someone else's hands in a way which is later seen to be providential. Gloucester thinks he has organised his suicide. Providence has decided otherwise, and sent him, as his guide, the sanest madman there ever was. Renaissance story and romance are full of such incidents.

NOTES

Quotations from the plays are from *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), using the Folio text for *King Lear*.

1. John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. Roger Sharrock (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) 232.
2. *Ibid.* 374.
3. Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule & Exercises of Holy Dying*, 1651 (London: J.M. Dent, 1909) 97.
4. *Ibid.* 306, 307.
5. See Scene 18.55-72. Another example occurs in *The Faerie Queene* Bk.1, Canto 9, 29 and 50.
6. John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. John Russell Brown (Manchester University Press, 1974) 4.2.230-4.
7. Jeremy Taylor, op.cit., 165.
8. John Gerard, *The Autobiography of an Elizabethan*, trans. Philip Caraman (London: Longmans, 1951) 21.
9. See Charles de Tolnay, *Hieronymus Bosch*, trans. M. Bullock and H. Mins (London: Methuen, 1966) 28-29: "The whole art of the Middle Ages was a representation of thoughts and feelings, and not a picture of the visible world. At the beginning of the 15th century, a time when spiritualism was still holding its own in spite of the discovery of realistic means of expression, we meet, probably for the first time, pictures of man's inner world side by side with portrayals of man himself."
10. Marvin Rosenburg, *The Masks of King Lear* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) 263, 263-4, 264, 265.
11. Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge University Press, 1962) 206, 207.
12. *Ibid.* 210, 212.
13. *Ibid.* 482-3.
14. Ferdinand in *The Duchess of Malfi* employs a similar gruesome deceit to drive the Duchess to despair: "she's plagued in art" (4.1.111).
15. William Perkins, *A Treatise of Man's Imagination* (Cambridge, 1607) 38.
16. *Ibid.* 145-6.
17. Edgar's entire approach may owe something to the advice given by Epictetus on how to sympathise with the sorrowful: ". . . have readily in remembrance that it is not the accident which troubleth him . . . but his opinion conceived thereof. But if thou talk to him, accommodate thyself to his perturbation, and moreover, if the matter so require, weepe also with him for companie". See *His Manual*, trans. J. Sandford (London, 1567) 10 verso. He warns, however, against losing proper detachment. See also Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971) 65: Limited as prisoners' control of what was done to them in the Nazi concentration camps was, they could maintain "the last of human freedoms, to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."
18. Edward Jorden, *A Brief Discourse of a Disease called Suffocation of the Mother* (London: 1603) 22 verso.
19. *Ibid.* 24 recto, 24 recto, 24 verso. The relevant chapter 7 is entitled: Of the cure of this disease, so much as belongeth to the friends and attendants to performe (23 verso).
20. *Ibid.*, 24 recto.
21. Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1651 (London: B. Blake. 1836) 370.
    Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia or Moral Emblems*, London, 1709 (rpt. New York & London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1976) 27. The Italian edition (Padua 1611) spells out the moral at much greater length.

> course, that we are masters and not servants of facts, and that we know that the discovery of Shakespeare's laundry bills would not be of much use to us; but we must always reserve final judgment as to the futility of the research which has discovered them, in the possibility that some genius will appear who will know of a use to which to put them.[4]

Where, in the way of thinking that I am sketching, a serious attempt was made to relate works to their historical context (leaving aside the Marxists who, it seemed, did not so much want to read works of literature as to fit them into a straight-jacket) the significant relation was assumed to occur at the level of the history of ideas (a natural enough assumption if literature is thought to traffic heavily in themes). This is to say that a culture was thought of as being definitively unified at the level of its dominant ideas; and evidence for this coherence was sought particularly in what we might call the high culture of the period in question — its expressed views on religion, philosophy, political theory, the arts.

This background of ideas was then re-directed at the foregrounded work of art as an explanatory formula (and any misgivings about circularity were pushed aside). Thus, for example, a period of several centuries across the vast range of Western Europe came to be known as the Renaissance, and Burckhardt confidently defined it as characterised by "the discovery of the world and of man", a formula which accorded well with his own late-nineteenth century secular assumptions but was largely derived from the way in which Vasari, building on a notion first formulated by Petrarch, saw Italian art as having achieved a realistic representation of the natural world and an idealised representation of the human form. In this case, then, the arts themselves provided the terms in which a whole period was to be understood.[5]

I am not denying that it is a practical necessity to give the past some shape, nor that we could do without the idea of the Renaissance; and of course the history of ideas approach generated valuable insights into individual works. It allowed John Danby, for example, in *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature* (1948), to produce a most illuminating reading of *King Lear*, based on distinguishing within the play two radically opposed ideas of nature — on the one hand a view of the universe as hierarchically ordered, and "tuned" by intrinsic filiations and responsibilities (Ulysses's speech on "degree" in *Troilus and Cressida* and all the texts expounding ideas of order cited in Tillyard's *Elizabethan World Picture* lurk in the wings). This is the view of nature implicit in Edgar's filial devotion to his father in the passage before you, as also in Cordelia's "I love your Majesty/ According to my bond". But running counter to such assumptions, said Danby, is the view of nature epitomised by the hard new realism of Hobbes which holds that if we are honest with ourself we know that we have no obligations beyond satisfying our appetites. This is the view explicit in Edmund's "nature be thou my goddess" and, if we would think of the immediate context of our passage, operative in Regan's preparedness to let the blind Gloucester "smell/ His way to Dover" (3.7.92-93).[6]

In this way of thinking, however, and this seems to me the crucial point, the critic and the scholar, whether or not they combine their talents, *do* share a common model — that of the work of literature as foreground and the historical context as background; and, what is perhaps more important, they both assume that the text and its context are available in an unproblematical way.

From about the mid-1970s, however, virtually all the fundamental assumptions of the approach I have been outlining have been radically called in question by the impact of a revolution in theory which has left its mark on every subject in the humanities — it is generally summed up under the two broad labels, structuralism and post-structuralism.

It would be the subject of a whole set of talks in themselves even to describe these "movements": for the moment let me say simply (though the claim needs some qualification) that they were, like the New Criticism itself, essentially formalist in orientation — that is to say, their leading preoccupation was with texts and how they are

process in which man is, as it were, stripped of "superfluities" and forced to confront his "unaccommodated" condition as "a poor, bare, forked animal" (3.4.109-110). We might recall in particular Lear's "Off, off you lendings" (3.4.111) as he sheds his robes; and we might notice too the way in which this sequence of images is trans-figured in Lear's final heartbreaking "Pray you, undo this button" (5.3.309) where the king's need to humiliate himself to the stripped state of the "thing itself" has been replaced by a humility whose sole need it is that love might breathe unstifled beyond the self. In a similar way, we might move out from Edgar's aside, "Bless thy sweet eyes", to a consideration of the notions of blindness and "seeing" as they are developed in the play; from Gloucester's sense of Tom as "humbled to all strokes" to the play's manifestations of pride and humility and to the whole problem of suffering; from Edgar's assumption of madness to the play's probing of reason and madness (and of reason in madness); from Gloucester's "Heavens, deal so still" to the play's questioning of the relation between man and the gods; and so on.

In assuming, in this way, that the text is an organic fusing of part to part and that its inter-relations and the insights they engender reveal themselves to close reading, we would be reading much in the way that Coleridge read Shakespeare, and much in the way we might — if you will excuse the expression — nostalgically have hoped that Shakespeare would always be read. (But, as Malcolm Bradbury's Professor Zapp says, there comes a point where one has to yield to the Zeitgeist or drop out of the ballgame.) At any rate, until more or less the mid-1970s, if one was English and had an evangelical streak, one had no qualms about calling this way of reading "the common pursuit"; and if one was American and anxious to convince one's colleagues that what one was doing has its own rigour and up-to-dateness, one called it the "New Criticism".

The "New Criticism", and I am now using the term to encompass a very broad tendency in the post-war years, scrutinised "the words on the page", making it more or less a principle to ignore the work's historical context, because it believed that the literary text was virtually autonomous. Literature was that uniquely privileged deployment of language which "contain[ed] in itself the reason why it [was] so, and not otherwise";[2] and it was held to be available on its own terms to the attentive reader.

The New Criticism laid claims to "newness" because it saw itself as displacing and set against a mechanistic history of literature approach for which literature was a body of knowledge rather than a reservoir of imaginative power and insight. One unfortunate consequence of these assumptions was that they entailed a distinction between the critic and the scholar — though of course it was conceded that the scholar might come up with valuable information on which the critic could draw in producing his readings.

Let me illustrate the tendentious workings of this distinction between the critic and what I will call, for the sake of comparison, the old historicism. If one looks at the passage chosen from *King Lear* as it appears in the Arden edition one sees the typical work of the scholar impinging on it. Thus in the footnote to line 59 one reads, "Obidicut] a corruption of Harsnett's Hoberdicut. See Appendix, p.255, for this and the other devils mentioned here." In the Appendix one finds a three-page listing of the names of foul fiends and of phrases torn from the sentences in which they appear in a book by Samuel Harsnett called *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, known by scholarship since the eighteenth century to have been preserved in amber in *King Lear*. One also finds in the Appendix a reference to an article in the *Review of English Studies* and if one looks *that* up one finds that it differs from the list really only in giving the phrases within the full sentences in which they originally appeared. At this juncture the critic would probably reflect that the study of sources is truly the "elephants' graveyard of literary history"[3] and feel thoroughly justified in his own calling, unless he happened to remember T.S. Eliot's sagely patronising reminder:

> Any book, any essay, any note in *Notes and Queries*, which produces a fact even of the lowest order about a work of art is a better piece of work than nine-tenths of the most pretentious critical journalism. . . . We assume, of

iii) the conviction, ultimately Marxist in its antecedents, that history is a matter of struggle and power relations; but increasingly Foucauldian in its awareness of the range of ways in which power is exerted through discourse.

iv) the fact that though the practitioners of the new historicism have a highly sophisticated awareness of contemporary theory, their commitment to the idea that a literary work is historically embodied effectively sets them "against theory" in as much as theory exhibits an aggressive totalising impulse and lays claims, not dissimilar in a way to those previously made for the work of literature itself, to a privileged detachment from practice.[14]

On the one hand, the new historicist approach might seem to diminish the literary work by robbing it of its special privilege — by insisting that even a supreme example such as *King Lear* is like, rather than unlike, all other texts; on the other hand, this way of thinking enriches the work by seeing it as the vehicle of a practice — in this case the Shakespearean theatre — which is actively and, what is more important, formatively engaged with all the other practices of the time.

It is chastening to think that after centuries of critical attention to Shakespeare the extraordinary phenomenon of the Shakespearean theatre remains almost totally unexplained. Let us recall some of the facts. When James Burbage built his Theatre in Finsbury Fields in 1576 it was, it would seem, the first professional theatre built in the West since Roman times. The status of this practice within its society was very ambivalent. Shakespeare's company (and it was the most privileged of all) operated beyond the city limits on the seamy South Bank (at least until the Blackfriars theatre was also acquired in 1610), bore the constant hostility of the City Fathers, suffered the censorship exercised by the Master of the Revels, was threatened continuously by closure because of plague, and existed tenuously on the very margins of the culture. Yet it was also specially licensed by the Crown, was called on frequently to perform at Court by royal command, and its shareholders (including Shakespeare himself) were entitled to wear the royal livery as Grooms of the Chamber. It was a practice that made the whole society spectators. The social range of those who frequented the theatres is suggested by the fact that on one occasion, in 1602, when the playhouses were searched for "vagabonds" to serve in the army, the playgoers were found to include, in addition to the run of apprentices, journeymen, bawds and masterless men, "not only . . . Gentlemen, and servingmen, but Lawyers, Clarkes, country men that had lawe cawses, aye the Quens men, knightes, and as it was credibly reported one Earle".[15] The Shakespearean theatre, for the relatively brief span of its existence, was a truly collective social enterprise, and Alfred Harbage estimates that by 1620 the average weekly theatre attendance was close to 25 000, a staggering figure if one realises that the total population of London, man, woman, and child, was less than eight times that number.[16] At the peak of Shakespeare's career the companies were playing six times a week and more than ten months a year, stopping not for bad weather but only for Lent — and there are indications that that embargo was avoided, too, at times. This extraordinary practice created what Louis Montrose has well described as "a new kind of cultural space".[17] Within this space Shakespeare's company upheld the "unyoked humour" of "idleness", rehearsing like Prince Hal the grossness and variety of human behaviour, submitting everything that was "rich and strange" to the "excellencie of the English tongue". It is hardly surprising that travellers from the rest of Europe went out of their way to visit the Elizabethan playhouses, and recognised in this practice a prodigy without precedent.[18]

Why did this society produce just this practice at this time? What were the nature of its negotiations with all the other practices in the society? What role did this practice play in this society? It would almost seem that such questions have not so much been unanswered as virtually unasked. Ultimately such questions may prove to be unanswerable, but for me it is the first and most exciting feature of the new historicism that it asks them; and sets about answering them in an invigorating way that will without a doubt

read rather than with the way that texts are embedded in a precise historical and social context.

Now there are signs that these movements have largely spent their force, and increasingly literary studies are moving back to history; but back to history in a way that takes account of the impact of the revolution in theory. Thus we have the emergence of the new as opposed to the old historicism (though the term "new historicism" is one that has been mainly used to characterise the tendency as it has been evident in Renaissance literary studies).[7]

One effect of the broad revolution in theory has been to open the literary critic to the impact of other disciplines; and this has resulted in a more comprehensive way of thinking of the unity of a society at a given time than that entertained by the history of ideas approach. The view of a society as the sum of *all* its institutions and all the activities or processes in which its members are involved is one encouraged by a whole range of currently influential ways of thinking. I will mention only four of these which have impinged on the new historicism. First, there is the anthropological idea of culture (with a small "c") as the *total* set of institutions and activities of a group, a view presented recently by Clifford Geertz in a way that makes it particularly amenable to those working in literary studies in that he emphasises the need to *interpret* the symbolic practices which constitute the overall design of a society. Thus, in a most entertaining way, he can illuminate the nature of Balinese society through an extended interpretation of the significance of a Balinese cockfight.[8] Secondly, there is the structuralist-semiotic notion, most elegantly exemplified by Roland Barthes's essays in *Mythologies*, that a culture is built up on the basis of *an enormously broad range* of conventional signifying codes, such, for example, that a boxing match signifies one thing, and a wrestling bout something entirely different, the one being a contest, the other a performance.[9] Thirdly, there are the sophisticated Marxist views on the way a society is constituted in which, as in Raymond Williams's "cultural materialism", the old distinction between the economic base and the superstructure is all but abandoned: influential among these recent Marxist views is Althusser's insistence that ideology is not a dirty word synonymous with the "error" of the dominant group but a development from all the socially-maintained processes, rituals, and apparatuses of social reproduction.[10] And fourthly, though it is intended to discompose comforting ideas of historical continuity and holism, there is Foucault's notion of every epoch as having an epistemic coherence which governs its "universe of discourse" and establishes the structures of consciousness available to it; much as, to cite Foucault's own preferred epitome, in Velasquez's "Las Meninas" the absent figures of the king and queen govern the whole design.[11] Such ways of thinking have helped to confirm the idea that a culture is a comprehensive and complexly interrelated set of social *practices*, all of which are interesting and revealing.

If you find all that last bit somewhat daunting, simply hold on to the central idea that at any period any one practice, such as the Shakespearean theatre, cannot be dissociated from all the other practices of the society.

Four features in particular would seem to mark off the "new historicism" from the work of other more traditional scholars currently applying themselves to Shakespeare:

i) the belief that literature is merely one practice among many. The literary text has no transcendent significance and no inviolable integrity — it does not reveal the essential, timeless truths of the human condition, for all "truths" are historically embedded; nor does it incarnate its meanings in a form such that no single word is expendable (a notion whose idealism in the context of Shakespeare's practice has incidentally been undermined in a very practical way by the recent demonstration that there are in effect two quite distinct plays of *King Lear*).[12]

ii) the belief that the literary text is not bounded by its author's embodied intentions and transparent to an historically informed and objective reader, but constituted by an individual reader from a particular perspective.[13]

control.[23] This is shown by the very titles of many of their books, in which the word "power" functions almost as a refrain: *The Power of Forms*; *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*; *Political Shakespeare*; *Power on Display*; *The Illusion of Power*; *The Place of the Stage: Licence, Play and Power in Renaissance England.*

This obsessive interest has emerged not only because such questions *are* intrinsically interesting and important, but because most of the new historicists are academics of strong radical tendencies, frustrated by the reactionary tendencies of their own Reaganite and Thatcherite societies; which is to suggest that the new historicism itself needs to be placed as a social practice. But, as the examples I have given of discussions of *Measure for Measure* show, approaches in this vein tend to suggest that Shakespeare's dramatic practice, and possibly the very institution of literature itself, can be profoundly conservative in its social effects. It is thus not surprising that some of the British cultural materialists have launched an attack on the institutionalised study of Shakespeare as an ideologically suspect activity.

It is against this background that I find the American new historicists generally more complex and more flexible than their British counterparts, more prepared to keep open the possibility that "profoundly conservative" may be an honorific term.

In support of this contention let us consider how the new historicist approach can be brought to bear on the detail of a specific passage, by returning to the extract from *King Lear* with which we began. Some of you will have recognised that I chose it because it has been the object of attention by the critic who is for many, myself included, the best of the new historicists, the American Stephen Greenblatt.[24] It is interesting that Greenblatt approaches the passage by going straight to what might seem to be its least promising aspect, the borrowing from Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures.* Indeed he begins with Harsnett rather than with *King Lear* itself, and it is his first achievement to make the reader feel that the *Declaration* is a fascinating document in its own right. It is an account of a series of illegal exorcisms (the ceremonies in which devils are ritually cast out) performed, some eighteen years before Harsnett wrote, by Jesuit priests (who were in any case banned in England under pain of death) in a country house in Buckinghamshire before an audience of several hundred people. Harsnett dwells on the fact that the subjects of such exorcisms, as in the case in question, were generally young girls whose sinuous writhings while the devils were being cast out would be more salaciously gratifying to all concerned. (This is the reference behind Edgar's characterising Flibbertigibbet, in the passage before you, as a devil "of mopping and mowing" who "since possesses chambermaids and waiting-women".) Not that Harsnett's intentions smack at all of the back pages of our Sunday tabloids: he was chaplain to the Bishop of London and his purpose was to discredit the religious charisma associated with Popish ceremonies. For Harsnett exorcism was cheap trickery; and he exposes it as such by reducing the practice of it to a theatrical fraud, an "imposture" characteristic of the theatrical seductiveness of Catholicism itself. His book had its effect, for in the year following its publication Anglican ministers were precluded from performing an exorcism without special dispensation from a bishop. The *Declaration* thus played its own small but significant disciplinary role within what Greenblatt described in another context as the "momentous ideological shift in early modern England from the *consensus fidelium* embodied in the universal Catholic Church to the absolutist claim of the Book and the King."[25]

What intrigues Greenblatt about Shakespeare's use of Harsnett is the nature of the "negotiation" between the "evacuated" practice of exorcism, devalued as theatrical imposture, and the Shakespearean practice of theatrical imposture which stood ready to receive it. He notices the nice economy of Shakespeare's taking over a "documented fraud" for the fraudulent possession of Edgar; and sees Shakespeare as thus "loyally confirming" the official view that such charismatic practices have been "emptied out"

provoke continuing argument and research.

Let me entrench the point by way of some particular examples. I will leave the passage from *King Lear* for a while and focus on *Measure for Measure*. The old historicism had long made us acquainted with the fact that some of the major shareholders in the theatre companies were also owners of the brothels that stood beside the theatres;[19] and, of course, that sort of knowledge in itself makes the bawdy scenes in *Measure for Measure* feel very different. When Pompey delivers the news that all the houses are to be pulled down, many in the contemporary audience would have had wry thoughts about their aprés-show intentions. But it is old hat that the theatres were situated in the area outside the city limits known as the Liberties and that they stood cheek by jowl with the brothels and bear-baiting pits, the leprosaria and the bowling alleys. The old historicism might well have asked, too, how the presentation of the sexual transgressions within *Measure for Measure* illuminates and is in turn illuminated by the treatment of sexual transgressions in the society at large. The historian Lawrence Stone provides evidence to the effect that in Essex alone some fifteen thousand people were summoned on sexual charges during the forty-five years up to 1603; and he points out that this meant that those living in the area "had more than a one-in-four chance of being accused of fornication, adultery, buggery, incest, bestiality or bigamy".[20] That in itself is a fascinating gloss on Claudio's aggrieved complaint that he has been singled out for punishment. But to think thus in terms of "glosses" on the play is still to work within the old foreground and background model. What is new is the sort of analysis that a new historicist like Jonathan Dollimore brings to bear on such facts. He argues that the play is a mirror of the way that in Jacobean England transgressive behaviour was more generally being brought into a new condition of surveillance by the State. Whereas the Church, with its practice of confession, had sought to submit sexual transgression to the pastoral disciplining of behaviour, a practice was now coming into being whereby lechery was identified as a threat to *secular* law and order. The defining of sexual transgression, and the recognition of the proclivity in even such a pillar of virtue as Angelo to transgress, is in this view a necessary prelude to the achieving of an enlarged secular control over "transgressive" individual behaviour; and hence not only "one aspect of a wider desire to achieve a disciplined society" but also a step towards legitimising the extension of that authority.[21] In this view theatre and brothel alike are seen not simply as subversive institutions smouldering just beyond the city limits, but as mechanisms that both afforded the regulated release of potentially subversive energies and ultimately made for an extension of control.

The same problematic of subversion and control has been explored in another way in relation to *Measure for Measure* by Leonard Tennenhouse.[22] He focuses on the Duke's act of surrendering his power to a deputy and leaving Vienna, and points out that the motif of an "absent ruler" recurs in a spate of at least eleven plays which made their appearance just after James's accession. Tennenhouse asks whether these plays have the demystifying effect (whether intentionally or not) of giving currency to the potentially subversive notion of the stage as an institution separable from the monarchy; or whether the final return of the patriarchal ruler to set things to rights works in such a way as powerfully to endorse the monarchy as the sole principle of political order. Like Dollimore, he comes out against the view of *Measure for Measure* as subversive in any simple sense.

This very brief excursus on new historicist discussions of *Measure for Measure* allows me to make a number of points:

i) that there are many different ways in which a work can be seen to be enmeshed with the practices of its time.

ii) that the asking of the question "How does Shakespeare's theatre as a cultural practice, and how do Shakespeare's individual plays stand in relation to the power structures of Elizabethan and Jacobean society?" has led to an almost obsessive concern among the new historicists with the problematics of subversion and

of dramatic instantaneity. It is as though Shakespeare's practice required his audience, for the greater sharpening of receptiveness, to traverse its boundaries — to suspend disbelief and to be detached from belief, virtually at the same moment.

If Greenblatt is acutely aware of the peculiar improvisatory modulations and, as it were, shifting status of the aesthetic mode, it is another characteristic feature of his work that he tends to approach Shakespeare by way of a wide swerve, after his main focus has been on another text. The reason for this is that he distrusts the traditional notion of the "self-fashioning" self, and hence has reservations about the freedom of the controlling author. Nevertheless, he seems torn between his up-to-the-minute belief that all texts are equal and his deeper instinct that Shakespeare is much more equal than others. Near the start of the *King Lear* essay he calls in question the notion of the "freestanding, self-sufficient, disinterested art-work produced by a solitary genius" (165); but near the end of the essay, in noticing how the practice of theatre has largely been supplanted, with the passing of time, by the practice of reading, he is prepared to speak glowingly of "Shakespeare's imagination [yielding] forth its sublime power" (183). It is this sort of ambivalence that gives Greenblatt's work an oddly attractive quality, and sets it apart from the much more predictable dogmatic adhesions of the British "cultural materialists". Greenblatt never leaves one with the feeling that at every turn he finds politics more compelling than literature or the freedom to let one's argument discover its own direction.

Mine has now brought me to the point of being tempted to endorse a recent criticism of the new historicism: that in certain of its exponents it runs the danger of being obsessed with considerations of the notion of power relations in literature, to the virtual exclusion of everything else.[29] In the South African context in particular, where some feel constrained to snatch at every loose analogy that might be used to make a political point, that might seem a virtue rather than a limitation; which is why I would urge you to read the new historicist critics not only for the light they throw on Shakespeare, but also, as in Greenblatt's essay on the history plays, "Invisible Bullets",[30] for their powerful and subtle explorations of just how intricate the social and political dimension of works of art are.

NOTES

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1. The following are the main works of the new historicist critics: Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (University of Chicago, 1980); the collection of essays edited by Greenblatt, *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance* (Norman: Pilgrim Books, 1982); Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984); the collection of essays edited by Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism* (Manchester University Press, 1985); Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres* (London: Methuen, 1986); and Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theatre in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). Much of the work of the new historicists is available only in the form of articles. The two latest books to have been published are Stephen Greenblatt's *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) and Steven Mullaney's *The Place of the Stage: Licence, Play and Power in Renaissance England* (University of Chicago Press, 1988).
2. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ch.14, para.7.
3. Stephen Greenblatt, "Shakespeare and the Exorcists", in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (London: Methuen, 1985) 163.
4. "The Function of Criticism", in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber, 1932) 33.
5. "The Discovery of the World and of Man" is the title of Part 4 of Jacob Burckhardt's *The*

(182). But he then goes on to consider Edgar's own subsequent successful "improvising"[26] of the practice of exorcism.

You will recall that the disguised Edgar leads his father to what he tells him is the top of Dover Cliff. There Gloucester makes what is intended to be his suicidal leap; and after he has stumbled in confused consternation Edgar addresses him in the guise of one on the beach "below" who has witnessed the blind man's miraculous preservation after a mighty fall. Pointedly, Edgar describes how, when Gloucester stood poised at the top of the cliff, he saw a fiend depart from the old man, one with "a thousand noses" (all the better for smelling the way to Dover one might say) and with "horns whelk'd and wav'd like the enridged sea" (4.6.70-71). At one level, Edgar has with this detail exorcised his own assumed madness in sending "poor Tom" packing; at another and far more significant level Edgar has exorcised his father's deadly despair.

Thus, paradoxically, in absorbing the discredited practice of exorcism, Shakespeare only seemingly shares the official line that would discredit the practice; and in effect his play, in honouring Edgar's act of exorcism by way of a theatrical fiction, "recuperates and intensifies our need for [such] ceremonies" (183), (and, one might add, for the institutionalised improvisation which the theatre itself affords). If, says Greenblatt, *King Lear* is pre-eminently in Shakespeare's oeuvre the play in which the spiritual world is "emptied out", it is also the play which bequeathes Harsnett's sceptical denial of the demonic principle to the villains, and which, in the words of Greenblatt's final sentence, "paradoxically creates in us the intimation of a fullness that we can only savor in the conviction of its irremediable loss." In this way then, the play takes its part, alongside Harsnett's *Declaration*, but to very different effect, in its age's central struggle to "define the sacred" (165).

I hope that even with this very truncated recension of Greenblatt's views I have indicated the interest of the issues that are illuminated by approaching *King Lear* in terms of a negotiation between practices: though I am sure that not all of you would agree with Greenblatt that *King Lear* issues from a conviction of irredeemable loss, and that it ultimately reveals "a deep uncertainty, a loss of moorings in the face of evil" (179).

I must now confess that I have somewhat distorted Greenblatt's intentions, and the "feel" of his essay, in presenting his comments on Shakespeare's use of exorcism in *King Lear* as if they added up to a straightforward view of the play. Greenblatt's strategy is not to allow his comments to settle into anything as solidified as that, for he has a distrust of stable meanings that encourages him to hold back from a mere reading.[27] The formulations I have highlighted are, as it were, bracketed as only one way of thinking of Shakespeare's practice. It is important to recognise, however, that this detachment on Greenblatt's part is not simply the accommodating gesture of a writer who is marketing this particular essay in a collection dominated by deconstructionist assumptions. Rather, it is specifically related to his sense of the oddly detached status of the theatrical practice itself, as indeed of the aesthetic domain. In this regard it is worth pointing out that no feature of the passage which we have taken as our locus is more intriguing and more characteristic than the fact that in the course of his improvising, Edgar twice steps out of role. Because it is a familiar stage convention, the first such moment, Edgar's aside, "I cannot daub it further . . . And yet I must", works not so much to destroy the theatrical illusion as to invest the audience directly in the appalling personal pain which he is suppressing from his father and which would otherwise have no dramatic expression. It also establishes his fortitude, his recognition, one might say, that if he is to be worthy of his part in the play he must not "break up his lines to weep". Yet to put it thus is to acknowledge that the image of "daubing" sets up resonances which imply a deeper complicity between the audience and the play's designs (including, perhaps, a recognition that Edgar's motives for remaining concealed should not be called in question).[28] The second moment is even more strange. In his reference to Flibbertigibbet "of mopping and mowing; who since possesses chambermaids and waiting-women" Edgar steps right out of the play, breaking not only the illusion that he is poor Tom but also the very illusion

23. This is the point rightly emphasised by Edward Pechter in "The New Historicism and Its Discontents: Politicizing Renaissance Drama", *PMLA* (1987), 292-303, which is the most searching critique of the new historicism to date.
24. Greenblatt, "Shakespeare and the Exorcists".
25. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 157. John L. Murphy, in *Darkness and Devils: Exorcism in "King Lear"* (Athens: Oklahoma University Press, 1984), likewise points out that the "insistence by Christian rationalism that the oracles have ceased, the miracles have ceased, and the prophecies have ceased plays a major role in forging the modern world in the seventeenth century" (p.5). His first chapter usefully illuminates the dispute among religious factions as to whether there were demons in the world of human experience. In this connection one might recall G.K. Hunter's comment: "The excitement of intellectual life in the sixteenth century came less from classical poetry than from the controversies of theology and from the techniques by which these could be conducted." ("The Beginnings of Elizabethan Drama: Revolution and Continuity", *Renaissance Drama*, n.s., 17 (1986) 36.
26. This is one of Greenblatt's favourite terms, defined in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* as "transforming given materials into one's own scenario" (p.227) which is, of course, precisely what the theatre itself does. Greenblatt's own reservations about the freedom of the individual subject or author are illuminated by a passage from a book to which he is partial, Pierre Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 1977): "Each agent, wittingly or unwittingly, willy nilly, is a producer and reproducer of objective meaning. Because his actions and works are the product of a *modus operandi* of which he is not the producer and has no conscious mastery, they contain an 'objective intention', as the Scholastics put it, which always outruns his conscious intentions. The schemes of thought and expression he has acquired are the basis for the *intentionless invention* of regulated improvisation . . . so that his discourse continuously feeds off itself like a train bringing its own rails" (p.79).
27. Less fastidiously, I would find it intriguing to tease out the relation of the play's concern with exorcism to its repeated presentation of the secular form of exorcism — banishment. Cordelia, Kent, Edgar, the Fool, Gloucester and Lear himself are all in different ways "cast out" during the course of the play.
28. The motive is provided only at 4.6.334: "Why I do trifle thus with his despair/ Is done to cure it."
29. See Pechter, "The New Historicism and its Discontents".
30. "Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion", *Glyph* 8 (1981) 40-61.

Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy 2 (1860, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958) 279. For Vasari's borrowing from Petrarch see Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (1960; New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972) 31-35.

6. John Danby, *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature* (London: Faber, 1948) 20-53.
7. The phrase was coined by Greenblatt in his Introduction to *The Power of Forms*, 5.
8. See, in particular, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). Greenblatt invokes Geertz's views on several occasions in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, and, having registered his conviction that Marxist aesthetics "has never satisfactorily resolved the theoretical problems raised in the *Grundrisse*, and elsewhere," adds "I have attempted instead to practise a more cultural or anthropological criticism", p.4. Louis Montrose's best-known essay is significantly entitled, "The Purpose of Playing: Reflections on a Shakespearean Anthropology", *Helios* n.s.7 (1980), 51-74.
9. Interestingly, Greenblatt's concluding sentences in the essay "Shakespeare and the Exorcists" glance at Barthes's theoretical discussion of mythology.
10. Greenblatt makes a rather uneasy use of Althusser's notion of "internal distantiation" at several pivotal points in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, and again in "Shakespeare and the Exorcists", 182. It hardly needs saying that Dollimore takes over the term "cultural materialism" as a mark of homage to Raymond Williams: he gives it an extended definition in his essay "Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism and the New Historicism" in *Political Shakespeare*.
11. See *The Order of Things* (New York: Random House, 1973). Foucault has become the presiding genius of the new historicism, particularly for his later genealogies and for his discussions of the relation between the subject and power.
12. See Gary Taylor, ed., *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's Two Versions of "King Lear"* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).
13. It is an extension of this way of thinking that history itself is, comparably, not an external reality but something subjectively constituted on the basis of available texts. In this vein, Howard Felperin has pointed out the "submerged politics" of Greenblatt's essay on Marlow in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, and the extent to which his interpretation relies on concepts not available in the Renaissance; but Felperin's attempt to deconstruct the new historicist enterprise seems wilful, as in his misreading of Greenblatt's comments on the interplay between the symbolic structures of texts and the symbolic structures "perceivable in the careers of their authors and in the larger social world". See "Making it 'Neo': the New Historicism and Renaissance Literature", *Textual Practice* I (1987), especially p.266.
14. See Walter Michaels and Steven Knapp, "Against Theory", *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1982); and the ensuing discussion in *Critical Inquiry* 9 (1983), 725-800.
15. Quoted by Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642* (Cambridge University Press, 1970) 141. This section of my paper is indebted to Gurr and to Louis Montrose's "The Purpose of Playing", op. cit., n.8.
16. See *Shakespeare's Audience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) 19-52. At the same time, of course, the emergence of London as a great metropolis at the end of the sixteenth century is one of the factors which made for the emergence of the professional theatre.
17. "The Purpose of Playing", 70.
18. In these final remarks I have been drawing heavily on Steven Mullaney's "Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs: The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance", *Representations* 3 (1983) 40-67.
19. See Gamini Salgado, *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Dent, 1977) 58.
20. Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977) 519.
21. "Transgression and Surveillance in *Measure for Measure*", *Political Shakespeare*, 72-87. The sentence quoted is cited by Dollimore, p.76, from J.A. Sharpe, *Crime in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge University Press, 1983) 70.
22. See the discussion of the play in the chapter "Family Rites, City Comedy, Romance, and Strategies of Patriarchalism" in *Power on Display*, 147-186.

tendencies of these" must take into account preeminently the Calvinist-Puritan political thinkers, with certain Catholics running a close second.

Neither Dollimore nor Tillyard knows the parameters of Elizabethan political debate. Both make religion an establishment phenomenon, whether approvingly or dissapprovingly. Tillyard makes the average Elizabethan a holder of the beliefs of Richard Hooker's version of natural law and then reads Shakespeare as one of these average Elizabethans. Dollimore sees the establishment as using the same religion. Neither of them sees that religion was a varied phenomenon and that the most powerful tyrannical doctrines of the day as well as less sensational doctrines of the accountability and limitation of monarchical power had a religious sanction as strong as the doctrines of absolute sanctified monarchy. Both show their own predilections in the concept that they have of the age, their own underlying structures of thought, and miss various possibilities in the age that might make them more sensitive to details in the literature. Both exercise their own forms of hegemonic discourse, Dollimore no less than Tillyard. In fact, in the would-be radical Jonathan Dollimore, Tillyard — masked — rides again.

For "new-modelled" one could read "two-modelled", for the chief political debate of the day revolved around two models of that most important concept, natural law. This two-model debate was conducted between three parties. One group was obviously the establishment group who built upon certain ideas presented by two early Tudor theologians, Tyndale and Barnes. Opposition to this early manifestation of establishment theology first came from a group of Puritan-Calvinist thinkers. John Ponet and Christopher Goodman were both English refugees on the Continent during the reign of the Catholic Mary Tudor, George Buchanan was a Scots humanist and reformer, du Plessis Mornay a Huguenot nobleman who fled France for England after the St Bartholomew's Eve massacre. The reign of Mary Tudor and the St Bartholomew episode were two watersheds of thought, making Protestants consider the question of human rights, violent resistance and righteous rebellion. Theology can be situational, as the Elizabethan Age vividly demonstrates.

The Catholics were the third party in the ring. While no friends of the Reformers, their ideas were sometimes remarkably similar. They promoted God against Caesar, differing from the Reformers on the role of the Pope, whereas the establishment party were persuaded that the interests of Caesar had a far greater measure of divine sanction. There were Catholic quietists in England who were prepared to be good subjects and who accused the Jesuits of being like the Puritans.[4] But others were more radical or subversive. One Jesuit in particular deserves mention, that elusive Pimpernel, Robert Parsons.

What must be emphasised is that the main establishment statements, Hooker's included, were not assured statements of generally accepted beliefs but were polemical answers either to the Puritan faction or to Parsons. The Elizabethan Englishman had his being in the midst of powerful religio-political controversy. The debate was about natural law, the two models. It overflowed into interpretations of English history in which the overthrow of Richard II by Bolingbroke was the most important point of discussion. The Bible was combed by all parties for precedents and arguments, the same episodes and texts often being subjected to entirely opposite interpretations. The Puritan exiles in Geneva during Mary's reign produced the Geneva or "Breeches" Bible, which had revolutionary political marginalia. No New Testament text was more pulled about than the famous Romans 13. The third fruitful source of precedent and argument was Roman history. Junius Brutus, the tyrannicidal overthrower of the Tarquin Kings, ushered in a period of republican (if largely patrician) rule. Julius and Augustus Caesar restored autocracy. What did one learn from all this? In the opening paragraph of the life Shakespeare used for *Julius Caesar*, Plutarch makes the connection of Marcus Brutus with the ancestral tyrannicide clear. Du Plessis Mornay, the Huguenot, chose the

Religion, Politics and Literature: The Elizabethan Background New Modelled

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As we know in South Africa today, funerals can be demonstrations of community solidarity. Such a funeral took place in Elizabethan London in 1584.[1] The coffin was followed by an assortment of Huguenot, Scots and English ministers and five hundred laity. It was buried outside the city bounds where the Genevan and not the Anglican formulary could be more safely used. Elizabethan society, from the highest to the lowest, was ideologically diverse. Sir Philip Sidney's father once hired the Huguenot Church in London (the building used by an *émigré* population) for a baptism at which the officiant did not wear the Anglican cap and surplice. Vestments were the focus of much of the ideological division, an outward sign of deeply felt matters of the spirit. Certain Puritan Separatists (those prepared to break openly with the ecclesiastical unity and discipline established by the civil law with the Queen as Supreme Governor) were executed, as were occasional Dutch Anabaptists. A number of "Puritan" clergy who did not act as radically as the Separatists were nevertheless imprisoned and some died in gaol. An Archbishop died while under house arrest. The Puritan Stubbe, for writing a pamphlet that offended the Queen (who appeared to be countenancing a French suitor) had the offending right hand that drove the pen struck off by the executioner. The Star Chamber ordered all copies of the Puritan *Admonition to Parliament* to be burned. The forces that, in the middle of the next century, were to evince themselves in rebellion, civil war, regicide and parliamentary republicanism, were already at work. Then, too, at the other end of the spectrum, Jesuit agents such as Parsons and Campion were executed when caught, and English Catholics suffered a variety of harassments. Puritanism (within and without the Established Church) and Catholicism both had political dimensions, as indeed did establishment Anglicanism.

Tillyard gave us *The Elizabethan World Picture*. In the varied anti-Tillyardian reaction (which has been going on, in fact, since the 1950s), Herbert Howarth has told us, in a brilliant little essay, to "Put Away the World-Picture".[2] Dollimore, of the so-called "new historicism", has very recently called for "reassessments of what were the dominant ideologies of the period and the radical counter-tendencies to these" and for a "radical contextualising of literature", which would include the perception that "religion was a kind of false consciousness perpetuated by the rulers to keep the ruled in their place".[3] Substituting clay for paint, this paper intends to new-model the Elizabethan background. Echoes of the New Model Army of the later Civil War are intended: one of the main deficiencies in the various views of the Age, past and present, is failure to see the importance to it of Calvinist-Puritan radical political thought, although Catholic radicalism must also be understood.

Dollimore, of the "new historicism", is as blind as the Tillyard he despises. Tillyard, indeed, sees religion as an establishment force, drawing particularly on Richard Hooker's massive defence of the establishment model of natural law, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Dollimore, and other contributors to the volume *Political Shakespeare*, see radicalism as opposed to religion. In fact, any "radical contextualising of literature", any "reassessment of what were the dominant ideologies of the period and the radical counter-

Shakespeare in Southern Africa Vol. 2, 1988, 42-50

ceremony are set aside. The coronation is repudiated. Ponet, in 1556, has already chosen Richard II and Edward II as his two examples from English history of Kings rightfully deposed.

Students of Shakespeare are accustomed to being told that imagery of cosmic disorder accompanies the overthrow of sanctified majesty. Ponet associates cosmic disorder with the tyranny of the reign of Mary Tudor, legitimate monarch though she was. Cosmic order is to be restored by her overthrow. Obedience to evil kings is the cause of disorder. Kings must serve God in their vocation, they are themselves but members of the commonwealth, the commonwealth is destroyed by bad kings, not by usurpers. Kings are subject to the law, like everybody else.

Goodman's attack is aimed more specifically at obedience, but natural law is mentioned. Ponet and Goodman had both rejected the simplistic reading of Romans 13 and had tackled head-on the problem that must have bothered any thoughtful Elizabethan Englishman. They are, furthermore, seminal to ideological debate in the ensuing century, and Ponet especially deserves to be better known as an early English exponent of human rights and democratic theory. Milton's justification of the execution of Charles I reaches back at least to Ponet in 1556 and, distantly perhaps, to St Augustine. Ponet's attack was on Mary. But from the very beginning of Elizabeth's reign, some Calvinistic Englishmen were suspicious of her monarchical doctrines, however glad they might have been that Mary's rule was at an end. When Elizabeth was crowned with traditional rights certain English exiles in Geneva were unwilling to return to England until told to do so by Calvin himself.[12]

Buchanan and du Plessis Mornay elaborate the same ideas with greater ability, but the importance of Ponet must not be underestimated. In him the language of human rights first gains an eloquent English voice.

Some of the ironies surrounding Buchanan's *De Iure Regni apud Scotos* are worth elaboration. He wrote the treatise to show that the Scots, who had just deposed their Queen, were a lawful nation. Elizabeth had aided and abetted the deposition of her Scots cousin and kept her prisoner in England until her eventual execution. Mary Queen of Scots was a legitimate, hereditary, sacramental monarch. In a letter to Elizabeth she pertinently asked: "In your conscience, madam, would you acknowledge an equal liberty and power, in your subjects?" At the scaffold she said: "You know I am cousin to your Queen, and descended from the blood of Henry the Seventh, a married Queen of France and the anointed Queen of Scotland".[13] An official justification of Elizabeth's actions first tries to refute Mary's claim to be an absolute prince subject only to God's judgement, saying that princes should be subject to man's law when they pass the bounds of justice, and then, in a shift of argument, that only another anointed, crowned, hereditary monarch is competent to judge the same rank.[14]

The Scots in the name of natural law had deposed a Queen, aided and abetted by Elizabeth and her advisers who held the other model of natural law. The establishment was not above choosing expediency rather than divine principle. Intelligent people might have noticed and wondered whether principle was in fact divine.

Like the Puritan-Calvinists, the Jesuits did not identify Caesar's interests with God's. The English Jesuit who caused the greatest stir, Robert Parsons, used unusual tactics. He composed a dialogue among earnest but apparently loyal seekers for truth who discussed the succession to the throne.[15] The seekers eventually emerge from the tangled slaughter, murder and intermarriage of English medieval history with the Infanta of Spain as the true heir to Elizabeth I. In the process, however, a thoroughly Lancastrian interpretation is given to English history. Like Ponet, Parsons considers Richard II the best example of the bad king rightfully deposed. The process is seen as one of people, parliament and nobility. Coronation vows are seen as a contract, hereditary right as of limited validity, monarchy in general as constitutionally limited. Behind all this, but not explicit, is essentially the same model of natural law as that of the Puritan-Calvinists, of which constitutional democracy is the ultimate development

pseudonym Junius Brutus for his famous treatise, the *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*. James I, on his accession, was hailed as "England's Caesar" in a crudely flattering piece of public versifying.[5] Elizabeth was also called Caesar.[6]

After this preamble it is time to return to the beginning, that is to Tyndale and Barnes, the theologians of the Henrician Reformation who formulated certain ideas that became part of the establishment stock-in-trade. Reformation in England, as in certain other places, was the work of the ruler, the highest "magistrate", of civil authority. Barnes and Tyndale developed a theory that all power, civil and ecclesiastical, belonged to the King. They wished to counter the Papal claim to have power to dismiss monarchs by excommunication, which gave subjects the right to revolt. They also, it is clear from their writings, wished to protect the English Bible, of which Tyndale was one of the early translators. This Bible, to Tyndale especially, is not a subversive document but enjoins *obedience* — the key word — on the part of subjects. "The peaceable doctrine of Christ teacheth to obey and suffer for the word".[7] The chief scriptural basis is Romans 13, which is given a simplistic interpretation.

The king is "in the rowme of God and his law is nothing but the law of nature and natural equity which God graved in the hearts of men". Even pagan kings rule by virtue of this natural law. This does not give the King the right to rule unjustly. Nevertheless, obedience is due even to a tyrant. Christ taught all obedience, his kingdom is not of this world. He that judges a King judges God. Better, at least, a strong ruler. For Kings there is only God's judgement. How God acts, especially whether through men, a key question, is not discussed, apart from a vague, passing remark about lesser magistrates.

Barnes had to live out (if that is the right phrase) his doctrine of passive suffering. Henry burned him at the stake after the fall of Thomas Cromwell. He emphasises the two kingdoms doctrine rather more specifically than Tyndale.[8] There is a strong statement that Christ will eventually confound tyrants but all that man can do, or the church, is to suffer for conscience sake without any resistance except, where possible, flight.

There, then, in a nutshell, are the arguments of these two early Tudor protestant theologians, who saw things from their perspective of preserving kingly power against Papal, however unsatisfactory King Henry VIII himself might have been. The doctrine of obedience was enshrined in the political Homilies of the Anglican Prayerbook, which were to be read as sermons. The most important of these statements is the Homily of 1571, "Against Rebellion", inserted in Elizabeth's time, and possibly with her participation. Apart from emphasising the doctrine of obedience, and that resistance even to bad rulers is wrong (they are in any case a punishment for sin), this Homily introduces another key word: "Patience". We must "patiently suffer and obey such as we deserve", and "pray" for better times. Prayer, patience, endurance, obedience: these are words with political overtones to the Elizabethan Englishman.[9] Bishop Thomas Bilson, in his defence of Elizabeth as the godly protestant monarch in 1585, uses the same terms.[10] When the Duchess of Gloucester calls in question Gaunt's "patience" in Act 1.2 of *Richard II*, she for a moment rips open the whole Elizabethan debate. Only two years earlier than Bilson's work, however, Archbishop Grindal had died under house arrest imposed by Elizabeth because he had insisted on refusing Caesar what was God's.

What has happened to the two models of natural law? Tyndale briefly mentions the concept, saying that the King's law is God's, the law of nature. The Puritan-Calvinist development of the alternative model of natural law was partly provoked by the reign of Mary Tudor and by the St Bartholomew Massacre, and was also part of an attack on the doctrine of obedience. This was fully developed between 1556 and Bilson's statement of 1585. This model of natural law preceded that of Hooker. The Puritans were first in with a fully enunciated natural law theory.[11] This theory sanctioned violent revolt and tyrannicide, if need be, by private individuals. It sanctioned the peoples' rights against the King, often in the form of parliament. Often the aristocracy is seen as a group of lesser magistrates who should control the greater. Essentially, their theory is that of constitutional democracy. Hereditary succession and the seal of the coronation

Plessis Mornay's *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos*. Book VIII first likens England to Israel, with church and people the same and the king exercising a priestly office. Any king, once appointed, rules by divine right and is owed obedience. Conquest may be a lawful beginning of a rule. However, much is again made of how the king is subject to law. The English situation is described as a particularly happy one in which, when monarchs take possession of the 'room' to which they are called, the very solemnities and rites of their inauguration paint out before their eyes the extent of their authority and power and an established mutuality of duties is recognised (Ch.ii. 13).

However, in the attack on Junius Brutus, (which shows that the *Vindiciae* must have been sufficiently well-known to warrant attack), we are told that hereditary succession is the characteristic of all "well appointed kingdoms". Dominion returns to the people only when there is no heir. So much for choice or contract. The image of music as political and cosmic order (echoed perhaps in Ulysses's famous or notorious speech in *Troilus and Cressida*) seems to indicate in Hooker an ideal situation which by inference is the situation in England. The relationship of kingship to constitutional restraint remains vague, the Puritan political gambits are ignored, the real questions remain to be discussed. The final inference seems to be that the patriarch/king/priest of England/Israel gains the throne by a hereditary succession that is part of divine order and though he is required to rule justly, he rules supremely. In an England that exemplifies the ideal situation further radical questions need not be asked.

The Elizabethan Age, then, saw a great flowering of the language of human rights and of notions which are basic to the concept of constitutional democracy. It offers a strongly argued liberation theology and presents theological and political arguments that are thoroughly situational: had Mary Tudor not ruled nor St Bartholomew's Eve taken place, changes in protestant attitudes to obedience would not have occurred and the revolutionary model of natural law would never have developed. In the powerful debate that characterises the Age (but which has its culmination in the Civil War later on) the establishment had the advantage of repressive mechanisms, but it was, nevertheless, an age of debate, a debate in which there was no dichotomy between religion and politics and in which radicalism had a theological basis at least as strong as that of the establishment. This radicalism had powerful overt expression in certain notably argued polemical works and solid support from that movement within and without the Established Church that was coming to be known as Puritanism. Modern so-called radical criticism of Shakespeare still has to come to grips with Elizabethan radicalism.

Shakespeare was a dramatist, not a writer of polemical treatises. He did not have to endorse or refute opinions in his own voice. Debate could be conveyed through the points of view of characters in the play. It is true that the reception of opinion by the audience could be influenced by the nature of the speaker. On the other hand, a complex situation could be conveyed by differing opinions in the mouths of equally worthy characters. The context in which a speech is made must also influence the reception of the ideas expressed.

It is not the purpose of this article to claim Shakespeare as a Calvinist-Puritan tyrannicide in opposition to the "average" Elizabethan of Tillyard's conception discussed earlier. It is the purpose to suggest that Shakespeare was aware of the debate. Any Elizabethan author had to beware of authority. Shakespeare, as chief dramatist of the Lord Chamberlain's Men (The Master of the Revels was an official in the Lord Chamberlain's ministerial department) later the King's Men, enjoying the direct patronage of James I, must have been particularly sensitive to political necessity. One has to develop an eye not only for the key words but also for the camouflage techniques used.

But his "negative capability" may have been precisely the characteristic that in any case could not see ideological situations in terms of black and white and divorced from the personalities of specific people. Hence, in *Richard II* the anguish of the Duchess of Gloucester and the perplexity of the Duke of York (who also calls in doubt the doctrine of

although Parsons does not carry his own argument as far as that. Ponet and those after him had made much of the King's being subject to law and to democratic process.

The most elaborate expositions of the establishment model of natural law came after Parsons and the Puritans. Parsons was answered right up to the early eighteenth century. A more or less immediate refuter, the Scots jurist Sir Thomas Craig, produces the natural law model with which we are conventionally familiar. Not only does he insist on hereditary right, refuting Parsons's arguments particularly on Richard II, but he talks in hierarchical terms of the eagle as king of birds, lions of beasts and kings over men. From the beginning, natural law, written in the hearts of mankind, ordains patriarchal royalty. The first English translation, of 1703, has interesting remarks with the advantage of hindsight about the Puritan Revolution, relating Parson's ideas to those of the revolutionaries who overthrew Charles I.[16]

Hereditary right is the key to Craig's attack on Parsons. It is instituted by God himself.[17] A tyrant is the man (perhaps like Bolingbroke) who brings no right to a kingdom. Popular revolt is "the grievous cruelties of the people".[18] Neither reason nor necessity are grounds for deposing a king or chastising him or requiring him to render account for his actions.[19] But, strange to say, a lawful king may be overthrown by a conqueror! Conquest is the will of God! It gives total power unfettered by law. Perhaps Craig has in mind a legitimate line of kings flowing from the Norman Conquest — the idea seems to be hinted at by Hooker, too.

Craig argues that the Tarquins were not the legitimate Kings of Rome, so appearing to justify their overthrown by Junius Brutus.[20] But then he inconsistently argues that Junius Brutus was wrong to overthrow a king. From this action flowed the unsatisfactory nature of the Republic, with the tribunes of the people "a most seditious kind of men". The Caesars brought stability. Julius Caesar was killed by individuals, not by the commonwealth. So are the histories of England and Rome interpreted by Craig according to his set of interests.

The Elizabethan historian Sir John Hayward produced a reply to Parsons which repeats Craig's arguments.[21] However, his earlier history of Henry IV, which landed him in the Tower for a time, clearly indicates the divided mind that must have been the condition of many Elizabethans. Most of it is a rational account of how a nation, commons and peers, dealt with a constitutional crisis. Richard is an evil King, rightly deposed by a competent contender at the request of the nation. Then, in the last few pages, he laments the illegal overthrow of Richard. Despite this strange and inconsistent conclusion, the pragmatic nature of his main account was too much for authority.[22] In trying to understand the Elizabethan Age with all its romantic glitter, one must never forget the control of publication and of drama, and the savage penalties that could be the lot of offenders.

Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* was an answer to the Puritan case on church government generally.[23] It is especially the concept of hereditary succession that Hooker (like Craig) defends. The great Hooker's work is indeed massive and able, and might rightly be considered a landmark in the evolution of English prose. However, that the argument is as cogent and incisive as is sometimes claimed must be questioned and far too little attention has been given to the fact that it is a polemical reply of an embattled establishment and that tactics of evasion are central to the work.

The whole basis of the argument is natural law, God's law, with which the positive laws of different societies may or may not agree. Society itself is based on natural reason, both man and society being microcosms of the universal macrocosm of nature. Book I is devoted to this question of law in the different levels of creation. The patriarch/king is the first and most natural form of regiment. Chapter X.4 to X.8 works through a perhaps deliberately vague weighing of popular consent against absolutism. Notable for its absence, however, is any discussion of what to do with a bad king. What is clearly there is Hooker's satisfaction with the comfortable fact that in England church and society are coterminous. Book VIII is, however, a specific rebuttal of "Junius Brutus", that is of du

princes should be religious, the church has no power over the state. The church should teach the people to be "patient" with a bad prince. Bishops should "endure" (him) with "patience". The church may refuse communion to a ruler.

11. In the Elizabethan age the only English translation of du Plessis Mornay's *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* was of the fourth book, *A Short Apologie for Christian Souldiers* (1588) by S. (Stephanus) Junius Brutus. This is about the right of neighbouring monarchs to overthrow the tyrant next door. English troops assisted the Huguenots as well as the Dutch. The whole argument of the *Vindiciae* is attacked in Book VIII of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, referring to the arguments of "Junius Brutus". The treatise must have been well known even if it was not known that the tyrannicidal pseudonym disguised Henry of Navarre's Ambassador to Elizabeth's court.
12. For this last point see Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967) 31. This should be one of the standard works for all Elizabethan scholars.
13. *Scottish History from Contemporary Writers: Mary Queen of Scots*, ed. Robert S. Rail (London, 1900) 25, 305.
14. "Justification of Queen Elizabeth in Relation to Mary Queen of Scots" in *Accounts and Papers relating to Mary Queen of Scots*, ed. A.J. Crosby and J. Bruce (London: Camden Society, 1867).
15. Robert Parsons, *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crown of England* (1594).
16. Thomas Craig, *The Right of Succession to the Kingdom of England, in two books; against the sophisms of Parsons the Jesuite.* . . . trans. James Gatherer (London, 1703).
17.-20. *Ibid.* Bk.1, ch.12; ch.4; Bk.1, 186; Bk.1, 159.
21. John Hayward, *An Answer to the first Part of a certain conference concerning Succession, published not long since under the name of R. Dolmans* (London, 1603).
22. ——, *The first part of the life and reigne of King Henrie the IIII* (London, 1599).
23. The authority of the three posthumously published books of the *Politie* has been controversial. In his article for the *DNB*, Sidney Lee concluded: "A critical examination shows that the seventh and eighth books, in their existing shape, are constructed from Hooker's rough notes, and, although imperfect, are pertinent to his scheme; but that the so-called sixth book has no right to its place in Hooker's treatise". Sidney Lee, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography* XXVII (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1891) 293.
24. 2.1.164, 208.
25. 1.2.187.
26. If not strictly relevant to the drama of the age, except to indicate some kind of contemporary relevance à la *Shakespeare Against Apartheid* (Professor Orkin's recent book), it is nevertheless fascinating to consider the political stance of sixteenth and seventeenth century Calvinism in relation to contemporary South Africa. The English-speaking liberal has only too easily been given to regarding Calvinism as the enemy, without being aware that the language of human rights has its English origins in the Calvinist tradition stemming from Ponet quite apart from the tradition of the common law that derives obscurely from the Magna Carta of 1215. On the other hand, some present-day South African Calvinists, while regarding Anglicanism as a traditional enemy (especially since the line of turbulent priests from Father Huddleston and Bishop Reeves onwards) are inclined to adopt interpretations of Romans 13 which would have gladdened the hearts of Queen Elizabeth I and her ecclesiastical hierarchy. Liberation theology of the most violent kind has impeccable Reformation origins. Mr Boesak and Archbishop Tutu are mild by comparison with Ponet, Buchanan, and du Plessis Mornay or the slightly later Rutherford and John Milton.

    The matter is well raised by the "ABRESCA Charter" of 1981 rather than by the more recent and better known *Kairos* document. Paragraph 1.1d reads: "God institutes the authority of the State for the just and legitimate government of the world. Therefore we obey government only in so far as its laws and instructions are not in conflict with the Word of God. Obedience to earthly authorities is only obedience *in God*". 2.3 reads: "As heirs of the Reformed tradition they [i.e. ABRESCA members] are faced with a crisis because the system of apartheid

"patience")[24] can exist in the same play with the loyalism and integrity of the Bishop of Carlisle. We sympathise with all three at their different times of utterance. However, when that other key word "obedience" occurs during Canterbury's set speech about the exemplary honeybees in *Henry V*[25] we may feel that what we have already learnt about him should give us cause for ironical reservations and that the assorted soldiery encountered during this outwardly most patriotic of plays, whether Nim and Ancient Pistol or Bates and Williams in the famous Agincourt-Eve encounter, do not in their various ways conform to the hive-like concept of the prelate's disquisition on order in the state. Ulysses's yet more famous speech on order and degree (so uncritically relied on by Tillyard) is an even better example of how both speaker and context call in question a plummily orthodox exposition.

None of these utterances makes Shakespeare a Puritan Regicide. They do show wide sympathies and a capacity to see many aspects of a situation. His acute awareness of the constitutional problem of the bad king is plain, as is his sense of the inadequacies of officially orthodox utterances. A technique of adroitly implicit undermining characterises some speeches in the plays which appear to give notable exposition to establishment ideas. And it should not go unnoticed that the key words "obedience" and "patience", which evoke the whole Elizabethan polemic, occur at crucial junctures, not without what would appear to be some sympathy.[26]

NOTES

References to the plays are to *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

1. See the chapter "Calvinism with an Anglican Face: the Stranger Churches in Elizabethan London" in Patrick Collinson's *Godly People* (London: Hambledon Press, c1983) and his article "The Elizabethan Puritans and the Foreign Reformed Churches in London" in *Proceedings in the Huguenot Society of London*, 20 (1964).
2. *The Tiger's Heart* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970).
3. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, eds., *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cutural Materialism* (Manchester University Press, 1985) 3,11. The latter quotation is a reference by Dollimore to the chapter by Stephen Greenblatt.
4. William Watson, *A Decacordon of Ten Quodlibetical Questions* (1602) 27, 28, 30.
5. Henry Petowe, *His Majesties most Royal Coronation. Together with the manner of the solemne shewes prepared for the honour of his entry into the Cittie of London. Eliza., her Coronation in Heaven. And Londons sorrow for her visitation* (1603).
6. E. Nesbit, *Caesar's Dialogues* (1601): the work calls on Romans 13 to justify royal authority.
7. *The obedience of a Christen man, and how Christen rulers ought to govern, wherein also (if thou mark dilygently) thou shalt find eyes to perceave the crafty conveisance of all inglers* in Tyndale, Frith and Barnes, *Works* (London, 1573) xxv. The republication in the middle of Elizabeth's reign is significant.
8. *That mens constitutions, which are not grounded in Scripture, bind not the conscience of men under pain of deadly sin* in Tyndale, Frith and Barnes, op. cit. The title sounds more aggressive but the message is essentially the same.
9. In *A Declaration of the Queen's Proceedings since her Reign*, in *Church Historical Society*, ed. W.E. Collins, 58 (1899), Queen Elizabeth is cited on the occasion of the Northern Rebellion (Catholic) as being "by God's grace the sovereign . . . next under God" and her subjects are "bound to live in the faith and obedience of Christian religion".
10. Thomas Bilson, *The true differance between Christian subjection and unchristian rebellion* (Oxford, 1585) 213, 127. Bilson's is a defence against Papal attacks but could just as easily be a defence against the Puritan-Calvinists. He relies heavily upon Romans 13. He says that princes are the "higher powers" of this text. The clergy should teach civil disobedience. While

Freedom of Speech and Shakespeare's Women Characters

EVE HORWITZ

Faced with Petruchio's perverse and apparently irrational tyranny, Katherina, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, cries out in defence of her last remaining freedom:

> Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak,
> And speak I will. I am no child, no babe.
> Your betters have endur'd me say my mind,
> And if you cannot, best you stop your ears.
> My tongue will tell the anger of my heart,
> Or else my heart concealing it will break,
> And rather than it shall, I will be free
> Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words.
> (*TS*, 4.3.73-80)

This is a powerful statement of an adult right to speak freely, as Katherina presents freedom of speech as her most vital freedom, upon which her sanity itself depends and her status as an adult human being. Her passionate defence of her right to speak freely does not, in fact, arise directly from its context in Petruchio's attempts to tame her, as his efforts at this stage are directed towards deprivations of other kinds. Rather, Katherina's speech seems to be a set piece, prefiguring later heroines, like Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*, in its insistence on a woman's right to mature humanity and its challenge to men's ability to countenance this right. In this very puzzling play, the explosive power of Katherina's speech stands out, suggesting that her rebellion against the constraints of the submissive stereotype that Petruchio is forcing upon her is justified, thus posing very awkward questions about the desirability of her 'taming' and about the nature of the authority that Petruchio exercises.

Although Katherina's opening words in her speech have more than a suggestion of her customary wilfulness, this wilfulness is given a more serious value in what follows. By presenting the silencing of women as a failure of courage on the part of men, she allies her outspokenness with the moral right to plain speech, speech that will reveal the truth, where conventional attitudes hide it. She underlines the failure of Petruchio's tyranny to reflect the tolerance which is the sign of true and just authority: "Your betters have endur'd me say my mind . . .". Denied freedom of speech, the connection from heart to tongue, Katherina is relegated to the status of an automaton: her next protest; "Belike, you mean to make a puppet of me" (4.3.103) is a serious reflection of the automatic responses expected of a woman, or of an obedient subject.

Katherina's claim to the right of free speech touches upon a crucial area of contention in the exercise of political rights in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Throughout the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the monarchy was in a state of continual conflict with parliament concerning the limits of freedom of speech for the loyal subject, as the right to speak freely provided a testing ground for the extension of individual conscience and individual liberty in the face of traditional hierarchical power.

Shakespeare in Southern Africa Vol. 2, 1988, 51-59

has been and still is justified theologically mainly by people of that very tradition. Yet the people of these [ABRESCA] Churches representing the victims of apartheid, reject that system as evil and contrary to the Word of God. The question that this poses is whether they are also rejecting their confessional heritage from which so much support for the system stems. . . ." 2.4 "What does it mean to be Black and Reformed in Southern Africa today?". See John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio, eds., *Apartheid is a Heresy* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1983) 161-63.

Dare one suggest that they compare "obedience" in the mouth of Henry V's Archbishop of Canterbury with "patience" in the mouth of the Duchess of Gloucester, understood in the light of Elizabethan political controversy?

(ABRESCA stands for Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in Southern Africa.)

loyalty to the Queen — Wentworth was known as a fanatical loyalist, and John Stubbe is reputed to have cried, "God Save the Queen!" as his right hand was struck off on the scaffold as a punishment for his publication of *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf*. Wentworth's fate was not so severe: he was imprisoned in the Tower for his impertinent speech, but was soon graciously pardoned by the Queen. As frequently as men like Wentworth tried to assert their right to speak freely on subjects of their choosing, the Queen responded by silencing the House, forbidding discussion of religious matters or of the accession question. By proclamation and by sometimes brutal punishments, she sought to control and limit outspoken criticism of her policies.

The conflict between the Queen and the Commons did not diminish in the later years of her reign, when Shakespeare was writing his plays. Essex's rebellion provided a dramatic instance of the instability that many of Elizabeth's subjects felt in her declining years. In fact Essex, in protesting at his treatment, focuses on very much the same area of contention touched upon by Wentworth. As Joel Hurstfield describes the incident:

> The courtier Earl of Essex, the perfect image of the gallant nobleman reared to the mystique of royalty, wrote thus in 1598 to the lord keeper of the great seal: "I owe to Her Majesty the duty of an Earl and Lord Marshall of England". But, he said, he was being demeaned from his high place to the position of a slave. And now, in the moment of truth, he tore away the enveloping illusion of an infallible Crown: "What, cannot Princes err? Cannot subjects receive wrong? Is earthly power or authority infinite? Pardon me, pardon me, my good Lord, I cannot subscribe to these principles".[4]

Very relevantly to my discussion of Shakespearean drama, Hurstfield stresses the effect such remarks have in revealing "the dualism in society, the conflict between form and reality, between power and the limitations upon its exercise".[5] Free speech tears away the veil from the fictions that support authority.

In the Jacobean court, the discrepancy between James's conception of autocratic kingship and his often undesirable personal qualities heightened this awareness of the stratagems and fictions involved in the exercise of power. James's decadence, his sodomy and drunkenness, coupled with his claims to Divine kingship and unquestioned authority led to an extraordinary divide between the king's public and private person. An awareness of the theatricality of the exercise of royal power was heightened, as the king appropriated theatrical and literary forms to his projection of his own authority.[6] In the face of James's belief in the infallibility of the crown, according to Christopher Hill, criticism of the king had to be carefully encoded, and protestations of loyalty were sometimes part of a conscious and elaborate game.[7] Nevertheless, ways were found to criticise the king, ranging from outright confrontation, as in the 1610 Parliament, to elaborate strategies of concealment. Interestingly, in the light of *Henry VIII*, one of these was extravagant praise of past monarchs, particularly of Elizabeth.[8]

Returning to Shakespeare's plays with these strategies in mind, the political resonances of women's roles in the plays become striking. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio appropriates the discourse of state power, and, in a manner which prefigures James's strategies, applies it to the family. Petruchio constantly refers to the husband/wife relation as a microcosm of authority and order in the body politic, and claims to be acting "under name of perfect love" (4.3.12). However, his own exercise of authority is riotous and disorderly, giving cogency to Katherina's protest against his "taming" methods and the unreasonable restrictions he imposes upon her.

In asserting his power to tame Katherina, Petruchio has recourse to the most extreme model of absolute authority in his definition of marriage and in his insistence on controlling Katherina's utterances, by force if necessary:

Claims for the formal privilege of freedom of speech in parliament date back to Sir Thomas More's petition to Henry VIII in 1523:

> It may therefore like your most abundant Grace to give all your Commons here assembled your most gracious licence and pardon freely, without doubt of your dreadful displeasure, every man to discharge his conscience, and boldly in everything incident among us to declare his advice; and whatsoever happen any man to say, it may like your noble Majesty, of your inestimable goodness, to take all in good part, interpreting every man's words, how uncunningly soever they be couched, to proceed you of good zeal toward the profit of your realm and honour of your royal person.[1]

More's defence of freedom of speech is clearly intended to prevent any reprisals being taken against members of parliament for their opposition to the king's will. In other words, freedom of speech was not to be equated with disloyalty or treason. The problem was to reconcile the right of dissent and the hierarchical social system which required absolute and unquestioning loyalty.

In Elizabeth's reign, contention on this issue focused particularly on Puritan members of the House of Commons. Protestant insistence on the freedom of individual conscience and on the predominance of divine over secular authority led Puritans in and out of the house to state their case with a fervour that vigorously challenged the absolute authority of the monarchy. The career of Peter Wentworth provides a striking example of this process. In 1576, Wentworth delivered his famous address to the House of Commons on freedom of speech. The address, he later claimed, had been forming in his mind for some years, and in coming to his decision to risk delivering it, he was swayed by his remembrance of the wrath of Elihu in the Book of Job:

> Behold, I am as the new wine which hath no vent and bursteth the new vessels in sunder. Therefore I will speak, that I may have a vent. I will open my lips and make answer. I will regard no manner of person, no man will I spare; for should I go about to please men, I know not how soon my maker will take me away.[2]

Wentworth's text stresses the explosive power of free speech, its challenge to traditional values and its divine rectitude. In his argument, the right to speak freely has particular moral force, as free speech is clearly the expression of a truth that would otherwise be suppressed.

In his speech to Parliament, Wentworth insisted on the value of outspokenness as "necessary for the preservation of the Prince and State", rejecting conformist discourse as flattery and dissembling:

> He that dissembleth to her Majesty's peril is to be counted as an hateful enemy, for that he giveth to her Majesty a detestable Judas his kiss. And he that contrarieth her mind, to her preservation — yea, though her Majesty would be much offended with him — is to be adjudged an approved lover. For faithful are the wounds of a lover, saith Solomon, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.[3]

In his extraordinary appropriation of erotic discourse, Wentworth reveals the potential for corruption and perversion in unchallenged authority, and legitimises the criticisms of a contentious citizen.

In Wentworth's argument, the power of the monarch is not beyond criticism, nor can all the actions of the Queen be regarded as unquestionably right, but in his protests and those of other Puritans, the vigour of this criticism was countered by a constant insistence on

rightful authority. Emilia's defiance of Iago thus reflects the political position of those who risk the wrath of their rulers by revealing abuses of legitimate authority. There is an overriding moral commitment that obliges the good citizen to speak out against tyranny.

However, Emilia pays a high price for her integrity. In the kind of society reflected in the tragedies, plain speaking is vulnerable to the arbitrary exercise of authority. As Puritan protesters were only too aware, it could be extremely dangerous to challenge entrenched power, however righteously. For Emilia, the price of her revelation of the manipulations that had led Othello to the murder of his wife is her own death. Plain speaking invites self-annihilation:

> So, come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;
> So speaking as I think, I die, I die.
> (5.2.251-2)

Truth, redemption and death are united in a way that could all too easily reflect the fate of a loyal subject whose criticism is treated as treason in order to protect the fictions that maintain power.

Because the conventional views on feminine virtue in Elizabethan and Jacobean society emphasised the value of submission and silence in women, the role of women in society and in the drama provides an exaggerated version of the stresses that were evident in the broader society. Although conventional descriptions of appropriate speech for men often stressed the value of restraint or silence in the presence of a Prince, the constraints on women's language were formidable in the extreme. Language was of great interest to Shakespeare's contemporaries, and was invested with considerable revelatory power, as Ben Jonson bears witness:

> Language most shewes a man: speake that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, and inmost parts of us, and is the Image or the Parent of it, the mind. No glasse renders a mans forme, or likenesse, as true as his speech.[9]

It is clear that the language Jonson describes here is a direct reflection of individual personality, invested with a powerful force to objectify the subjective. Women, on the other hand, were led to fear the expression of their personalities in language, and were enjoined to keep silence. Women were expected to be chaste, silent and obedient. It was through the passive exercise of these virtues that the good woman achieved marital harmony, argued the conduct book writers. The model of the perfect woman and, I would argue, the conservative model of the perfect citizen, was Patient Griselda, with her unquestioning acceptance of her husband's authority.

There are, of course, a number of problems inherent in this paradoxical definition of feminine virtue. A major problem is that the woman's own personality is not considered in this model of behaviour; her individuality has to be totally suppressed in the name of social harmony. This means that the role of the conventionally submissive women imposed an extreme denial of individuated needs, setting a wide gap between individual and social role, and requiring that all personal impulses be subordinated to male authority. The good woman therefore embodies an extreme version of the constraints imposed upon obedient citizens in their uncritical submission to royal authority.

A major problem, it is clear, in enforcing these models of feminine passivity is that, in them, male authority can too easily be seen as unjust tyranny, so that the intended effect of cautionary tales like that of Patient Griselda, which is to reinforce ideas of the necessary subjection of the weaker woman, is subverted by the moral implications of the actions that are depicted.[10] The line between just authority and tyranny becomes blurred, and the woman's silence, although morally superior, can be seen as unjustly imposed, throwing into question the desirability of feminine passivity and of absolute obedience.

> Good Lord, how bright and goodly shines the moon!
>
> *I say* it is the moon that shines so bright.
>
> It shall be moon, or star, or what I list,
> Or e'er I journey to your father's house.
> (4.5.2, 4, 7-8; my emphasis)

The fictions that underlie the exercise of authority are here revealed as fictions and their distorting power clearly charted, particularly the extent to which authority can appropriate the use and meaning of language.

The problem of Katherina's final speech of submission is thus closely linked to strategies of social control. In her final speech, Katherina gives an orthodox account of the need for woman's submission in marriage, phrased in such a way as to invite its acceptance. The idea of marriage and the family as a microcosm of the body politic is prepared for by Petruchio, who stresses the harmony generated by rightful hierarchy and order. Because of the terms of princely rule that he uses, to object would be treason:

> Marry, peace it bodes, and love, and quiet life,
> An awful rule, and right supremacy,
> And, to be short, what not that's sweet and happy.
> (5.2.109-111)

There is, however, some irony here in the inescapable disjunction between the nobility of this righteous order and his own riotous and arbitrary behaviour in the course of the play. The harmonious language, as in the Induction, simply does not fit the facts, however desirable the ideas it expresses. Like the Induction, therefore, Katherina's speech sets up an ideal of noble behaviour that is simultaneously desirable and unreal, a dream of harmony and a distortion of the observable facts.

In the final analysis, however, subordination is made necessary by feminine weakness, a vulnerability demonstrated only too clearly by the treatment Katherina has undergone. This is a fairly brutal recognition of the realities of power. However, the benefits of subordination, that is, physical protection and the attainment of social concord, are also stressed, in order to present a complex balancing of the benefits and disadvantages of the social and political hierarchy.

When Othello has murdered Desdemona, Emilia, confronted with Iago's attempt to use his marital authority to silence her, responds with an outburst similar to Katherina's:

> 'Twill out, it will: I hold my peace, sir, no,
> I'll be in speaking, liberal as the air,
> Let heaven, and men, and devils, let 'em all,
> All, all cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.
> (*Oth.*, 5.2.220-223)

Even more explicitly than Katherina, Emilia acknowledges the transgression that her outburst represents, but insists on the need to defy convention to reveal the manipulations of her husband.

Neither Emilia nor Katherina can lay claim to any state of moral superiority. Katherina's shrewishness and Emilia's directness and liberality are, in the framework of both plays, flaws which have to be overcome in their final apotheosis. In Emilia's case, of course, her rebellion is shown to be manifestly right because she is exposing the dishonesty and corruption of Iago. Iago is, however, her husband, and in that role, claims the right to control her freedom of speech. Iago's attempts to silence her are clearly designed to prevent her from revealing his own lies, and the exercise of his marital power is an abuse of

masculine aggression[13] that is taken up by the men confronted by this linguistic vigour, as they attempt to suppress the words of both Emilia and Paulina by demonising them, charging them with being the image of subversion and disorder, the shrew or the witch. Iago asserts his authority to try to control Emilia — "Speak within doors" (4.1.146) — then attempts to detract from the power of her speech by casting her as the stereotype of feminine foolishness: "You are a fool, go to" (4.1.150). Paulina also earns Leontes's harsh rebuke:

> A mankind witch! Hence with her, out o'door:
> A most intelligencing bawd!
> (2.3.68-9)

She is accused of sexual laxness, husband-beating and witchcraft, as Leontes tries a series of male demonisations of feminine power and outspokenness in an attempt to control her. In both *Othello* and *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare leads his audience to observe both the legitimate nature of the woman's protest and the wrongheadedness of the man's attempts to suppress this protest.

The truth emerges as a powerful force, breaking through the confines of convention to challenge hierarchies: "'Tis proper I obey him, but not now" (5.2.197-8), Emilia asserts, while Paulina insists on the proper limits of male authority:

> Unless he take the course that you have done,
> Commit me for committing honour — trust it,
> He shall not rule me.
> (2.3.48-50)

Thus Paulina, in her defence of the freedom of speech, casts a searching light on the potential for corruption in the exercise of power and on the strategies that seek to contain attempts at rebellion against authority. Like Protestant parliamentarians, she challenges the doctrine that the king is never wrong, substituting the idea of government by consensus, based on reason and justice.

An interesting light is thrown on this aspect of Paulina's outspokenness by the Puritan Philip Stubbes's eulogy to his dead wife, *A Cristal Glasse for Christian Women* (1591), in which he idealises her as the perfect Puritan woman. Although she is depicted as a loyal and subservient wife who subordinates her own will to that of her husband and observes the silence proper to a woman, she is yet an outspoken defendant of the truth:

> At XV. yeares of age (her father being dead) her mother bestowed her in marriage to one maister *Stubbes*, with who she lived four yeares, and almost an halfe, verie honestly and godly, with rare commendations of all that knewe her, as well for her singular wisedome, as also for her modestie, courtesie, gentlenesse, affabilitie and good government. And above all, for her fervent zeale which she bare to the truth, wherein she seemed to surpasse manie: Insomuch as if she chanced at any time to be in place where either Papists or Atheists were, and heard them talke of Religion, of what countenaunce or credite soever they seemed to be, she would not yeeld a iote, nor give place unto them at all, but would mightiliy justifie the truth of God, against their blaspemous untruthes, and convince them: yea and confound them by the testimonies of the worde of God.[14]

This description embodies both the virtue of Paulina as a good wife, and the vigour and fearlessness with which she confronts the power of the king. The passivity required of a woman is clearly transcended when she is called upon to defend fundamental beliefs.

In the trial scenes of both *The Winter's Tale* and *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare uses the trial

It is clear that the role of the silent and submissive heroine could have strong political resonances. The system represented by tragic heroines like Ophelia and Desdemona in the later stages of *Othello* is one of faith, unquestioning allegiance and self-denying obedience to a hierarchical conception of a higher good. Particularly in Shakespeare's tragedies, this system all too often comes into conflict with a more worldly and self-interested conception of the social bond, reflecting a profound crisis in the conception of human identity in Jacobean England. Richard Marienstras describes these two clashing systems as "the social bond and the bond of communion. The first is founded upon utility, profit, the law, conventions, a quasi-commercial exchange of services: it is essentially opportunistic. The second, to use terms familiar at the period, depends upon nature or the supernatural, in other words upon values that are shared, the recognition of another being, love".[11]

In charting the drama's responses to this crisis as it expressed itself in religious and political ideologies, Robert Weiman notes, perceptively, that:

> For the Elizabethan drama, susceptible as it was to the most "confounding" of changes — there simply was not available, in the contemporary framework of formulated thought, any room for dramatically usable concepts and symbols of social change, let alone revolution.[12]

The theatre itself therefore reflected the pattern of political and parliamentary opposition. Giving expression to elements of popular culture and of political contention, the theatre nevertheless contained these within a traditionalist framework. This means that any critique of the dominant order had to be expressed obliquely, or, as Weiman argues, had to appear to be a confirmation of this order.

It is my contention that the conflict in woman's status reflected, in an extreme form, a more general conflict between centralised authority and the freedom of individual subjects. The refusal of certain women to conform to the pattern of silence and unquestioning obedience expected of them is reflected in the claims of Puritan members of Parliament, of the right to express their conscience freely, without fear of reprisal.

In Shakespearean drama, this Puritanical righteousness is best reflected in the role of Paulina in *The Winter's Tale.* Paulina takes up Emilia's insistence on speaking the truth at all costs, assuming this shrewish role on her own initiative:

> He must be told on't and he shall: the office
> Becomes a woman best.
> (2.2.31-2)

One could well ask why speaking to Leontes should be a woman's duty. Is it perhaps, that only a good subject, a loyal and obedient subject, has the right to challenge royal authority in the name of truth? Paulina insists on the legitimacy of her role as a woman and a subject. Her transgression of propriety is a necessary challenge to Leontes's tyrannical abuse of his role. Taking up the baby, Paulina allies her femininity with the legitimacy of motherhood and links her outspokenness to the innocent silence of the baby. However, her approach to Leontes is hardly subservient. Paulina echoes Emilia's shrewish violence in her defence of her need to speak, as she stresses the uncompromising harshness of those who reveal the truth:

> If I prove honey-mouth'd, let my tongue blister,
> And never to my red-look'd anger be
> The trumpet any more.
> (2.2.33-5)

It is less this sense of righteousness in the woman's speech than its "deviant" anger and

as a commentary on abuses in the exercise of authority. Yet their rebelliousness is contained within the framework of obedience to rightful authority, as their insistence on freedom of speech is finally assimilated to the preservation of the dominant order.

NOTES

1. J.E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1559-1581* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953) 18.
2. Ibid., 318.
3. Ibid., 320.
4. *Freedom, Corruption and Government in Elizabethan England* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973) 67.
5. Ibid., 63.
6. See Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).
7. "Political Discourse in Early Seventeenth-Century England", *Politics and People in Revolutionary England*, ed. Colin Jones, Malyn Newit and Stephen Roberts (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 43-64.
8. Ibid., 53.
9. *Discoveries* (1641; London: John Lane, 1923) 78.
10. See Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985) 167-71.
11. *New Perspectives on the Shakespearean World* (Cambridge University Press, 1985) 129.
12. Robert Weiman, "Shakespeare and the Uses of Authority", *Shakespeare, Man of the Theatre*, ed. K. Muir, J. Halio and D.J. Palmer (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983) 186.
13. Carol Neely explores in some detail the ways in which Paulina takes on a masculine identity in imposing her presence in this scene. See "Women and Issue in *The Winter's Tale*", *Philological Quarterly* 57 (1978) 188.
14. Ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, Series 6, nos 4 and 6 (London: New Shakspeare Society, 1877-8) 197-8.

of a powerful woman, in both cases a queen and a foreigner, to explore the legitimate but wrong-headed exercise of royal and patriarchal power. In *The Winter's Tale*, both Paulina and Leontes's councillors argue that only by heeding the advice of loyal subjects can a king rule justly. It is this which distinguishes benign rule from tyranny. Hermione provides a cogent analysis of the coercive nature of authority and its power to distort the truth of those subject to it, particularly when opposition is identified as treason:

> Since what I am to say, must be but that
> Which contradicts my accusation, and
> The testimony on my part, no other
> But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me
> To say "not guilty": mine integrity,
> Being counted falsehood, shall, as I express it,
> Be so received.
> (*WT*, 3.2.22-28)

The exercise of tyrannical power, by forcibly imposing its own ideology, can appropriate rectitude to itself, and control the parameters of discourse, but Paulina asserts the need for the victims of tyranny to resist these categorisations:

> It is an heretic that makes the fire,
> Not she which burns in't.
> (2.3.114-5)

Hermione's obvious virtue and Paulina's staunch defence of her serve to underline Leontes's wrongful exercise of royal power.

Queen Katherine, in *Henry VIII*, combines the outspokenness of her earlier namesake, the shrewish Kate, with the virtue of Hermione and Paulina. It is because she is a loyal and subservient wife that she can challenge Henry's government, as she does in her attack on Cardinal Wolsey's taxation policy and her revelation of some of the stratagems that underlie the accusations against Buckingham. When Henry divorces her, there is, again, a clear disjunction between his motivation, his desire for Ann Boleyn, and the discourse of Christian conscience that is invoked to enforce the divorce. Once again, the trial of a woman character acts to reveal gaps in the dominant discourse. Katherine is capable of perceiving the gap between the language of political expediency and the less savoury truth that lies behind it. At the same time, her total lack of power as a woman and a foreigner forces her to submit to Henry's will.

Henry VIII is remarkable for the way in which the exercise of royal power is simultaneously glorified and criticised. England is revealed, by Katherine, as a place of falsehood and deceit:

> Would I had never trod this English earth,
> Or felt the flatteries that grow upon it:
> Ye have angels' faces, but heaven knows your hearts.
> (3.1.142-45)

And yet, by a series of apotheoses, the cynical exercise of self-interested power is converted to a paeon of praise to King Henry and his progeny. Katherine again provides the model for the exercise of loyalty as she moves towards her death. Like Stubbes's Puritan wife, her outspokenness is assimilated to her virtue, and both serve to reinforce royal authority.

In Shakespearean drama, outspokenness in women characters, or outright shrewishness, provides a striking conjunction of rebelliousness and conformity. In transgressing the norms of feminine submissiveness, these women serve to reveal the contradictions, the dishonesties and the stratagems of power. Their shrewishness functions, in a covert way,

Sol T. Plaatje
From the photograph by Lizzie Caswall Smith, The Gainsborough Studio, London. Reproduced courtesy of the Department of Historical Papers, Library of the University of the Witwatersrand.

South African journalist, starting two newspapers just after the turn of the century in Mafeking and Kimberley; he helped found the African National Congress in 1912 and, in subsequent years, played a vital role in its continued existence; as a writer he published one of the most important early political works in the history of the country, *Native Life in South Africa* (1916), the first novel in English by a black South African, *Mhudi* (1930) and, posthumously, the only diary of the siege of Mafeking by a black participant (ed. John L. Comaroff, 1973; reissued 1984 as *The Siege of Mafeking*). In addition, he was a pioneer in linguistics and lexicography in this country.

In the early Days of Innocence, when things were in some ways easier, Plaatje did see a Shakespeare play:

> I had but a vague idea of Shakespeare until about 1896 when, at the age of 18, I was attracted by the Press remarks in the Kimberley paper and went to see *Hamlet* in the Kimberley Theatre. The performance made me curious to know more about Shakespeare and his works. Intelligence in Africa is still carried from mouth to mouth by means of conversation after working hours, and, reading a number of Shakespeare's works, I always had a fresh story to tell.

Then he *read* one:

> I first read *The Merchant of Venice*. The characters were so realistic that I

A Moment in the Past: William Tsikinya-Chaka

TIM COUZENS

In the first half of this century there was a strong demand for Shakespeare amongst blacks. A performance by the Diocesan Training College at Grace Dieu in Pietersburg of some scenes from *The Merchant of Venice* was so successful that the students themselves produced a simplified version of *Julius Caesar* soon afterwards. A reviewer in the newspaper *Umteteli wa Bantu*, while aware of some radical omissions, was full of praise: "To perform *Julius Caesar* and to leave out Mark Antony seems a contradiction in terms, and yet it is true to say that while the play was on he was hardly missed from the stage. The climax of the play arrived with the murder of Caesar at the Capitol, and this was particularly well staged." The performance of the plays, added the reviewer, "even in simplified form, can be of real educative value."[1]

The mission schools were keenly active in the teaching of Shakespeare. Dan Twala was at Lovedale in 1924 and remembers the syllabus contained *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, and *The Tempest*. "I used to boast being able to quote to the other students", said Twala. "Everybody thought he was great when he could quote a word or two from Shakespeare."[2] When King Edward Masinga became the very first black radio broadcaster in the Forties and was given at first five minutes, then fifteen, for his programme, he sometimes turned to drama:

> I translated Shakespeare when what was known as the Zulu programme was steadily growing and I tried to mimic the white broadcast as much as possible, and I tried to solidify my position as much as possible. I didn't like my masters to say, "Uh, well, you can go away now. This thing you have started here is not worth it", so I tried as much as possible to make it as good as theirs.

Extracts from the plays were reproduced on glass records but none seem to have survived.[3]

Opportunities to *see* a Shakespearean play were very rare, however. In the early 1930s, when Sybil Thorndike visited Johannesburg, special permission had to be obtained for black dramatist Herbert Dhlomo and a friend to attend one of her performances in the City Hall. Cut off from live performances, not allowed (until very recently) into public libraries, early writers laboured under extreme difficulties. But whites and white theatre also suffered. What, after all, would Shakespeare have been like without the majority of his audience?

Indeed, at a conference in Lesotho in 1973, Bernth Lindfors virtually advocated the scrapping of the Bard from African school syllabuses.[4] His suggestion, not surprisingly, was met with some dismay, but it is not without merit. It cannot be said that Shakespeare found his way into the hearts of the majority of black students. But there was a moment in the past where things might have been different.

One writer took his love for and contemplation of Shakespeare extraordinarily far. He had the insight, breadth of vision and stature to match his mentor, too. This was the remarkable Solomon Plaatje. Plaatje, born 1876, died in 1932, was a pioneer

Shakespeare in Southern Africa Vol. 2, 1988, 60-66

Plaatje, too, was born at a propitious time — 1876 — and in the right place. He was taught by German missionaries steeped in the two great writers of England and Germany, Shakespeare and Goethe. He found work in nearby Kimberley — the birth place of the industrial revolution in South Africa. In the siege of Mafeking he was swept up in Imperial war. Consequently he found himself early in his life an active player on the world's political stage.[7]

Just as Shakespeare's acting led him to write, so did Plaatje's profession draw him to his literary activity. Plaatje, before the Anglo-Boer War and during the siege, acted as an interpreter in the magistrate's court in Mafeking. It was a position which ideally required considerable skill, and which there were few people qualified to fill. Plaatje did so with distinction. His translations of Shakespeare, in a way a natural extension of interpreting, are regarded as amongst the best of written Setswana. (It still remains for a mother-tongue speaker to delineate the ins-and-outs of Plaatje's skill.)

It was not only in occupation that Nature showed her wisdom. There was also, for instance, the opportunity. The period between the founding of the ANC in 1912 and his final return to South Africa after two extended visits to England was one packed with activity for Plaatje — delegations, pamphlets, fund-raising, hundreds of speeches. But time was, in those days, slower, and he was compelled to make a number of long sea voyages. Relaxed in forced exile from centres of hurly-burly politics, this is when he liked to translate Shakespeare. In 1917 he sailed from Plymouth to the Cape on the "Galway Castle", the voyage taking twenty nine days rather than the usual seventeen because of war conditions. His translation of *Julius Caesar* was the happy result. *Othello* was begun on a voyage from Montreal to Cherbourg in 1922 and completed the following year on a further Southampton to Cape Town run. Whoever went on those long magical Union Castle voyages can ever forget them? Who would ever think nowadays of translating Shakespeare on a South African Airways cattle-truck in the sky?

The two writers had a great deal in common. Shakespeare was "a countryman through and through."[8] In play after play, there is the knowledge of ancient crafts, the smell of the forests, the sweat of the hunt. Plaatje, too, was a man of the country. He (rightly or wrongly) contrasted an English peasant's vocabulary of four hundred words with "the fecundity of terms and acuteness of idiom" possessed by the Setswana-speaking shepherd who used at least four thousand.[9] Plaatje's Setswana was rich soil for Shakespearean seed.

Both Shakespeare and Plaatje matured at the time of a great revolution — when oral culture was being largely transformed to a written one. Shakespeare's father, John Shakespeare, was not literate. Young Plaatje, too, had a skill which reversed the order of wisdom between the old and the young.

> During the first week of each month the native peasants of Bechuanaland, and elsewhere, used to look forward to [the arrival of the Setswana newspaper from Kuruman] as eagerly as the white up-country farmers now await the arrival of the daily papers. How little did the writer dream, when frequently called upon as a boy to read the news to groups of men sewing kerosses under the shady trees outside the cattle fold, that journalism would afterwards mean his bread and cheese.[10]

When he wrote down his remarkable family tree, dating back twenty generations and transmitted word-of-mouth to him by his grandmother and great-aunts, he was, he said, "the first to put memory to paper."[11] Both Plaatje and Shakespeare could draw on a deep well of sayings, riddles, proverbs, folk-tales, songs, and country lore. Shakespeare, wrote Q., "brought all this fairy-stuff up to London in his own head, packed with nursery legends of his native Warwickshire."[12] Plaatje did something similar. Rather than read some of the more recent, somewhat esoteric linguistic criticism of Shakespeare, we can fall back on the nineteenth century scholarship of the delightfully-named Rev T.F. Thiselton-

> was asked more than once to which of certain speculators, then operating around Kimberley, Shakespeare referred as Shylock.

He soon found that Shakespeare spoke to him in his everyday life in recognisable language:

> While reading *Cymbeline*, I met the girl who afterwards became my wife. I was not then as well acquainted with her language — the Xosa — as I am now; and although she had a better grip of mine — the Sechuana — I was doubtful whether I could make her understand my innermost feelings in it, so in coming to an understanding we both used the language of educated people — the language which Shakespeare wrote — which happened to be the only official language of our country at the time. Some of the daily epistles were rather lengthy, for I usually started with the bare intention of expressing the affections of my heart but generally finished up by completely unburdening my soul. For command of language and giving expression to abstract ideas, the success of my efforts was second only to that of my wife's, and it is easy to divine that Shakespeare's poems fed our thoughts.
>
> It may be depended upon that we both read *Romeo and Juliet*. My people resented the idea of my marrying a girl who spoke a language which, like the Hottentot language had clicks in it; while her people likewise abominated the idea of giving their daughter in marriage to a fellow who spoke a language so imperfect as to be without any clicks. But the civilized laws of Cape Colony saved us from a double tragedy in a cemetery, and our erstwhile objecting relatives have lived to award their benediction to the growth of our Chuana-M'Bo family which is bilingual both in the vernaculars and in European languages.

Almost at the same moment, then, his own dark Lady and Mr W.S. became life-long passions.

It was certainly no accident that Plaatje befriended Shakespeare: not only was it in the stars, it also had something to do with Tswana society.

> Besides being natural story-tellers, the Bechuana are good listeners, and legendary stories seldom fail to impress them. Thus, one morning, I visited the Chief's court at Mafeking and was asked for the name of 'the white man who spoke so well'. An educated Chieftain promptly replied for me; he said: William Tsikinya-Chaka (William Shake-the-Sword). The translation, though perhaps more free than literal, is happy in its way considering how many of Shakespeare's characters met their death. Tsikinya-Chaka became noted among some of my readers as a reliable white oracle.[5]

Shakespeare's works are the product of an extraordinary man, born at a particular time. A multitude of conjunctions, large and small, go to their making. Amongst the larger generalisations one can observe the death of feudalism and the beginnings of the rise of capitalism, religious ferment and monarchical splendour, the demise of feudal marriages and the pursuit of individual love, the growth of English nationalism and the beginnings of colonialism (in Ireland and America). There is, then, no reason to argue with A.L. Rowse's opinion: "These things — place and time — the very dates 1564-1616 — are significant: if he had been born twenty years earlier or later, his achievement would not have been what it was. The time would not have been ripe, or it would have been overripe, for him and his work as we have it. His career and his work, what he made of his opportunity and his providential good fortune, provide a signal example of the fruitful marriage of the right moment with the right man."[6]

Their intrigues and vicissitudes;
Away, where the air was clean,
And the morning dew
Made all things new;
Where nobody was by
Save Mhudi and I.

Speak not to me of the comforts of home,
Tell me of the Valleys where the antelopes roam;
Give me my hunting sticks and snares
In the gloaming of the wilderness;
Give back the palmy days of our early felicity
Away from the hurly-burly of your city,
And we'll be young again — aye:
Sweet Mhudi and I.

Above all, just as Shakespeare's women direct and control the comedies, so does Plaatje rest the hope for the future of his country on the fine shoulders and upright back of his heroine, representative of the rich loam of African womanhood.

Again, sadly, the time was not ripe. *Mhudi* was completed by August 1920, but was not published for ten years — a short stretch before Plaatje's death. Had his epic novel been recognised earlier, would he not have completed more? Had his translations been published immediately (he made desperate efforts to finance them), would he not have done Setswana an immortal service? Should he not have been given enough money for a world cruise with the only proviso that he come back with a translation of the *Complete Works of William Tsikinya-Chaka*?

Probably it was only Plaatje who could have done so. He was the right man in the right place at the right time. He owed Shakespeare a great deal. He would have been too modest to say it himself but Shakespeare owes him, too. By extending Shakespeare into another language and into new literary forms he was enriching Shakespeare in the process. The moment of Plaatje was a moment in the past. Probably it will never come again. But if it does let us hope that we are ready for it.

NOTES

1. *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 20 December, 1930.
2. Interview with D.R. Twala, Dube, Soweto, 26 July 1979.
3. Interview with K.E. Masinga, Umlazi, KwaZulu, 7 January 1975.
4. See B. Lindfors, "Why not African Literature?", *Teaching English in African Schools: Four Lectures* (Johannesburg: The English Academy of Southern Africa, 1973) 45-62.
5. All the quotations are from [S. Plaatje], "A South African's Homage", *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare* (London: Oxford University Press, 1916) 336-339: reproduced in "Plaatje Centenary Issue", *English in Africa* 3.2 (1976) 7-8.
6. A.L. Rowse, *William Shakespeare: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1963) 1.
7. For a fuller discussion of some of the following, see Brian Willan's magnificent biography, *Sol Plaatje* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984).
8. A.L. Rowse, op. cit., 52.
9. S. Plaatje, *Sechuana Proverbs with Literal Translations and their European Equivalents* (London : Kegan Paul, 1916) 6.
10. *Ibid.*, 4.
11. Unpublished Ms., School of Oriental and African Studies, London University.
12. 'Q', [Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch], Introduction to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press, 1924) xiv.

Dyer, M.A. Oxon., and his substantially researched *Folk-Lore of Shakespeare* (1883) to provide us with comparative data to match the folk-lore of Plaatje (as well as his relative-by-marriage, S.M. Molema, in his book *The Bantu: Past and Present* [1920]). Witches, natural phenomena, heavenly bodies, birds, animals, plants, folk medicine, birth, marriage, death, sports, punishments, superstitions, proverbs — while obviously not one-to-one equivalents — give both writers their richness and freshness.

Sadly, in one respect, the time was out of joint. Plaatje's Setswana translations were problem plays in that nobody would publish them. He was ahead of his time. Only in 1930 did *Diphosho-phosho* (*The Comedy of Errors*, or, more literally, *Mistakes-mistakes*) get printed. And *Julius Caesar* was published by the University of the Witwatersrand after his death. He also translated *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and at least part of *Romeo and Juliet*. Because his writing was not recognised while living, because it was largely forgotten after his death, only very minor fragments of these translations survive. Their loss is part of the South African tragedy.

Over and above his obvious love for and identification with Shakespeare, Plaatje had another purpose in translating his works. He aimed to show that Setswana was a language subtle enough to cope with the greatest of writers and quite capable of taking its own place on the world's stage. Human problems, too, were universal.

> Hath not a Mochuana eyes?
> Hath he not hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions??
> Is not a Mochuana fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter, as a whiteman is??
> If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge? If we are like in the rest we will resemble you in that.[13]

Plaatje's tribute to Shakespeare did not stop at translations, however. In a fine essay, Professor Stephen Gray has indicated the influence of Shakespeare (and Bunyan) on Plaatje's *Mhudi*.[14] There is then no need to go into detail here about Plaatje's use of Shakespeare's world view, chronicle-histories, dramatic techniques and imagery. We can confine ourselves to one or two aspects of general tone and structure.

Without any personal political ambition Shakespeare was a deeply political writer. In numerous plays he entered imaginatively into the existence of monarchs and their courtiers, foregrounding their virtues and their vices. By so doing, he showed himself to be at least their equal. The same held for Plaatje. In *Mhudi* he portrayed the world of the Tsidi Barolong under their chief Tauana, peaceful but vulnerable; of the Koranna under the treacherous Ton-Qon; of the fearsome Ndebele under the potentially tragic Mzilikazi; of the Boers, excessively intolerant; of the Seleka Barolong under their Solomonic chief Moroka. In the years between Plaatje's birth (1876) and death (1932), considerable changes had occurred in the power and authority of the chiefs in southern Africa. The more "progressive" chiefs were represented at the founding of the ANC in 1912 but it was a new kind of leadership that was evolving — the kind represented by Plaatje himself, educated, flexible, intelligent, chosen by nature and the people. One of the main themes of *Mhudi* is the apprenticeship of leaders, the training of Prince Hal.

It was no accident, too, that Plaatje translated at least two of the comedies. An essay is long overdue on Plaatje's humour, the gentle nature of which bespeaks a broad humanity. Plaatje's heart, like Shakespeare's, was in the countryside with its regenerative qualities — whether couth or agrestic — and the songs in *Mhudi* have the touch of Arden Forest.

> I long for the solitude of the wood,
> Far away from the quarrels of men,

Upgrading the Study of Shakespeare in Southern African Secondary Schools : An Interim Report on the Schools' Text Project

ANDRÉ LEMMER

In August 1987 I embarked on the Shakespeare Schools' Text Project under the auspices of the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa and the Institute for the Study of English in Africa at Rhodes University. The research is funded by a generous grant from the Chairman's Fund of the Anglo American Corporation, to which I am greatly indebted.

This report cannot attempt to provide a synopsis of the research project in its entirety, as the original research report is too bulky a document for comprehensive précis in the space available. It would also be tediously repetitive to provide here a complete and chronological description of the visits, interviews, pilot surveys, questionnaires, case-study work, work-shops for developing and testing materials, editorial decisions and procedures, details of which have already been supplied in the full report (to be published by SSOSA and ISEA); so I propose instead to focus on some of my findings, followed by a summary of the case for and against Shakespeare in the southern African school and my own conclusions and recommendations.

Shakespeare for whom? — Syllabuses

Shakespeare is clearly a vast enterprise in the schools of South Africa. He is the only author specified by name in National core and Departmental "ethnic" syllabuses. In the National core syllabus for English higher grade, under the minimum requirements for prescribed work, "a play by Shakespeare" is listed as the drama option for both standard 8 and standard 9 and as a compulsory work for standard 10. Clearly, it is intended that at this level the study of Shakespeare should become increasingly "literary" and "academic". For example, in the CED (Cape Education Department) senior secondary syllabus under the section on reading and literature study, we are informed that:

> While consideration should continue to be given to dramatic presentation and audience participation, the study of plays based on their literary merit should become an increasingly important aspect of drama in Standard 8, 9 and 10.
>
> The emphasis should be on full-length plays, particularly Shakespearean, although extracts may be considered desirable to bring pupils into contact with a wide range of material. Whenever possible, pupils should see worthwhile stage productions. Suitable films and recorded material should be used where appropriate. (p.20)

Under the heading "Prescribed Work", "a play by Shakespeare" is specified as one of the "four works that must be studied and examined" for standard 10.

While the specification that a Shakespeare play must be one of the prescriptions for DET (Department of Education and Training) schools has been removed from the new ESL syllabus, it seems clear that the drama option for standard 10 will remain a Shakespeare play. In the CED prescription choices, too, Shakespeare remains firmly ensconced: for example, in the list for 1989, Shakespeare options are specified at three levels — for

13. Page from an unpublished Plaatje notebook (reproduced in "Plaatje Centenary Issue", *English in Africa* 3.2 (1976) 7).
14. "Sources of the First Black South African Novel", *Munger Africana Library Notes* 37 (1976). For a discussion of some epical and biblical influences on Plaatje, see Tim Couzens, "Sol. T. Plaatje and the First South African Epic", *English in Africa* 14.1 (1987) 41-65.
15. S. Plaatje, *Mhudi* (London: Heinemann, 1978) 71.

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