of the English king and church was restored in 1660, radical millenarians were repressed and had to face that the English revolution—“God’s cause”—had failed politically, at least temporarily.<sup>2</sup> In her recuperation of God’s cause, Lead argued that the revolution, properly understood, would be “intrinsic.”<sup>3</sup> In her prophecies, Lead unites a radical hermeneutics of Scripture with Jacob Boehme’s concept of God as androgyne in order to reconfigure both God and divine history. According to Lead, Wisdom’s disciples and eventually all of creation were to be—to use a Behmenist keyword—“tinctured” by the Virgin Wisdom’s creating power, until a critical mass was made ready for revolutionary change. The license for this strategy was found in Scripture, especially Proverbs and the Books of Wisdom, in which a Divine Feminine voice of Wisdom speaks directly:

I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was....  
When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:  
Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;  
Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth... (Prov. 8:1, 22, 29–32).

<sup>1</sup>Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983).

<sup>2</sup>The idea of the failure of “God’s cause” is found in Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), 199–212.

<sup>3</sup>Jane Lead, *The Enochian Walks with God, Found out by a Spiritual-Traveller, whose Face Towards Mount-Sion Above was set. [Gen. 5. verse. 22]; an Experimental Account of what was known, Seen, and met withal there* (1694), 6.

Lead's God is rooted in the desire for a just and compassionate universe, in theological concepts based on the rhythms of woman's body, and spiritual practices devised by Lead and her circle.<sup>4</sup>

What made the Philadelphian movement unique was the primacy it afforded women's theological disclosures. As the foremost prophet of the Philadelphians and the writer of its foundational texts, Jane Lead spent the last thirty years of her eighty-year life reinterpreting certain passages from the Bible in order to tease out the voice and presence of a hidden part of God, the Virgin Wisdom.<sup>5</sup> In her first *Message to the Philadelphian Society* (1696), Lead points to the centrality of "woman clothed with the sun" passage in the founding of the Philadelphian community:

according to John's Prophecy, a Virgin Woman is designed of a pure Spirit, and of a bright Sun-like Body, all impregnated with the Holy Ghost, that shall travail to bring forth the First-born, that will multiply and propagate such a Body, as shall be filled with the Spirit, Power, and Temple Glory of the Lamb of God.<sup>6</sup>

The Philadelphian message was especially germane and empowering for women. According to one scholar, so many ladies joined the society during the late 1690s that it became "derisively known as the Taffeta Society."<sup>7</sup> The movement also attracted talented and learned men, the most important of whom were Francis Lee (1660–1719) and Richard Roach (1661–1730), both graduates of St. John's College, Oxford. Lee not only became Jane Lead's spiritual son, even marrying her widowed daughter to secure the relationship, he also co-founded the Philadelphian Society with Lead, in 1697, in order to propagate her ideas systematically, through organizing public meetings and publishing her writings. Reverend Rich-

<sup>4</sup>This argument is developed in Sylvia Bowerbank, "Millennial Bodies: The Birth of New Nature in the Late Seventeenth Century," in *Speaking for Nature: Women and Ecologies of Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

<sup>5</sup>Important studies of Jane Lead's work are included in Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace 1678–1730* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Catherine F. Smith, "Jane Lead's Wisdom: Women and Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Poetic Prophecy in Western Literature*, ed. Jan Wojcik and Raymond-Jean Frontain (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), 55–63; eadem, "Jane Lead: The Feminist Mind and Art of a Seventeenth-Century Protestant Mystic," in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979): 183–203; Joanne Magnani Sperle, "God's Healing Angel: A Biography of Jane Lead" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 1985); and Nils Thune, *The Behmenists and the Philadelphians: A Contribution to the Study of English Mysticism in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1948).

<sup>6</sup>Jane Lead, *A Message to the Philadelphian Society, Whithersoever dispersed over the whole Earth* (London, 1696), 12.

<sup>7</sup>Lee C.E. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660–1688* (1931; repr. New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1968), 307. Unfortunately, Whiting gives no source for this comment.

ard Roach, rector of St. Augustine's, Hackney, was an equally steadfast spiritual son of Jane Lead. He acknowledged in his "Divine Communication," that, although the Virgin Wisdom of God might condescend to display herself to men, she especially manifested herself intrinsically to women: "And hence favours will be indulged to the females of this day, both virgin and others, of like nature with that of the Virgin Mary, but in a more internal and spiritual way."<sup>8</sup> The Philadelphian vision is a legacy of hope, but it is built on the spiritualization of body and earth and on the eschatological motifs of *Revelation*. What does the Christian mystical tradition have to offer to current debates over the destiny of the earth and its inhabitants?

It remains important to study the details of the intellectual struggle of the Philadelphians, as well as the strategies they used to bring into effect a distinctive concept of an androgyne God and a corresponding history of nature receptive to women's desire for a compassionate and just reality. In fact, the very strangeness of their ideas makes visible the range and limits of what has now become acceptable "nature" for us. Many educated men of the Restoration period, whether theologians or philosophers, agreed that God no longer intervened miraculously to change nature. The lesson learned from English revolution was that entrenched hierarchies of power, whether in the church or state, would be challenged and disrupted if God's love was allowed to range indiscriminately and dangerously among people of all stations. "God" was increasingly restricted to operating only as Providence, according to set and knowable natural laws. Such educated men thus did their part to depreciate enthusiasm as a dangerous contagion.<sup>9</sup> God's intervention in history was to be considered a unique occurrence of the apostolic period. With the repression of prophecy, there were no openings for women's theological discoveries, even among the Quakers.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, especially during the 1690s, Jane Lead and the Philadelphians had some short-lived success in publishing their tracts and in promulgating their concept of an androgyne God with revolutionary plans. Chief among Lead's contributions was her reiteration of radical compassion as the cosmic principle of Divine interaction with nature. By envisioning God as an androgyne, with Virgin Wisdom hidden eternally

<sup>8</sup>Roach's "Divine Communication" is reproduced in a patchwork collection of Philadelphian pieces, published as Mrs. Jane Lead, *Divine Revelations and Prophecies* (Nottingham: H. Wild, 1830), 81–88.

<sup>9</sup>See George Williamson, "The Restoration Revolt Against Enthusiasm," *Studies in Philology* 30 (1933): 571–603. Two well known philosophical attacks were Henry More, *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* (1662) and John Locke, "Of Enthusiasm," in *An Essay on Human Understanding*, 2 vols. (1690; repr. New York: Dover, 1959), 2:429–31, 434, 436, 438.

<sup>10</sup>For the use of "God" as a mechanism of social control to encounter radical spirituality in late eighteenth-century England, see Stuart Peterfreund, "Blake, Priestley, and the 'Gnostic Moment,'" in *Literature and Science: Theory and Practice*, ed. Stuart Peterfreund (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990), 142–43.

within him, Lead highlighted compassion as an essential co-existing quality of God the Father (not just the Son). Her aim was to discover a method by which earthly bodies might be made “agreeable” and “answerable” to the rising light of Divine Wisdom who was to remake nature, subject by subject, in Her own compassionate image.<sup>11</sup>

Christianity has bequeathed to the West a conflicted legacy regarding the nature of God and divine interaction with the earth and its inhabitants. Particularly vexing from the point of view of ecology is Christianity’s eschatological history of nature.<sup>12</sup> “Ecology” designates a range of discourses about life and its habitats (from Greek *eco* for “habitat” or “household”), and includes ethical discourses concerning how to coexist appropriately with other forms of life on earth. In contrast, “eschatology” designates a distinctive discourse on last things, on the end of history, on death and judgment; it is derived from the Greek *eskhatos* for “last,” plus the familiar *logos* for “discourse.” As Stephen L. Cook writes that to invoke the eschatological mode, whether in literature, politics, or society, is to instigate radical change and discontinuity; eschatology “involves an imminent inbreaking by God inaugurating a future age qualitatively different from this age.”<sup>13</sup> For Christians, the ultimate achievement of ecological harmony or peaceable nature has been understood as a millennial phenomenon.<sup>14</sup> In the final analysis, to appeal to an alternative reality in which all beings achieve perfect accord on earth is to evoke the coming of the end of time and space, when Divine Spirit enters material history. It is also to bring into play the authority of certain key Biblical texts, especially Revelation in which God’s version of history is enigmatically disclosed. Discursively, eschatology defers the ultimate overcoming of suffering and oppression to the end of history, when the earth will be annihilated amidst a series of apocalyptic horrors, but finally transcendent reality will be restored. Arguably, in the meantime, for Christians, *contemptus mundi* has long seemed the height of spiritual intelligence. By locating salvation else-

<sup>11</sup>Jane Lead’s diary, *Fountain of Gardens*, was published in 3 volumes; 1 and 2 in 1697; and volume 3 in 2 parts 1700 and 1701; for this idea, see 3:68 and *passim*.

<sup>12</sup>Important ecofeminist critiques of Christian eschatology include: Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk*, 99–102, 235–66; and Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), esp. chap. 7, “Eschatology: A New Shape for Humanity,” 197–212. For an appreciative analysis of Ruether & McFague’s contributions, see Peter C. Phan, “Woman and the Last Things: A Feminist Eschatology,” in *In the Embrace of God: Feminist Approaches to Theological Anthropology*, ed. Ann O’Hara Graff (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1995): 206–28.

<sup>13</sup>Stephen L. Cook, *Prophecy & Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 24

<sup>14</sup>For the widespread use of millennial rhetoric in ecological writing, see M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jacqueline Palmer. “Millennial Ecology: The Apocalypse Narrative from Silent Spring to Global Warming,” in *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*, ed. Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 21–45.

where, either in the afterlife for individuals or at the end of history for humanity, Christianity can be said to look forward to death of the body and of the planet. Such an apocalyptic pattern of history suggests, to some observers, that Christianity seems theologically committed to ecocide.<sup>15</sup> At the very least, Christians have been charged with worshiping a transcendent God who appears aloof from, if not indifferent to, the well-being of the earth, but who will return in wrath to judge the failings of earth and its bodies.

Ruether raises the provocative question of whether Christian ideas of eschatology can be ever be understood as compatible with an ecological or a feminist understanding of history. Ruether's own strategy is, in part, to focus attention away from a transcendent God toward the positive doctrine of incarnation; the ministry of Jesus has always exemplified the revolutionary concept of "Divine advocacy of the Oppressed" and thus the promise of a new day and a new earth.<sup>16</sup> Interpreted as earth-friendly, the eschatological promise of a future time when God's amnesty will take effect encourages Christians to act in order to bring about an end to suffering and oppression. For Bernice Marie-Daly the millennial process toward good change on earth is essentially gendered and dualistic: the "masculine" properties of domination and struggle will be overcome or be balanced by the "feminine" properties of compassion and co-operation.<sup>17</sup> Nor have secular writers forsaken the imaginative potential of eschatological metaphors. Western ecological feminists still combine ideals of androgyny and the appeal to a lost home of "Eden" to configure the desired future state of ecological harmony and justice.<sup>18</sup> The deeply engrained

<sup>15</sup>One of the strongest challenges comes from Native American critics, such as Vine Deloria, *God is Red* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1973). Ward Churchill, *Struggle for the Land: Native North American Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide, and Colonization* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ringer, 1999) documents a number of case studies of the disastrous effects of Euro/Christian approaches to land use in contrast to the earth-centered practices of, for example, the Haudenosaunee of Upper-state New York, the Lakota of the northern plains, and the Lubicon Cree of Northern Alberta.

<sup>16</sup>Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk*, 25. The contradiction at the center of the Judeo-Christian God is captured nicely in the Rabbinical saying: "God prays to himself that his mercy may triumph over his severity"; In E. Stauffer, "Theos." in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Kittel, 3:110. Quoted by Blumenberg 260.

<sup>17</sup>Bernice Marie-Daly, *Ecofeminism: Sacred Matter/Sacred Mother* (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1991). Her ideas are loosely based on Teilhard de Chardin's evolutionary view of the "eternal feminine" as a celestial force spiritualizing nature. In 1918, he wrote: "The Virgin is still woman and mother: in that we may read the sign of the new age.... By its very nature, the Feminine must continue unremittingly to make itself progressively more felt in a universe that has not reached the term of its evolution.... The tender compassion, the hallowed charm, that radiate from woman—so naturally that it is only in her that you look for them, and yet so mysteriously that you cannot say whence they come—are the presence of God making itself felt and setting you ablaze"; *The Prayer of the Universe* (London: Collins, 1973), 149–53.

<sup>18</sup>Marilyn Sewell, ed., *Cries of the Spirit: A Celebration of Women's Spirituality* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 235.

pattern of the earthly “now” against the heavenly “then” is illustrated here in a poem which accompanied Judy Chicago’s “The Dinner Party”:

And then compassion will be wedded to power  
 And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind  
 And then both men and women will be gentle  
 And then both women and men will be strong  
 And then no person will be subject to another’s will  
 And then all will be rich and free and varied ...  
 And then all will live in harmony with each other and the Earth  
 And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

The Philadelphian contribution to Western thought is very much about the opening up of the concept of God to its full and radical potential, thus, setting in motion a corresponding restoration of nature in the here and now. Jane Lead prophesied that, if Divine Feminine, obscured in the shadows of Judeo-Christian tradition, were given full and fair expression, a culture of planetary peace could soon be created. With curious prescience, Boehme had called the process “the greening” of creation.<sup>19</sup>

The Philadelphian vision of the future is articulated as a spiritualization of nature and, as a consequence, does not appear to anticipate either feminist or ecological thought. And while it may be good news for feminists that a Feminine Divinity appeared to an Englishwoman in the late-seventeenth century, this figure is stubbornly configured as a Virgin—as a self-generating Spirit, unpolluted by the concerns of the known world and weaknesses of the human body. The appeal to an ultimate future when the earth and humanity will be made luminous by the grace of the Virgin Wisdom seems to negate any immediate concern with planetary well-being. The Philadelphians aspired to be “virginized souls”; they worked to clarify their bodies in the “Eunuch Reservatory.”<sup>20</sup> The bright ethereal bodies that inhabit Lead’s visions seem strange and estranged from our current earth-based perspective that studies, reveres, and defends the sacred lives of whales and snails, the fecundity and variety of earth’s embodied progeny. Lead’s visions of a Divine Virgin seem entirely abstracted from the earth and its realities, grounded in otherworldly illusions and apparently oblivious to ecological wellbeing. Yet, understood within seventeenth-century political discourse, the Philadelphian “virgin nature” is a complicated and radical concept. The keen resemblance

<sup>19</sup>See Jacob Boehme, *Four Tables of Divine Revelation* (1654), reproduced by Nigel Smith in “Jacob Boehme and the Sects,” in *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 194.

<sup>20</sup>Lead, *Fountain of Gardens*, 1:26. As Susanna Elm, “*Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) makes clear, the use of the word “eunuch” has long been in use among ascetic communities to designate their preferred mode of subjectivity (122–24).

between the confined situation of their Divine champion (hidden in God the Father) and that of the humble circle of inquiring women (hidden in the shadows of patriarchy), waiting and working together for the liberation of the Virgin Wisdom and the coming of a new age suggests that the Philadelphian movement was not merely apolitical and otherworldly.

Jane Lead's version of nature's revolutionary destiny is based on four main sources: 1) her continual reading of Scripture, especially the sapiential books and Revelation; 2) her youthful encounters with the dissenting conventicles of the 1640s; 3) her study of Boehme's theosophical speculations especially as they were filtered through the conversations and writings of English Behmenists, chiefly John Pordage (1608–81); and 4) her own visions of the Virgin Wisdom, starting in 1670 and continuing for thirty years. The influence of Revelation is pervasive in her writings, especially in the urgency and intensity of her prose.<sup>21</sup> To illustrate, on 1 February 1678, she is startled out of sleep by a Voice:

Awake, awake, be putting on of your Body of Strength, sleep not in security as others do, for distress in all Nations is coming on.... that Fire-Ball will kindle throughout all Nations, whereby they shall be consumed and devour one another. But there will be given again the immaculate Body to some, for a distinguishing and sealing Mark.... These are of the ransomed Ones...a righteous Seed, that shall replenish the Earth again, after Judgment hath done its work....<sup>22</sup>

Yet, despite the influence of Revelation, the familiar series of apocalyptic horrors—war, famine, plague, earth quakes, and other global catastrophes, and even the last judgment—are rarely mentioned.<sup>23</sup> Instead, characteristically, Lead seeks a compassionate interpretation of the text; she

<sup>21</sup>Resonances of Revelation abound in Lead's texts, and include everything from the redeemed being arrayed in white robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb; to an penchant for the number seven (as in the opening of the seventh seal); to having the phrase "I am Alpha and Omega" carved on her tombstone; Rev. 7:14; 8:1; 21:6.

<sup>22</sup>Lead, *Fountain of Gardens*, 3.1.56–57.

<sup>23</sup>As Sperle points out, Francis Lee reported that his mother-in-law often said that "There are many angels of judgment but few healing angels"; quoted in Sperle, "God's Healing Angel," 30. Sperle felt the comment so crucial to an understanding of what Lead's mission was about that she entitled her PhD dissertation: "God's Healing Angel: A Biography of Jane Ward Lead." In contrast, although Adam McLean also noticed Lead's emphasis on healing over vengeance, he decided, notwithstanding, to illustrate his 1981 edition of her *Revelation of Revelations* with Albrecht Durer's famous woodcuts of the Apocalypse. The juxtaposition of Lead's text and Durer's imagery serves to show a marked difference in their representations of the same book of the Bible: "As a contrast to her interior images," admits McLean, "[Durer's woodcuts] symbolically capture a more male, outer vision of the Apocalypse events, complete with millennialist destruction and horror"; Adam McLean, introduction to Jane Leade, *The Revelation of Revelations* (Edinburgh: Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks, 1981), 4.

focuses on “the ransomed Ones” and the positive potential of the woman clothed in sun, travailing to give birth, and eventually triumphing in bringing forth a new universe. In Lead’s second book *Revelation of Revelations* (1683), the opening of the seventh and last seal is given a positive spin; it will uncover the “rich bank and vast treasury of Wisdom,” and loosen her spirit and power to “vigorously carry on this New Jerusalem-building.”<sup>24</sup> The words of Revelation that resonate in Lead’s texts suggest that she is focusing her gaze well past the apocalypse; she is striving to sing a “new song” and even as she writes, the “living stones” are gathering together to build the New Jerusalem.

Lead’s debt to the theosophy of Jacob Boehme is everywhere evident in her writings. This legacy was acquired between 1670 and 1681, when she entered into a close spiritual partnership with John Pordage. Pordage was a leading English commentator on Boehme’s recently translated texts and an initiator of a circle of Behmenist mystics.<sup>25</sup> In *Revelation of Revelation*, Lead reiterates Boehme’s narrative of cosmic history in which, for all eternity, God dwells in a deep abyss or “glassy sea” of Revelation 4:6 (Boehme’s Ungrund), which appears as still nothingness, outside of time, space, or structure, but contains everything. Before time, God existed abstractly, writes Lead, “abiding in his own simplified Deity, before either the angels or other creatures were created.”<sup>26</sup> Following Boehme, her God is a God who, longing to be conscious of self, appears as in a mirror and beholds the Virgin Wisdom. God is revealed as an androgyne in whom the Virgin Wisdom abides, though hidden, for all eternity; no mention is made of her being created. Accordingly, Lead writes, the Virgin is a manifestation of the everlasting and divine creator:

She was before all, as being the co-essential creating power in the Deity, which formed all things out of nothing, and hath given a dignified existency to all those seraphic glories which move within her own Sphere, who are the product of an unsearchable wisdom, for the replenishing of those superior worlds which are little known in this, where we are outcasts.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Jane Lead, *Revelation of Revelations* (London, 1683), 23. Catherine F. Smith does an astute biographical reading of Lead’s penchant for using metaphors of riches and dowries that cannot be snatched away. Given that, after her wealthy husband’s death, Lead was swindled by an overseas administrator and left destitute, she might have been “covertly protesting” the legal practices and limitations regarding women’s rights of inheritance. See “Jane Lead’s Wisdom,” 58–59.

<sup>25</sup>In *Perfection Proclaimed*, Nigel Smith points out that thirty-two separate translations of Boehme were published between 1644 and 1662 (188). Smith’s chapter, “Jacob Boehme and the Sects,” is a fine assessment of Pordage’s contribution. Other important studies include: Thune, *The Behmenists and the Philadelphians*; and Serge Hutin, *Les Disciples Anglaises de Jacob Boehme aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 1960).

<sup>26</sup>Lead, *Revelation of Revelation*, 28.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 54.

Thus, for Lead, as for Boehme, the Virgin Wisdom is at once God's self-simulation and dissimulation.

In Lead's history of nature, it is the suffering of the earth that moves the Virgin to proceed from the glassy sea of eternity. The until-now-hidden female part of God hears the groaning of the earth, and, in deep compassion, emerges in historical time to bring forth good change. Like so many of her contemporaries, Lead's understanding of the present state of the world is that of a broken humanity and a degraded earth, suffering under the curse of the fall. In one vision, she sees the whole frame of earth, trembling restlessly, while "those Inhabitants that were found upon it, stood shaking and tottering."<sup>28</sup> Likewise, in a vision of 16 March 1678, "a man of earth" appears to her, dressed in "plain husbandman's garb," and bows to her. Lead cries out "Woe and Alas!" in sympathy and solidarity with the man of the earth, afflicted in "a thousand ways." He is the progeny of Adam, who generated according to the fallen kind and now, alas, "the Earth is over-spread with a Corrupted Seed...[we are] Creatures of Oppression and Violence."<sup>29</sup> The time is nigh for the Virgin's seed to crush the serpent's seed, as promised in Genesis 3:15. "Solomon's Porch," the splendid poem that prefaces Lead's *Fountain of Gardens*, reiterates the Philadelphian vision of the earth's destiny:

Too long, too long the wretched World  
Lies wast, in wild Confusion hurl'd  
Unhing'd in ev'ry part; each Property  
Struggling disrang'd in fiercest Enmity.  
The whole Creation groans;...  
But now shall Natures Jarr  
Cease her Intestine War....<sup>30</sup>

Lead and her followers construct an historical narrative in which violence and suffering are to be driven out of the cosmos. This very day, in London, the Virgin Wisdom hidden in God is in ascendancy once more; she is listening to groaning creation, as a mother "who cannot but be more sympathizing with her Children." She is seeking a way to redeem the earth to its first estate, working to create subjects answerable to her will, so that she may reenter history fully.<sup>31</sup>

By way of elucidating the Philadelphian view of the cosmos, I now digress briefly to the work of Anne Conway who, although she converted

<sup>28</sup>Lead, *Fountain of Gardens*, 3.1.65.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 3.1.121-22.

<sup>30</sup>"Solomon's Porch" was probably written by Francis Lee (see Christopher Walton, *Notes and Materials for an Adequate Biography of the Celebrated Divine and Theosopher, William Law* [London, 1854], 232, 252), although for some reason Thune attributes it to Richard Roach; *The Behmenists and the Philadelphians*, 139.

<sup>31</sup>Lead, *Enochian Walks*, 26.

to Quakerism in the end, took a long term interest in Behmenist ideas.<sup>32</sup> As D.P. Walker points out, one of the few books advertised in *Theosophical Transactions* (1697) of the Philadelphians was Conway's *Principles of the most Antient and Modern Philosophy*.<sup>33</sup> The affinity between Conway and the Philadelphians can be seen in the former's claim that the original creation was based on the principle of sympathy: "[God] implanted a certain Universal Sympathy and mutual Love in Creatures, as being all Members of one Body..."<sup>34</sup> Conway also theorized the body as essentially one substance with the spirit, and therefore capable of gradually transforming itself into a more subtle and volatile form.<sup>35</sup> She dared to attack Hobbes, Descartes, and other modern philosophers for failing to understand the powers of the body and matter to transmute themselves:

they were plainly ignorant of the noblest and most excellent Attributes of that Substance which they call Body and Matter... Spirit of Life, and Light, under which I comprehend a capacity of all Kind of Feeling, Sense, and Knowledge, Love, Joy and Fruition, and all kind of Power and Virtue, which the noblest Creatures have or can have; so that even the vilest and most contemptible Creatures; yea, dust and sand, may be capable of all those Perfections...through various and succedaneous Transmutations from the one into the other; which according to the Natural Order of Things, require long Periods of Time for their Consummation, although the Absolute Power of God...could have accelerated or hastened all Things and effected it in one moment....<sup>36</sup>

Thus, like the Philadelphians, Conway thought the achievement of true nature was possible in history. God gave creatures time, she argues, so that they might pride themselves in the work required to perfect themselves by slow degrees: "as the Instruments of Divine Wisdom, Goodness and Power which operates in, and with them: for therein the Creature hath the

<sup>32</sup>As demonstrated in a letter of a certain Worthington [no first name given] to Henry More, dated 8 January 1668: "I believe had your ears full of Behmenism at Ragly [Lady Conway's estate]...for when I was at London, I met with one who was to buy all Jacob Behmen's works to send thither"; quoted in Margaret Lewis Bailey, *Milton and Jakob Boehme: A Study of German Mysticism in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Haskell House, 1964), 93.

<sup>33</sup>Anne Conway, *Principles of the most Antient and Modern Philosophy* (1692). This is an English translation of the Latin version, *Principia Philosophiae Antiquissimae & Recentissimae*... (Amsterdam 1690). Conway's original English version is lost. *Theosophical Transactions* (London: Philadelphian Society, 1697), 98; D.P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 225.

<sup>34</sup>Conway, *Principles*, 56.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 154–56.

greater Joy, when it possesseth what it hath, as the Fruit of its own Labour.”<sup>37</sup>

The centrality of radical compassion to Lead’s concept of the godhead is indicated by the fact that only once did she disagree overtly with Boehme’s theosophy (and some of her followers) in vindicating the doctrine of apocatastasis (or universal restoration).<sup>38</sup> Referring to her departure from Boehme, she writes:

I must own, that Jacob Behmen did open a deep Foundation of the Eternal Principles, and was a worthy Instrument in his Day. But it was not given to him, neither was it the Time for the unsealing of this Deep. God has in every Age something still to bring forth of his Secrets, to some on Gift, to some another, as the Age and Time grows ripe for it.<sup>39</sup>

Her spirit moved another degree, she tells us, when in 1693, it was revealed to her that God’s compassion would be extended universally to all those once considered lost, including the apostasized angels. On the title page of *Enochian Walks*, she announces that there is to be a fresh teaching on the “Immense and Infinite Latitude of God’s Love,” that is, that the restoration of His Whole Creation to its Original harmony will include even the Luciferian spirits, once the time of their due punishment is over. This is a cosmic compassion so radical that one of her contemporaries accused Lead not only of heresy but of endangering public order: “in this age of licentiousness, there is hardly any doctrine of hers of more pernicious consequence than that of her pretending Divine revelation for her doctrine concerning *the finiteness of hell torments*.”<sup>40</sup>

Jane Lead’s writings on the Virgin Wisdom release a volatile figure capable of effecting fundamental change. Lead shrewdly negotiates the shifty terrain between dogma and myth, theorized by Hans Blumenberg in his *Work on Myth*. Unlike holy texts which “cannot be altered one iota,” writes Blumenberg, myths have a high degree of constancy at their narrative core that makes them “recognizable,” and the capacity for variation and innovation on their margins.<sup>41</sup> On one hand, Lead is confronted with the fixity of Protestant orthodoxy that requires the validation of scriptural authority, even as it virtually disallows women to engage in theology or textual exegesis. On the other hand, Lead has her own visions of the

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.,155.

<sup>38</sup>For Lead’s adherence to the doctrine of apocatastasis, see Thune, *The Behmenists and the Philadelphians*, 72–77; and Walker, *The Decline of Hell*, 218–30.

<sup>39</sup>Jane Lead, *A Revelation of the Everlasting Gospel-Message* (London, 1697), 25.

<sup>40</sup>The comment is taken from one of Henry Dodwell’s letters to Francis Lee, cited in Walton, *Notes and Materials*, 193; emphasis in original.

<sup>41</sup>Hans Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 34.

Virgin Wisdom which license her to tell particularized stories about God's present operations and the future of the earth. Lead elaborates on the Word; she seeks deliberately to speak what she terms "fresh words" on Divine history.<sup>42</sup> Based on Scriptural remnants, she initiates a new narrative about the Virgin Wisdom entering history and situates the story in a particular time and place: London, April 1670. So, while she is constrained by the holy text, her very method of reading and rereading puts strategic emphasis on certain passages. Then she prays, inquires, goes on to watch, and elaborates on what she finds; thus even as she reasserts scripture, she unsettles things and opens the text to its original mythic potential.

To illustrate just how unsettling Jane Lead's writings were at the time, I will now examine some of the arguments advanced against her by the learned Henry Dodwell (1641–1711), a theologian and nonjuror, who wrote a sustained attack on Lead's authority as a prophet. The attack appears in a series of letters that Dodwell was prompted to send to Francis Lee, a fellow non-juror, who had just become Jane Lead's spiritual son and collaborator in the Philadelphian society.<sup>43</sup> As his letters show, Dodwell was clearly mystified and irritated that someone of Lee's high caliber of learning, piety, and literary talent would deliberately devote his life to championing Lead's prophecies. In trying to argue Lee out of his folly, Dodwell declares that his primary concern is to preserve the unity and integrity of the Church of England and to ensure that the best and brightest of Englishmen, including Francis Lee, should support the authorized church, which is the only one that can be sustained over time. Dodwell reiterates the church's standard injunctions against enthusiasts: claimants to prophecy of all sorts are unnatural, dangerous, and divisive. As all established denominations agree, moreover, true prophecy was confined to the apostolic period. Women prophets, in particular, claims Dodwell, have always brought dishonour and disorder to the church, "even in Apostolic

<sup>42</sup>Prophets are given "fresh words" and "fresh discoveries" from time to time, says Lead, *Fountain of Gardens* 3.1.161, 166. Likewise, in *Enochian Walks*, she calls for "feeding from a fresh Pasture" (28).

<sup>43</sup>The correspondence between Dodwell and Lee was fortunately preserved among the papers of the eighteenth-century religious writer William Law (1686–1761), best known for his *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1728). These papers were published by Christopher Walton as *Notes and Materials for an Adequate Biography of the Celebrated Divine and Theosopher, William Law* (1854). We learn on the front page that Walton had unsuccessfully advertised for an editor for Law's papers. To qualify, the applicant was to have a "sound classical learning" and a "masculine strength of reason and judgment." No one suitable was to be found, so Walton ended up publishing the papers himself, and letting stand any number of prejudicial remarks to discredit Jane Lead's reputation, such as that she had "the character of the piety of the Cromwell-Muggletonian-fanatic days in which she lived" (148). Despite three layers of misogyny—deposited by Dodwell in the seventeenth, Law in the eighteenth, and Walton in the nineteenth centuries—Francis Lee's brilliant defense of his mother shines through in his letters.

times, when gifted women presumed to exercise their gifts in assemblies of men; you see how the Apostle restrains them from it.”<sup>44</sup>

Dodwell’s second aim is to discredit Lead herself as a deluded prophetess. Since he is hesitant to blacken the name of the woman Francis Lee calls “mother,” Dodwell would prefer to cast her as the dupe of others, notably John Pordage (1608–81), sometime rector of Bradfield and the leader of a Behmenist circle during the 1650s and 1660s and Jane Lead’s partner in spiritual seeking during the 1670s until his death in 1681. Her deep respect for Pordage is evident in all her writings; for example, in her preface to his *Theologica Mystica*, published just after his death, she calls him a “holy and heavenly Man,” whose mystical work was left to be completed by the next generation.<sup>45</sup> Dodwell paints a very different picture of the man as a spiritual opportunist; he repeats the scandalous story that, in 1654, Pordage lost his living—even during the fanatical times of Cromwell!—because he was accused of having “unwarrantable conversations with spirits” and bewitching women to prophecy.<sup>46</sup> Dodwell likens Pordage to one of those sly heretics in history who seduced women into believing they were prophetesses: “so Simon Magus with his Helena, so Appelles with his Philumena, so Montanus with his Prisca and Maxilla.<sup>47</sup> So it was, Dodwell insinuates, with Pordage and his Jane.

But, for Dodwell, the case is worse if Jane Lead deliberately wrote her own books. Not only is she a usurper of hermeneutic and prophetic powers, she is also a heretic because she revives some of the absurd and pernicious notions of Gnosticism that had long been dispelled from all denominations of orthodox Christianity, including the notion that God is an androgyné. In Dodwell’s words:

I was surprised to find her stumble on several antiquated heresies, condemned for such in the first and most infallible ages of Christian religion. She calls her Virgin Wisdom a goddess, directly contrary to all those purest ages have declared against the difference of sex in the Divinity....<sup>48</sup>

The letters that Francis Lee wrote in reply to Henry Dodwell provide a vibrant defense of both Lead’s authorship and prophetic authority. To summarize, Lee argues that, far from disrupting church unity, the Philadelphians are a small circle within the Anglican community working to restore the piety of the primitive church. Jane Lead herself has lived a

<sup>44</sup>Walton, *Notes and Materials*, 188.

<sup>45</sup>Lead, preface to John Pordage, *Theologica Mystica* (Amsterdam: Heinrich Wettstein, 1698), 9.

<sup>46</sup>For the details of this story, see Nigel Smith, “Jacob Boehme and the Sects,” 185–225; and Hutin, *Les Disciples Anglais de Jacob Boehme* 83–84, 250–51.

<sup>47</sup>Walton, *Notes and Materials*, 192–93.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 193.

humble and holy life in voluntary poverty and in constant prayer. Nothing in her writings contradicts scripture or church doctrine.

Francis Lee ridicules the very idea that Jane Lead did not write her own books, as he has daily experiences of her profound knowledge of scripture, as well as of her ease in composing her thoughts—not only in her books but also in an extensive correspondence with admirers on the continent. As for her distinctive teachings on the Virgin Wisdom, Lee insists, Lead never uses the word “Goddess” to refer to her visions, nor is she the one who introduced a female personality into the godhead: “she useth to speak of Wisdom in the same manner as doth Solomon in his Proverbs, and the author of the Book of Wisdom: yea, as Christ himself doth, Matt. xi.19.”<sup>49</sup> When push comes to shove, Lee is quite capable of mocking Dodwell and men’s pretensions, as for example when he writes that, in the highest understanding, “the appellation of male and female, when appropriated to the Divine Being are *equally improper*.”<sup>50</sup> Francis Lee’s strategy is to reclaim and to situate the writings of his spiritual mother well within the pale of orthodoxy. Yet, as we shall see, he in no way seeks to diminish the revolutionary potential of her prophecies.

It is clear in Lead’s writings that she deliberately inquires after the Virgin Wisdom, looking for license to elaborate on the traces of the Being she has found in Scripture and in translations of Jacob Boehme’s writings.<sup>51</sup> Careful to keep low and to ground her visions in the language of recovery of what is already there, albeit hidden, in the Holy Text, Jane Lead discovers what she seeks. It is worth noting that she had a life-long habit of exercising her thoughts while reading scripture and that everything she wrote was in conversation with scripture. The habit started early, as is indicated by an incident from her late teens. During Christmas festivities, when she was eighteen years old living in a respectable Anglican home, Lead (then Ward) went through a spiritual crisis of the sort that marked the coming of age of many converts to radical Puritanism. For three years, Lead was in great spiritual anguish, but she told no one, even though her family and friends were alarmed that she had become acutely introverted. She began a secret course of reading that one day led to her being “surprised” by the Chaplain of her father’s house who caught her surreptitiously “reading in his Study.” Fortunately, he encouraged her to continue in her habit of holy reading and inquiry. Her life-long preoccu-

<sup>49</sup>Walton, *Notes and Materials*, 207.

<sup>50</sup>Walton, *Notes and Materials*, 208; emphasis mine.

<sup>51</sup>These traces include the Genesis passage in which God created mankind in his own image and likeness (“In the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them”), references to God’s “bosom” or “the milk of the Father,” and to the sapiential books in which God speaks under the rubric of the Virgin Wisdom. Based on such traces, J. Edgar Bruns, *God as Woman, Woman as God* (New York: Paulist Press, 1973), argues that it is doubtful that the Hebrew Yahweh is ever considered “utterly masculine by his worshipers” (35).

pation with study was considered by Francis Lee to be the cause of her eventual loss of sight.<sup>52</sup>

It is evident that Lead deliberately chose to study certain texts that authorize women's freedom in spiritual matters.<sup>53</sup> She lays aside those passages that might be used to forbid her prophecies; for example, she overrules Paul's oft-repeated sanction against women's speaking:

[it is] *from a most Essential and Experimental ground from which this goeth forth; which if otherwise, in my Circumstances, I should not have rendered myself publick*: For every Woman praying, or prophesying with her Head uncovered, dishonoureth her Head I Cor. 11.5. But Christ being my Head-covering, I have both Commission, and Muniton-strength, upon which I shall proceed, and go forward, and say something.<sup>54</sup>

Judging by her writings, it is apparent that Lead knew by heart all those texts wherein remains of the Feminine Divine can be found, particularly, in Proverbs and the Books of Wisdom. The first vision of the Virgin Wisdom came in April 1670, explicitly in response to an inner debate Lead was having over the nature of a Feminine Divine Being who left scriptural traces of Herself. Prompted by Solomon's example, Lead writes, on that day, she was seeking Wisdom's "Favour and Friendship; demurring in my self from whence she was descended, still questioning whether she was a distinct Being from the Deity or no?"<sup>55</sup>

In April 1670, two months after her husband's death (on 5 February), Lead was in the countryside visiting a friend, taking solitary walks in the woods, desiring to have conversation with the Divine Wisdom, when the Virgin first appeared. Or is it that the Virgin Wisdom is produced by the inquiry, by Lead's relentless research and incessant questioning of the holy text and the cosmos? The first words of the Virgin are: "Behold I am God's Eternal Virgin-Wisdom, whom thou hast been inquiring after.... [I am] a true Natural Mother; for out of my Womb thou shalt be brought forth after the manner of a Spirit, Conceived and Born again...."<sup>56</sup> A few

<sup>52</sup>Preface of the publisher to Jane Lead, *The Wars of David and the Peaceable Reign of Solomon* (London, 1700).

<sup>53</sup> Ann Bathurst, Lead's sister-prophet in the Philadelphian movement, also includes numerous scriptural validations for woman's speaking in her diary; on 1 June 1694 she writes: "O Thou birth of the Holy Ghost, *a woman shall compas a man*, weakness shal lay hold on strength" (Jer. 31:22); and on 16 June 1694: "Double thy Spirit upon thy handmaid..." (Joel 2:28-29). See *Rhapsodical Meditations and Visions by Mrs. Ann Bathurst*.... 2 vols. Bodleian MS, Rawl. D 1262-63. Despite the obvious limitations, a vibrant argument for women's freedom, based on scriptural arguments, was achieved by Quaker Margaret Fell Fox in her *Women's Speaking Justified* (1666).

<sup>54</sup>Lead, "An Instruction, and Apology to the following Discourse," *Enochian Walks*.

<sup>55</sup>Lead, *Fountain of Gardens*, 1:18.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

days after her first vision, Lead returned to London and went into complete retirement to await further revelations; they came six days later when the Virgin appeared with a train of Virgin spirits and an Angelical host. If Lead would join the Virgin train and acknowledge Wisdom as her mother, the Virgin promised to be to Lead as Rebecca was to Jacob: his co-conspirator in supplanting his brother Esau. “[Wisdom would]...contrive and put me in a way how I should obtain the Birth-right-Blessing. For if I would apply my self to her Doctrine, and draw my Life’s Food from no other Breast, I should then know the recovery of a lost kingdom.”<sup>57</sup> With her mystic’s eye, Lead peered into the cosmos, night after night, seeking beyond the cold rhythms of the stars to find a God with the dove eyes and tender heart of a woman. As signified by the body parts—breast, heart—the Voice that answers Lead’s inquiry is not that of an abstracted distant, law-bound Providence but a compassionate God who hears the groaning of creation.<sup>58</sup>

Lead wrote during the dawning of the “age of reason,” when the Cartesian subject was in its ascendancy and a diminished Deist God had only his absence and death to anticipate. Yet, paradoxically, it was equally the age of compassion, when great seekers—such as Jeanne Guyon (1648–1717), Antoinette Bourignon (1616–80), and Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647–90)—heard voices, speaking from the heart of God.<sup>59</sup> Sister Alacoque’s vision of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, wearing his crucified heart outside his robe, provided a throbbing symbol of a God who cares about the fate of creation, which endured in the popular imagination at least for three centuries.<sup>60</sup> Lead’s visions of the Virgin Wisdom provided what she

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 1:25–26.

<sup>58</sup>For an interesting comment on the strange rhetorical polarities of patriarchy and feminine imagery deployed even in Puritan America, see David Leverenz, “Breasts of God, Whores of the Heart,” chapter 5 of *The Language of Puritan Feeling: An Exploration in Literature, Psychology, and Social History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1980), 138–61.

<sup>59</sup>Ted A. Campbell makes the important point that the Enlightenment and the religion of the heart movements are “nearly simultaneous cultural phenomena,” and not simply competing movements; *The Religion of the Heart: A Study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 175–77.

<sup>60</sup>Richard Roach records that Jane Lead appeared on the night of her death as a curious version of the sacred heart. Around the time of Lead’s death, in mid-August 1704, a woman at Utrecht was reading Lead’s *Revelation of Revelation*. She fell into a visionary dream, in which Lead appeared recognizably as a pale and old matron, “very pious and modest,” but wearing only a mourning veil of black silk. The dreamer was unnerved by the apparition and also ashamed because underneath the veil, the figure was naked; Lead’s breast was laid open with her heart visible. The dreamer tried to flee, but was drawn to the heart, where Jesus was hanging on his crucifix, with John and Mary on either side (*Papers of Richard Roach*, Bodleian MS, Rawl. D 833, 2:89). The report of the dream can also be found among Lee’s papers (Lambeth Palace MS 1559); the dreamer is tentatively identified as Joanna Halberts by Sperle, “God’s Healing Angel,” 43–44.

called “experimental knowledge” of a God who hears the groans of the earth, a God who reenters history with breasts of consolation, a God out of whose womb a new reality will be born.<sup>61</sup> Lead prophesied that “a birth is to be born in which nothing but joy, life, blessing and eternal power and dominion shall take place.”<sup>62</sup> Such a God-concept is inextricably linked to a distinctive history of nature—based on the mysteries of the female body—that ends not in the death and destruction of the earth but in the birth of a new earth restored to justice and peace among all living beings. What Lead articulates is an eschatology patterned on rebirth and regeneration, as might be expected by the grace of an androgyne God.

The representation of God as an androgyne has direct implications for the Philadelphian representation of the ideal human subject.<sup>63</sup> As Sallie McFague observes, “Our tendency is not only to model God in our image, but to model ourselves on the models with which we imagine God.”<sup>64</sup> In a vision of 29 September 1677, Lead claims that a Voice passed through her, promising: “Ye shall be marked with the Father’s name.... Upon which word I much exercised my mind.... [I]t was thus given Me to understand, that to be marked with the Father’s Name, is no less than to be transfigured into a Virgin Body.”<sup>65</sup> For Lead, in correspondence to the Father/Virgin Wisdom, the true human subject will be an androgyne, or in Lead’s terms, a Virgin Body. Following Boehme, Lead asserts that to claim that the original Adam was created in “the image of God” is to claim that he was also androgynous, male and female, and had a Virgin hid within him:

God Created Adam at first to bear his one Image and Figure, who was to represent God himself, the High and Divine Masculine, Male and Female: so that Adam had his Virgin in himself in imitation of his Creator, which in Time was brought forth in a distinct Figure.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup>McFague argues that to embody God is to envision a God that suffers with other suffering bodies. It is to make ecology a sacred responsibility and a divine priority: “if God is embodied, then bodies become special and whatever degrades, oppresses, or destroys bodies affronts God”; *The Body of God*, 200.

<sup>62</sup>Lead, *Revelation of Revelations*, 52.

<sup>63</sup>The transformative potential of the image of an Androgyne God is defended by Eleanor Rae and Bernice Marie-Daly in *Created in Her Image: Models of the Feminine Divine* (New York: Crossroad, 1990). For instance, they write “if one takes seriously the experience of androgyny, our images of God/ess could be presented in a way that would do justice to the teaching in Genesis that, in some real way, our being created female and male is the basis for our imaging of the Divine, while at the same time paying honour to the fact that the fullness of humanity is present only when both male and female is represented” (85).

<sup>64</sup>McFague, *The Body of God*, 145.

<sup>65</sup>Lead, *Fountain of Gardens*, 2:409.

<sup>66</sup>Jane Lead, *Wonders of God’s Creation* (1695), 31.

Thus, in Lead's reiteration of Boehme's reading of the first three books of Genesis, Adam was able to procreate spiritually, as angels do; Virgin Adam was "sufficient of himself to increase and multiply for the replenishing of paradise."<sup>67</sup> The original sin occurred when Adam chose Eve and the Virgin fled.<sup>68</sup> There seems to be some equivocation as to whether the first Eve was made in "the High and Divine Masculine, Male and Female," of Genesis I; she was already distanced from God the androgyne.<sup>69</sup> The second Eve, in any case, is a powerful figure for Lead, representing restored and full human nature. The second Eve, unlike the first, will partake fully in divine image, male and female; her progeny will replenish the earth with bright, self-generating bodies.<sup>70</sup> To achieve the subjectivity of the second Eve here and now is the chief end of Lead's mystical travails. The project set for Lead and Wisdom's followers was to develop self-regulating techniques that would produce the desired effects, the generation of a society of androgynes. Lead's writings are full of instructions for rehabilitating the imagination, thus leading to the "manufactory" of new subjects. At the end of time, Lead saw the human subject figured as the Second Eve, the true androgyne, the millennial body, wearing a clear and-white robe, looking out on the world "through Dove eyes."<sup>71</sup>

Jane Lead did not attempt to go beyond the Father (as Mary Daly did in recent memory) or to dethrone him and replace him with Christ, or the Mother or the Goddess.<sup>72</sup> Instead, she opened up and elaborated on the

<sup>67</sup>Lead, *Revelation of Revelations*, 38. For Boehme's reading Genesis 2:21, in which the taking of the rib marks the "dissolution" the divine wholeness of Adam, see *Mysterium Magnum. Or An Exposition of the First Book of Moses called Genesis*, trans. John Sparrow (1654), ed. C.J.B. (London: John M. Watkins, 1965), 1:110.

<sup>68</sup>This idea is derived from Boehme, who connected original sin to the division of Adam into two sexes and away from androgynous completeness. See "Appendix II: The Androgyny of Adam," in Hans L. Martensen, *Jacob Boehmen (1575–1624): Studies in his Life and Teaching by Hans L. Martensen (1808–1884): Primate Bishop of Denmark*, trans. T. Rhys Evans, ed. Stephen Hobhouse. (London: Rockliff, 1949), 153–54.

<sup>69</sup>For a various treatments of Eve, compare Lead, *Fountain of Gardens*, 2.110–11 with 3.1.192–93, 3.2.311–12, and *Revelation of Revelations*, 38. For the rich variety of historical interpretations of Eve, see Kristen E. Kvam, Linda S. Schearing, and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds., *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), esp. chap. 6. Both the point that the concept of an androgynous God and corresponding Adam is derived from a Jewish cabalistic reading of Genesis, and the question of whether such a concept promotes an egalitarian vision of woman-man relationships are raised on 165.

<sup>70</sup>Sophia will now espouse herself to Eve, "so long barren" and bring forth "a holy Issue" to make up a perfect church on earth; Lead, *Fountain of Gardens*, 2.114.

<sup>71</sup>Dove's eyes" appear in the Song of Sol. 5:12; and "white raiments" (washed in the blood of the lamb) appear in Rev. 4:4; 7:9–13 ; Lead depicts Virgin Spirits in white robe and with dove's eye in *Fountain of Gardens*, 3.1.114. The Philadelphians are called "the Dove-Flocks" in *Fountain of Gardens*, 1.4 and *Message to the Philadelphian Society*, 4.

<sup>72</sup>In the 1970s, Mary Daly described her ecological feminist project as a form of "decide," that would replace God the Patriarch with "God the Verb"; *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 12.

sign of the true Father, as found in scripture, to discover a Virgin Wisdom hid in Him for all eternity.<sup>73</sup> The Philadelphians saw themselves as a “holy convocation,” fashioning their very natures to be receptive to the Virgin Wisdom’s mysterious operations, preparing the way for the new reality on earth (*Enochian Walks* 3).<sup>74</sup> They believed that nurturing a community of “virginized souls” or androgynes would bring about a peaceable culture, a precondition to the coming of natural harmony and Divine Wisdom. As a community, they advocated and lived according to a strict code of voluntary simplicity, based on repudiating wealth, limiting consumption, and repressing sensuality. And, their collective practice of poverty, fasting, prayer, and self-restraint was understood as a way of living, conducive to the conservation of compassionate nature in themselves, and therefore, beneficial to the rest of creation.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup>Seventeenth-century Catholic women had recourse to Mary and other female saints to mediate Divine power on their behalf. In *The Garden of Our B[lessed]. Lady* (1619), recusant Sabine Chambers grants the Blessed Virgin as much celestial power as orthodoxy will allow: “Next unto God the Father, she is most potent./Next unto God the Sonne, she is most wise./Next unto God the Holy Ghost of most goodnesse, and of most ardent charity” (272).

<sup>74</sup>Lead, *Enochian Walks*, 3.

<sup>75</sup>For a detailed study of their way of life, see Bowerbank, “Millennial Bodies.”



## *The Unfortunate Traveller* and the Ramist Controversy: A Narrative Dilemma

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THE NARRATIVE AND RHETORICAL structure of Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* has vexed its critics almost since its initial appearance in 1593. Most modern critics have followed a line something akin to that of G.R. Hibbard, who sees Nashe as a writer unable at times to distinguish his own voice from that of the narrator, Jack Wilton.<sup>1</sup> Stephen Hilliard's study of Nashe notes the critical tendency to see *The Unfortunate Traveller* as "a formless work, spun out by a careless author with no fixed purpose" and, though he chides such critics for ignoring its many virtues, grants that they likely "reflect a truth" about its composition.<sup>2</sup> Even ardent admirers of the work, such as Nashe biographer Charles Nicholl, say it presents "a sense of life as a series of episodic fragments."<sup>3</sup>

Such criticism is difficult to rebut because Jack Wilton, the beleaguered narrator of *The Unfortunate Traveller*, is without doubt a voice in search of a proper rhetorical mode. He careens from the discourse of the confidence man, to that of the aristocrat, to that of the poet, to the preacher, and, in the end—though only briefly—to that of the penitent sinner. The end result is a character who seems oddly out of joint with his own narrative. At one moment we see him gleefully recounting his various bawdy and at times malicious exploits, while at others we see him soberly sermonizing against Anabaptist and Papal excesses. A reader scarcely knows how, or even whether, to try and reconcile the two voices. Perhaps Hibbard is correct: the gleefully mischievous persona is the fictive Jack Wilton and the didactic one is Nashe, who clumsily co-opts his narrator occasionally.

However, a more useful approach to Nashe's difficult narrativity may be found in exploring the extraordinary degree to which the text is self-

<sup>1</sup>G.R. Hibbard, *Thomas Nashe: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 154–55.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen Hilliard, *The Singularity of Thomas Nashe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 122.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Nicholl, *A Cup of News: The Life of Thomas Nashe* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 157.

consciously rhetorical. Despite the pamphleteer's frequent praise of the "extemporal", Philip Schwyzer has usefully pointed out the impossibility—given his rate of production—that Nashe simply cranked out whatever came to his mind at a given moment without any recourse to ornamentation and revision.<sup>4</sup> In fact, his work engages persistently and intelligently with issues of artistry and rhetorical strategy, as Jonathan Crewe's book on the subject makes clear:

Rhetoric's simply being there and exerting a continuous force is enough to induce, if not a conviction of its primacy, then at least a profound irresolution about the nature of "reality".... Without committing himself unequivocally to performance as an absolute value or to the systematic promulgation of an antiworld, the ongoing possibilities of "rhetoric" are extensively explored in his work.<sup>5</sup>

Crewe's reading, in fact, suggests that those possibilities constitute the "subject" of *The Unfortunate Traveller*, that in some sense its narrative level exists simply as a foil to its rhetoric, especially at the tale's end, as the brutality of the latter operates in tension with the happy ending denoted by the former.

Crewe's reading is essential in its identification of rhetoric's centrality to Jack Wilton's adventures. However, an assertion of rhetoric's primacy in the tale is incomplete without careful attention to the conflicting intellectual notions of rhetoric operative in Elizabethan culture. I would argue that Nashe explores such rhetorical problems in terms of one of the most acrid academic debates of the Renaissance, the battle between the proponents of Peter Ramus—who sought with considerable arrogance and ability to critique classical notions of rhetoric and dialectic—and the more conservative thinkers who remained champions of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. Nashe himself weighed in on this controversy more than once in his pamphlets. In his *Anatomic of Absurditie* he praises the students who "wisely prefer renowned antiquitie before newe found toyes, one line of *Alexanders* Maister [Aristotle], before the large inuective *Scolia* of the *Parisian* Kings professor [Ramus]"<sup>6</sup> and warns against a student coming to understand logic "by the rayling of *Ramus*" so that he "estimats Artes by the insolence of Idiots."<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, he uses the issue as another means of castigating the rival Harveys, of whom Gabriel at least was an

<sup>4</sup>Philip Schwyzer, "Summer Fruit and Autumn Leaves: Thomas Nashe in 1593," *English Literary Renaissance* 24 (1994): 586.

<sup>5</sup>Jonathan Crewe, *Unredeemed Rhetoric: Thomas Nashe and the Scandal of Authorship* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 23.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas Nashe, *The Anatomic of Absurditie*, in *The Complete Works of Thomas Nashe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), 1:43.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:45.

ardent Ramist.<sup>8</sup> While Hibbard seems to question whether Nashe had a deep sense of the issues involved in the debate, he notes that Nashe always favored the “conservative and traditionalist” positions in such matters.<sup>9</sup>

No reason exists, however, to believe he did not grasp at least the general issues of the debate and I believe we can see the consequences of the dialogue between the two positions in the elements of narrative chaos of *The Unfortunate Traveller*. This essay will examine those elements, concluding that Jack Wilton is trying to become a speaker at an historical moment when the cultural and intellectual forces around him have confused the very notion of what it means to speak and write. The lines of classification of Renaissance rhetoric and poetic—drawn by classical authors, modified in the middle ages, then radically redrawn by Ramistic doctrine—have profound consequences to the self-conscious narrator type of Jack Wilton. As he speaks to us and to the other players of his story, he grants us an insight into the persistent mediation required in the Renaissance between speaker, style, and content. The apparent rhetorical hodgepodge of the text is a mirror of the conflicting currents of thinking—particularly those suggested by the Ramist controversy—concerning the *rhetor* and his role in the Renaissance.

The fundamental instabilities in sixteenth and seventeenth century rhetorical theory occur in assessing the proper relationship between content, style, and speaker. The classical and medieval tradition considers all three of these elements to be interlocking and essential to the art of rhetoric. Plato’s critique of rhetoric in the *Gorgias* sets the stage for this linkage by attacking the Sophists for their lack of concern about content, for arguing the lesser case. Quintilian continues in this tradition by defining rhetoric as “the good man speaking well,” a definition which demands a virtuous speaker, speaking eloquently, about matters which will ultimately cultivate better behavior in listeners; anything else is not properly rhetoric.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, when we take Cicero’s work on rhetoric as a whole we first find in *De Inventione* that eloquence and wisdom are *both* necessary ingredients to successful rhetoric.<sup>11</sup> *De Oratore* makes clear in several places that to produce both ingredients requires an ideal orator who, if not virtuous, is at least possessed of a nearly universal education.

<sup>8</sup>See Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500–1700* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1956) for a detailed account of Ramism in England. 196–99 detail the exchanges between Gabriel Harvey and Nashe on the topic.

<sup>9</sup>Hibbard, *Thomas Nashe*, 6.

<sup>10</sup>Quintilian, *On the Early Education of the Citizen-Orator: Institutio Oratoria, Book I and Book II, Chapters One Through Ten by Quintilian*, trans. by John Selby Watson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965).

<sup>11</sup>Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Inventione*, trans. by H.M. Hubbell, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 21.

Medieval rhetoric, while clearly underappreciated by modern scholars in its contributions to rhetorical theory, does not radically change this notion, but it does plant the seeds of its demise. Augustine's basic premise, set forth in his *De Doctrina Christiana* is that ornament can be found even in the Bible and eloquence, so long as it is used to support his notion of *charitas*, has a place in the discourse of Christian peoples.<sup>12</sup> The subsequent divisions of Ciceronian principles into the *artes poetria*, *dictaminis*, and *praedicandi* of the Middle Ages exist circumscribed in this assumption. D.W. Robertson Jr. demonstrates, for instance, that medieval poetics tends to believe in the notion that rhetorical ornament is used to protect and enhance a core of divine meaning.<sup>13</sup> However, the seeds of a split between speaker, style, and content are sown here; words have begun to be seen as "clothing" for divine ideals, with the emphasis being placed on whatever divine truths can be found lurking beneath.

This very abbreviated context is necessary to emphasize the way Ramus and his Renaissance followers destabilized thinking about the nature of producing a text and, particularly in Jack Wilton's case, the nature of being a producer of texts. The first point of Ramistic philosophy relevant to our discussion critiques Quintilian's assertion that a rhetorician must be a good man. This, Ramus argues, makes no sense because "a definition of any artist which covers more than is included in the rules of his art is superfluous and defective."<sup>14</sup> The position is argued in Ramus's trademark heated and dismissive manner, but boils down to this: a person without virtue can obviously be a skilled user of language and thus, the Quintilian definition is useless. This would certainly seem to echo our twenty-first-century sense of rhetoric as well; no one today would argue, for instance, that Bill Clinton's sexual behavior diminishes his capacity as a rhetor except insofar as it affects his ability to create a publicly viable ethos.

Ramus not only severs the link between speaker and rhetorical practice, but also removes the generation of content from the art of rhetoric. In short, he makes invention and arrangement the province of dialectic and memory, style, and delivery the province of rhetoric. The most important English Ramistic logic and rhetoric of the sixteenth century, an adaptation of his *Dialectica* by Dudley Fenner, demonstrates the importance of this separation.<sup>15</sup> Following Ramus, Fenner divides his discussion of logi-

<sup>12</sup>See especially the discussion of Paul's eloquence scattered through most of Book 4. For this article, the edition referenced was Saint Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D.W. Robertson Jr. (New York: Macmillan, 1958).

<sup>13</sup>D.W. Robertson Jr., "Some Medieval Literary Terminology with Special Reference to Chretien de Troyes," *Studies in Philology* 48 (1951): 669–92.

<sup>14</sup>Peter Ramus, *Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian*, trans. Carole Newlands (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), 84.

<sup>15</sup>See Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric*, 219–22 for an account of the prominence of Fenner's text.

cal categories into two parts: Invention and Judgment. Within this discussion of invention, he discusses the importance of form as follows:

The form is a cause by the which a thing is that which it is and so different from all other things, as in the example of man before mentioned. But the natural form of things, though they may be conceived by reason, yet they cannot well be uttered by speech. The artificiall forme of things is much more easie to be conceived in reason, and uttered in wordes....<sup>16</sup>

For Fenner, form does not help to shape an idea, and words are a means of clouding understanding rather than achieving it. Instead, reason is the unclothed “pure” idea and logic is the means by which such ideas are achieved.

In light of the classical stance toward rhetoric represented here by Cicero in *De Inventione*—arguably the most admired work on eloquence of the middle ages and beginnings of the early modern period—the shift in emphasis is striking:

I have been led by reason itself to hold this opinion first and foremost, that wisdom without eloquence does too little for the good of states, but that eloquence without wisdom is generally highly disadvantageous and is never helpful.<sup>17</sup>

For Cicero, one’s reasons and one’s ability to express them are interlinking parts of being a good citizen; the two work in concert rather than hindering one another. When Fenner, on the other hand, turns to rhetoric, he has a subtle but profound distrust. After defining elocution as the “gar-nishing of speech,” he justifies it rather tentatively:

This changing of words was first found out by necessitie, for the want of wordes, afterward confirmed by delight, because such wordes are pleasant and gracious to the eare. Therefore this chaunge of signification must be shamefast, and as it were maydenly, that it may seeme rather to be led by the hand to another signification, than to be driven by force unto the same.<sup>18</sup>

The goal for Fenner is obviously to reduce the amount of violence which ornament might do to an idea. Indeed, when he next discusses hyperbole and catachresis (placing a word in an odd context to gain emphasis)—two of the more revered rhetorical tropes of traditional rhetoric—he refers to the latter as “the abuse of fine speech” and the former as “the excesse of

<sup>16</sup>Dudley Fenner, *The Artes of Logike and Rhetorike*, (Middelburg: R. Schilders, 1584), 1.2.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 1.1.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 2.1.

this finesse.” While it would be misrepresenting Fenner (and Ramus) to suggest that he treats all tropes with such suspicion—in fact, following Augustine he finds some of them in the Bible—his zeal for rhetoric is clearly lower than his zeal for logic. As Walter Ong notes, “To the Ramist, Dryden’s admission that he was often helped to an idea by a rhyme was an admission of weakness, if not outright intellectual perversion.”<sup>19</sup> The importance of this rigid division between logic and rhetoric possibly has been overemphasized in discussions of Ramistic philosophy; Ramus still believes that knowledge can be generated in and through language, but that the proper home of such generation is in the art of dialectic. In a sense, he has simply moved around the classifications.<sup>20</sup>

Tinkering with classifications does, however, have consequences for the way we think about things. When coupled with his insistence that we no longer consider the quality of the speaker in our consideration of oratory, Ramistic rhetorical doctrine requires an almost complete severance between speaker (or writer), content, and style. In the sixteenth century, this radical theory was being circulated alongside the more traditional Ciceronian rhetorics of Roger Ascham, Thomas Wilson, and George Puttenham, rhetorics which maintained the ancient Roman insistence on invention as rhetorical practice and on the orator as a well-educated, virtuous figure. This swirl of contradictory thinking on the nature of discourse runs through *The Unfortunate Traveller* consistently, manifesting itself through Jack Wilton’s halting and difficult attempts to become a *rhetor*.

Jack’s first words on the art of persuasion indicate a strong sense of himself as a persuader and also an ardent disregard of classical virtue in the uses of his persuasive abilities. We learn very early that while the prince must use command to get men to do his bidding, Jack is quite capable of using his wits, as he says, to “make them spend al the mony they had for my pleasure.”<sup>21</sup> And in his long speech to the cider merchant we learn how proud he is of the complete power he has over his listener; indeed the man “was readie to haue striken his tapster”<sup>22</sup> for interrupting Jack as he explains the man’s (outrageously concocted) mortal danger.

The type of rhetoric employed by Wilton here obviously does not fit into any sort of classification, at least not one recognized in “authorities,” but it does demonstrate some sound rhetorical principles. He succeeds in persuading the terrified vendor to give away large amounts of cider, prin-

<sup>19</sup>Walter J. Ong, *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958), 289.

<sup>20</sup>For a useful summary, though in some ways a dismissive one, of Ramus’ intellectual contributions see Pierre Alber Duhamel, “The Logic and Rhetoric of Ramus,” *Modern Philology* 46 (1949): 163–71.

<sup>21</sup>Thomas Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, in *The Complete Works of Thomas Nashe*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), 2:210.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:212.

cipally through the device of *narratio* concerned with events, which Cicero classifies into *fabula*, *historia*, and *argumentum*. What Wilton has done is to construct a *fabula* and pass it off as a recent *historia*; that is to say, he tells a big lie. However, the execution of the lie has some rhetorically admirable traits. Cicero admonishes that a *fabula* must be told with brevity, clarity, and plausibility. While Jack probably slips a bit on brevity, he tells the story with a clarity and plausibility that shocks the “Lord of Misrule” into what would have previously been unthinkable to him. His details, down to suggesting that the king believes the merchant to be smuggling out intelligence in empty cider barrels, have the ring of truth to them despite being pure fabrication. If we read this initial rhetorical exploit of Jack’s in the context of the tension between Ramistic and traditional theories of persuasion, we see that in this instance Ramus wins. The virtue of the speaker and the rightness of his cause have no relationship whatsoever to the efficacy of his story and Wilton clearly revels in his ability to persuade here, regardless of consequences to himself and others. We couldn’t be given a clearer example of the notion that the efficacy of rhetoric has little relation to the nobility of its purpose.

Jack’s next foray into discourse uses the Ramist tensions as an opportunity to construct a condemnatory theme sermon on the Anabaptists featuring Matthew 11:12 as the central scripture:

When Christ said *the kingdome of heaven must suffer violence*, hee meant not the violence of long babling praier, nor the violence of tedious inuective Sermons without wit, but the violence of faith, the violence of good works, the violence of patient suffering. The ignorant snatch the kingdom of heauen to themselves with greedines, when we with all our learning sinke into hell.<sup>23</sup>

This is the preamble to a long sermon on the evils of the Anabaptists and, by extension, all Protestant sects. The sermon makes sense when ascribed to the quite conservative Nashe, but when ascribed to the somewhat amoral Jack Wilton (as it clearly is), the sermon rests uneasily as a polemic and intrusively self-conscious rhetorical act. Are we intended to assume that Nashe has clumsily dropped his narrator momentarily or are we to assume that Wilton has a heretofore repressed interest in the tides of reformation?

The criticism of “tedious, invective sermons without wit” provides a useful window here, I believe, for Wilton has created some tedious invective himself. He begins by misappropriating the passage from Matthew, which quite clearly claims, out of Christ’s mouth, that “from the days of John the Baptist until now [the time of Christ, presumably] the kingdom

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 2:279.

of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matt. 11:12). Christ is marking his own presence as a moment when the violence against the kingdom of heaven is stopped, thus making Wilton’s protestations to need the “violence” of faith and good works seem hollow at best. The commentary that follows, then, resting as it does on such sandy ground, not surprisingly washes about unevenly. The sermon fires off a nice round on the “dim cloud of dissimulation” with which the Anabaptists cover the “glorious sun of the Gospels,” but also meanders into a rant against the poverty of continental lands prompting the overthrow of the episcopacy. It finally degenerates completely into a hope, bolstered by quotation from Ovid, that those who weaken religion be gelded.<sup>24</sup>

This is silly stuff, and with Nashe’s voice we can laugh at the boldness of the pamphleteer. Nashe had, in fact, constructed a long sermonic pamphlet of his own, *Christ’s Tears*, that is likely his least admired work, both amongst moderns and his contemporaries. In Jack Wilton’s voice, earnestly attempting to gloss the faults of the Anabaptists, the failings of the sermon are troubling. He has attempted to perform several feats of persuasion and even exegesis; his method has been simply to follow the forms of his genre, but he has not applied any rigorous logic to his thinking on the subject. He has voiced opinions that we might presume Nashe to have held, but the form of presentation has failed to hold them particularly well. Rhetorical form here has been applied, but without any recourse to logic—we have sermonic ornamentation without the bare bones “reasons” which Fenner (via Ramus) claims. What Fenner calls “artificial forms” have been applied here, and uttered in words, but they lack a coherent “natural reason” beneath them, especially so since Ramistic rhetoric keeps arrangement—sorely needed in this sermon—as a part of logic.

The resultant critique we can see here favors the Ciceronian notion of the need for more than just eloquent forms. However, since the content is likely palatable to Nashe, this represents in many ways a noncommittal representation of the difficulties one faces in speaking in Renaissance culture. His creation, the young blooming rhetor, has some grasp of ornamentation and a knowledge of his subject, but has been unsuccessful in negotiating the competing models available to him for forming the ideas. He has neither used the Ciceronian method for building arguments, nor has he adopted the medieval *ars praedicandi* nor has he used the Ramistic method of invention and judgment. The confused intellectual environment creates an out of control whirl in which the sermon fails properly to express its topic, maintain a convincing style, or even persistently maintain a consistent rhetorical voice. In short, the problems of the sermon are a micro-version of the problems of the entire text of *The Unfortunate Traveller*.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 2:232–38.

His difficulties with the sermon apparently prompt Nashe and/or Wilton to further meditate on the nature of discourse in the pages which follow as Jack immerses himself in Renaissance Europe. We are first urged, by juxtaposition, to compare the corrupted formal disputation of the university professors with that of the “inkhorne orator” who addresses the duke. A group of professors have been appointed to praise the duke, but, failing to surprise anyone who has attended a university graduation, their presentation lacked “any ostentation of wit” and was laced with so much Latin that the resultant sycophancy is nearly incomprehensible.<sup>25</sup>

The next orator whose speech is described in detail is that of “Vanderhulke” the inkhorn orator. “Vanderhulke” was an epithet Nashe used to describe Gabriel Harvey in a prior work and so we might expect an opportunity here for criticism. Indeed, Vanderhulke is fat, drunken, and possessed of “a sulpherous big swolne large face.”<sup>26</sup> His speech is inappropriate for the occasion and rambles overmuch. However, it has a wit lacking in the speech of the professors, particularly in its closing:

Bonie Duke, frolike in our boure, and perswade thy selfe that euen as garlike hath three properties, to make a man winke, drinke, and stinke, so we wil winke on thy imperfections, drinke to thy fauorites, and al thy foes shall stinke before vs. So be it. Farewell.<sup>27</sup>

No one would claim a brilliant sort of wit here, but the use of language is clever and Vanderhulke has used a nice bit of troping at the end to close up his oration. It may be ridiculous, but the duke finds it entertaining, and let us not forget that entertaining and flattering the duke were the purposes of the entire Wittenberg pageant.

Nashe, through Jack’s account, has created in the professors and Vanderhulke exemplars of the dilemma of Ramistic doctrine. The professors, in their use of Latin and its logical terms, perhaps have access to the logical truths suggested by the method of invention and judgment. However, they completely fail in constructing an oratory useful to their purposes; even the drunken students who follow them in the pageant seem to have greater eloquence. The “inkhorne orator” Vanderhulke, on the other hand, seems possessed only of vulgar ornament; there is no “there” there in his speech. While the Duke does receive him warmly, the text leaves no doubt as to his inferiority as a character.

The entire opening of Jack’s entrance into Wittenberg serves to suggest the presence of Ramistic doctrine while hinting at an entirely Ciceronian and Quintilian remedy: eloquence could only be restored to the

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 2:246–47.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 2:247.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 2:249.

occasion through reuniting speaker, content, and style. The point is reinforced and expanded in Jack's assessment of the academics in attendance upon Luther and Carolostadius during a debate held the following day:

A most vaine thing it is in many vniuersities at this daie, that they count him excellent eloquent who stealeth not whole phrases but whole pages out of Tully. If of a number of shreds of his sentences he can shape an oration, from all the world he carries it awaie, although in truth it be no more than a fooles coat of many colours. No inuention or matter haue they of theyr owne, but tack vp a stile of his stale galymafries.<sup>28</sup>

The problems of the rhetorical controversies have thus created a sort of discursive paralysis. The academics noted above cannot even achieve the artless logic that perhaps the professors of the pageant could achieve, but instead, faced with either a voiceless dialectic or an empty rhetoric, simply steal from old authorities.

Midway through the story then, in the face of his own inadequacies as speaker/thinker and those of others, Wilton offers us an insight into what he finally feels is most admirable in a user of words. When Petro Aretino, "Aretine," aids in his release from jail after being falsely accused of counterfeiting, Jack spends a great deal of time praising his skill with a pen. Not surprisingly, he first praises his tremendous wit. He then praises his boldness and spirit, claiming that "if out of so base a thing as inke there may bee extracted a spirite, hee writ with noughte but the spirite of ink.... [N]o leafe he wrote on but was lyke a burning glasse to set on fire all his readers."<sup>29</sup> Rather than flattering his countrymen, he goads them, and "his life he contemned in comparison of the liberty of speech."<sup>30</sup> No doubt Nashe the brazen pamphleteer—and an avowed admirer of the real Aretine—is coming through at this point, but Jack seems to have absorbed the discourse of his time in an almost cynical way. Rather than praising his careful thought, or good reasons, or his ability to use tropes or ornament his ideas—all necessary in the Ciceronian and Quintilian tradition—he has come to admire the rhetoric of shock. The ability to stick barbs in one's opponents is the highest measure of a writer's skill to Jack Wilton. Nashe employed this skill often as a pamphleteer, but one wonders whether we should view this uncritically as an assessment of what is admirable in the rhetoric of his age.

One final type of rhetor figures prominently in Jack's narration: the poet. Nashe creates the famed earl of Surrey, obsessed with his true love Geraldine, as Jack's master and patron. The portrayal of the poet creates

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 2:251.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 2:264.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 2:265.

several moments when Nashe is clearly satirizing Surrey's type of poetry and, probably by extension, most of the poetry being produced in England during his day. Though lacking quality, the poems are not particularly distinguishable from much Renaissance poetry. As Crewe notes, one of the "parodic" poems actually appears in a Renaissance anthology of poems, *England's Parnassus*, and not as a farce.<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless, Jack seems to suspect a deficiency in his master's art, though he hesitates to come right out and say so. Particularly interesting, in light of the Quintilian insistence on the rhetor being a good man speaking well, is the way Jack comes to view Surrey as an ultimately ineffectual man. Wilton critiques Surrey's first poem, for instance, composed in the dungeon of Mistress Tabitha, for being a rather idle pastime given their dire circumstances, comparing it to the man who beats the bush while another gets the bird. Later, composing *bon mots* based on Ovid as he issues a challenge to the world, we receive this subtly scathing description of his dress:

His armour was all intermixed with lillyes and roses...his helmet round proportioned lyke a gardners pot, from which seemed to issue forth small thrids of water.... Whereby he did import thus much, that the teares that issued from his braines, as those artefi-ciall distillations issued from the well counterfeit water-pot on his head, watered and gaue life to his mistres disdain (resembled to nettles and weeds) as increase of glorie to her care-causing beauty (comprehended vnder the lillies and roses).<sup>32</sup>

Jack is witnessing his master the poet in quite humiliating garb and, following commentators such as Sidney who have little regard for the English poetry of the day, Nashe has suggested a fall of the poet from grace as an effective rhetorician. As Tuve suggests, failing to see the poet as a rhetor works against the very grain of Renaissance training in the language arts; thus the denigration of Surrey's very character is an indictment against poetry itself as rhetoric.<sup>33</sup> Though different spin might be placed upon the portrayal of Surrey, ultimately I think we must again be drawn to the Quintilian notion that this poetry is ridiculous because its author is so. Jack has once again unwittingly implied that perhaps the classical rhetorical theorists are more astute than the Ramists give them credit for.

As Wilton's story continues, the uses of discourse become increasingly more toxic and less formalized in conjunction with the decidedly darker turn of the narrative. Heraclide, for instance, attempts to persuade the rapist Esdras from his intent by a moving plea to higher authority asking

<sup>31</sup>Crewe, *Unredeemed Rhetoric*, 82.

<sup>32</sup>Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, 2:271-72.

<sup>33</sup>Rosemond Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), 281-83.

“is there a power about thy power?” The criminal’s response amounts to a simple “no” and a claim that his luck supersedes the ability of divine retribution to punish him; the brutal rape follows.<sup>34</sup> Diamante is raped during this episode as well and Wilton is paralyzed mostly, it would seem, by his own lack of courage to aid her. He supposedly believes his door is guarded during the crimes, but his protestation is unconvincing: “Then threw I my selfe pensive againe on my pallet,” he notes, “and darde all the deuiles in hell, nowe I was alone, to come and fight with mee one after another in defence of that detestable rape.”<sup>35</sup>

Nashe is creating a situation in which the power of words to redeem is almost completely negated by the horrible evil of the bandits. Jack’s useless howls to “all the deuiles in hell” have no more or less force in affecting the situation than do Heraclide’s. Far from rendering men (or women) able to contend—as Francis Bacon suggests as rhetoric’s role—words have an utterly empty force, as empty as Jack sees his own cowardly howling to be. While Jack may have been able to continue his attempts to become a *rhetor* in the relatively optimistic early half of the book, even in the face of the doubts inserted by Ramist doctrine, the dreadful circumstances of the latter half lead him to recognize language and its users as mere ornament, useless in the face of the world’s realities.

The other particularly notable speeches in the text—that of the exiled, anti-travel Englishman and the venom of Cutwolfe, for instance—have varying tones but equally impotent results. Jack ignores and strains himself to escape from the Englishman; the poisonous tale of Cutwolfe is silenced by the ghastly tortures of the executioner. By the final paragraph, Wilton has learned that effectual speaking is useless in his world, a demonstration I believe is part of Nashe’s belief that the doctrine of Ramus erodes the force of discourse, while the Ciceronian model is too weak to restore its power. All Jack can say by book’s end is that “unsearchable is the booke of oure destinies.”<sup>36</sup> Cutwolfe’s speech, or rather perhaps its grizzly interruption, leaves no action available except “the straight life,” filled with a marriage, alms-deeds, and a return to the service of his monarch. Not a bad life, probably, but certainly not a very rhetorical one for a young man who begins his tale as a budding *rhetor*.

Thus Nashe awkwardly resolves the story without actually resolving the rhetorical dilemmas of his narrator. These dilemmas find their source deep within the intellectual context of Elizabethan England and, though Nashe usually seems to favor conservative classical attitudes toward language, those attitudes prove to be as ineffectual as the more revolutionary Ramistic ones. Stephen Hilliard argues that this sort of paradoxical explo-

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 2:289.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 2:287–88.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 2:327.

ration is typical of Nashe. Though his work often aggressively defends the conservative *status quo*, it cannot help also revealing the limitations imposed by the social and intellectual order of his times.<sup>37</sup> Jack Wilton's seeming abandonment of things rhetorical, then, comes from a failure in his culture to clarify just what it means to use language well. Neither the Ciceronian tradition nor the Ramistic remedy prove sufficient to satisfy either Nashe's talents or those of his young creation.

<sup>37</sup>Hilliard's principle thesis, in fact, is that Nashe spends his career tripping over his own "singularity" as a writer even as he tries to present orthodox intellectual opinions. For instance, in *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, his attempts to discredit Puritans and prop up the orthodox social order ultimately mock themselves; *Singularity of Thomas Nashe*, 61.



## Pain for Pen: Gaspara Stampa's *Stile Novo*

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THE ITALIAN CRITIC AND SCHOLAR, Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) dismisses Gaspara Stampa's *Rime* (1553) thus:

She was a woman; And usually a woman, when she is not given to ape men, uses poetry and submits it to her affections because she loves her lover or her own children more than poetry. The lazy practice of women is revealed in their scanty theoretical and contemplative power.<sup>1</sup>

For him, Stampa's poetry is somehow inferior to her male counterpart's poetry because it lacks "theoretical and contemplative power." This essay will analyze aspects of Stampa's poetry which disprove this claim.

As a woman, Gaspara Stampa was completely aware of the woman's traditionally passive role as the object of love-making and consequently as the subject of poetry. For centuries, authors have assumed that the act of writing privileged men since the physical act of putting pen to paper paralleled men's role in the sexual act. But Gaspara Stampa does not content herself with that metaphor. Instead of submitting her poetry to her lover or to her children, as Croce describes, she seeks a female counterpart of this pen-paper metaphor. In her poetry, Stampa replaces the masculine pen or *penna*, the instrument of conception unique to men, with the female pain, or *pena*, the culmination of conception, the travails of childbirth, unique to women. Significantly, she relates her experiences as a female poet, creating words, to the ultimate female creation of the Word, Jesus Christ's birth, which does not rely on human male intervention, but on divine intervention and the Virgin Mary's free will to be productive. Thus, Stampa creates a new, feminine style of poetry, a *stile novo* as she terms it, similar to Dante's *dolce stil novo*. Her metaphor of maternal procreation allows Stampa to explore the tensions associated with being a female writer where the traditional creation, the woman, has suddenly become the creator.

<sup>1</sup>Benedetto Croce, *Conversazioni Critiche*, 2nd series, 2nd ed. (Bari: Laterza, 1924), 225; my translation.

Following Bembo's injunction, she imitates Petrarch, but still underscores throughout her unique feminine poetical theory. Her first sonnet, which closely imitates Petrarch's first sonnet, introduces several new ideas which are not present in Petrarch. Most of these ideas are outside the scope of this paper, with the exception two: Stampa's introduction of the word *pena* and the reference to her sex. Compare the first two quatrains of Petrarch's poem with the first quatrain of Stampa's:

*Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* 1.1–4<sup>2</sup>

Voi ch' ascoltate in rime sparse il suono  
di quei sospiri ond' io nudriva 'l core  
n sul mio primo giovanile errore,  
iquand'era in parte altr'uom da quel ch' i' sono:

del vario stile in ch' io piango et ragiono  
fra le vane speranze e 'l van dolore,  
ove sia chi per prova intenda amore  
spero trovar pietà, non che perdono.

[You who hear in scattered rhymes the sound of  
those sighs with which I nourished my heart  
during my first youthful error, when  
I was in part another man from what I am now:

for the varied style in which I weep and speak  
between vain hopes and vain sorrow, where  
there is anyone who understands love through  
experience, I hope to find pity, not only pardon.]

*Rime* 1.1–4<sup>3</sup>

Voi, ch'ascoltate in queste miste rime,  
in questi mesti, in questi oscuri accenti  
il suon degli amorosi miei lamenti  
e de le pene mie tra l'altre prime.

[You who listen in these, my sad rhymes,  
in these sad, in these dark accents

<sup>2</sup>Hereafter *RVF*. All quotations and translations of Petrarch are from *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: the Rime sparse and Other Lyrics*, ed. and trans. Robert M. Durling (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

<sup>3</sup>All quotations of the *Rime* are from *Gaspara Stampa: Rime*, ed. Maria Bellonci (Milano: Rizzoli, 1976). English translations are from *Women Poets of the Italian Renaissance: Courty Ladies and Courtesans*, trans. Laura Anna Stortoni and Mary Prentice Lillie (New York: Italica, 1997), or from *Gaspara Stampa: Selected Poems*, ed. Laura Stortoni and Mary Prentice Lillie (New York: Italica Press, 1994), unless otherwise noted.

the sound of my laments of love  
and of my pains amongst the other previous pains.]

The last line in the first quatrain of Petrarch's sonnet refers to his masculinity: "quand'era in parte altr'uom da quel ch' i' sono" (I was in part another man from what I am now) (*RVF* 1.4). We can interpret Petrarch's use of *uomo* (man) in the broader sense of mankind, yet, he does add "i' sono" (I am). Therefore, Petrarch, as a man, is writing masculine poetry and using masculine metaphors. Stampa refers to her sex in a similar manner. She ends her first sonnet thus: "ch'anch'io n'andrei con tanta donna a paro" (That I would go equal to such a woman) (*Rime* 1.14). By reminding her audience of this basic difference between herself and Petrarch, she invites us to see a difference between Petrarch's description of his anguish, using *dolore* (pain), and her description of her anguish, using *pena* (pain). Although both words have similar denotations, Stampa deliberately chooses *pena* because of its close resemblance to *penna* (pen).

The discursive context in which Stampa writes provides ample precedent and, indeed, endorsement for the connection she draws between writing and sexuality. Many authors have used *penna* to refer to the penis. For example, in canto 20, lines 40–45 of the *Inferno*, Dante meets Tiresias who eventually regains his *maschili penne* (manly plumes)<sup>4</sup> after having been a woman for a time. Dante uses *le penne* in a similar manner in *Paradiso* 32.79–81 where *le innocenti penne* (the innocent members)<sup>5</sup> are circumcised. Petrarch's usage of *penna* as a phallic symbol, although discernable, is less obvious than Dante's. For instance, Petrarch's *RVF* 13.91–92 contains a *double entendre* where his pen tires from long and sweet speech with a lady. A similar *double entendre* occurs earlier in the collection where Petrarch describes his situation: "Ma perché 'l tempo è corto / la penna al buon voler non po gir presso" (But because time is short, my pen cannot follow closely my good will,) (*RVF* 33.90–91). This particular poem is full of sexual imagery and *double entendres*, and it is, therefore, not difficult to assign more than a literal meaning to Petrarch's lines; although his desire is there, he is not physically able to follow through.

Although Stampa's readers are versed in this traditional metaphor, they may not make an immediate connection between *pena* and *penna*; however, the words themselves are nearly alike, since only one letter differentiates them. In addition, little separates these two words in terms of the sexual metaphor. We have already seen how *penna* is used in an erotic

<sup>4</sup>All quotations and translations of Dante are from the *The Divine Comedy*, 3 vols, ed. and trans. Charles S. Singleton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), unless otherwise noted.

<sup>5</sup>I have used *The Divine Comedy*, 3 vols. ed. and trans. Allen Mendelbaum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980–84) translation in this instance since Mendelbaum captures the euphemism more clearly than Singleton.

sense; but in order to understand how *pena* functions in this same metaphor, we need to remember that in this first sonnet, Stampa reminds us that she is a woman, so we need to examine how the Renaissance views women, especially the woman's body, as that which is to be acted upon by the male. As is well known, Aristotle postulates that Nature always wishes to create the most perfect being, and that would be a man since he is hotter and better endowed for creation. A woman is created only if the elements do not come together in a perfect fashion.<sup>6</sup> According to Aristotle, the woman only provides the matter upon which the male's principle of movement, the semen, can act:

That is why wherever possible and so far as possible the male is separate from the female, since it is something better and more divine in that it is the principle of movement for generated things, while the female serves as their matter ὕλη.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, according to Aristotelian theory, the active generative principle lies in the male while the woman provides the matter ὕλη. Galen takes Aristotle's claims one step further by postulating that female reproductive organs were simply inverted, underdeveloped male organs, and he makes a direct correlation between the phallus and the uterus.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the uterus is the female equivalent of the penis.

Renaissance physiology, following Classical precedents, enables physical procreation to parallel poetic creation. The male writer's pen allows him to function both sexually and artistically, and the woman provides both the matter and the subject matter. In fact, creation cannot occur without a man, nor without a man's pen, since the ὕλη upon which the semen must act is passive and cannot act on its own. Biologically and poetically, then, women writers are left out of the equation. Their only role is to provide matter for semen or subject matter for poets.

Stampa sees a creative possibility in this biological view of sexuality for a woman writer however. The uterus, which causes the woman pain while delivering a child, is essential for a woman to be productive; a woman cannot be fruitful sexually without her uterus. Gaspara Stampa refers to this feminine aspect of the biological process when she indicates in this first sonnet that loving produces *pena* on her part. Thinking about love-making as a symbol for creating poetry, Stampa's art must also cause her pain; and

<sup>6</sup>Ian MacLean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 8.

<sup>7</sup>Aristotle, *De Generatione Animalium*, ed. and trans. E. L. Peck, Loeb edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 2.1.731b–32a. All English translations of Aristotle are from the Loeb edition.

<sup>8</sup>Galen, *De usu partium*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Margaret Tallmadge May (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 14.6. All English translations are from this edition.

since the uterus and the phallus were thought to be analogous, we can make a connection between *pena* and *penna*. Stampa's pain is just as essential in her creative process as Petrarch's pen is in his. When viewed in this light, Stampa's choice of *pena*, to replace Petrarch's *dolore*, becomes more evident. *Dolore*, although it means pain, is not similar enough to *penna* to fit Stampa's poetical theories. However, she still does not make a connection between pen and pain this early in her collection. She only introduces the fact that she is a woman and that her writing causes her pain.

Instead, Stampa continues to develop her poetical theories by introducing conspicuous maternal imagery in her second sonnet. In this sonnet, Stampa introduces her lover, Collatino, the male counterpart of Petrarch's Laura. The first line of this sonnet imitates Petrarch's third sonnet that describes his first encounter with Laura; the next line then diverges from the pattern. This change allows Stampa to broach the image of the creation becoming the creator. Compare the first anniversary sonnets of both Petrarch and Stampa:

*RVF* 3.1–4; 9–11

Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro  
per la pietà del suo fattore i rai  
quando i' fui preo, et non me ne guardai,  
ché i be'vostr'occhi, Donna, mi legaro

.....  
trovommi Amor del tutto disarmato,  
et aperta la via per gli occhi al core  
che di lagrime son fatti uscio et varco.

[It was the day when the sun's rays turned  
pale with grief for his Maker when I was  
taken, and I did not defend myself against  
it, for your lovely eyes, Lady, bound me.

.....  
Love found me altogether disarmed, and  
the way open through my eyes to my heart,  
my eyes which are now the portal and  
passageway of tears.]

*Rime* 2.1–8<sup>9</sup>

Era vicino il di che 'l Creatore,  
che ne l' altezza sua potea restarse,

<sup>9</sup> Again, I have followed Stortoni and Lillie's translation except where indicated by curly brackets, {}, where the translation is mine.

in forma umana venne a dimostrarsi,  
dal ventre virginal uscendo fore

quando degnò l'illustre mio signore,  
per cui ho tanti poi lamenti sparsi,  
potendo in luogo più alto arridarsi,  
farsi nido e ricetto del mio cuore.

[It was about the day when the Creator,  
Who could have stayed in His sublime abode,  
Came down to show Himself in human form,  
Issuing from the Holy Virgin's womb

When...my illustrious lord  
For whom I {have shed so many tears}  
Who could have found a nobler resting place,  
{Deigned to make} his nest and {was received} in my heart.]

Stampa's variation from Petrarch first concerns her changing the holiday on which she meets her lover. Stampa first encounters Collaltino near Christmas, the day celebrating the birth and life of Christ, instead of Good Friday, the day commemorating his death. This divergence from Petrarch allows Stampa to introduce the femininity of her poetry, not only with images of birth, but also with the introduction of a female character into the creative process—the Virgin Mother. Without the Virgin, there would have been no birth and no Christmas to celebrate. In Petrarch's poem, on the other hand, there is no mention of the Madonna since she has no active role on Good Friday.

Petrarch only gives a two-line description to indicate on what day he met Laura, but Stampa's description of her first meeting with Collaltino lasts the entire first quatrain. Stampa could have ended her description of the nativity with the phrase, "in forma umana venne a dimostrarsi" (Came down to show Himself in human form); however, she adds "dal ventre virginal uscendo fore" (Issuing from the Holy Virgin's womb). Here, Stampa introduces the actual physical process of birth along with a female character, the Virgin. Again, we are reminded of her use of *pena* from her first sonnet, since issuing from the womb necessarily brings pain. With both of these additions, Stampa also changes the focus of the relationship in her poem. What should be an intangible, god-man relationship, now in Stampa centers on a physical, mother-son relationship. The difference is obvious: man is subject to God whereas son is subject to mother. Thus, not only does Stampa introduce a female character in her poem, she also assigns her an authoritative role.

She further emphasizes this mother-son relationship by paralleling her situation with Mary's in the second quatrain. Here, Stampa simply

exchanges *Creatore* with the word *signore* (lord) in the exact position. Not only does *signore* refer to Collaltino in his role of nobleman, but *signore* can also be another title for Christ, an intentional ambiguity on the part of Stampa. She compares Christ and Collaltino, putting them on a level superior to Stampa's. She furthers the idea of Collaltino as a *figura Christi* by adding that Collaltino "potendo in a luogo più alto arridarsi" (could have found a nobler resting place), but he condescends to find a place with Stampa instead. Such a description maintains the god-man relationship Stampa establishes in the first quatrain with Collaltino as god and Stampa the adoring worshiper. However, she abruptly returns to the mother-son relationship by ending this quatrain with a female image. Translating "potendo in a luogo più alto arridarsi" literally, Collaltino could have "nested" (arridarsi) in a higher place, but chooses rather to "nest" in Stampa's heart. The English connotations for nesting are obviously maternal, but the Italian connotations of *nido* (nest) are also sexual.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, "farsi nido" (to nest) in the second quatrain occupies the same place as "ventre virginal" in the second. Thus, the mother-son relationship established by Stampa in the second quatrain echoes the Virgin-Christ child relationship established in the first quatrain.

Furthermore, the sexual imagery contained in the line, "farsi nido e ricetta del mio cuore," (*Rime* 2.8) reemphasizes the idea that pain is associated both with love-making and word-making for women. This motif coincides with the sexual imagery contained in Petrarch's version. In lines nine to eleven, Petrarch is struck with the phallic arrow, through an "aperta la via" (the way open), to his heart. Here Petrarch reverses the sexual roles and casts himself as the female participant; however, what issues forth (son fatti uscio) from his sexual experience is not a child but tears. On the other hand, Stampa sees the irony in a male writer appropriating a female, procreative image. The result must be empty because the image will always be sterile for the male. But, when a woman uses a similar image, "farsi nido e ricetta nel mio cuore," where the beloved enters and is received in the heart, the image is fruitful, since her suffering produces a child—a poem, a word. The traditional creation, the woman, has now created. With this poetic model, Stampa sees herself in a comparable position to the Virgin with an opportunity to create poetry through divine inspiration, providing flesh for the word and becoming the means by which poetic incarnation can occur.

In light of these readings, the ideas presented in Stampa's first poem become more significant. In *Rime* 1.4, Stampa introduces the idea of *pena*, and then says in line 14: "ch'anch'io n' andrei con tanta donna a

<sup>10</sup>Besides meaning "nest" in the sense where birds lay and hatch their eggs, the Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana also defines *nido* thus: "in senso allusivo: organo genitale femminile" (in an allegorical sense: the female genitalia).

paro” (That I would go equal to such a woman). Not only does she ask her audience to remember that she is a woman, who brings forth female poetry, she also foreshadows the introduction of the virgin birth, seen in the second poem. The “tanta donna a paro” (equal to such a woman) can refer both to the elevated status Stampa will receive as Collaltino’s lover, and to the fact that Stampa sees herself in a situation similar to that of Mary. She makes that comparison explicit in her second poem, when she introduces the imagery of the virgin birth. She here concentrates more on the physical process that naturally brings pain to the woman and her uterus, subtly referring to the *pena* of her first poem. In her eighth poem, Stampa combines all these ideas, culminating with a claim for a new style of poetry:

*Rime* 8

Se, così come sono abietta e vile  
 conna, posso portar sì alto foco,  
 perché non debbo aver almeno un poco  
 di ritraggerlo al mondo e vena e stile?

S’Amor con novo, insolito focile,  
 ov’io non potea gir, m’alzò a tal loco,  
 perché non può non con usato gioco  
 far la pena e la penna in me simile?

E, se non può per forza di natura,  
 puollo almen per miracolo, che spesso  
 vince, trapassa e rompe ogni misura.

Come ciò sia non posso dir espresso;  
 io provo ben che per mia gran ventura  
 mi sento il cor di novo stile impresso.

[If I, who am an abject, low-born woman,  
 Can bear within me such lofty fire,  
 Why should I not possess at least a little  
 Poetic power to tell it to the world, {both mood and style?}]

If Love, with such a new unheard-of flint  
 Lifted me up where I could never climb  
 Why cannot {he, outside of his usual playfulness,}  
 Make pain and pen{similar in me?}

{And if} Love cannot do this by force of nature,  
 Perhaps {he can accomplish this be a miracle  
 Which often conquers, crosses, and breaks every boundary.}

How that can be, I cannot well explain  
 But yet I feel, because of my great fortune,  
 My heart {impressed with a new style.}<sup>11</sup>

In the first quatrain, she describes herself as an abject, low-born woman, recalling the meek, submissive Virgin Mary, reminding her audience that she, too, is a *figura virginis*. Then, engaging in a play on words, a *gioco* as she terms it, she asks why Love cannot make “la pena e la penna in me simile.” As we have seen, *penna* equals the male reproductive organ, and according to the medical knowledge of the day, the uterus and the phallus were similar. Thus, if we associate *pena* with the uterus, it would indeed be similar to *penna*, and not simply because one letter has been added. Gaspara Stampa, in this line reduces the female act of giving birth into one word, *pena*, and the male act of conception into *penna*. Therefore, on a metaphorical level, she is asking why Love cannot make her female poetry similar to male poetry. By pointing out the fact that these two words are similar, both orthographically and biologically, she is pointing out that in the procreative metaphor where sexual creativity equals poetic creativity, the female act of giving birth is indeed similar to the male act of conception. It is not the pains from just any birth to which she is referring, however. It is the virgin birth, which Thomas Aquinas described as requiring a supernatural, divine power in order to be fertile. In his *Summa Theologica*, he explains that Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit, a miracle that crossed natural boundaries:

in the conception of Christ, it was in nature’s way that he was born of a woman; it was above nature’s way that he was born of a virgin. Nature’s way in the generation of the animal species is that the female furnishes the matter [*materiam*] while from the male comes the active principle in generation, as Aristotle shows. A woman conceiving from a man is not a virgin. So for the supernatural mode of conception in Christ the active principle was a supernatural divine power.<sup>12</sup>

When talking about the female contribution to the creative process, Aquinas uses the Latin equivalent, *materia*, of the Greek word, ὕλη, which Aristotle uses in his description. The words can refer to both physical and literary subject matter; a concept which continues the parallel between biological and poetical creation. The man creates while the woman provides the subject matter. A conflict arises, however, when a woman creates

<sup>11</sup>Exceptions from Stortoni and Lillie’s translation are indicated by curly brackets where the translation is mine.

<sup>12</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, 61 vols (New York: Blackfriars-McGraw Hill Book Company, 1694–81), 3a.31.5.

and a man provides the subject matter, as in Gaspara Stampa's poetry. Such a scenario is not natural. Indeed, Stampa seems to have Aquinas's passage in mind when she states: "E, se non può per forza di natura, / puollo almen per miracolo, che spesso / vince, trapassa e rompe ogni misura." Only thus, through miraculous divine intervention, can a woman bring forth poetry. The three verbs Stampa chooses here are very strong verbs: *vincere* (to conquer), *trapassare* (to cross), and *rompere*, (to break). Such aggressive verbs indicate what Stampa will have to do to the *misura*, or boundaries, both natural and social, in order to succeed as a poet.

These verbs also have sexual connotations, usually associated with the masculine role in copulation, especially involving a virgin woman. A man must *trapassare* and *rompere* the hymen in order to achieve sexual "victory." Here Stampa has reversed the sexual roles. Stampa, as the Virgin, will be the one to *trapassare* and to *rompere* boundaries; she will have the poetic victory. And Stampa leaves no doubt that she has already crossed these boundaries and will succeed as a woman poet. Her final lines of this programmatic sonnet culminate with a claim for a new style of poetry. She ends with a description of her heart being impressed by a *stile novo*, once again reminding us of Dante's *dolce stil novo*. Dante's explanation of the theory behind his *dolce stil novo* in *Purgatorio* 24 and 25 turns on divine inspiration. When Love inspires Dante, he writes. When God inspires the fetus, it moves. As John Freccero has noted, interpretation, the common element between human procreation and poetic creation in Dante's *dolce stil novo* is the verb *spira*:

Statius' discussion about conception and reproduction in Canto XXV serves as a gloss on Canto XXIV, where the subject is literary creation and conception. More than that, it seems to suggest strongly an analogy between the act of writing and the act of procreation.... Sexuality is, for Dante, nature's expression of creativity.... As the soul is inspired in the fetus, so the inspiration of the poet comes from God. The body, however, is the work of parenthood. In the same way, the poetic corpus is sired by the poet....<sup>13</sup>

Stampa invites her reader to ask what happens when the poetic corpus is not sired, but mothered. Turning to Aquinas' model of the virgin birth, the Holy Spirit, or divine inspiration, provides the creative impetus that gives life to the fetus: it is the only way for the material to become active. In Stampa's model, the female poet, analogous to the Virgin, receives divine inspiration to create her poetic corpus which is the only way for the subject matter to become the active author. Likewise, the Holy Spirit, or

<sup>13</sup>John Freccero, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 202.

divine inspiration, provides the creative impetus in Aquinas' model of the virgin birth.

Such an icon is problematic. Although a sense of female independence exists in the virgin birth metaphor, it also inherently contains a sense of female submission. Mary's response to the Angel Gabriel demonstrates her humility, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord" (Luke 1:38), thus becoming a model for womanly obedience and submission.<sup>14</sup> Yet, Dante aptly expresses the paradox of the Madonna in his hymn to Mary at the beginning of *Paradiso* 33. Mary is at once virgin and mother, daughter and progenitor, humble and exalted (*Par.* 33.1–2). Thus, at times, the mother can require obedience from the son, as she requires a return home from the temple (Luke 2:51), or water turned to wine (John 2:4). Yet, most of the time, God requires obedience from the worshiper. Therefore, the Virgin is at once independent and submissive since she gives flesh to the Word, but still submits to the Word's will. This paradoxical image of the Madonna is an appropriate one for Stampa's poetry as Fiora A. Bassanese points out:

In her dual role of lover, thus responsible for singing the praises of the beloved, and woman, Stampa must find an adequate symbol of both passivity and activity. Maternity offers the solution. She receives love on the one hand, but also gives life. It is also a metaphor for the creative act of composing poetry, urged on by the inspiration of love.... The [anniversary] poems reiterate Stampa's readiness to love, as presented in the *ancilla Domini* theme of the first anniversary sonnet, expressing willing and fatalistic submission to another's will.<sup>15</sup>

The irony comes from fact that the Virgin's God to whom she is subject also happens to be her son. Stampa finds herself in a similar situation. She claims her independence by writing poetry, giving flesh to her word; however, Stampa still sees herself as submissive to a higher will, to her god. She, as the mother, the creator of the poetry, can ask for submission from her creation; however, Stampa also faces a paradox. She has in a sense created her lover through her poetry, just as Petrarch created Laura, and in this scenario, the created lover must feel some sort of obligation to the creator. But, Stampa is very much aware that she is a woman creating a man and not vice versa. Stampa's creation is also her *signore*, her god. In her creation of Collaltino, Stampa has maintained both the social distance

<sup>14</sup>Penny Schine Gold, *The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude, and Experience in Twelfth-Century France*, Women in Culture and Society, ed. Catharine R. Stimpson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 68–69.

<sup>15</sup>Fiora A. Bassanese, *Gaspara Stampa*, ed. Carlo Golino, Twayne's World Authors Series 658 (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 76–77.

of her actual relationship with Collaltino and the spiritual difference of her symbolic relationship with her *signore* of poetry. As the creator of this character, Stampa could require submission from him, but most of the time her *signore*, her god, requires submission from her.

The description of her new style maintains this paradox. Although she is the active, female writer, her imagery in the last line of the eighth sonnet is passive. She feels her heart “di novo stile impresso” (impressed with a new style). Again, Stampa refers to the parallel between writing and copulation, only this time replacing pen and paper with the stylus and tablet. Her heart becomes the tablet on which Love impresses his style, his stylus. As in English, the Italian words for style (*stile*) and stylus (*stilo*) are as similar as the words for pain (*penna*) and pen (*penna*). Again, only one letter separates them. Stampa here maintains her play on words throughout the sonnet.

Because Stampa imitates Dante’s description of his *dolce stil novo*, it is important to consider how Dante uses the word *stilo* to mean both “style” and “stylus” in the *Comedia*. In *Purgatorio* 24.58–59, Bonagiunta exclaims, “e qual di più a gradire oltre si nette, / non vede più da l’uno a l’altro stilo” (he who sets himself to seek farther and see no other difference between the one style and the other). Here *stilo* definitely stands for “style,” but in a later usage, Dante refers to Paul as “l verace stilo” (the veracious pen) (*Par.* 24.61) usually translated as “pen” or “stylus.” In both instances, however, style or stylus is nearly interchangeable. In the former instance, Bonagiunta’s use of *stilo* could have been a continuation of the idea that Dante moves his pen whenever Love dictates. Or with the latter instance, Dante, using metonymy with *stilo* standing for a male author, furthers the sexual imagery. Therefore, thinking of the ambiguities associated with the *stil* of the *dolce stil novo*, we can translate this phrase in two ways: “sweet new style” or “sweet new stylus.” The apocope of *stil* allows for both translations since we do not know whether the word ends in “o” or in “e.” Dante’s ambiguity here furthers his association of procreation with artistic creation. In effect, Dante has created both a new style and a new stylus, each one following after Love’s dictates. Either one proclaims a new method of writing, but each still assumes a male writer.

Stampa’s new style answers Dante’s own. Both poets describe their writing style with intentional sexual references. Like the *dolce stil novo*, Stampa’s *novo stile* is erotic in that it is based on a procreative metaphor, requiring divine inspiration in order to be productive. But her style is feminine and aptly suited to her role as a woman writer. The placement of *stile* (style) next to *impresso* (impresso) reminds us of the tablet inscribed by the stylus. At first it would seem that Stampa is reverting to the traditional procreative metaphor that calls for passivity in the woman, but the preceding lines suggest the reverse. Stampa’s controlling metaphor in this poem

has been the virgin birth, a conception that did not require a “stylus” in the human terms, but relied on divine intervention instead. Therefore, the new style, or stylus, which Stampa feels impressing her heart is not the same as Dante’s pen that follows Love’s lead. Rather it is divine inspiration that goes beyond the bounds of nature to conceive in Stampa’s heart. However, active and passive tensions that reflect the conflict between her feminine role of a lover and her masculine role as a writer continue. While most of the eighth sonnet contains active, assertive imagery, Stampa ends this poem with a passive image. Unlike Dante who moves his pen whenever Love dictates, Stampa allows her heart to be impressed with this new style. The difference lies in the basic biological differences between the two authors: Dante is male and Stampa is female. Although an independent female poetic self is available for Stampa to exploit in her chosen metaphor, she returns to the accepted notion of woman as passive in nature and in sexual roles. Stampa is the active poet, while remaining the passive lover. Her *novo stile* maintains, first, the paradox of the Virgin, independent and submissive, and second, the woman’s natural role in the sex act.

To return to Croce’s remarks, instead of Stampa demonstrating “scanty theoretical and contemplative power,” she has accomplished the opposite. Stampa has indeed contemplated the problems associated with women writing, and created a new poetical theory, a *stile novo*, that encompasses the tensions of female creation where the subject becomes artist, and where even the very act of writing itself, paralleling the sexual act, excludes a woman from wielding a pen. However, there is an aspect of the sexual act that excludes the man—the actual birth. By concentrating on the unique female aspect of the pain associated with childbirth and referring to the one birth that did not require a human, male presence, only divine inspiration, to be productive, Stampa has created a space in her sonnets for female poetry within a male metaphor.

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## Wise Maget

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IN MEDIEVAL GERMAN LITERATURE, the figure of the wise man occurs repeatedly. This can be evidenced in several primary works of literature from the period. In Wolframs von Eschenbach's *Parzival* Trevrizent is shown to be a very wizened and understanding member of Parzival's own family.<sup>1</sup> In Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan*, the title figure is known to be wise before he is physically mature. However, in the critical literature on the period, there is no mention of older female characters exhibiting similar attributes as those qualities exemplified by the male figure of young Tristan, let alone younger women or girls.<sup>2</sup>

There is textual evidence to support the notion of a motif in German medieval literature of a maiden, wise before her years in many of the major works of the time. Four primary works, Hartmann von Aue's *Der arme Heinrich*, Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, Wolfram's *Willehalm*, and Hartmann's *Iwein* offer examples of this motif.<sup>3</sup> I will also argue that this usage of a woman wise ahead of her years has lived on in German literature even if it has not enjoyed the popularity it had in the Middle Ages. These later examples will be identified and compared to show a definite character type. The intent is to show a pattern of use for a type of character and to show its survival in the mainstream of German literary tradition.

These four medieval sources all have a male character as their main protagonist: Heinrich, Parzival, Willehalm, and Iwein. The females identified in this essay are not the main characters of their respective works, but rather, through their wisdom, help the protagonist. In some cases the pro-

<sup>1</sup>See J. G. Hagen, *New Advent-The Catholic Encyclopedia*, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11060b.htm> and the life of Nicholas of Cusa; he is also referred to as "Nicolaus Trevirensis." Wolfram was most likely knowledgeable of the saints, this shows that his Trevrizenz figure was not only wise but holy.

<sup>2</sup>See Frances and Joseph Gies, *Women in the Middle Ages, The Lives of Real Women in a Vibrant Age* (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1978), for an in depth study on women's lives in the Middle Ages.

<sup>3</sup>Hartmann von Aue, *Gergorius/Der arme Heinrich* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967) [hereafter *DAR*]; references are to lines. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998) [hereafter *P*]; references are to sections:lines. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Willehalm* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1968) [hereafter *W*]; references are to sections:lines. Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981) [hereafter *I*]; references are to lines.

tagonist's very survival depends on the actions and wisdom of the girl in question. In the first narrative *Der arme Heinrich* this figure is "die kleine Braut" (the little bride);<sup>4</sup> in the second it is Wolfram's Obilot, the third Alyze, and in the fourth Lûnete. These four characters supply the best examples of the figure in German medieval literature, and to complete the typology there will be supporting female figures from other well-known works as well.

The young girl, in Hartmann von Aue's *Der Arme Heinrich*, comes to her wisdom at the age of eleven. This can be deduced from the text because the narrator gives her age as eight, "ein kint von ahte jâren..." (a child of eight years) (*DAR*, 303). He then states that his pain increases three years later: "dô der arme Heinrich driu jâr dâ entwelte und im got gequelte mit grôzem sêre den lîp..." (When poor Henry had resided there for three years and God had tortured his body...) (*DAR*, 350–53). This would make her eleven years of age. The first sign of her insight comes after Heinrich has told her parents how he will die and that only one cure can be found, which is the heart's blood of a young, willing virgin: "von ir herzen das bluot" (*DAR*, 452). After hearing this, the girl is kept up at night worrying about the future of her family:

waz mac uns mê gewerren  
 danne *an* unsern herren,  
 daz wir den suln verliesen  
 und mit im verkiesen  
 beidiu guot und êre?  
 wir gewinnen niemer mêre  
 deheinen herren alsô guot,  
 der uns tuo, daz er unz tuot

*DAR*, 491–98

[How can any greater tragedy befall us  
 than that which is happening to our lord  
 and that we should lose him,  
 when with his loss  
 we too lose our possessions and honor?  
 We will never again  
 find such a good master,  
 who does so much for us and treats us well.]

<sup>4</sup>All translations into English are my own unless otherwise noted. These translations are not intended to be artistically valuable, but are instead merely to present an interlinear translation for those unfamiliar with Middle High German and make these texts more accessible for comparative purposes. The original Middle High German text will appear first and the line by line English translation below.

She recognizes a need that is beyond her own, and that concerns her entire family. She speaks more about adult concerns and how her family will not have a good life after the master is gone. Medieval peasants were not long lived and worked at a very early age,<sup>5</sup> which forced them to mature at an earlier age. This explanation, however, does not go far enough to account for her desire to sacrifice herself for the greater good of her family. The narrator speaks of her as a child and acknowledges her accelerated understanding of the situation. She is described as like an adult, or at least unlike any child the narrator has ever seen:

wan sî trouc tougen  
 nâhen in ir gemüete  
 die aller meisten güete,  
 die ich von kinde ie vernam.  
 welch kint getete ouch ie alsam?  
 des einen sî sich gar bewac,  
 gelebete sî morgen den tac,  
 daz sî benamen ir leben  
 umbe ir herren wolde geben.

*DAR*, 520–28

[She carried hidden  
 deep in her soul  
 the greatest measure of goodness  
 That I have ever found in a child.  
 What child would have ever acted thus?  
 The one thing she had decided  
 should she live to see the coming day  
 that she would take her life  
 and would give it to her lord.]

The thought of a cure for her beloved Heinrich makes her happy—“Von dem gedanke wart sî dô vil ringes muotes unde vrô” (From this thought she was made courageous and happy) (*DAR*, 529–30)—but it is not a decision that she has made lightly or does not understand. In the lines 520 to 528 one sees the beginning of her resolve to help Heinrich regardless of the personal consequences. This decision on her part is of course greeted with grave concern by her parents. They love Heinrich and know that they will lose everything when they lose him, but the thought of losing their daughter is equally painful, if not more so. The daughter tells

<sup>5</sup>See David Herlihy, *Opera Muliebría, Woman and Work in Medieval Europe* (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1990), for a study of the work that women did, from the ancient to the modern world.

her parents of her plan and they react as normal parents would; they think that her decision is the momentary willfulness of a child and not based in the knowledge of what the real consequences of her actions will be:

ich bin ein maget und hân den muot,  
 ê ich in sihe verderben,  
 ich wil ê vür in sterben.  
 Von dirre rede wurden do  
 trúrec und unvrô  
 beide muoter unde vater.  
 sîne tohter die bater,  
 daz sî die rede lieze  
 und ir herren gehieze,  
 daz sî geleisten möhte,  
 wan ir diz niene töhte.  
 er sprach: “tohter, dû bist ein kint  
 und dîne triuwe die sint  
 ze grôz an disen dingen.”

*DAR, 562–75*

[I am a maiden and I have the courage  
 that before I see his demise  
 I will die for him.  
 From this speech  
 both father and mother  
 sad and unhappy.  
 He begged his daughter  
 to cease such talk  
 and to tell their lord  
 of her intentions  
 to which she had no right.  
 He said: “Daughter, you are a child  
 and your faithfulness  
 is too great for these things.”]

With the words “dû bist ein kint” (you are a child) (560) her father hopes to show that her plan is pointless. In this manner he hopes to show her resolve to be nothing but a flight of fancy, which has no basis in reality. He hopes that she will forget the decision if he belittles it. He also states that she cannot be willing to follow through with her wish because she has never stared death in the face. She is inexperienced in the ways of the world and cannot possibly make a rational decision because the consequence, death, is simply beyond her comprehension:

du entmaht sî niht bringen,  
als dû uns hie hast verjehen.  
dû hâst des tôdes niht gesehen.  
swennez dir kumet ûf die vrist,  
daz des dehein rât ist,  
du enmüezest ersterben,  
und möhtestu *daz* erwerben,  
dû lebetest gerner dannoch:  
wan du enkæme nie in leider loch.  
tuo zuo dînen munt:  
und wirstû vür dise stunt  
der rede iemer mêre lût,  
ez gât dir ûf dîne hût.

*DAR*, 576–88

[You cannot go through with this,  
what you have spoken of.  
You have never seen death.  
When it comes to the point  
where there is no turning back  
and you must die  
but you can choose that, (a reprieve)  
you would rather live:  
because you can never escape this prison.  
Hold your tongue,  
and if you again  
speak of these things  
I will take it out on your hide.]

With this manner of argument, her father hopes to put her in her place by intimidation and convincing her of his superior knowledge and experience. He honestly believes that she cannot know what she is doing. She is, however, no ordinary child, as the narrator has already stated. She makes it quite plain that she can reason and that she has perhaps more logic than her more experienced and knowledgeable father. She is able to bring her argument into the realm of the spiritual. She then speaks of eternal life and the rewards in heaven as well as earth bound reasons, such as Heinrich's protection and goodness to them. She makes a comparison between life with the heavenly father and a troubled, difficult existence here on earth. Her arguments sound like those of an adult rather than ravings of an eleven-year-old girl (*DAR*, 593–628).

The parents realize the validity and rational presentation of her argument, as they do not try to refute what she has said. It would be logical to

assume that they would make a counter argument if she had not persuaded them with her logical monologue. Instead of arguing the points that she made in her long speech her mother tries a new approach. She informs her daughter how the mother will hurt her if the girl goes through with her plan. It will break the mother's heart to see her daughter die at such a young age. The daughter has already caused the mother great pain during childbirth and she does not want to have any more unnecessary pain.

gedenke, tohter, liebez kint,  
wie grôz die arbeite sint,  
die ich durch dich erlitten hân,  
und lâ mich bezzern lôn emphân,  
dan ich dich hœere sprechen.  
dû wilt mîn herze brechen.

*DAR, 631–36*

[Think about this, daughter, beloved child  
how great the labor was  
that I suffered on your behalf,  
and allow me to have a better reward  
than I hear you speaking of now.  
You will break my heart.]

The mother continues trying to persuade her daughter by similar means until she reaches a counter argument for the daughter's belief in her eventual reward of heavenly salvation. The mother wishes to inform her daughter that this act of seeming selflessness and sacrifice for the family is simply suicide, and that no one comes into heaven who has committed suicide because it is a cardinal sin:

und lâzestû uns über dîn grap  
gestân von dînen schulden,  
dû muost von guotes hulden  
iemer sîn geschieden:  
daz koufest an uns beiden.

*DAR, 658–62*

[If you allow, through  
fault of your own,  
us to stand over your grave,  
all of God's great rewards  
will remain closed to you:  
This you will reap from us two.]

The daughter thanks her mother and father for caring for her and for giving her everything that she has needed. She says that God has given her reason:

nû wil ich gôte gnâde sagen,  
daz er in minen jungen tagen  
mir die sinne hât gegeben,  
daz ich ûf diz brœde leben  
ahte harte kleine.

*DAR*, 693–97

[Now I would like to thank God  
that he has given me in my early years,  
enough understanding  
not to dwell  
on this transitory life.]

This reason, which has come at an early age, tells her that she needs not put so much value on life in this world. From line 681 through line 854 she holds a monologue listing the reasons for her helping Heinrich. These reasons are far reaching and show a broader understanding of her family's situation. She realizes that her parents do not have enough money to secure her a dowry for a husband. This fact alone could be seen as an argument for her selfishness. The torturous life of a peasant is too tedious and difficult for her and that eternal life in Heaven would be better. In stating this argument she can imagine something that is extremely difficult for an adult, let alone for an eleven-year-old. She also has awareness of others. Her parents have other children but they are poor. Her family member's lives would be improved, according to her arguments, if she were to trade her life for their benefactor's. She comprehends her family's position in society and its economic potential, or lack thereof.

She has listed too many good reasons for helping her lord, and by extension her family, and the parents can find no flaw in her logic. They therefore decide to follow her advice because they believe that it has been won through holy intervention: "der sin sí ir von gote komen" (this decision has come to her from God) (*DAR*, 874). Arguing against her divine logic would be as futile as arguing against God himself. It is reminiscent of the scene in the Bible when Abraham is told to give up his child.<sup>6</sup> The girl is even compared to Saint Nicholas in the manner of her wisdom coming before its time. The instance of St. Nicholas is extreme but by evoking his

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 22:2: He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Mori'ah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

case, the narrator can demonstrate the girl's wisdom to an audience, which was no-doubt knowledgeable of the Saints:<sup>7</sup>

Dô sprach daz kint sâhen  
 zem tôde sô gâhen  
 und ez sô wîslichen sprach  
 unde menschlich reht zebrach,  
 si begunden ahten under in,  
 daz die wîsheit und den sin  
 niemer erzeigen kunde  
 dehein zunge in kindes munde.  
 si jâhen, daz der heilic geist  
 der rede wære ir volleist,  
 der ouch sant Niklauses phlac.  
 dô er in der wagen lac,  
 und in die wîsheit lêrte,  
 daz er ze gote kêrte  
 sîne kintlîche güete.

*DAR*, 855–69

[When they saw the child  
 running into the arms of death  
 and yet speaking so wisely  
 surpassing all human authority  
 they began to realize together  
 that the wisdom and logic  
 could never appear  
 from the tongue in any child's mouth.  
 They said, that the Holy Ghost  
 was the author of her speech,  
 who had done the same with Saint Nicholas.  
 He lay in the crib  
 and was taught the wisdom  
 that he should turn to God  
 his childish goodness.]

<sup>7</sup>The prologue from *Ochrid* (4 vols.), by Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic (Birmingham: Lazarica Press, 1985): *The Life of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker*, <http://www.stmichael.org/Nicholas/StNich.html>. "After his birth, while still in the baptismal font, he stood on his feet for three hours, supported by no one, by this rendering honor to the Holy Trinity, of Whom he later would show himself to be a great servitor and intercessor. In him it was possible to recognize the future wonderworker even by the way in which he drew near to his mother's breast, because he led on the milk only of the right breast, signifying by this his future standing on the right hand of the Lord together with the righteous. He gave signs of his extraordinary abstinence in that on Wednesdays and Fridays he took his mother's milk only once, and this in the evening, after the parents' completion of the customary prayers."

The narrator has shown the reader a girl of little experience and years willing to sacrifice herself for the good of her family and lord. She has also been given the ability to make her point understood through arguments that are divine in nature. She can therefore be said to display wisdom beyond her years. The claim will not be made that she acts wisely in all ways, but merely that she has abilities that are beyond her years. It is clear from the text that the young bride is at times guilty of *unm ze* (extreme behavior, losing her temper). When speaking to the doctor she informs him that he sounds like a woman, “iuwer rede gezæme einem wibe” (your words belong to a woman) (*DAR*, 1122), and she beats herself about the breasts and bewails her forced existence on earth. In this sense she is still somewhat childish, but this is due to that fact that the Holy Spirit has, at this point, left her. There is no more reason for her to be adult-like because there is no more sacrifice to be made. Her wisdom allowed her to make the argument that she and Heinrich should go to Salerno for his treatment.

Once Heinrich has been saved, the divine wisdom is withdrawn and she returns to her normal state of childhood. While under the Holy Spirit’s influence she is capable of holding a lengthy, mature monologue for pages at a time because it allows her to make logical and reasonable arguments. It also gives her purpose. Once the divinely inspired wisdom and Holy Spirit are gone, she hardly speaks again.

There can be little doubt that “The Maid with the Little sleeves” (La Pucelle aux Petites Manches)<sup>8</sup> in Chrétien’s text is indeed the character from which Wolfram von Eschenbach moulds his Obilot in *Parzival*. Wolfram seems purposefully to create confusion in his text as to whether he based his work on Chrétien’s *Le Conte du Graal (Perceval)*<sup>9</sup> or not, because Wolfram himself states in *Parzival* quite plainly that Chrétien told the story incorrectly (*P*, 827:1–11). Most researchers, however, believe that Wolfram did indeed take his story from Chrétien’s masterpiece.<sup>10</sup> Given that this influence is substantiated, there is a connection between the German literary figure Obilot and a larger convention from the originator of the genre.<sup>11</sup> Wolfgang Mohr also ties the figure of Obilot to the figure of “die kleine Braut” in Hartmann’s *Der Arme Heinrich*. What makes this

<sup>8</sup>Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Conte Du Graal (Perceval)* (Paris: Félix Lecoy, 1973)

<sup>9</sup>Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval, or the Story of the Grail*, trans. Ruth Harwood Cline (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985).

<sup>10</sup>See Joachim Bumke, *Wolfram von Eschenbach* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlerische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1991) and Neil Thomas, “Wolfram von Eschenbach: Modes of Narrative Presentation,” in *A Companion to Wolfram’s Parzival*, ed. William Hasty (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1999), 131, in which he calls Chrétien’s text the “source text.”

<sup>11</sup>See Ruth Harwood Cline’s introduction to Troyes, *Perceval*.

remarkable is Wolfram's general dislike of Hartmann's style and methods, which can be seen clearly in *Parzival*.<sup>12</sup> Mohr states:

Literarhistorisch gehört die Geschichte von Obilot in den Zusammenhang der Entdeckung des kindlichen Ordo in der hochmittelalterlichen Dichtung. Hartmann von Aue war Wolfram damit unmittelbar vorausgegangen. Seiner kleinen Bauerstochter und kleinen Heiligen im >Armen Heinrich< stellt Wolfram eine kleine Dame gegenüber, nicht mehr ganz als Kind, schon ein wenig Backfisch mit Ansprüchen auf einige Meinungen und eignes Lebensrecht in der Gesellschaft, ja sogar schon ein wenig geneigt, ihre Wirkungen auf die Großen auszuüben.<sup>13</sup>

[In literary history the story of Obilot belongs in connection with the discovery of the child class in the poetry of the high Middle Ages. Hartmann von Aue was undoubtedly ahead of Wolfram in this area. Opposite his {Hartmann von Aue} little farmer's daughter and little holy child in *Der Arme Heinrich* Wolfram places a little woman with claims to her own opinions and a right to life all her own in society. She is even predisposed to exercise her powers on those older than she is.]

In Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* Obilot proves herself to be much more aware of the world around her than her young years would indicate. Her older, supposedly wiser, sister Obie has insulted Gâwein, calling him a traveling salesman or merchant. Obilot's insights into Gâwein's character and standing are superior to her sister's, as she is able to see beyond appearances. Obilot comes to Gâwein's defense after Obie has wrongfully accused Gâwein of being a travelling merchant imitating a knight:

diu junge muose ir spotten doln:  
 si sprach er mac sich des wol erholn:  
 ich gibe im noch gein ellen trôst,  
 daz er dîns spottes wirt erlôst.  
 er sol dienst gein mir kêren,  
 unde ich wil im vrôude mêren.

<sup>12</sup>Wolfram mentions Hartmann several times in *P*. The first is when Wolfram speaks of Hartmann's *Erec* (134:6–7), the second is when Wolfram names Hartmann specifically and has him being a courtier in Arthur's court (143:21) insinuating that Hartmann in reality knows nothing about warfare, only life at court.

<sup>13</sup>Wolfgang Mohr, *Wolfram von Eschenbach: Aufsätze* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1979), 113. See also Xenia von Ertzdorff, "Fräulein Obilot: Zum siebten Buch von Wolframs *Parzival*," *Wirkendes Wort* 12 (1962): 129–40.

sît du gihst er sî ein koufman,  
er sol mins lônnes market hân.

P, 358:7–14

[The young sister had to take the insult:  
She said, “ He will make up for what he missed  
and I believe whole-heartedly  
he will be delivered from your insults.  
He will turn his services to me  
and I will make him happy for it.

If you still believe that he is a merchant  
he will have my reward for proving otherwise.]

In this manner Obilot already shows herself to be free of the vanities to which her older sister has fallen prey. She also shows herself to be a good judge of character and less biased, which enables her to pick a combatant based on quality, rather than a whim or fancy. Obilot also reveals maturity beyond her years when her father, Lippaut, asks Gâwein for help in saving his besieged city. Obie’s suitor Meljanz is attacking the walls of the city because his *Minnedienst* was not rewarded. Obie is pleased with the events and watches gladly as Meljanz proves himself in battle. Obilot accomplishes what her father cannot do. She succeeds in persuading Gâwein to help them with the defense of their city. This despite her youth and the fact that Gâwein has given his word to be somewhere else in a short time, not leaving him enough time and energy to fight here:

er sprach >vrouwe, iuwers mundes dôn  
wil mich von triuwen scheiden.  
untriuwe iu solde leiden.  
mîn triuwe dolt die pfandes nô  
ist si unerloeset, ich bin tô.  
doch lât mich dienst unde sinne  
kêren gegen iuwere minne:  
ê daz ir minne megt gegeben,  
ir müezet vünf jâr ê leben:  
deist iuwerre minne zât ein zal.<

P, 370:11–17

[He spoke “Lady, it is your wish  
that I break my word (oath, promise in good faith).  
You must despise faithlessness.  
I have given my word in promise:  
if I do not make good on it, I am dead.

However, if I were to serve you  
and try to earn your love:  
Before you could give me my reward,  
you would have to live another five years:  
until you would be allowed to repay me.”]

Gâwein gives the reader a clue as to Obilot’s age. In five years time she will be able to reward a knight who has proven himself worthy through *Minnedienst*. If the “kleine Braut” was eleven when she was of marrying age then Obilot must have been six or seven years of age. She is the youngest of the four girls to be examined in this essay, yet she arguably accomplishes the most in saving her city while simultaneously saving her sister’s relationship. Considering the harsh treatment she receives from her sister, Obilot reveals exemplary charity often unseen even among adults.

Gâwein cannot be rewarded sexually for his aid to Obilot, but he will be rewarded in other ways. He thinks of Parzival, who always honors women, even above God. This thought leads him to wear his armor in defense of the city on behalf of the young girl. The thought of Obilot’s purity and honorable behavior will bring him to even greater deeds on the battlefield:

nu dâhte er des, wie Parzival  
wîben baz getrûwet den gote:  
sîn bevelhen dirre magde bote  
was Gâwân in daz herze sîn.  
dô lobte er dem vrôuwelîn,  
er wolde durch si wâpen tragen.  
er begunde ir vûrbaz mêre sagen  
>in iuwerre hende sî mîn swert.  
ob iemen tjoste gein mir gert,  
den poynder müezt ir rîten,  
ir sûlt dâ vûr mich strîten.  
man mac mich dâ in strîte sehen:  
der muoz mînhalp von iu geschehen<

*P*, 370:18–30

[He [Gâwein] began to think about how Parzival  
trusted women more than God:  
The memory of the young girl’s message  
found its way into Gâwein’s heart.  
He praised the young girl  
and agreed to represent her with his weapons.  
He began to say to her  
“my sword is in your hands.

If someone wishes to joust against me  
 you must then ride in the attack  
 and fight in my place.  
 One might see me in the battle  
 but it will in actuality be you.”]

Gâwein will fight for her and her honor and thereby increase his own reputation, possibly increasing it more because he takes on the task without a promise of payment. Obilot’s ability to awaken Gâwein’s honor takes an understanding of the system of *Minnedienst* although she is still playing with dolls. She has indirectly saved her city as well as Meljanz and Obie’s love. Her act accomplishes what no one else could do and she promises that her love will send Gâwein off to great deeds. She motivates him further by stating that she will be his shield and his strength. Her love will give him luck and safety, which will carry him through all of the morning’s battles (*P*, 371:1–16).

Her speech of strength, courage, and love convinces her also of her own new-found maturity. She declares herself both *wirt* and *wirt n*, although in 372:1 the narrator informs the reader that Obilot leaves: “Dan vuor diu magt und ir gespil” (Then the maid and her playmate took their leave). She convinces Gâwein to save the city and informs him that she will help him in his fight, two daunting tasks for any grown up, yet she leaves with her play partner (Clauditte). She remains a child in some ways. She has a puppet (token) (*P*, 372:18) that she is willing to share with her friend Clauditte. It is also childlike that though she has persuaded Gâwein to help in the city’s defense, she needs help from her father in a much simpler manner. She has nothing to give him for his troubles because she is a child and has only playthings:

vater mir wart nie sô nôt  
 dîner helfe: dar zuo gip mir rât.  
 der ritter mich gewert hât.

*P*, 372:28–30

[My father I have never had such need  
 of your help: Please give me counsel.  
 The knight has heard my plea.]

...dâ hân ich clienote  
 dem vremen ritter gelobt.  
 ich waen mîn sin hât getobt.  
 hân im niht ze gebenne,  
 waz toug ich dan ze lebenne,

sît er mir dienst hât heboten?  
 Sô muoz ich schâmeliche roten,  
 ob ich im niht ze gebene hân.  
 nie magede wart sô liep ein man.

*P*, 373:18–26

[I have promised  
 the foreign knight my love reward.  
 I must have been robbed of my senses.  
 I have nothing to give him,  
 he has promised to serve me  
 what reason have I to live?  
 So must I turn red with shame,  
 because I have nothing to give him.  
 Never has a knight been so beloved of a maid.]

Lippaut, her father realizes what a great service she has done to the city and to him personally. Gâwein can save them all and can save his position as master of the castle or “Burgherr”. Lippaut had failed in this task, and now that she has achieved it for him, he declares:

Tohter, swes dîn wille gert,  
 hân ichz, des bistu gewert.  
 ôwol der vruht diu an dir lac!  
 dîn geburt was der saelden tac

*P*, 373:1–4

[Daughter, whatever your heart desires,  
 I have it, and you are worth it.  
 What a blessing that you are to us!  
 Your birth was a lucky day.]

Obilot shows herself to be a good judge of character in her defense of Gâwein. He hears Obie insulting him as Obilot defends him, though she does not know him. Obie’s insults of Gâwein, although she has no idea of his character or station in life can be seen as an example of *unm ze*, a characteristic that Obilot does not share with her older sister. She can be seen to be more mature than her sister because she exhibits another characteristic that her older sister lacks: *zuht*, or manners and bearing.

It also can be argued that in her willingness to be punished for her view of Gâwein demonstrates that she recognizes the necessity of paying the consequences of holding an unfavorable opinion. Due to Obilot’s stance, Obie slaps her across the face for defending Gâwein against her attacks. Finally Obilot achieves the ultimate safety of the city and the reconciliation between Meljanz and Obie, which brings Obie back to a state

of *mâze* and *zucht*, which she had been lacking before. In doing at the age of six or eight what others (including her own father) could not do in adulthood, Obilot exhibits another form of mature ability, that of problem solving. She manipulates the system in which she does not yet live in to suit her needs. She is unable physically to reward Gâwein but still manages to solve a situation so that all are in the end satisfied.

In Wolfram's later work, *Willehalm*, the third young female figure to be examined appears in verse 154. Willehalm has had a dispute with his sister, Alyze's mother the queen. The two siblings are angry with one another because Willehalm wants his relatives to raise an army and help him fight the heathens who are besieging his wife and lands. The queen believes that he fights too often and innocent men are dead because of his need for honor in battle. The family is split in two by the feuding siblings. Alyze is a beautiful, young, and innocent girl with braided hair (*W*, 154:9–11). Her age is undetermined, but she is referred to by the narrator as *magt* (maiden) (*W*, 155:17; 155:28; 156:2; 156:19; 157:4), *meide* (virgin) (*W*, 155:13) and *kint* (child) (*W*, 156:9; 158:1). These clues provide the basis for judging her to be still a girl of younger years, not yet ready for *Minnedienst*. The narrator does inform the reader that Alyze is well developed for her age. He describes her further by saying that:

ir brust ze nider noch ze hôch.  
der werlde vîentschaft si vlôch

*W*, 155:7–8

[Her breasts were neither too high nor too low.  
She was pleasing to all without exception.]

This could be understood as a sign of womanhood. The earlier clues of Alyze being called a *magt* and *kint* seem more compelling, meaning that she is simply a well-endowed, early bloomer. This can be seen due to the repetition of the diminutive terms by the author used for the figure of Alyze as opposed to a feeling implied by the text. She also has special powers for one so young. The narrator states that her purity (*kiusche*) can work miracles of healing:

Alyz diu sældenbære,  
man möht ûf eine wunden  
ir kiusche hân gebunden,  
dâ daz ungenande wære bî:  
beliebe diu niht vor schaden vrî,  
sî müese enkelten wunders.

*W*, 154:20–25

[Alyze was the bearer of blessings and mercy,  
so that anyone who had a wound  
and brought it before her purity,  
even if it were untreatable:  
would, even if not healed,  
have been released of sin.]

sí gap sô minneclîchen schîn,  
des lichte ein vreuden siecher man  
wider hôhen muot gewan.

W, 155:4–6

[She looked so beautiful  
to look on her gladdened even the bitterest  
and made him take heart.]

Willehalm, the experienced fighter, capable governor of his territory and older male begs his young and inexperienced niece for advice and aid when he says to her:

niftel, nu gestate mirs,  
daz ich in dîme gebote lebe:  
dîn güete mir den rât nu gebe

W, 156:12–14

[Niece, now allow me  
to put myself in your hands:  
Let your goodness give me counsel.]

Alyze can heal wounds with miraculous power despite her youth and inexperience, and is able to solve problems that adults cannot solve themselves. Her warlike uncle asks a young maiden for advice about matters that she should not be able to comprehend at her age or due to her sex. It was seen as unsightly for a woman to be in combat except for the most demanding of situations.

Alyze has her uncle in a position of disadvantage when he asks her for help. He is distraught with the thought of Gyburg and the attack on his homeland, and wishes to be there to aid in the defense. With her answer she holds power over him and what is to happen in the rest of the narrative. She directly influences what will happen for better or worse for Willehalm and his whole family. Alyze tries to bring about a reconciliation between her uncle Willehalm and her mother. In doing so she heals the rift in the family and also makes it possible for Willehalm to defend his lands with the help of the armies at his relatives' disposal. The hero of the nar-

rative is so incensed at his sister that he is about to behead her. It is only through the quick thinking and soothing words of his niece Alyze that her mother is saved ( *W*, 157:4–30).

Alyze claims that her mother has misbehaved and that her uncle has become unnaturally angry with her. This is a role reversal in which the young daughter scolds her mother and uncle for their childish behavior. In doing so she reminds her uncle of what is really important: his family. She brings to light the fact that Willehalm and her mother came from the same parents and also her own close ties with his wife Gyburg. Her monologue helps him find his path back to reason. Even though Alyze states that her mother is wrong and Willehalm is still angry she has avoided a disaster for her family.

Willehalm realizes that he has been too rash in his criticism. Alyze's mother and Willehalm are at peace all through the efforts of a wise, young child who helped him become reconciled with his sister. In doing so Willehalm won the approval of his family, which means that he gains an army to help him in his battle against his Saracen and Moorish enemies. To this end his mother, realizing his need and good qualities, gives the money to support an all out offensive against her son's enemies ( *W*, 160:24–26).

Alyze, the girl who can work miracles, has worked one in keeping her family together. She has also saved her aunt and uncle's very lives by creating an environment in which Willehalm could receive the help he needs from his family. If she had not been there and been unable to help in the manner that she did, her mother might be dead and Willehalm would have no army. Gyburg would have little chance of rescue.

In Hartmann von Aue's *Iwein* the protagonist, for whom the narrative is named, is a knight undertaking quests in order to win honor and glory. He is, however, quickly trapped while entering the castle of a knight, who he had just slain in combat during the first adventure of the narrative. *Iwein* is then trapped in the entrance between two portcullises. He will be discovered and killed in a very dishonorable manner if not aided by a young *maget* who realizes his worth and can see his value even though he killed her master. Lûnete, a young girl, gives him a ring of invisibility, which allows him to hide in plain sight and avoid capture:

herre, ich erkenn iuch wol:  
iuwer vater was, deist mir erkannt,  
der küneec Urjên genant.  
ir sult vor schaden sicher sîn:  
her *Iwein*, nemet diz vingerlîn.  
ez ist umben stein alsô gewant:  
swer in hât in blôzer hant,  
den mac nieman, al die vrist

unz er in blôzer hant ist,  
gesehen noch gevinden

I, 1198–1209

[Sir, I know you well:  
Your father was named, this is known to me,  
King Uriens.  
You will be safe from danger:  
Sir Îwein, take this finger-ring.  
This stone has the power that  
whosoever has it in their naked hand,  
no one, as long as  
it is in the kept in the naked hand,  
will be able to see or find him.]

Lûnete is successful in her efforts to save Îwein, but why would a young girl have a ring of invisibility or know how to procure one if she is not a representative of the *w se maget*? The narrator calls her *s n vriunt* or “his protector.” He also refers to her as *diu guote maget* (the good maiden) (I, 1303). She is still a *maget* and also able to do for Îwein, that which he cannot do for himself. Îwein cannot help himself out of his first predicament and must rely on Lûnete. She saves the hero only to have him put himself at risk again. He then sees her mistress, Laudine, and immediately falls in love with her. He has slain this woman’s husband and she is mourning his death. Her vassals had been eager to slay Îwein, yet he does not wish to flee because of his love for Laudine. Lûnete scolds Îwein as an adult scolds a child acting irresponsibly. She simply cannot believe that he would act so foolishly when he is not yet free of danger. Îwein is older than Lûnete and also a knight, but her wisdom and cool-headedness allow her to chastise him for his irresponsible behavior:

irn wellent mir volgen,  
sô habt ir den lîp verlorn.  
alsus erwant in ir zorn.  
sî sprach ‘wes was iu gedâcht?  
wær iuwer gedanc volbrâcht,  
sone hetent ir niht wol gevarn,  
ichn trûwe iu den lîp niht bewarn.  
ezn sî dan iuwer wille.  
durch got sitzent stille.  
er ist ein vil wîser man  
der tumben gedanc verdanken kan  
mit wîslîcher getât

I, 1490–1501

[If you won't follow me  
 So must you lose your life.  
 Thus, she her anger turned him from his task.  
 She asked, what were you thinking?  
 If you had followed through with this thought  
 It would have gone badly for you.  
 I am trying to save your life  
 even if that isn't your desire.  
 By God, sit quietly.  
 He is a much wiser man,  
 who can put an end to stupid thoughts  
 and continue with wiser deeds.]

Vrou Minne has taken hold of *Îwein* so that he is unable to think of anything but the love he feels for Laudine. A younger, less experienced maiden must think rationally for him and be his voice of reason. The narrator states that she can also recognize a situation and react in a suitable manner hinting at her cleverness. In doing so he also states clearly the title of this character type:

Dô ez halbez wart gesaget,  
 do erkande wol diu wise maget  
 daz er ir vrouwen meinde,  
 als sî im sît bescheinde.

I, 1757–60

[Hardly half had been said  
 when the wise maiden recognized  
 that he had her Lady in mind  
 and she told him her opinion.]

In the second sentence the author uses the term *wise maget* to describe *Lûnete's* actions. Not only is *Îwein* impressed with *Lûnete's* ability to handle the situations that have arisen. *Gawan* (*Gâwein*) is also impressed by *Lûnete's* quick thinking, which saves *Herr Îwein's* life. He realizes that *Îwein* would not have come into his present position without her. *Gâwein* is seen to represent all things positive in *Arthur's* kingdom. The medieval audience would immediately recognize *Gâwein* and the "Tugenden" (noble qualities) that he stood for. It is this recognition of *Lûnete's* accomplishment by *Gâwein* that assures the reader that this all was accomplished through the efforts of the *wise maget* and that she is worthy of real praise (I, 2715–29). *Îwein* as well as *Gâwein* both thank *Lûnete* for saving his life and they both speak of her cleverness and resourcefulness. *Îwein*, after a stern lecture on *verligenhet* by *Gâwein* (I, 2790–98) departs to find further adventures and to increase his reputa-

tion. In doing so he stays out too long and loses his favor with his wife. This has further consequences for others in the narrative than merely those visited on Îwein. His madness and subsequent wanderings are at least self-inflicted, quite different than what happens to Lûnete. She is held responsible for her part in the Îwein scandal because the other citizens believe that she is responsible for duping Laudine and leaving them unprotected (*I*, 4119–26).

Lûnete has risked much to bring Îwein to a point of power in her kingdom, yet Îwein has done all in his power to lose it as quickly as it came. Îwein simply lets go of his position and wife because he is out enhancing his honor in his own manner avoiding *verlîgenhet*. He has let the kingdom slip between his fingers and realizes in his next meeting with Lûnete that his actions are again worthy of disdain. She scolded him before for not realizing his situation and he now feels responsible for not realizing how his actions would affect her. It is, however, an opportunity for Îwein to save Lûnete and repay some of the debt that he owes, even if she is in the situation because of his failure to keep his promise to Laudine. Îwein is able to come to terms with the debt he owes her and states:

swie ich zuo mir selben habe getân,  
ir sult iedoch gewis hân,  
ichn lâze iuch niht under wegen.

*I*, 4255–57

[I have always acted in the same way  
You should know this  
I will not desert you]

<sup>o</sup>*wein* is a work, which restates a message, which Hartmann von Aue had put forth in *Erec* narrative.<sup>14</sup> Gâwein warns Îwein of the pitfalls of a married, comfortable life and Îwein takes him at his word. The *Erec* narrative, together with his <sup>o</sup>*wein* show that while one must not be *verlîgen*; one must also not forget one's responsibilities to one's family and estate. Îwein was not only a knight, he is also the leader of a community, a community with no head while he is at tournaments avoiding a bad reputation. It is Lûnete who, by saving Îwein's life and then by orchestrating a marriage with Laudine, procures a kingship and great honor through high marriage for the hero. Îwein could do neither without her. She is also responsible for facilitating his return. She manages to accomplish a great deal for Îwein that he cannot or will not do for himself and she does so with no real power of her own.

<sup>14</sup>Hartmann von Aue, *Erec* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1985).

There is a similar character type found in Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan*.<sup>15</sup> The character of Îsôte (Isolde) is also spoken of as possessing some special abilities. Firstly Gottfried informs the reader that her mother, also named Isolde (Îsôt) is wise and beautiful: “diu wise Îsôt, diu schoene Îsôt” (*I*, 7291). She was capable of many arts, especially in medicine. The reader learns that the daughter Isolde is still a young maiden: “dise jungen maget Îsôte” (*I*, 7845) and wise in ways that the other *w se maget* figures have not been; she is well learned several subjects and can read (*I*, 7846–47). Isolde learned many of the talents that her mother has already mastered. Her family a very progressive family for the time. Isolde learns in many ways as much as a male would learn in a cloister. She has learned the art of healing from her mother as well, which makes her extremely well educated for that time (*I*, 7868–69).

Gottfried writes of her beauty often in sentences such as, “la dûze Îsôt, la bêle” (*I*, 8071) as well as her purity and sweetness: “diu süeze Îsôt, diu reine (*I*, 8054). In the tradition of the *Minnes nger* Gottfried attributes special qualities to Isolde's beauty (*I*, 8078–84). Her beauty was considerable, as was her ability to transform her audience with the skill she presented on the harp and through song. She does not have all the abilities of other major figures in the other narratives, but she does heal the protagonist and seems to have extra, almost miraculous powers due to beauty and wisdom.

Another female figure capable of saving a situation seemingly doomed to disaster due to the honor of men in love service is Bêne in Wolfram's *Parzival*. Although Bêne is often referred to as a “vrou” (Fräulein) (*P*, 663:15) but the author indicates her age by describing her as “Bêne, süeziu magt” (Bene sweet maiden) (*P*, 718:23). It is apparent that Itonje, Gâwein's sister and beloved of Gramoflanz, will die of a broken heart at the end of the duel between the two men she loves (although she has never seen Gramoflanz and is meeting Gâwein for the first time). It is Bêne, who sees the danger to Itonje in this situation. She makes it known to those responsible and first brings to consciousness the fact that Gramoflanz wants to marry the daughter of the man supposedly responsible for killing his father (King Lot). Gramoflanz then also wants to kill Lot's son Gâwein, Itonje's brother, to avenge his own dead father (*P*, 693:22–25). Through her wisdom she can recognize what the older, experienced men, blinded by honor, cannot. They will rail at each other and actually cause Itonje pain. The entire situation makes no sense at all if they really love Itonje as they claim. Bêne is the go-between for Itonje and Gramoflanz as well as Itonje's friend. It is through Bêne that the combat-

<sup>15</sup>Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967).

ants are helped by Arthur to find a peaceful solution to the problem and maintain honor in doing so.

Bêne is more than just a go-between for Gramoflanz and Itonje, because she alone cares for Itonje's reputation among all of the on lookers. Bêne takes Gramoflanz' message to Arthur and makes sure that no one sees Itonje's pain. It is also through Bêne that Itonje came to know of Gramoflanz (*P* 716, 25). She is so important to the situation and so capable that Arthur asks for her help in alleviating the tension between Gâwein and Gramoflanz:

Nu helfet mir, ir zwêne  
und ouch du, vriundîn Bêne,  
daz der künc her zuo mir rite  
unt den kampf doch morgen strîte.

*P*, 719:1–4

[Now help me you two  
and also you Bene my friend,  
the King [Gramoflanz] should ride to here to me  
and me ready for the battle tomorrow.]

Bêne, the maiden, recognizes how destructive this whole situation will be and tries to alleviate it in a way that will be easier on Itonje and not hurt her reputation in the eyes of others. King Arthur himself must rely on her to make sure the components of his plan are in place. Even though Arthur is the only one with the power to solve the problems he needs a maiden to help him carry out his plan. If the two combatants were to find out about the plan they might find another way to satisfy their need for honor regardless of the consequences to Itonje.

A narrative from the Middle Ages, which brings up many of the same topics of discussion as found in Wolfram's *Parzival*, is *Moritz von Craun*.<sup>16</sup> The author is not known but the source is a French fable from ca 1170–80, “Du chevalier qui recovra l’amor de sa dame.”<sup>17</sup> The figure is not named in the tale and simply referred to as “diu juncvrouwe” (the virgin) and “magadîn” (maiden).<sup>18</sup> With the age of marriage at approximately thirteen, one can assume that as a “magadîn” and a “juncvrouwe” she is under that age.

When Moritz goes to seek his reward for winning the tournament he is extremely tired and yet anxious for his long delayed reward for love service from the married woman he serves. He worries that he will sleep and miss the greetings of his lady, but the young maiden will allow him to sleep

<sup>16</sup>Albrecht Classen, ed., *Moriz von Craun* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1992).

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 1195, 1242; 1289, 1258.

and wake him when her mistress comes.<sup>19</sup> She takes responsibility allowing him to get much needed rest. He had not slept for many nights due to the building of his overland ship as well as having made great physical exertions winning the tournament for his lady.<sup>20</sup>

When the mistress comes to find Moritz, it is not clear if she really wants to give him his reward or not, as she merely looks for any excuse to get out of the situation. She finds him asleep on the maiden's lap. The maiden wants to keep her promise, but her mistress commands her not to wake the sleeping Moritz and states that it is entirely his fault and that it is clear that his efforts are more intent on knightly feats of danger than on serving the woman he loves. She turns the situation around and blames him for not being rewarded as he loves sleep more than he loves her.<sup>21</sup>

The maiden realizes the folly of her mistress' words. She can see that her mistress will earn a bad reputation for herself and love service. This seems difficult for a woman inexperienced in the ways of love. She gives her mistress sound advice on love even though she herself cannot be experienced. She also sees that she would be forced to break her promise to the knight, which can only serve to take her own honor. The young maiden has a sense of responsibility beyond her years and station.<sup>22</sup> With sense enough to give advice equaling the valued counsel of King Solomon, this "magadin" proves that she is wise beyond her years.

For the *w se maget* to be a viable topic in medieval German literature and one that seems to have been used in some of the greatest, most widely read and performed pieces of the time there has to have been some literary source or sources that they build on. The authors were well read, despite Wolfram's protestations to the contrary, and claimed a wide knowledge of Greek and Roman history. Chrétien mentions the ancients as does the author of *Moriz von Cra n*, who uses his introduction to describe the downfall of chivalry since the antique period. The education that all of the authors must have enjoyed most likely stemmed from clerical education. They all appear well acquainted with the teaching of the church and they adhere to the norms set forth by the clerical standards of the time.<sup>23</sup>

Another source for this archetype is older Germanic literature. In the *Nibelungenlied* the figure of Brünhilde is excessively strong of body, not simply due to her high birth and station as queen but rather because of her virginity.<sup>24</sup> Her purity and chastity allow her to be superior in strength to

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 1238–43.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 1249–53.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 1258–84.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 1289–1338.

<sup>23</sup>See Wolfram's *Parzival* and Parzival's meeting the grey knight and Trevrizent on Good Friday in book 4.

<sup>24</sup>Helmut Brackert, ed. and trans., *Das Nibelungenlied* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1971), Bände.

a male of similar standing and birth. The king cannot subdue her, but Sigfried can. All three are of equal birth but Sigfried claims himself to be the king's vassal. It can therefore be argued that it is her virginity alone that gives her such enormous strength. This strength only wanes after she has been deflowered and becomes mortal. The signs of her strength are shown clearly in the contests of strength between Brünhilde and Günther in which Brünhilde is described as being stronger than twelve men:

Diu Prünhilde sterke	vil grœzlîche schein.
Man trouc ir zuo dem ringe	einen swæren stein,
grôz unt ungefüege,	michel unde wel.
in truogen kûme zwelfe,	helde küene unde snel.

*Das Nibelungenlied*, 449

[Brünhilde's strength showed itself quite clearly.  
They carried a a heavy stone to her in the ring,  
it was large, round, heavy and ungainly.  
Twelve brave, strong men carried it with difficulty.]

Brünhilde is as strong as twelve men and proves her strength in other feats as well (*Das Nibelungenlied*, 449–66). On Brünhilde and Gunther's wedding night she is able to bind him hand and foot with her belt and hang him from a nail on the wall (*Das Nibelungenlied*, 636–37) and will not allow him to touch her until she has figured out how he beat her in the contests. In paragraph 638 Gunther has to beg her to let him go and promise not to touch her. Her superhuman strength only subsides once she has lost her virginity, the source of her magical powers:

Er pflac ir minneclîchen,	als im daz gezam
dô muoste si verkiesen	ir zorn und ouch ir scham.
von sîner heimliche	si wart ein lützel bleich.
hei waz ir von der mine	ir grôzen krétté gesweich!

*Das Nibelungenlied*, 681

[Tenderly, as well he should he held her in his arms.  
She then had to release her anger and chastity.  
Through his actions she became a little pale.  
Love caused her to lose all of her magic powers.]

In Anglo-Saxon poetry there is a female character capable of great feats of faith, intelligence, and strength. The poem *Judith* is the story of a Hebrew widow, able to do what the men in her city cannot.<sup>25</sup> The first

<sup>25</sup>Mark Griffith, ed., *Judith* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 8:4–16:24.

proof of her abilities comes when she admonishes the magistrates, who are resigned to surrender to Holofernes in five days time (8:11–20).<sup>26</sup> Judith then tells them that she will do what they cannot; she can save the city with God’s help (8:32–35). Her beauty allows her access to Holofernes’s tent (12:16–20) and her wisdom provides a means of escape through her nightly prayer ritual (13:9–11). It is Judith’s faith in the Lord, which gives her the strength and allows her to lift Holofernes’s own sword from the bed-post and decapitate him with only two blows (13:6–9).

As in the instance of Obilot in Wolfram von Eschenbach’s *Parzival*, Judith saves her city from certain destruction, which no one else can do. Her beauty aids her as it does in many other examples of the *w se maget* figure, such as Alyze, but she is no maiden. Judith’s husband Manasseh had died during the barley harvest (8:2). She chose to mourn him, remain chaste (8: 4–8) and to never have relations with a man,<sup>27</sup> though she lived to be 105 years of age (16:22–24). Judith’s piety and devotion to God, in the face of insurmountable adversity, has also raised her to the status of a saint. Carey Moore discusses Judith’s sainthood in her translation of *Judith*, which is an objectionable term to some readers because she used deceit and committed murder. Nevertheless, Judith does acquire a saintly stature because of service to God and her people: “Like it or not, then, for the ancient author, Judith was a saint.”<sup>28</sup>

In the same manuscript, the Cotton Vitellius A XV, is the famous *Beowulf* poem.<sup>29</sup> In *Beowulf* there are references to yet another *w se maget* figure and an instance of virginal exception, showing a connection with later German female characters:

Bold wæ betlīc,	bregorōf cyning
hēah in healle,	Hygd swīðe geong
wīs wēlpungen	þēah ðe wintra lýt

[He was a famous king, with a fitting  
High hall and a wife, Higd, young  
But wise and knowing beyind her years]<sup>30</sup>

Higd, the young and wise wife of Higlac is in direct opposition to Thrith. Thrith, in lines 1931–43 is said to be a liar (1937), a sinner (1940) and vicious (1932–33). Thrith is then tamed through marriage. Her wise

<sup>26</sup>Carey A. Moore, trans. *Judith* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985).

<sup>27</sup>Compare this to Wolfram’s Sigune figure in *Parzival*.

<sup>28</sup>Moore, *Judith*, 62.

<sup>29</sup>For an in-depth study on *Beowulf* and the manuscript see Kevin Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf Manuscript* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996).

<sup>30</sup>Lines 1925–28. Original from Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson, *Beowulf: an Edition with Relevant Shorter Texts* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998). Translation from Burton Raffel, *Beowulf* (New York: Mentor, 1963).

father knows how to change her ways and it is only through her marriage to Offa, that she is made into a model wife. In a similar manner she is tamed, in the same way that Brünhilde is weakened, by her deflowering and marriage:

Hūru þæt onhōhsnode	Hemminges mæg;
ealodrincenda	ōðer sædan
þæt hīo lēodbealewa	læs gefremede
inwitniða	syððan ærest wearð
gyfen goldhroden	geongum cempan
æðelum dīore	syððan hīo Offan flet
ofer fealone flōd	be fæder lāre
sīðe geshōte,	ðær hīo syððan well
in gumstōle	gōde mære
līfgesceafta	līfigende bræc,
hīold hēahlufan	wið hæleþa brego

[But Hemming's kinsman tamed her: his hall-guests  
Told a different story, spread the news  
That Thrith had forgotten her gory tricks  
Once her wise father had sent her to a wedding  
With Offa, married her to that brave young soldier  
Sent her across the yellow-green sea  
To that gold-adorned champion, a fierce fighter  
In war and peace. They praised her now  
For her generous heart, and her goodness, and the high  
And most noble paths she walked, filled  
With adoring love for that leader of warrior]

*Beowulf*, 1944–54

The idea of virginal exception, or purity giving power to a character, has a Germanic literary tradition that continues in the characters of later authors. The figure of a female of high birth taking up arms was not common in the literature of the times, even distasteful, yet in Wolfram's *Parzival* Antikonie is a virgin fighting alongside Gâwân as well as any knight (*P*, 408:28–409:15). Antikonie's virginity, as well as her *triuwe*,<sup>31</sup> could be the facilitators of her ability to fight side by side with Gâwein against the angry mob intent on killing Gâwein in Schanpfanzun.

<sup>31</sup>See Marion Gibbs, *Wiblichez Wibes Reht* (Duchesne University: Duchesne University Press, 1972) and eadem, "Ideas of Flesh and Blood: Women Characters in *Parzival*," in *A Companion to Wolfram's Parzival*, ed. Will Hasty (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1999) for ideas on the importance of *Triuwe* in Wolfram's narrative.

Another movement of major importance to the authors using this type of character in their stories was Marianism. This movement was a flourishing at the time of the crusades. The idea of a virginal, younger character in a story with the ability to show nobility and display all of the “Tugenden” that Wolfram and the others wanted to give voice to with their characters must have been appealing. All of the authors mentioned in this article reveal religious beliefs based on church dogma and their connection to the rules of chivalry. In Will Hasty’s *Companion to Wolfram’s Parzival* there is a discussion on religion in the Arthurian romances and the influence of religion and the crusades on chivalry. Hasty writes that:

In this (balance between worldly demands of chivalric life and spiritual demands) we see signs of the Church’s increasing influence on the nobility’s basically military understanding of itself in the High Middle Ages. Around 1200 this self-understanding had been influenced by the ideology of the Crusades, one of the effects of which was to endow fighting with a higher spiritual purpose.<sup>32</sup>

The literary history up to that time and the religious climate of the Middle Ages provided the perfect elements to necessitate a character type such as the *w se maget*. Idealizing a woman and younger maidens was especially attractive to the troubadours (Minnesänger). The combination of literary history, religious fervor, and the ideals of courtly love, or chivalry, combine to provide the author with a pleasant character with the power to help a knight in need, a maiden who is in herself not a threatening, but rather an all together “tugendhafte kleine Frau.”

The actions of these four maidens, die kleine Braut, Obilot, Alyze, and Lûnete all interact with the protagonist in their respective narratives in such a way that the protagonist is able to take an otherwise dire situation and turn it into a positive outcome. Die kleine Braut brings Heinrich back to God’s good graces by offering herself as a sacrifice for her lord and family. Obilot helps her city, her sister’s relationship with Meljanz, her father, and brings greater honor to Gâwein by handling the situation in an honorable, intelligent manner. Alyze is able to avoid a family feud and to give her uncle the chance of saving his wife and lands through her mature advice. Lûnete is able to save Îwein as well as provide her Mistress with a husband and a defender for their territory. “Die kleine Braut” and Alyze have an additional bond of being divinely inspired in their premature wisdom.

These four major figures in some of the major works of the time, included with the minor figures also outlined, constitute a great number of a similar character type in arguably the most important works in medieval German literature. If the character type appeared in only one work by each

<sup>32</sup>Hasty, ed. *A Companion to Wolfram’s Parzival*, xiii.

author or in only certain text genres, such as the Arthurian romance, then one could say that the character type is limited to a specific theme. This is not the case as Hartmann von Aue uses the figure of “die kleine Braut” in the moral tale *Der arme Heinrich* and then uses the figure in the Arthurian romance *Iwein*. Wolfram uses the figure in several different works and his nemesis Gottfried von Straßburg also employs the character type.

In 1998 Kathleen Ragan collected and edited stories of heroines from around the world. In her book entitled *Fearless Girls, Wise Women and Beloved Sisters*, Ragan shows that there are a number of stories with wise women in them, nine of them having Germanic origins.<sup>33</sup> These tales are mainly old folktales, which show that women are as capable of great feats of wisdom, bravery, and strength as their male counterparts. When seen together with the Anglo-Saxon poems, Germanic narratives, and Arthurian romances from both French and German sources, the figure of the *w se maget* can be viewed in context of a larger literary vision. This vision of a woman as holy,<sup>34</sup> beautiful and healing was more widespread than just in Wolfram and Hartmann’s area of influence in what is today Bavaria and northern Austria. It was also available to the authors/scribes of *Judith* and *Beowulf* in the area of modern day Britain as well as to Chrétien de Troyes in France.

<sup>33</sup>See Kathleen Ragan, *Fearless Girls, Wise Women and Beloved Sisters* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998).

<sup>34</sup>For more stories of holy women see Osbern Bokenham, *A legend of Holy Women* trans. Sheila Delany (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).

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## The Presence of the Past: Shakespeare in South Africa

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IN WHAT WAYS HAS SHAKESPEARE—as a collection of texts, as cultural capital, as a tool of a colonial education system as powerful as the bible and the gun—manifest in South African culture? Today I will sketch the presence of the past in a way which aims to draw out the South African in Shakespeare as much as the Shakespearean in South Africa. I do this following the post-colonial call to redress the imbalance of knowledges between the West and the Rest, and in order to break a simplistic cultural binary which posits “African,” colonized culture on one side and “European,” high culture on the other. There are ongoing debates about the details of this model of, variously, cultural hybridity, creolization, or transformation. Nevertheless, recognition of the synergy that occurs with the meeting of cultures, however unequally, is central to any understanding of the cultural conditions of a post-colonial world, and, ultimately, of post-apartheid South Africa.

Bill Ashcroft has recently suggested that any kind of resistance to colonial domination has to create as well as resist.<sup>1</sup> This notion of cultural transformation, which stresses alternative forms of resistance, is a useful one in terms of conceptualizing the Shakespearean-inflected aspects of the work of Solomon Plaatje in the early twentieth century, and of a group of writers who, in the 1950s, can be seen to follow in this transformative tradition of writing a South African Shakespeare.

Born in what was then the Orange Free State in 1876, Sol Plaatje was a politician, a writer, a linguist, and an activist: “one of South Africa’s most important political and literary figures.”<sup>2</sup> His output included five translations of Shakespeare’s plays, of which only two survive, *Diphosphoso* (*Mistakes Upon Mistakes/A Series of Blunders*, his version of *A Comedy of Errors*) and *Dintshontsho tsa Bo Julius Kesara* (*Julius Caesar*).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bill Ashcroft, *Post-colonial Transformations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 2–3; 5; chap. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Brian Willan, introduction to *Sol Plaatje: Selected Writings* ed. Brian Willan (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997), 1. See the same claim made also in Willan, “Sol T. Plaatje and Tswana Literature: A Preliminary Survey,” in *Literature and Society in South Africa*, ed. Langley White and Tim Couzens (Cape: Longman, 1984), 81.

Plaatje has been read in a number of ways: as the co-opted native intellectual,<sup>4</sup> and as a representative of the emerging petit-bourgeois African class whose love of Shakespeare becomes a delineating marker of education and civility.<sup>5</sup> A third reading is exemplified by Leon De Kock's version of almost inadvertent Bhabha-ian mimicry which he finds at work in the writings of the mission-educated back elite, including Plaatje.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Njabulo Ndebele places Plaatje "firmly... in the genuine history of the struggle for liberation."<sup>7</sup> Plaatje's use of Shakespeare could also be theorized as essentially destabilizing the notion of the colonial subject,<sup>8</sup> following Helen Tiffin's vision of the colonial Other who takes up the challenge of the binary system and shifts himself from one side to the other, according to the promise of the civilizing mission. This movement disrupts "those very hierarchized binaries upon which the ideology of Empire... rests."<sup>9</sup> However, David Johnson worries that this kind of post-colonial "Plaatje-subject" will come to define Plaatje, "given the cultural authority" of the major Western institutions in which such theory is housed.<sup>10</sup>

Whether his use of Shakespeare is viewed as a strategy of disruption (Plaatje challenges the construction of his own "otherness" by proving he

<sup>3</sup>Tim Couzens and Brian Willan "Solomon T. Plaatje, 1876–1932: an introduction," *English in Africa*, Plaatje Centenary Issue, 3, no. 2 (September 1976): 2.

<sup>4</sup>David Johnson, *Shakespeare and South Africa* (Clarendon: Oxford, 1996), 96.

<sup>5</sup>Tim Couzens, *The New African: A Study of the Life and Works of H.I.E. Dhlomo* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985), 6–18.

<sup>6</sup>Leon De Kock, *Civilising Barbarians: Missionary Narrative and African Textual Response in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1996), 114. This reading can be compared to David Chanaïwa's, who finds in Plaatje "perhaps the most typical of the...reform-oriented intellectuals" who made the "terrible mistake" of buying into humanism at the expense of more direct political activism; "African Humanism in Southern Africa," in *Independence without Freedom: The Political Economy of Colonial Education in Southern Africa*, ed. Agrippah T. Mugomba and Mougo Nyaggah (Oxford and California: ABC-Clio, 1980), 15 and 35 respectively. De Kock replies that Chanaïwa "fails to recognise the possibility...[of] constructing counter-narratives in which the discourse of 'civilisation' was reappropriated and redeployed"; *Civilising Barbarians*, 114.

<sup>7</sup>Njabulo Ndebele, "Actors and Interpreters: Popular Culture and Progressive Formalism" in *Rediscovery of the Ordinary* (Johannesburg: Congress of South African Writers, 1991), 82.

<sup>8</sup>The strategy of assimilation which disrupts the simple categorization of colonizer/colonized can be effective. Ania Loomba has illustrated the possibility of using Shakespeare "as a suitably weighty means through which [to] negotiate [a] future" in her examination of Kathakali drama's adaptation of Shakespeare; *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, eds. Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 163. David Schalkwyk and Lerothodi Lapula have been "struck by the way in which Plaatje treats Shakespeare as material to be used and...rather than as an idol to be worshipped"; "Solomon Plaatje, William Shakespeare, and the Translation of Culture," *Pretexts: literary and cultural studies* 9, no. 1 (2000): 16.

<sup>9</sup>Helen Tiffin, "Plato's Cave," in *New National and Post-colonial Literatures: An Introduction*, ed. Bruce King (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 154.

<sup>10</sup>Johnson, *Shakespeare and South Africa*, 109.

can be “the same”), assimilation (Plaatje took what he was given and changed it to his own purpose), or ironic civility (whether he meant to or not, the gap between material conditions and colonial education’s humanist discourse served as implicit activist criticism), it is important to allow for a Plaatje who is not fooled into submission by a colonial Shakespeare. In addition, often inflecting the critical recognition of Plaatje’s importance to South African literature is the way in which Plaatje’s appreciation of Shakespeare legitimates Plaatje’s own importance as an artist and icon.<sup>11</sup>

Whether or not Plaatje’s relationship with Shakespeare can be read as a relationship with a series of texts (including the “narrative” of “civilization”) that carried with them an ultimately empty promise of political and social justice, one of the aims of his translations was to show that Setswana was a language which deserved to be protected. In his Introduction to *Diphosphoso*, Plaatje tells his reader:

It has not been an easy task to write a book such as this in Setswana.... But we are driven forward by the demands of the Batswana—the...cries of people exclaiming, “Tau’s Setswana will be of no use to us! It is becoming extinct because children are not taught Setswana! They are taught the missionary language! They will lose all trace of our language!” That is why we undertook to tackle this task.<sup>12</sup>

Beyond this, what more can we say about Plaatje’s translations of Shakespeare? Is there a way to free the “Plaatje-subject” from the binary of either subversive native Other or co-opted colonial subject, in a way that might allow him to artistically own his relationship with “Shakespeare” without concomitantly catching them both in the imperialist and oppressive colonial education system? Is it possible to claim a hybrid Plaatje without privileging Shakespeare?

In a field concerned with another Other, work has been done on women’s translation in the early modern period. Critics have illustrated

<sup>11</sup>See Tim Couzens, “A Moment in the Past: William Tsikinya-Chaka,” *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 2 (1988): 60–66. See also Willan, “Sol T. Plaatje and Tswant Literature,” 82–87, for a discussion of Plaatje’s relationship with Shakespeare. Willan also explores the political motivations and “ideological connotations” of the translations (88). In addition see Stephen Gray’s discussion of *Mhudi*, “Plaatje’s Shakespeare” *English in Africa* 4, no. 1 (March 1977): 1–6: “Plaatje did ‘monkey’ Shakespeare” (1). Plaatje’s Shakespearean influence is discussed by Couzens and Willan in their introduction to the *English in Africa*, Plaatje Centenary Issue, where a selection of Plaatje’s writings on Shakespeare is given, entitled “Plaatje and Shakespeare” (7–8). See also David Chanaiwa “African Humanism in Southern Africa: The Utopian, Traditionalist, and Colonialist Worlds of Mission-Educated Elites” in *Independence without Freedom: The Political Economy of Colonial Education in Southern Africa*, ed. Agrippah T. Mugomba and Mougo Nyaggah (Oxford and California: ABC-Clio, 1980); and David Johnson’s account of Plaatje as “The Colonial Subject and Shakespeare,” in *Shakespeare and South Africa*, 74–110.

<sup>12</sup>Quoted in Willan, *Sol Plaatje: Selected Writings*, 383–84.

that translation can be seen as an act of authoring. Danielle Clarke has detailed the powerful political commentary found in female-authored texts of the period, and shows that translation is a site of intervention and public involvement, pointing out the ideological implications of the act of rewriting inherent in translation.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, Plaatje's acts of translation may have been overstressed as imitation, in the modern sense, and under-recognized as creative imitation in the early modern sense. This suggests itself in an evaluation of *Diphosphoso* by Shole J. Shole. Shole repeatedly stresses the "fine...free...and idiomatic" nature of Plaatje's translation: "Plaatje did not attempt to retain the original form at the expense of meaning... this is what makes *Diphosphoso* the success it is."<sup>14</sup>

What emerges from Shole's evaluation is that attempts at literal translation from Shakespeare's English to Setswana fail poetically and linguistically, while using Shakespeare as what we may recognize to be a source is far more successful: "At times his freedom reaches ridiculous extremes.... [W]here [Plaatje] cannot translate, he creates."<sup>15</sup> Shole compares Plaatje's translation to Raditladi's of *Macbeth*, which follows the original literally. The result is a piece of work at times so nonsensical "that one may wonder whether [Raditladi] understood his own work himself."<sup>16</sup> A direct translation, which does not make cultural and idiomatic allowances, becomes a "mistranslation."<sup>17</sup>

We can thus theorize a hybrid text, both Shakespearean and Plaatjean. Viewing Plaatje as having done something to Shakespeare, instead of reading Plaatje's work as valuable because of its debt to Shakespeare, is one way to trace the presence of a Shakespearean influence on South African literature without privileging the colonial half of the hybrid.

Ania Loomba, amongst others, has pointed out the failings of a generalized notion of hybridity.<sup>18</sup> Addressing specific cultural and historical conditions is imperative in order to avoid reinscribing the terms of dominance that hybridity as a concept first sought to counter.<sup>19</sup> Ulf Hannerz, in an article on the South African township, Sophiatown, suggests creolization as a framework within which to place the voices of a group of

<sup>13</sup>Danielle Clarke, "Translation, Interpretation and Gender: Women's Writing c.1595–1644" (Unpublished D.Phil. dissertation, University of Oxford, n.d.), C.10946.

<sup>14</sup>Shole J. Shole, "Shakespeare in Setswana: An Evaluation of Raditladi's *Macbeth* and Plaatje's *Diphosphoso*" *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 4 (1990/91), 51–64, here 51 and 59.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 60–61.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 53.

<sup>18</sup>Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 173–183.

<sup>19</sup>See Natasha Distiller, "A Sign that History is Happening: Shakespeare in 20th-Century South African Literature," *Literature Compass* 2 (2005):145. See 1–18 for an overview of the concept of hybridity.

men who wrote for the popular *Drum* magazine in the 1950s.<sup>20</sup> Shakespeare permeates both the writings of, and about, *Drum* magazine, its staffers, and Sophiatown itself, which through texts including interviews, literature, journalism, criticism, and conference papers, has been constructed as a Shakespearean space.<sup>21</sup>

Anthony Sampson, the editor widely accredited with the changes that made *Drum* the voice of the new urban African in 1951, came to South Africa from Oxford with “a knowledge of 243 Elizabethan plays.”<sup>22</sup> In what by now is a familiar imposition of “structures of knowing”<sup>23</sup>, he thus brought a particular idiom to his understanding of Sophiatown. Sampson said, “[A]ll that frenzied activity ... seemed to me to be every bit a Shakespearean play with terror and murder waiting in the wings.”<sup>24</sup> This is a sustained metaphor. Elsewhere, in an interview, Sampson says the mixture of “white characters” in the shebeens (or bars) of Sophiatown, “was marvelous. I always thought it was very like the Elizabethan theatre”. Similarly, Sampson describes the enforced class mixing amongst black South Africans as, “very much like a scene from Falstaff—a funny mixture of people with the odd pickpocket in the background. It was wildly romantic....”<sup>25</sup>

Sampson brings a delighted English gaze to the politically and socially fraught township scene: “I can remember watching a man hide under a table when word came that his wife was looking for him while his mistress was bundled out of the window. That was like watching an Elizabethan play.”<sup>26</sup> Elsewhere, Sampson reports:

<sup>20</sup>Ulf Hannerz, “Sophiatown: the view from afar,” in *Readings in African Popular Culture*, ed. Karin Barber (Oxford and Bloomington: International African and Institute and Indiana University Press, 1997). I am grateful to Sandra Klopper for making me aware of this article. For a history of the development of Sophiatown see Paul Gready “The Sophiatown Writers of the Fifties,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16, no. 1 (March 1990); Hannerz, “Sophiatown”; and Tom Lodge, “The Destruction of Sophiatown,” in *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal*, ed. Belinda Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1983). The reasons for the destruction of Sophiatown are indicative of burgeoning formal apartheid in the new philosophy of the Nationalist regime; they are cited variously as slum clearance, the elimination of “black spots” from the white cities, and the “symbolic importance of eliminating African rights to the ownership of land”; *From Protest to Challenge*, ed. Thomas Karis and Gwendoline Carter (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1977), 24. In addition, Sophiatown has been read as a geographical and symbolic space of resistance, impossible to control on both levels; Lodge, “The Destruction of Sophiatown,” 346–48.

<sup>21</sup>Paul Gready has called “The co-existence of an emergent black urban culture and the National Party’s intent to destroy such a phenomenon... both the significance and tragedy of Sophiatown”; “The Sophiatown Writers of the Fifties,” 139.

<sup>22</sup>Mike Nicol, *A good-looking corpse* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1991), 26.

<sup>23</sup>Anthony Fothergill, “Cannibalising Traditions: Representations and Critique in Heart of Darkness,” in *Under Postcolonial Eyes: Joseph Conrad After Empire*, ed. Gail Fincham and Myrtle Hooper (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1996), 94.

<sup>24</sup>Quoted in Nicol, *A good-looking corpse*, 26.

<sup>25</sup>Anthony Sampson, *Sophiatown Speaks*, ed. Pippa Stein and Ruth Jacobson (Johannesburg: Bertrams Avenue Press, 1986), 43.

<sup>26</sup>Quoted in Nicol, *A good-looking corpse*, 95.

It came to me suddenly that I was watching an Elizabethan play. It was as if the characters had tripped straight from the stage of the Globe, lugging their dead bodies with them. Sophiatown had all the exuberant youth of Shakespeare's London. It was the same upstart slum, with people coming from a primitive country life to the tawdry sophistication of the city's fringes. Death and the police state were around the corner: and there was the imminent stage direction:  
Exuent with bodies...<sup>27</sup>

The theatricality of this description, which overlooks the reasons why people were forced into townships, and sense of enjoyment and distance it implies can be contrasted with Bloke Modisane's account of living in Sophiatown's violence, in his autobiography *Blame Me on History*. This, too, is done with reference to Shakespeare:

Violence and death walk abroad in Sophiatown, striking out in revenge or for thrills or caprice; I have lived in my room, trembling with fear, wondering when it would be my turn, sweating away the minutes whilst somebody was screaming for help, shouting against the violence which was claiming for death another victim.... Is it a friend out there whose blood is screaming forth through the multiple stab wounds? A relative, perhaps?... A stranger?... [T]here in my room I knew that after the facts have been examined,...the rationalisations equated, the truth will confront me with a sense of shame; I would admit that no man, no relative or friend or stranger deserves the death of a beast. It was Caesar's boast that "the skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks, they are all fire and every one doth shine"; if I allowed one spark—no matter how distant and insignificant—to be extinguished, then by this, my fire too would forfeit the right to flicker.<sup>28</sup>

The difference between observer and participant is inscribed in the differences in emotional response to the drama. For Sampson, the Shakespearean framework describes voyeuristic enjoyment; for Modisane Shakespeare's texts become a conduit for the expression of distress, as well as for signifying the effect of extreme and sustained violence on himself and others of his community in what, because of Shakespeare's cultural status, was a suitable register.

<sup>27</sup>Anthony Sampson. *Drum: A Venture into the New Africa* (London: Collins, 1956), 80.

<sup>28</sup>Blake Modisane, *Blame Me on History* (1963; repr. Craighill: AD Donker, 1986), 59–60.

Modisane refers to Shakespeare throughout his autobiography: "Why not? Even in Shakespeare's time people have been known to 'smile and murder while they smile.'"<sup>29</sup> He ranges from quoting Laertes to exemplify the emotion which causes people to take part in riots and Roderigo's description of Othello to illustrate the place of the black man in white society, to references such as: "If I am a freak it should not be interpreted as a failure of their education for a Caliban"; "We took up arms against the advance of poverty"; and "the sound and fury thrillers from Republic pictures."<sup>30</sup> Johnson characterizes Modisane's use of Shakespeare as "using the words of Shakespeare's characters in order to explain his own psychological processes."<sup>31</sup> Given the complicated relationship Modisane presents himself as having with the "European" culture he loved, his use of Shakespeare must also signify his learning in Europe's best. Equally important is his desire to use Shakespeare to normalize the chaos of his own milieu in terms that are both accessible to his readers and that work to confound their value judgment: "Even in Shakespeare's time..."

What Ez'kia Mphahlele has called the "grand Shakespearean image" manifests in pieces in *Drum* which describe township life.<sup>32</sup> A May 1953 tabloidesque expose called "My husband was a flirt," begins, "You know the old saying: 'Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.' And I'm scared of hell in the first place."<sup>33</sup> A December 1956 example of the creation of a partly Shakespearean discourse, which is energetic, urban, and specifically South African, is Casey Motsisi's in "Lobola? It's a Racket" [Lobola is a form of customary dowry]: "Ah, there's the rob – oops, rub!...catch me paying lobola!"<sup>34</sup>

Shakespeare also had a meta-textual influence on the writers of *Drum*. Motsisi was known as "Shakespeare of the Shebeens."<sup>35</sup> Can Themba had been his English teacher, thus, according to Mike Nicol, the man "who once taught Motsisi Shakespeare's sonnets...went on to teach him about life in Sophiatown."<sup>36</sup> In addition, the Shakespearean idiom has spilled over into critics' descriptions of the life and times of the *Drum* writers, as in, "Despite its destruction the importance of Sophiatown as a community and a culture has lived beyond its death, because not all that was solid melted into air."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 89.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 143, 168, 179, 103, and 65.

<sup>31</sup>Johnson, *Shakespeare and South Africa*, 175–76.

<sup>32</sup>Ez'kia Mphahlele, "My Experience as a Writer," in *Momentum: On Recent South African Writing*, ed. M.J. Daymond, J.U. Jacobs, Margaret Lenta ( Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1984), 79.

<sup>33</sup>Quoted in Nicol *A good-looking corpse*, 150–55.

<sup>34</sup>Quoted in Gready "The Sophiatown writers of the Fifties," 147.

<sup>35</sup>Nicol, *A good-looking corpse*, 216–26.

<sup>36</sup>Nicol, *A good-looking corpse*, 220.

<sup>37</sup>Gready, "The Sophiatown writers of the Fifties," 163.

Can Themba, of all the *Drum* staffers the most “steeped in English literature,”<sup>38</sup> also makes use of Shakespeare in his depiction of Sophiatown life as both content and stylistic feature. Examples include integrating a slang reference as part of an illustration of tsotsi taal (gangster-speak): “Weh, my sister, don’t lissen to that guy. Tell him Shakespeare nev’r said so!”<sup>39</sup> as well as in his propensity to invent words, Shakespeare-like: “the law in all its horrificiency prohibits me.”<sup>40</sup>

Themba’s first short story, which was also the winning story in *Drum*’s first short story competition, has as its protagonists a young couple, victims of “Love[’s]...often ill-starred ways.”<sup>41</sup> Instead of a Montagu and a Capulet, we have an umXhosa and a BaSotho, but the tragic consequences of their communities’ irrational hatred is written in the stars, or at least, in the literary tradition.

In his most sustained use of Shakespeare as both idiom and vehicle, and picking up on Sampson’s metaphor, Themba writes of South Africa in terms of Shakespeare’s plays, in “Through Shakespeare’s Africa,” written in 1963 for “New African.”<sup>42</sup> Themba begins by characterizing the violence of African life as something “Shakespeare would have understood without the interpolations of the scholars, and in this wise the world of Shakespeare reaches out a fraternal hand to the throbbing heart of Africa.”<sup>43</sup> Themba goes on to enlist Shakespeare as a vehicle for an expression of political anger, in a characteristically coolly sardonic tone. By writing his familiarity with Shakespeare “in this wise” into both the style and the story, Themba demonstrates at once his own sophistication, education, urbanity and intelligence, and the stupidity and brutality of the system that denies him equality. In form and content, Themba harnesses the best of British to make a point about the worst of South African. Just one brief example follows.

With the help of *Othello*, Themba jibes at

all the horror that one can conceive in the imagination of a backveld farmer who has tended his lands, jealously; guarded his honour, savagely; and contemplated his women in this dark

<sup>38</sup>Michael Chapman, ed., *The Drum Decade: Stories from the 1950* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1989), 209.

<sup>39</sup>Can Themba, “The Dube Train,” in *The Will to Die*, second impression (London: Heinemann, 1985), 59.

<sup>40</sup>Can Themba, “Crepsicule,” in *The Will to Die*, 2.

<sup>41</sup>Can Themba, “Mob Passion,” published in *Drum* in April 1953. Chapman, ed., *The Drum Decade*, 33, entire story 32–38.

<sup>42</sup>“Anthony Sampson, some-time editor of *Drum*, was perhaps the first person to remark that the turbulence of urban African life was like the stage of Shakespeare’s Elizabethan world...”; Can Themba, “Through Shakespeare’s Africa,” *New African* 2, no. 8 (1963): 150.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*

jungle of black, virile, uninhibited men, fearfully; leap up when these words [“Even now, now, very now, an old black ram/ Is tuppung your white ewe!”] are hurled to afright the night.”<sup>44</sup>

He correlates Othello’s situation with that of his readers, not missing the opportunity to advise them on how to get a white girl, as he gleefully points out he did, and a real Desdemona at that. “Worse than that,” he says, Othello “made himself indispensable to the state. It is this, also, that the urban African is continually doing.”<sup>45</sup>

Themba uses the politics of sex in Othello to comment on the apartheid state’s policies, which in their political control of the personal overstep the boundaries of truly “civilized” behavior:

By the way, let this quickly be said[:] in the world that Shakespeare cast for Othello and his miscegenatious doings, this kind of thing was not illegal. They had not yet come round to an Act of Immorality. The law, those days, was more concerned with whether charms and witchcraft were practiced on a girl to turn her mind to unnatural love. That was a serious crime. But we in the townships have long passed that stage. City-bred lover-boys who still use “roots” to catch the girls get laughed out of the shebang.<sup>46</sup>

Themba’s irony is characteristically complex. In Shakespeare’s Venice, he suggests, it is only a matter of time until they would “come round” to implementing racist legislation, thus pointing to the truly backward inevitability of the white man’s racism. Furthermore, in Shakespeare’s Venice, witchcraft is still taken seriously, whereas “civilized” urban Africans “have long passed that stage.” The colonial discourse of the White Man’s Burden (of which “Shakespeare” is a component), which needs barbarous natives to civilize and which encodes Western cultural, religious, and moral superiority, is dismantled.

The *Drum* writers can be seen to be Plaatje’s heirs in the South African Shakespeare they mobilized to express their frustrations. Ngugi wa Thiong’o has vigorously contested the authenticity of what he calls an “Afro-European” literary tradition. This tradition belongs to the petty-bourgeoisie ruling classes who are a creation of colonialism, and is “another hybrid tradition” and not a truly African one.<sup>47</sup> Insofar as the South African Shakespeare I have sketched here belongs to an elite educated by colonial institutions and offered class mobility through their edu-

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 153.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 154.

<sup>47</sup>Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Curry, 1986), 26–27.

cation, I have indeed described an “Afro-European” tradition. However, where this analysis differs from Ngugi’s is in the ascription of sites of cultural ownership. This is not meant to override Ngugi’s important analysis of cultural imperialism. Rather, it is to insist that the so-called “European” half of the hybrid is as African as the Africans who transform it. Thus an Africanized Shakespeare is a part of writing in English in South Africa.

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DELNO C. WEST  
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## Using and Abusing Delegated Power in Elizabethan England

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QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GOVERNMENT, like most early modern European governments, was one that sought to extend its influence and power throughout the realm. But at the same time it possessed minimal financial resources and coercive machinery of power, and therefore, while it issued mandates, it had to depend upon local officials and individuals to whom it delegated power. Nor did Elizabeth's government have any machinery of oversight to "watch-dog" those delegated powers.<sup>1</sup> Only when issues came to the attention of the Privy Council after-the-fact did the government, occasionally, intervene to redress abuses of those delegated powers. Two areas in which these dilemmas faced by Elizabeth's government are clearly exemplified are in the delegated powers of arrest and of impressment.

Lacking any organized municipal or national police force, powers of arrest in Elizabethan England were vested in a variety of people, most of whom were not under the direct supervision of the royal government. Local constables, justices of the peace [hereafter JP], mayors, city officials, agents of the courts, sergeants-at-law, customs officials, military and naval officers, church wardens, prison wardens, sheriffs, royal servitors, and private servants of Lords of the Privy Council all possessed legal rights to detain and arrest suspects. Needless to say such a welter of authorities with little or no coordination or supervision led to abuses of those powers.

Several episodes detailing the collusion of authorities in fraudulent charges appear in the records of the Privy Council. In 1587 it came to the Privy Council's attention that John Coping, held for debt in King's Bench Prison for a year, was there because of his creditor's perjured testimony concerning the size of Coping's debt and that creditor's collusion with the warden. A similar case appeared in 1589. A certain John Byss at Marshalsea Prison complained his enemies had falsely accused him as a recusant, and when brought before the sheriff of Somerset was then falsely charged also with a debt of a thousand marks. Byss had been a prisoner at Marshalsea Prison for four years, his case never coming before any court.

<sup>1</sup>Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (London: Longman, 1998), 3-11, 514, 70-72, 130-37.

And yet another such case appeared before the Council in 1592. Robert Clytherowe of Norfolk complained that using a false charge of recusancy the sheriff had seized all his cattle and grain stores.<sup>2</sup>

In other cases authorities used their authority to circumvent justice for personal gain. In 1580, a Dorset JP, upon receiving payments from the prisoners, bailed out several men committed to prison by the marquess of Winchester on the serious charge of piracy. A letter from the Council to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1591 offers another example of misuse of delegated authority. Complaints had finally reached the Council that “Mr. Bealson, her Majesty’s Attorney for that Province [Munster] dothe mysbehave hime selfe in th’execution of his office.” Mr. Bealson was imposing unreasonably high fines for minor offenses, pocketing much of the money, and then using false charges to jail those who dared complain against him.<sup>3</sup>

Some officials issued arrest warrants without listing any specific charges. In December 1591, the Recorder of the City of London swore out a warrant against a certain Mr. Paine, and sent a constable in the middle of the night to haul Paine, one of his servants, and a dozen others off to the Counter. Only after they were locked up did the Recorder come up with a vague charge: matters “touching high treason.” What saved Mr. Paine and the others and brought the arrests to the attention of the government was that the victims were friends and servants of Sir Francis Willoughby, with whom the Queen had once stayed, and who was knighted personally by her in 1587. The Privy Council intervened and reprimanded the City Recorder for exceeding his authority. Nor was this the Recorder’s first abuse of authority in that manner. In 1590 Thomas Toolie complained he had been committed to Newgate Prison by the City Recorder, but no charges had been filed.<sup>4</sup> The Recorder’s real reasons for these arrests are not known. Perhaps he had a personal vendetta; perhaps he was attempting to pry bail money out of the prisoners; perhaps he was retaliating, like Mr. Bealson of Ireland, on people who had complained about him. Nevertheless, in the case of Mr. Paine and his friends, the Recorder had reached too high. His victims had connections at Court.

Even a member of the aristocracy could be at the mercy of a greater noble, especially if that noble also possessed delegated legal powers. Sir

<sup>2</sup>*Acts of the Privy Council*, ed. J. R. Dasent (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1890–1907) [hereafter APC], 15:392, 19:190, 22:94. For discussions of how Elizabeth’s government relied upon ceremonial displays of power to make up for its lack of real power see Roy C. Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), and Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display* (New York: Methune, 1986).

<sup>3</sup>APC 2:27, 23:343–34.

<sup>4</sup>For Willoughby’s connections to Queen Elizabeth see Arthur F. Kinney, *Titled Elizabethans* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1973), 73, 77. APC 20:16–17, 22:151.

Edward Dymock experienced those difficulties in 1602. Dymock held a lease for the manor of Horncastle, but the earl of Lincoln refused to relinquish the property, claiming he held a prior lease to the manor. Lincoln built a watch house on the property and staffed with it with his private retainers who drove Sir Edward's men and cattle off the estate. Sir Edward retaliated by tearing down the watch house, only to find himself arrested for breaking the peace at the orders of the earl of Lincoln. The earl ordered the undersheriff to issue warrants against Dymock that would empower the earl's personal servants to take Dymock into custody. Lincoln then called a special session of court, over which he, and his son and heir Lord Clinton, presided. During the proceedings the earl and Lord Clinton intimidated the jury, and when it withdrew for deliberations Lincoln stationed his own attorney and some of his retainers outside the doors of the church wherein the jury conferred. Needless to say, the jury brought in a guilty verdict against Sir Edward, and that verdict stood until reversed by the Star Chamber.<sup>5</sup>

Yet Dymock did have enough standing to warrant action on the part of the Council. An ordinary feltmonger had no such high standing or connections at Court. In June 1592, a feltmonger's servant was seized summarily by servants of the Knight Marshall (warden of Marshalsea Prison). They entered his house at night with drawn daggers, served up a warrant from the Lord Chamberlain, but one without any specific charges, and carted off the man, his wife, and child, and everyone else present to Marshalsea. The feltmonger, his family, and friends were kept there for five days, no charges being laid against them. We only know of this incident because the man's friends and several feltmakers' apprentices "rioted," bringing the issue to the attention of the city authorities. "Great multitudes," we are told, caused "great disorder" when they assembled before Marshalsea Prison demanding the release of their co-workers; the Knight Marshall's men came out of the prison and beat several in the crowd. The "riot" was quelled by the Lord Mayor and one of the sheriffs. The leaders protesting the injustice to their friend found themselves sent to prison. There is no record of the disposition of the original arrestees nor of the arrested "rioters."<sup>6</sup>

A high-handed arrest did bring one of the Knight Marshall's men to task in December of 1597, but it was not for abuses against the Commons. Again an official had overreached. In this case Parliament was sitting, and the person arrested was a servant of the archbishop of York. We do not know what charges were specified, nor why the servant came to the atten-

<sup>5</sup>*Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury* (repr., London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1971), 12:410.

<sup>6</sup>"Dramatic Records of the City of London. *The Remembrancia*," *Malone Society Collection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), 6:662.

tion of the Knight Marshall's man. What we do know is that the Parliamentary privilege of freedom from arrest had been violated. The Knight Marshall's man was summoned before the House of Lords and committed for a brief time to prison, interestingly to the Fleet, not to his own place of work.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps these two incidents involving the Knight Marshall's men were part of larger "sweeps" by the warden of Marshalsea Prison. It was not unknown for prison wardens to send out "sweeps," arresting numbers of men from whom they could extort bail money. Since the jails were semi-privatized, they were expected to support themselves. The only money received from government was "poor bread"—bread furnished to those in prison who had no money to buy their own food. Wardens were not government employees with stipends or salaries. They were given a royal patent to receive prisoners and keep the jail, and expected to pay most prison expenses and earn their incomes from fees charged to prisoners. Those fees were wide reaching: for being committed to and discharged from prison, for being manacled and unmanacled in prison, for food and drink and bed and warmth in prison. In 1595 Robert Redhead, who had a royal patent to keep the castle and jail at York complained to the Privy Council that his income was being undercut by a Royal Pursivant (lawyer) who was taking charge of the wealthier people ordered into custody. As a result the only prisoners he was given in charge were the poor or condemned, from whom he could receive little fee-money.<sup>8</sup>

Some who received grants to operate prisons leased those rights to others. Brian Ansley was warden of the Fleet prison and leased the office out at £100 a year. In 1590 prisoners at the Fleet complained that the "substitute" warden, Joachim Newton, was extorting money from them by charging exorbitant fees for room and board. In 1591 Thomas Proudfoot, though granted a writ of *Habeas Corpus* by the justices of King's Bench, was being kept in prison by the sub-warden of the Counter who was in cahoots with the man who had jailed Proudfoot over a dispute regarding repayment of a small debt. The Privy Council in 1593 acknowledged that some wardens were charging exorbitant fees for prison "services," with the result that some people remained in jail long past their specified terms because they lacked the money to pay their prison bills.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup>S. D'Ewes, *A Compleat Journal of the Votes, Speeches and Debates, Both of the House of Lords and House of Commons throughout the whole Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (1693; repr. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1974), 571.

<sup>8</sup>S. and B. Webb, *History of English Local Government*, vol. 6: *English Prisons under Local Government* (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1963), 1–12, and C. Dobb, "London's Prisons," *Shakespeare Survey* 17 (1964): 93–99, describe the collection of fees by prison wardens for virtually everything. APC 25:229–30.

<sup>9</sup>APC 19:473, 22:309, 24:82, Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 95.

We have some idea of how lucrative conducting an arrest and taking charge of a prisoner could be. In 1600 the earl of Lincoln was imprisoned for refusing to obey a Privy Council order. He also refused to pay the fees of the sergeant-at-arms who took him into custody and guarded the earl at the Fleet Prison. The sergeant appealed to the Privy Council, which set the following fee-schedule for noble prisoners: arrest fee for an earl £5, for a baron 5 marks (1 mark=13s. 4d), for each day of attendance upon the nobleman 4 nobles (1 noble=6s. 8d), and if the arresting officer had to ride out of town to collect his prisoner he also received 4 marks per travel day. The total owed the sergeant was the £5 fee for arrest, plus two days riding (8 marks), plus 52 nobles for thirteen days of attendance upon the earl. That makes a grand total of over £26, well over a year's salary to the average artisan.<sup>10</sup>

Given this welter of public and private powers of arrest and the potential for quick and potentially large amounts of money it is no wonder that conmen sought to turn that confusion and potential to their advantage. Conmen used phony warrants to extract pretended arrest fees and travel expenses from those upon whom they served the warrants. In 1580 the earl of Shrewsbury sent a certain John Norton of Sheffield to London to answer charges of exacting arrest fees by posing as a royal herald. The Council issued an arrest warrant in 1596 against a *real* royal messenger who had been abusing his powers in that way. A royal proclamation that year warned subjects about conmen pretending to be "messengers of her Majesty's chamber," who wore counterfeit coats-of-arms on their clothes and served people with counterfeit warrants bearing forged signatures of Lords of the Privy Council or Church officials. The proclamation admits that despite ear-croppings and brandings used on some of the conmen who had been caught, the abuses still continued. The practice was pervasive enough that it brought forth a book detailing some of the unsavory practices used by conmen. *The Knights of the Poste*, ascribed to Edward Sharpham and printed in 1597, described conmen who pretended to be substantial citizens and collected rewards from prisoners on the pretense of paying their bail.<sup>11</sup> The £26 in fees owed the sergeant-at-arms for the arrest of the earl of Lincoln shows that the potential rewards were high enough for conmen to risk their ears.

Proving that the complaints of the Privy Council's proclamation and *The Knights of the Poste* were not exaggerations, three such episodes appear in Privy Council documents from those very years: William Symondes of Warwick was arrested in 1597 because he took people into custody pre-

<sup>10</sup>APC 30:598.

<sup>11</sup>*Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James P. Larkin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 3:159–62. S. E. (attributed to Edward Sharpham), *The Discouerie of the Knights of the Poste* (London: G. Shaw, 1597). APC 11:448, 26:92.

tending to be a royal servant, and, in 1598, John Melloes was arrested for pretending to be a messenger of the Royal Chamber and forging the signatures of Lords of the Privy Council on counterfeit warrants. One example of the technique used by these conmen is detailed in the Privy Council documents from 1597. A man named Ross pretended to be servant to the Earl of Essex. Ross went to Kent and “arrested” Francis Barker, using a counterfeit warrant he pretended was issued by the Privy Council. Ross then brought Barker back to London, and shifted him from place to place for several days, no doubt to keep him from being found by friends or family. Barker finally was released when he paid Ross the whopping sum of £47, plus a horse.<sup>12</sup> Probably this case came before the Council because Barker was a prominent Kentishman. He certainly must have been a substantial one; the £47 extorted from him represents a sum more than three times the average *yearly* income of a London artisan.<sup>13</sup>

Almost as long a list as that comprising those with powers of arrest in Elizabethan England is the list of those with powers of impressment into royal service—JPs, mayors, city officials, military and naval officers, sheriffs, and sometimes royal servitors. Private or semi-private recruitment of soldiers and sailors also was common. Fears of invasion from Spain, the wars in the Low Countries in support of the Dutch Revolt, and chronic rebellions in Ireland made the Privy Council pressure officials for more and more impressments for the army and navy.<sup>14</sup>

Semi-official musters, recruitment, and even military campaigns by private subjects, such as the Cadiz expedition of 1596 which was recruited and financed largely by its two joint commanders the earl of Essex and the Lord Admiral, made Elizabeth’s military a hodgepodge of authorities, and ripe fruit for corruption.<sup>15</sup> As early as 1564 the Privy Council was complaining of fraudulent musters used to extract money from local citizens. In 1573, for instance, a citizen of Cambridge was issued a private commission to conduct a muster, but warned he was not to impress the scholars and servants of the university, for fear he might turn his commission into a way to earn money by to forcing them to pay money to be released from service.

Naturally, conmen sought to take advantage of the confusing muster system just as they did in the case of the overlapping and unsupervised powers of arrest. An order of arrest was sent to Kent in 1573 concerning a certain Edward Chester and a certain Christopher Chute, both of whom were collecting money and taking advantage of free hospitality by pretend-

<sup>12</sup>APC 27:54, 137, 28:424.

<sup>13</sup>For average wages in late sixteenth-century London see James H. Forse, *Art Imitates Business: Commercial and Political Influences in the Elizabethan Theatre* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Press, 1993), 2.

<sup>14</sup>For a good discussion of Elizabeth’s military, its semi-private nature, and its many problems and abuses see Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 130–48.

<sup>15</sup>Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 131.

ing “to have the leading of soldiours.” In 1593 authorities in Rutland reported to the Council that a man claiming to be “Captain Bayton” was using a counterfeit commission to conscript men and horses so that the local inhabitants would pay him money to be released from service or to redeem their horses.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, the government was all too willing to grant exemptions from impressment to members of the privileged classes. Commissioners of Muster for Kent in 1573 were forbidden to impress the servants of the dowager countess of Pembroke, and in 1577 the dean and canons of Windsor chapel were allowed to withhold their servants from the training musters. As we will see below, in 1602 the Council forbade London officials to impress any gentlemen or their servants.

Others simply claimed the privilege of exemption on their own. The Privy Council reprimanded the muster commissioners of three counties, Carmarthen, Cardigan, and Pembroke, in 1580 because the commissioners were excluding themselves, as well as their personal servants, arms, and horses from the levies. In 1587 it came to the Council’s attention that several of the Essex gentry charged with serving as cavalymen “had absented them selves from their musters,” and in 1589 it learned that several men living in Middlesex not only refused to be called up, but also refused “to contribute anie thinge” in the way of arms and supplies, claiming that they either belonged to one of the London guilds or were “her Majesties servants.” In 1591 several gentlemen in Oxford claimed exemption from musters “by reason of their service and attendance on her Majestie.”<sup>17</sup> Obviously members of the privileged classes, or those close to them, were not about to suffer the inconveniences of losing their time, servants, or valuable horses.

Naturally there was fraud and abuse in this haphazard process of mustering men and arms. In 1580 the Privy Council ordered the Commissioners for Muster in Norfolk to replace John Blackney, esquire, as captain of soldiers. Blackney is described as unfit for service because he was too old and “subject to lamenesse and sicknes.” No doubt it was his high social standing (the title esquire could be used only by those who were descendants of a knight) that secured him the commission in the first place. The same year men who had been impressed in Chester for service in Ireland received neither the travel expenses nor money for uniforms that had been advanced to their captains. The Council complained in 1588 that “divers gentlemen” in Hertford had presented good horses at the muster but then switched them for “very badd horses” when actually called up for service. In 1591 the Council asked the earl of Pembroke to investigate the musters

<sup>16</sup>APC 7:175, 8:98–100, 24:149.

<sup>17</sup>APC 8:108, 12:340, 15:12, 17:249.

in Monmouthshire. Monies collected there had disappeared, and there was neither record of what had been spent, nor for what it had been spent. In 1593 several men conscripted from counties Bedford and Cambridge showed up in London in tattered clothing, lacking any arms, and physically unfit for service. In 1597 conscripts for service in Ireland were able to run away because their own captains were unwilling to conduct them out of Cheshire to the seaports, and reports from counties Devon, Norfolk, Suffolk, Sussex, Somerset, and Oxford revealed other widespread abuses. Some men were impressed solely to extort money from them by making them buy their way out of service. Some men were bribing the Commissioners of Muster to impress others in their place, and money appropriated to captains to buy food, arms, and equipment was disappearing without a trace.<sup>18</sup>

Captains of soldiers serving in Ireland were pocketing the money allotted them for their soldiers' pay and food, forcing their troops to loot the surrounding countryside. Many captains neglected to report men who had died or been mustered-out in order to pocket their pay. To make companies appear at full strength in order to receive money from the government, sometimes captains allowed Irish rebels to join musters called to determine company strength, collect the pay meant for the missing English soldiers, and then leave after the official count had been taken. Food provided for some ships in the navy was so spoiled it was feared it would poison the sailors. Most of the 800 men from twelve different counties awaiting transport to Ireland at Bristol in 1602 were found to be ill-equipped and clothed, weak, sick, lame, old, or young boys. All of them had been impressed so that substantial citizens would not have to serve, and it was assumed that any respectable men among them had been impressed because they had run afoul of the local authorities.<sup>19</sup> Obviously authorities in most counties were desperate to meet their quotas, but they also were using their impressment powers to rid their counties of indigents and undesirables.

There was especially heavy pressure on officials between 1599 and 1602 to raise troops for the campaigns going on simultaneously in Ireland and the Low Countries. JPs in Dorset in 1599 are described as frantically scouring the county for men. In early May 1602, the Lord Mayor of London used his warrant for impressment to take advantage of a certain Captain Allen. Allen personally had raised and equipped a company of 400 men. While in London awaiting transport, many of his men were seized by city officials and used to help fill the city's impressment quota.<sup>20</sup> This was doubly advantageous to the city. In the first place it was an easy source of

<sup>18</sup>APC 12:103, 286–87, 16:212–13, 17, 328, 24:62, 65–66, 25:351.

<sup>19</sup>*Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, 9:336–38, 12:144.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

soldiers, and in the second, the soldiers already were equipped, thus avoiding the complaints from the Privy Council that too many unequipped and unfit men were being impressed into military service.

That incident was followed later in the month by a spectacular abuse of impressment powers. Ordered by the Privy Council to raise troops for the campaign in the Low Countries by impressing vagrants and vagabonds from taverns, bawdy houses, and bowling alleys, the Lord Mayor instead directed a coordinated sweep of all the playhouses, impressing a total of 4000 men, including “gentlemen and servingmen...lawyers, clerks, countrymen that had law causes, aye the Queen’s men, knights, and as it was credibly reported one Earl.” Naturally the impressment of so many men of “quality” brought the action to the attention of the Privy Council. The result was a proclamation that henceforth no gentlemen or serving men should be impressed in London.<sup>21</sup>

The pressures on London officials to impress troops for the Dutch and Irish campaigns, or perhaps an attempt to extort “buy-out” money, may not have been the only reasons for the Lord Mayor’s sweep of the theatres in May 1602. Officially, at least, the London authorities had opposed the theatres in and around London from their inception. Petitions from the Lord Mayor and City Council to the Privy Council to ban or restrict playing and theatres, and prevent the opening of new ones, were numerous, and date to as early as 1549. Throughout Elizabeth’s reign such petitions were sent to the Privy Council almost annually. Despite these yearly requests to restrict playing, the number of public theatres and resident acting companies had increased in the London area, from three theatres and two resident companies in 1594 to five theatres and three resident companies, plus the Boys’ Companies at Blackfriars and St. Paul’s, in 1602. Earlier, in 1582 city authorities had tried another tack to restrict playing in London, prohibiting children, servants, apprentices, and journeymen from attendance at plays, but the prohibition had no effect. Perhaps, then, this massive sweep was simply a frustrated mayor attempting to use impressment powers as harassment designed to intimidate playgoers and playing companies alike since official petitions against playhouses and playing had proved so ineffective. To be fair to the London authorities, some concern about large gatherings of diverse people at the theatres, perhaps on some days as much as three or four percent of the city’s total population, is understandable. London and its suburbs had no police or fire departments, and crowd control essentially meant swearing out a posse of citizens.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>I. H., Jeayes, ed., *Letters of Phillip Gawdy* (London: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1906), 120-22.

<sup>22</sup>E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 2:400-12, 4:261-93, 287, 298-322; Forse, *Art Imitates Business*, 18-22.

Elizabeth also granted powers of impressment into royal service for reasons other than military duty, and a case of its abuse is famous in the annals of theatre-history. On 13 December 1600, James Robinson, agent of Nathaniel Giles, choirmaster of the Royal Chapel, and Giles's partner Henry Evans, used Giles' patent issued under the Great Seal, commanding "every one of you to whom this our commission shall come, to be helping, aiding, and assisting to the uttermost of your powers, as you will answer at your uttermost perils," to "haul, pull, drag, and carry away," Thomas Clifton, the thirteen-year old son and heir of Henry Clifton, esquire, from Toftrees in Norfolk, ostensibly to impress Thomas into the Queen's boys' choir. Henry Clifton immediately went to Blackfriars to demand the return of his son. His demand not only was refused, but Giles and Evans brought young Thomas into the room, handed him a playscript, and, in front of his father, threatened to beat him if he did not learn his part.<sup>23</sup>

Henry Clifton, however, was no mere country bumpkin. He was a member of the Norfolk upper gentry. He descended from John Clyfton, knight, listed in the Commissioners' List of 1433 of the gentry of Norfolk. His Nottinghamshire cousins had achieved prominence during the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII. By Elizabeth's reign the Clifton family had sufficient status that William Cecil, Lord Burghley, personally drew up a Clifton genealogy for inclusion in his personal papers. No records link Henry Clifton directly to the magistracy of Norfolk, but his grandson became JP. Henry himself may have been a local master of the posts. Since Toftrees lies on a postal road, Henry's manor possessed large stables, and his name is conspicuously absent from Norfolk Muster Rolls. Only JPs, clergy, and postmasters were exempt from musters, and Clifton was neither JP nor clergyman.<sup>24</sup>

If he were a postmaster, he was acquainted with Sir John Stanhope, Master of the Royal Posts. Even if he were not, he had indirect ties to Stanhope through Clifton's friendship with his neighbor Sir Roger Townshend of Raynam, who had married Stanhope's sister. Stanhope was especially close associate of Sir Robert Cecil, the Lord Secretary, and the Lord Admiral Charles Howard. Henry Clifton's status within the Norfolk elite also would have brought contacts not only with the Howard family, which held extensive lands there, but with Attorney General Sir Edward Coke, and Sir Francis Bacon—all prominent members of the Norfolk aristocracy. Clifton's friend Townshend had been knighted for services during the Armada by Lord Admiral Charles Howard, and his son John was married to Nathaniel Bacon's daughter. Clifton's manor at Toftrees was less than

<sup>23</sup>Irwin Smith, *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse* (New York: New York University Press, 1964), 482–86.

<sup>24</sup>Forse, *Art Imitates Business*, 193–94.

three miles from Mileham, the primary Norfolk residence of Sir Edward Coke, who also was chief patron of the parish church at Toftrees.<sup>25</sup>

These connections secured an order from the Privy Council signed by Sir John Fortescue, Chancellor of the Exchequer, that Thomas Clifton be returned to his father. But Clifton sought additional justice, or vengeance. About a year later he introduced a complaint in the Star Chamber that resulted in Evans's censure by the Privy Council, forcing him to hide his investments in the Blackfriars Boys Company, withdraw from active participation, and leave London for the space of at least one year.<sup>26</sup>

What was the purpose of Thomas Clifton's impressment? At this time Giles and Evans were attempting to start up a boys' acting company at Blackfriars. In his deposition before the Star Chamber, Clifton testified that rather than "recruiting" for new talent for the Queen's choir, his son, and most of the others boys he names, were impressed so that Giles and Evans could "furnish their said plays and interludes with children...." He claimed that most of those boys seized, including his son, possessed no musical talent or training. We know of only three boys Clifton named in his deposition that had musical training: Alvery Trussell, Salmon Pavey, and Nathan Field, who were apprenticed to the choirmasters of St. Paul's Cathedral. Paul's Boys already were presenting masques and interludes at court and public performances at Paul's.<sup>27</sup> In the instances of Trussell, Pavey, and Field, perhaps, Giles and Evans were using their powers of impressment to steal talent from the rival company. Yet how does that explain the impressment of Thomas Clifton? Perhaps he was a handsome boy, but there were plenty of handsome boys without well-connected fathers who could be impressed without fear of reprisal. Perhaps instead of thinking about Thomas Clifton's impressment as "talent-scouting," we should think about his impressment as a means of making money.

Estimates of start-up costs at Blackfriars for the boys' acting company suggest they were enormous. Annual rent was £40, due in quarterly installments of £10. Richard Burbage, the landlord, also demanded a £400 security bond, a sum equal to twenty-seven years wages to the skilled artisan. All maintenance and repair costs were to be borne by Giles and Evans. Henslowe's accounts and the "Sharer Papers" tell us those costs could amount to £100 per year. We also need to add at least another £40 or £50 to clean and spruce up the facility at Blackfriars, which had lain vacant for four years. Evans later asserted he bore the cost of converting

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Forse, *Art Imitates Business*, 194.

<sup>27</sup>H. N. Hillebrand, *The Child Actors*, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature 11 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1926), 160-69.

“the schoolhouse and the chamber over the same...to dine and sup in” and furnished it with “divers implements of household stuff.”<sup>28</sup>

As for costumes and properties, we can assume that Evans and Giles did not to lay out a sum like the £300 (twenty years’ labor to the artisan) Francis Langley had paid to start up his ill-fated theatre venture at the Swan in 1596. Yet a sum one-third that amount, £100, probably is not too far off, and Henslowe’s *Diary* tells us that least £4 probably was advanced to Ben Jonson and John Marston for new plays. Finally, the two would need to distribute discreet “gifts” to people at Court. Such “gifts” were accepted practice to gain favor with those with influence. Nobles paid them, and so did theater businessmen. We know John Heminges gave the Master of the Revels £5 to prohibit the Red Bull company from performing Shakespeare’s plays, and presented the Master annual “New Year’s gifts.” Christopher Beeston paid the Master £60 a year above and beyond the usual fees he charged to license new plays. Giles and Evans must have distributed at least that same amount to secure permission to reactivate the Blackfriars Boys.<sup>29</sup>

Adding these sums yields a total of about £600 (a sum representing forty years’ labor to the artisan), money that Evans and Giles had to raise, between September 1600, when they took possession of Blackfriars, and Christmas, when the quarterly installment on the rent was due. Nor does this sum include on-going costs of about £40 per year for bed and board for the boys housed at Blackfriars, and another £20 as salary for the required teacher attached to the group of boys, and whatever salary and room and board cost for at least two servants needed to cook and clean.<sup>30</sup>

Herein may lie the reason that on 13 December 1600, Giles and Evans “did haul, pull, drag, and carry away” young Thomas Clifton, as they already had done to “divers and several children from divers and sundry schools...and apprentices to men of trade...against the wills of the said children, their parents, tutors, masters and governors, and to no small grief and oppressions of your Majesty’s true and faithful subjects.”<sup>31</sup> Their boys’ acting company had not yet performed; Giles and Evans had no money coming in, and the quarterly rent was due in less than two weeks. Faced with a money shortfall, and the prospect of forfeiting the £400 bond and all the money they already had invested, Evans and Giles probably sought a way to turn Giles’s royal commission into ready cash.

<sup>28</sup>Smith, *Shakespeare’s Blackfriars Playhouse*, 509–46.

<sup>29</sup>Gerald Eudes Bentley, *The Profession of Player in Shakespeare’s Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 152–53; David Starkey et al., *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London: Longman, 1987), 162–65; Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 217, 222; Forse, *Art Imitates Business*, 195.

<sup>30</sup>Forse, *Art Imitates Business*, 198–200.

<sup>31</sup>Smith, *Shakespeare’s Blackfriars Playhouse*, 484–46.

Given the almost endemic abuse of royal warrants for personal gain we have seen above, Giles and Evans would have been paragons of virtue not to abuse the choirmaster's royal commission. Many of these "divers and several children," including Thomas Clifton, probably were not impressed, as Clifton claimed, "for the acting of parts in base plays and interludes," but for payment of discharge fees by their parents or masters. Most guildsmen would be glad to pay to regain their apprentices. Not only were they losing the boys' labor, but the time and effort spent to train them, and the £10 fees the guildsmen had paid their guilds to register the apprentices. They could lose their apprentices altogether; guild regulations specified that apprentices could be free of their obligations to their masters if they were "diverted to other Occupations than his own Mystery."<sup>32</sup>

Such an interpretation explains the seemingly stupid arrogance Giles and Evans displayed. Smug assertions "that they had authority sufficient to take any nobleman's son in this land," that Clifton could "complain to whom he would," that Clifton's son "should be employed" as a player, and the threat made before his father's eyes that Thomas would be whipped if he did not "obey the said Evans," were ploys designed to force Henry Clifton to pay for his son's discharge. The proceedings were *meant*, as Clifton asserted, "to despite and grieve" him,<sup>33</sup> so that he would pay up. Evans and Giles probably never mentioned money; they probably assumed Clifton knew what was expected.

Clifton, however, did not take the bait. Perhaps he was unused to the sophisticated collections of fees and favors rampant in Elizabeth's London; perhaps he was so outraged he refused to play Evans's and Giles's game. In either case he was not satisfied with the release of his son. He made the affair a Star Chamber matter and a year later presented evidence he had gathered concerning other impressments and "misdemeanors and offences." By that time Evans knew he might be in for trouble. Shortly before the case went before the Star Chamber he transferred all his goods to his son-in-law Alexander Hawkins.<sup>34</sup>

Giles and Evans had reached too high up the Elizabethan social scale. None of the other seven boys Clifton specified by name in his deposition, nor the "divers and several children" unspecified were described in Clifton's deposition as sons of the gentry, and it must be remembered that we only know about those impressments because Clifton had both the status and connections to make the authorities at court take notice. In later litigations involving Evans we learn he was censured specifically for the "takinge up of gentlemens children."<sup>35</sup> The Privy Council was not con-

<sup>32</sup>John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation* (London: John Wyat, 1725), 2:455–58.

<sup>33</sup>Smith, *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse*, 486.

<sup>34</sup>Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, 50–51; Smith, *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse*, 195.

cerned about, nor did it seek to stop, the impressment of children from the commons.

Here again we see why we know about these abuses of power. Henry Clifton, esquire, knew the Stanhopes, the Howards, the Bacons, the Cokes, all with powerful connections to the Privy Council just as Mr. Paine knew a person with connections at court, Sir Francis Willoughby. The archbishop's servant arrested by the Knight Marshall's man had both legislative privilege and a powerful patron. Francis Barker of Kent must have been a man of substance and influence in his home county. Most tradesmen, artisans, schoolmasters and the like had no such connections at court, legislative privileges, or wealth.

The commons was used to obeying and paying its "betters." Tavern keepers had to pay Sir Walter Raleigh for licenses to operate their businesses; tanners had to pay Sir Edward Dyer for the privilege of practicing their trade; and the average person paid multitudes of others for the privileges of being freed from false arrest, of buying salt or drinking glasses, or anise seeds or spangles, or for brewing beer for export, or demolishing gig mills, or transporting ashes and old shoes, or filing law suits.<sup>36</sup> Commoners paid for all sorts of goods and services licensed to individuals under the guise of royal patents of power or privilege.<sup>37</sup> One can only wonder how much money Giles and Evans, the City Recorder of London, the Knight Marshall and his servants, the con-man Ross, and nameless others may have raised "to the great oppression and wrong of divers of your Majesty's loving and faithful subjects"<sup>38</sup> without ever coming to the attention of the authorities. Many a man and woman, silently and resignedly, must have paid up when confronted with real or counterfeit warrants, real or counterfeit nobleman's arms, real or counterfeit powers of impressment, real or counterfeit claims of military or legal authority, knowing that, like the artisans and apprentices who protested the arrest of their fellow felt-worker, if they resisted, they too might end up in The Counter or The Fleet or Marshalsea.

<sup>35</sup>Smith, *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse*, 484.

<sup>36</sup>Edmund Lodge, *Illustrations of British History... in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, and James I.... Selected from the MSS. of the Noble Families of Howard, Talbot, and Cecil* (London: G. Nicol, 1791), 3:159–68.

<sup>37</sup>Webb, *English Prisons*, 1–2; Dobb, "London Prisons," 93–99.

<sup>38</sup>Smith, *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse*, 486.

# BOOK REVIEWS



Michelle P. Brown. *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. xvi, 479 pp.

*The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe* by Michelle P. Brown is an extensive study of the famous eighth-century Latin Gospel-book. Originally published in 2003 by The British Library as part of their Studies in Medieval Culture series, the study, like the book it describes, is beautifully produced and lavishly illustrated, including some 32 color plates and over 170 figures and illustrations. Indeed the book could function as an introduction to early Insular culture on the basis of its pictures alone, and even an Anglo-Saxonist less familiar than he should be with the art-historical record, like the current reviewer, will recognize images within its pages. However, the publication of *The Lindisfarne Gospels* is timed to correspond with that of a fine art, high-quality facsimile of the manuscript by Faksimile Verlag Luzern and The British Library (due to come out in 2003), and as such it is really an exhaustive review of all that is known about the book's provenance and history, the cultural and artistic milieu of its artist-scribe, the nature of its Latin text, the book's construction, and most importantly the art of the Lindisfarne Gospels. The monograph is an expansion of a briefer, descriptive volume which accompanies the facsimile. It includes a CD-ROM appendix describing the contents and foliation of the manuscript with selective collation.

The author of the monograph, Michelle Brown, is Curator of Illuminated Manuscripts at The British Library, and has published extensively on Anglo-Saxon and Celtic manuscripts, paleography, illumination, and Insular material culture and history. One can only envy her access to this gorgeous manuscript, which she clearly loves, and her seemingly encyclopedic expertise in all aspects of manuscript study and in Anglo-Saxon and post-Roman history. In her discussion, Brown brings to bear numerous recent archeological discoveries as well as revisitings of older ones, and her team used advanced laser and microscope techniques to analyze (safely) the manuscript's pigments. Interestingly, Brown's mentor, the paleographer Julian Brown, was one of a team of scholars involved in writing a large commentary volume to a facsimile edition of the Gospels published by Urs Graf Verlag in 1956–60. Like the new fine art facsimile, Michelle Brown's monograph is meant to reappraise and perhaps replace the earlier work. It seems quite likely that it will.

In her Acknowledgements, Brown states that the monograph is designed to be "geared to the needs of the scholarly community" as well as "to the informed general reader." I would say that she is generally successful in addressing these two audiences, although when immersed (as in Chapter Two) in the minutia of seventh-century Northumbrian bishoprics, the general reader will need to be very well informed indeed. Occa-

sionally I would founder in Brown's complex periodic sentences and look sometimes in vain for a definitive summary of the particular section's argument. On the whole, however, *The Lindisfarne Gospels* is laudably readable and clear.

As suggested above, the monograph is also meant to provide the technical detail of a facsimile commentary. Though occasionally rote (i.e. the book's dimensions, its foliations), much of this detail is expanded and is fascinating in its own light. For instance, in Chapter Four, on the book's codicology, we learn of the extraordinary care with which the skins for vellum were selected and prepared, and this is one of the ways in which the *Lindisfarne Gospels* represent a great outlay of resources. Similarly, the planning of the book, from the number of words per page to the tracing of the designs with leadpoint (a precursor to the pencil and not known to have been used again for 300 years), required immense time and energy. In Chapter Five, on the art of the book, we learn of the unique technical skill required for the creation of the pigments, which rival those used by Mediterranean artists. Brown shows us that these surpass the colors in any of the related manuscripts, such as the *Durham* and *Echternach Gospels*; only the *Book of Kells* has as broad a palette, though its colors have been less stable. This chapter also presents valuable descriptions of all the main illuminated pages, such as the carpet pages, incipits, and portraits of the evangelists, and it is here that one can find out, for instance, the identity of the mysterious man peeping from behind the curtain in the portrait of John (and what those odd lines on his feet are).

However, the heart, or rather common thread, of Brown's study regards the provenance, authorship, and dating of the book. Brown, as it turns out, endorses a traditional view of the book's origins—i.e. that it was made at Lindisfarne (so its title can stand) perhaps by Bishop Eadfrith—though she arrives at this independently of Aldred's colophon. In following this argument, made mainly in Chapters One and Two, the reader will need to bring some knowledge of the Columban tradition of monasteries and romanising reform, as this is one of the places where Brown most addresses her specialized audience. Essentially, she argues that the features of the book that link it to the center at Wearmouth / Jarrow (the alternative provenance most often suggested) have to be balanced against other features. While we will probably never be able to locate its origins with 100 percent certainty, Brown argues that:

the powerful affiliations with the Columban tradition, manifest prior and post its production, the assimilation of strong Wearmouth / Jarrow influence (but avoidance of others of its methods), the stylistic contextual material which points to northern Bernician territory and to Holy Island in particular as the best

source of in situ artifacts exhibiting a close relationship to the volume, the exceptional quality of manufacture and subsequent retention as a prestigious focal point of the cult of St Cuthbert all concur in supporting Lindisfarne as the most likely place of production.... (406)

With the book then established as a Lindisfarne product, Brown looks for “the most accomplished, experienced, learned and senior member” (298) and suggests Eadfrith, though she argues, mainly on stylistic grounds, for a date of composition later than the traditional 698 associated with the translation of St Cuthbert’s body—perhaps between 715 and 720, the latter corresponding with Eadfrith’s death, which might explain unfinished elements in the Gospels. While authorship cannot again be absolutely established, this reader finds her arguments compelling, particularly in conjunction with Brown’s notion of the act of creating the Lindisfarne Gospels as a kind of “sustained feat of spiritual and physical endurance,” “preaching with the pen in the scribal desert” (398 and *passim*).

As an Anglo-Saxonist, I have mainly associated the Lindisfarne Gospels with their tenth-century Old English gloss by Aldred. The gloss itself receives relatively little attention in Brown’s commentary except with regard to the book’s history and the traditions of its authorship. In Chapter Two, Brown advances the interesting theory that Aldred may have completed the gloss as a means to gain membership in the monastic community of Chester-le-Street. In his colophon, written some two hundred and fifty years after the book’s original making, Aldred places himself as the fourth of the book’s makers, writing his gloss “to make a home for himself,” Eadfrith being the original author, Aethilwald the binder, and Billfrith the maker of its mental ornaments (subsequently lost). Brown argues that aside from the rubrics and Aldred’s gloss, the Lindisfarne Gospels are the product of one man’s devoted work over the course of five to ten years, and one shudders to think what Eadfrith would have thought of Aldred’s (to my eye) rather scratchy and unruled hand on his beautifully laid out book. Brown however sensibly accepts the gloss as part of the book’s interest. In a similar manner, she later describes the nineteenth century treasure binding, deliberately archaized with an elaborate metal-work interlace, as having “entered into the history of the manuscript and excit[ing] a certain amount of public interest and affection in its own right” (208).

“What must it have been like to try to claw back enough time and energy to undertake this body-racking, muscle-aching, eye-straining task in a hut somewhere on the seaboard of north-west Europe with the wind and the rain and the distraction of a beauteous Creation all around?” (4). So asks Michelle Brown in her introduction. By the end of her mono-

graph, the reader will have acquired a keen sense (if not already in possession of same) of the marvel of this achievement. Brown is remarkably good at referring the reader to contemporary works that illustrate early medieval trends in manuscript production, textual transmission, illumination, metalwork decoration, and sculpture. These amply illustrate the diverse and cosmopolitan stands that she asserts were drawn upon by the artist-scribe of the Lindisfarne Gospels, as well as underlining his many innovations.

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Alan Bray. *The Friend*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003. 380pp. Ill.

Alan Bray is of course the author of *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, the groundbreaking 1982 study to which this book, twenty years in the making, effectively serves as sequel. As the editor's note to *The Friend* explains, "When Alan Bray died on 25 November 2001, he left this book in typescript. The typescript was complete." Preparation of the notes and apparatus fell to one of the book's first readers, Mark D. Jordan, author of several relevant volumes, most notably *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (1997). To both a great debt is due.

*The Friend* provides crucial reading for anyone with an interest in queer theory or in the histories of sexuality, marriage, English social and religious customs, literature, and much more. It is a history of (mostly male) friendship and its public role within English society from the later Middle Ages to the reign of Queen Victoria. In particular, Bray examines the lives of "sworn brothers" and of men who chose to be buried or memorialized together, as couples. The monumental imagery he describes often closely resembles that of married couples, and the ceremony that joined men in ritual brotherhood was, like betrothals, generally carried out before the church door. Still, those looking for a 'hidden history' of gay marriage, or simply of homosexual relationships, may be disappointed by this book: as Bray rightly points out, the evidence for a sexual component to most of the friendships here examined is conflicted at best, and often entirely absent. According to the summary on the book jacket, Alan Bray here "debunks the now-familiar readings of friendship by historians of sexuality who project homoerotic desires onto their subjects where there were none." Yet that same brief summary begins more suggestively: following a brief description of the seventeenth-century tomb of John

Finch and Thomas Baines—the discovery of which provided the impetus for this book—and the statement that “Bray would soon learn that Finch commonly described his friendship with Baines as a *connubium* or marriage,” we are told, “There was a time, as made clear by this monument, when the English church not only revered such relations between men, but also blessed them.” Many readers will immediately make the assumption that Bray wants at least initially to avoid, namely, that “such relations” were indeed homoerotic. In many cases they clearly were not, but served nonetheless to extend and complement the ties of kinship—including heterosexual marriage—in socially useful ways.

While Bray’s Introduction lays out the problems facing a study of this sort, and the assumptions he wishes to avoid or undermine, it does so in largely general terms, or in relation to specific reactions to the (as yet undescribed) material that follows, and so seems relatively abstract. And that rich material, which ranges from the common tomb of two fourteenth-century English knights, uncovered earlier this century in Istanbul, to Cardinal Newman’s burial with his friend Ambrose St John in the late nineteenth century, is treated with circumspection. He states:

The account I give is cast in unrelentingly historical terms until I come to the chapter “Friendship and Modernity.” My task as a historian is to let the past speak in its own terms, not to appropriate it to those of the contemporary world. Only in this late chapter, as the account I give begins to enter the world in which I live, do I step forward in my own voice and say what I believe the story to be. Many readers will find this frustrating. (6)

Still others will dispute the possibility of letting “the past speak in its own terms,” or “for itself” (11). Indeed, Bray himself states that the letters and poems that are among his primary sources “are not transparent windows through which we can now observe the past” (55); nor are tomb inscriptions. While most of his descriptions and transcriptions of monuments and texts may be as neutral as he could manage, the discussion, contextualization, and translation of these are obviously his own. And these have a tendency to tease the reader, adding to the frustration.

It is perhaps worth noting the difference between what Bray does here and what David Deitcher does in his book, *Dear Friends: American Photographs of Men Together, 1840–1918* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001). Both writers deal with what Deitcher calls “stubbornly ambiguous objects” and “enigmatic artifacts from the past” (14) that they feel have something to say to the contemporary world about friendship and same sex relationships. Unlike Bray, however, Deitcher combines historical analysis with deeply personal reflection throughout his book, which deals with photographs in which bodies of mostly anonymous men are closely and

affectionately entwined. While he clearly and carefully asserts that such physical intimacy did not necessarily have an erotic meaning to the sitters, Deitcher is also explicitly interested in what these photographs might mean to their modern, mostly gay collectors: "Uncertain of anything that ever actually transpired between the men in such a photograph, the collector is free to imagine whatever he pleases" (15). This personal, erotic relation to those anonymous photographs is, he writes, "akin to flirtation" in the way it "embraces uncertainty" (16) and defers definition. While Bray explicitly refuses wishful thinking, he embraces the various uncertainties of his material, and defers definition of his own relation to that material. But he also has a tendency to defer simple explanation, forcing the reader into uncertainty.

In his chapter on "The Body of the Friend," Bray examines the social meanings of kissing and embracing between friends, and of their dining and sleeping together, while avoiding any mention of erotic possibility within what was "overwhelming a world of men" (157), namely, England's great houses and colleges. Then, toward the end of the chapter, having explicitly rejected a homosexual reading of some erotic metaphors and sexual jokes in sixteenth-century familiar letters, Bray writes, "The shared bed and the embraces of masculine friendship suggested the sodomitical no more than the conventions of the familiar letter" (167). In deferring this comment for as long as he does, especially given that he has already admitted the possibility of sexual relations between some "sworn brothers" (38), Bray flirts with the reader, allowing and even promoting the very assumption regarding what he repeatedly calls "the gift of the friend's body" (158, 162, 172, 209, 217) that he plans to disappoint. Nor is his evidence against a homoerotic reading of the familiar letters initially convincing. He simply notes the explicit antisodomitical stance of some of his sources, but such a stance in itself tells us little. Some vehemently homophobic men today are homosexually active; we cannot assume that things were notably different in earlier periods in this respect, even if we cannot assume that nothing has changed. Bray largely ignores this particular problem. Yet when he doubts the ability of the past to speak for itself, and so intervenes, he is generally successful. He convincingly argues, for instance, that the common subject of these sexually charged jokes "is not sexuality but manliness" (168). Anyone familiar with modern male locker-room humour will undoubtedly see the parallels, although Bray of course does not explore these.

Nor does he necessarily explore textual meanings that early modern Englishmen might have been expected to understand. At the outset of this same chapter, he quotes an inscription from the tomb of John Finch and Thomas Baines as "VNVM CORPVS ET VNVS SPIRITVS," which he translates, "there is one body and one spirit" (143). While this is an appro-

priate translation of the apparent biblical source, Ephesians 4:4, the expletive “there is” distracts the reader from the potential marriage metaphor that is clearly relevant here. These two men, who referred to their relationship as a marriage, are in this inscription at least arguably described as being of “one body and one spirit.” In Ephesians 4, Paul uses the phrase to describe the church, but makes the marriage metaphor explicit in the following chapter, where he draws a parallel between Christ as head of the body that is the church and husbands as head of the body that is his wife. In 1 Corinthians 6:16–17, being of “one body” with a harlot is directly contrasted with being of “one spirit” with Christ. Yet Bray passes over all this to emphasize the Eucharistic implications of the phrase, the Eucharist being central to his argument, as it clearly was to the concept of ritual brotherhood. It is the book’s central metaphor: “the Eucharist was and remained the experience of a transformative rite that changed the significance of the bread and wine brought to it: through a mechanism of the same kind the table changed the stranger into the friend” (152).

The book also describes an historical transformation of friendship itself—one that Bray hopes to undo. He writes, “When in 1749 an Englishman described the practice of two men kissing each other as a foreign and distasteful practice, he seems to have been unaware that it had ever been thought otherwise” (212). Such unawareness is hardly a thing of the past, even now. But that is the (still mostly implicit) point: near the end of the seventeenth century, around the same time that, according to Bray’s earlier book, the modern view of the homosexual emerged in England, the gestures that Bray argues as characterizing friendship—“those visible gestures at table or bed or in the public embrace” (209)—all but vanished from English social life. The monuments themselves remained, but “We did not see these tombs because they did not signify”; thanks to Bray’s rediscovery, “they are beginning to signify again” (306). This book is an attempt “to recover the shape of a history for which a previous orthodoxy had—and still has—no place” (323). Bray’s obvious hope, as a gay Catholic convert, is that the current or future orthodoxy might find a place for this history and for the rite at its centre: that is, the blessing of gay couples by the church.

While the fourteenth-century “Catholic Rite for Making Brothers” reproduced here (130–33, in Latin with facing-page English translation) is unlikely to form the basis of many modern gay weddings, the revelation that the English church once blessed (and buried) “wedded brothers” severely challenges modern assertions of an unbroken tradition against such. Having discussed the ceremonial union and communion of two nineteenth-century women, Anne Lister and Ann Walker, whose relationship “was unquestionably sexual” (268), Bray asks, “Within this history, would a sexual potential have stood in the way of a sworn friendship in the

Eucharist? The answer must be that it would not, in that it evidently did not do so here" (269). A few months before his death, Bray was quoted (by Stephen Bates, *The Guardian*, 9 August 2001) as saying much the same thing, but with more general force: "The sexual potential of a relationship, which was always a possibility, was clearly not in itself a bar to eucharistic practice." He then directly compares ancient and modern practice: "The church was taking cognisance of friendship and although its disciplines were the same it was more willing to take a risk."

The writing of *The Friend* constituted a risk. That it sometimes seems too careful hardly constitutes a problem, given the wealth of material and the radical challenges to received wisdom that the book offers. It is a fitting final monument to Alan Bray—civil servant, social historian, activist, and academic—and to his friend and partner, Graham Wilson. Like the body of the friend in Bray's account, this book is a public gift of notable value.

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Valeria Finucci. *The Manly Masquerade: Masculinity, Paternity, and Castration in the Italian Renaissance*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003. ISBN 0-8223-3065-2. \$24.95 paper.

Though gender implies a consideration of the culturally constructed roles of men and women, gender studies, perhaps as a spin-off of women's history, has traditionally concentrated on women. Valeria Finucci's new work alternatively considers gender more from the perspective of men. *The Manly Masquerade: Masculinity, Paternity, and Castration in the Italian Renaissance* presents a close, scholarly reading of a series of fascinating topics in Renaissance culture such as the conception of children, cross-dressing, and castration. While other scholars have considered these subjects in studies of the history of medicine, theater, or politics, Finucci innovatively reveals instead what these discourses can tell us about masculinity in early modern Italy. Through an analysis of a selection of Renaissance literature deftly woven together with a variety of additional sources such as novellas, medical texts, and legal decrees, Finucci demonstrates that like femininity, masculinity was culturally determined, and sixteenth-century manliness encompassed a variety of constructions ranging from the aggressively masculine man to the more effeminate, ornamented, sensual man more typically associated with the seventeenth century. In short, the strong, swaggering man adorned with the codpiece, sword, and

daggers was far from the only male type at large in the Italian Renaissance landscape, and not surprisingly, a variety of models of masculinity necessarily generated a greater variety of interactions and negotiations between men and women than we have perhaps understood up until now.

Finucci begins with a consideration of the conception, generation and birth of children and the roles that men and women played in this process—a topic that engages the first half of her study. From high medical and literary thought down through popular culture, the early modern world believed that a variety of peculiar ways of human conception were possible; generation could easily involve only women or men alone, or in fact no mother or father at all. As the Renaissance drew on classical culture, it was informed by the ideas of Aristotle, Hippocrates, and Galen, who argued that women's importance in procreation was more accidental and passive than that of men. Lucian suggested that men on the moon married each other, carried their children in their calves and gave birth by cesarean section. Sixteenth-century writers often corroborated such stories of generation by one parent or sex alone; Agnolo Firenzuola told of a woman whose son was conceived by eating snow. Tasso and Straparola recounted women interbreeding with animals such as cats, dogs, pigs or tuna, and numerous beings could emerge from the womb including toads, serpents, and the penis itself. According to a variety of writers, again ranging from Aristotle to Tasso and Paracelsus, humans could also feasibly be born out of waste and putrefaction itself.

With such theories of generation abounding, Finucci turns to ask, just what exactly was the role of the father in conception? She attempts to answer this question by examining ideas of paternity and masculinity in a series of texts, beginning with Machiavelli's *La mandragola*. First performed in Florence in 1518, Machiavelli's tale recounts how an older lawyer, Nicia Calfucci, enters into a contract with Callimaco Guadagni in order to impregnate his infertile wife. Callimaco, disguised as a doctor, administers a fertility potion—the mandrake root—that will have the side effect of killing the man who first sexually approaches Lucrezia. A street boy (Callimaco in disguise) is then kidnapped to make love to Lucrezia and draw out this poison and impregnate her with (Callimaco's) child. Finucci uses this story to explore two ideas; first, that paternity can occur without fertilization, since Nicia, after delegating the dangerous business of sex to another man, comfortably claims Callimaco's child as his own and becomes a surrogate parent. Second, Finucci links the figure of Lucrezia—the toxic, dangerous, poisonous female—to an epidemic fear of spiders that swept across Italy in the early modern period. Under the spell of the mandrake root, Lucrezia becomes a masculine aggressor who, like the Freudian spider, kills with a male organ. This psychoanalytical interpretation aligns with the early modern medical perception that both sexes had

the same organs: that women had penises internally located. Machiavelli's comedy destabilizes any one single concept of masculinity and paternity; paternity and patriarchy here are not linked to sperm, as Nicia become a legitimate father not through sex but through caretaking. If both genders had penises and could behave in masculine ways, manliness was not determined by the penis per se, but by a man "put[ting] himself in a position of power and showing himself virile" (106).

Finucci also considers paternity by examining the well-known—but little explored—early modern concept that a woman's imagination, including what she thought of and looked at during pregnancy, played a decisive role in the engendering of children and their resulting appearance. In Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1575), the white woman warrior Clorinda is born from two Ethiopian parents; the fact that Clorinda did not resemble her mother or father suggested that the father's generative input was entirely canceled out by maternal imagination during pregnancy. The birth of monstrous children like Clorinda generated the male fear that men were in fact much less relevant to the gestation process than previously imagined. Renaissance ideas about conception, if taken to their logical conclusion, in fact put a child's resemblance entirely out of the hands of the father; "the mother carries a fetus that will look like her husband not because he is the genetic father of the baby but because she chooses, among a number of possibilities, to have her child look like what she finds desirable for herself," thereby placing the engendering of a physically similar child "suddenly...outside the reach of fathers" (140). Once again, men are perhaps not quite as manly as we thought; "at the very moment in which woman performs her most clear-cut role in society, and her most recommended one biologically—that of reproducing—she manages to set herself free from patriarchy" (141).

In chapters four and five, Finucci turns to other aspects of the "masquerade" of masculinity. In canto 28 of *Orlando furioso* (1532), for instance, Ariosto recounts the story of King Astolfo of Lombardy and his noble traveling companion Jocondo traveling around Europe, making love to more than a thousand women in revenge for having been betrayed by their wives. Though this at first might appear a typically aggressive, masculine response to the affront of adultery, Finucci argues that Ariosto feminizes these men who are narcissistically obsessed with their beauty. The narrative, she argues, is motivated not by power (the characters never impregnate any of the many women they sleep with) but by eroticism as their obsessive sex feminizes more than masculinizes the protagonists. Finucci interprets this tale to show that virility does not guarantee male power and "masculinity is a construct, a masquerade, a display, a performance, just like femininity" (166). The tale of cross-dressing twins in Bibbiena's *La calandria* (1513) further underlines the social constructedness

of gender. Santilla and Lidio, twins orphaned and separated at the age of six, cross-dress as a man and woman respectively in order to win the love of Fulvia, a Roman noblewoman; Santilla explains to Fulvia the fact of occasionally missing or changed organs by describing herself as a hermaphrodite. In this comedy, characters appear, disappear, and reappear in different gendered and sexual guises with a dizzying frequency, sometimes feminine in gender and female in sex, other times feminine in gender and male in sex.

Finucci ends her study with what is perhaps her most significant contribution: an analysis of the castrato in Renaissance Italy. Though many readers will already be familiar with the phenomenon of castrati—young males castrated in order to maintain a suitably operatic voice—it may come as a surprise to learn that while this practice is commonly associated with baroque Italy, it actually began in large numbers in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Finucci demonstrates how castration regularly happened in early modern Italian society for a wide variety of medical, political, and moral reasons in addition to theatrical ones, suggesting that castrated men actually regularly peopled early modern communities in Italy. Castrati may have been sexually mutilated, but in fact were often considered over-sexualized, incited feminine lust and fascination, and regularly established heterosexual attachments. Through a discussion of a papal bull passed in 1587 stating that men unable to emit seminal fluid could not marry, Finucci demonstrates yet another destabilization of what would traditionally have defined sex; it was not the penis, but the testicles and their power to make progeny for society that in this case defined masculinity.

Beyond the fact that this study innovatively considers gender in terms of men, another contribution of this work is its destabilization of sex as well as gender: a concept that many scholars have suggested—such as Thomas Laqueur in his well-known work *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1990)—but few have actually explored in more specific historical arenas. Finucci clearly demonstrates that not only masculinity, but also men themselves were culturally constructed and reconfigurable, as Bibbiena's characters attached and detached sexual parts, or castrati became famous as adept lovers despite their damaged male organs. This culture understood bodily humours to be constantly in flux, and genitalia did not necessarily constitute sexual difference. It has long been understood that gender in the late medieval and early modern world was fluid and changeable; but stories like that of Marie Germain—a French woman who by running after a pig and jumping over a ditch, became a man (6)—demonstrate how physical, biological sex was also changeable and fluctuating.

Finucci's study provides a compelling read that dynamically overturns any static perceptions historians and literary scholars may have had about Renaissance men and masculinity. This work is timely, echoed by Margaret Gallucci's *Benvenuto Cellini: Sexuality, Masculinity, and Artistic Identity in Renaissance Italy* (Palgrave, 2003), and will surely prompt further scholarly musing about male culture. Her plots summaries are excellent and allow even outsiders to the field of Italian Renaissance literature to immediately enter into her discussion and analysis. Finucci's writing simultaneously imparts a sense of awe and humor to her discussion of early modern sex, gender, and masculinity, as these sixteenth-century writers of comedy and farce regularly did themselves.

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