JOURNAL of CREATIVE INQUIRY

# Tennessee Tech's new GRAND CHALLENGE

# RURAL RE-IMAGINED

Volume 4
2019-2020

JCI Press
Office of Creative Inquiry and Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Volpe Library, Rm 117
Tennessee Technological University
Cookeville, TN 38505

Designer: Amy Hill and Edward C. Lisic
Cover Art: Amy Hill and Edward C. Lisic
Manuscript Editor: Emily E. Rush and Edward C. Lisic

Copyright 2020 JCI Press. All rights reserved.

Reproduction or translation of any part of this work beyond that permitted by section 107 or 108 of the United States Copyright Act without the permission of the copyright owner is unlawful. The copyright of each article is held by the author. Requests for permission or further information should be addressed to the operations department of JCI.

ISSN 2575-6095

Printed in the United States of America

Creative Inquiry:

The process of exploring issues, objects, or works through the collection and analysis of evidence including combining or synthesizing existing ideas, products, or expertise in original ways to answer an open-ended question or achieve a desired goal.

# JCI STAFF


## Editorial Staff

Edward Lisic, *Editor-in-Chief*

Emily Rush, *Assistant Editor*

## Editorial Board

Jeremy Blair, *Art Education*

Scott Christen, *Communication*

Kristen Deiter, *English*

Steven Seiler, *Sociology*

Lenly Weathers, *Civil & Environmental Engineering*

## System Administrator

Sharon Holderman, *Volpe Library*

# EDITORIAL

This issue finds a report by Kinsey potter on TTU's new Grand Challenge which has been named "Rural Re-imagined". The history behind the Grand Challenge started with suggestions that were made to the Strategic Plan committee who placed a "grand challenge" in the initial Strategic Plan document, in strategic Goal #1 : Education For Life. I was asked by President Oldham to chair this particular implementation working group, and we developed the first white paper document outlining my group's interpretation of a rural grand challenge as President Oldham had asked. We envisioned it as "Improving the quality of life" of residents of rural Tennessee. I look at the Grand Challenge as a vehicle for moving students forward in a large creative inquiry project that will benefit the lives of many people. Kinsey Potter started as an undergraduate and is now a graduate student here at TTU, and has been one of our student driving forces in this endeavor. Please enjoy her article!

*Edward C. Lisic*

# Journal of Creative Inquiry

---

## Editorial

## Professional Communications

*Kinsey B. Potter* 1

Reimagining Rural: How Generation R students are Redefining Rural at Tennessee Tech University

## English

Rebecca Ann Franey 9

Making the Way to Marriage: Language and Love in Shakespeare's Plays

## English

Kathryn Elise Porterfield 22

A Moral Interpretation of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

## English

Kathryn Elise Porterfield 30

Feminism in the Works of Anne Bradstreet and Margaret Fuller

## English

Ian Grant McLean 36

Gender in Flux: Transvestism and Gender Roles in *The Merchant of Venice* and "Venus and Adonis"

English

By Abbigail Jackson 44

Victims of Gender Politics: A Comparison of Jane Shore in *The Second Part of King Edward IV* and Margaret Thatcher n

English

By Jensen Lyons-Sabados 53

It is holy ground where the shadows fall": An Analysis of Light and Dark Imagery in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" and House of the Seven Gables

English

By Linda Mae Stegall 62

Secrets Revealed: Freud and Families in *Jane Eyre*

# Reimagining Rural: How Generation R students are Redefining Rural at Tennessee Tech University

By Kinsey Potter

## Origin of the Grand Challenge at Tennessee Technological University

In March 2019, Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, TN announced its new initiative, the Grand Challenge: Rural Reimagined, which harnesses science, technology, and innovation to transform rural living. Since Grand Challenges are usually important problems set by universities like Tennessee Tech to encourage involvement in using resources to solve the problem, the fact that TN Tech is surrounded by nine of the distressed rural counties in the Upper Cumberland made the Grand Challenge of Rural Reimagined a greatly needed initiative. Many distressed, rural communities face problems with needs such as fresh water, accessible fresh produce, accessible medical care, opioid crisis, and access to STEM education. Our university hopes that Rural Reimagined can make an impact to improve rural living in regards to these problems through the assets and resources that we have to offer our surrounding communities. According to Tennessee Tech, our Grand Challenge will develop and support "the success of rural areas throughout Tennessee in a way that can be replicated to help rural areas throughout the country and the world" ("Grand Challenge: Rural Reimagined").

As a senior student studying Professional & Technical Communications at the beginning of the initiative in 2019, I was ecstatic when the Director of TN Tech's Center for Rural Innovation and Chair of the Grand Challenge Committee, Michael Aikens, offered me an internship within the Grand Challenge. My internship duties included reaching out to faculty, staff, and the community about the Grand Challenge through various communication strategies in hopes of getting them involved. The goal of the Grand Challenge was and continues to be to combine the assets and leverages of all students, staff, and faculty at the university to solve problems in rural communities, and I was so excited to communicate this mission in hopes of truly implementing it across all departments and fields of study at our university.

Kinsey Potter, Grand Challenge Graduate Assistant

When I accepted the internship position soon after the announcement of the Grand Challenge, I was immediately integrated into the family of Rural Reimagined. I began attending the committee meetings, taking notes, and meeting with the community. The Grand Challenge committee consists of 15 faculty, staff, and administrators from many different departments, including the Fine Arts, Chemistry, Biology, Exercise Science, and Communications departments. I acted as both the Grand Challenge intern and the student representative for the committee, and I was thankful for the opportunity to connect with faculty and staff across campus. Throughout the summer, in addition to attending committee meetings and assisting in the planning process for implementing Rural Reimagined into our

campus, I met with Grand Challenge partners in the community and wrote narratives that would both publicize them as well as Rural Reimagined itself. Grand Challenge "partners" range from chambers of commerce to local, rural businesses who become involved with the Grand Challenge to leverage our assets of student interns, public relations, marketing, and grant assistance.

When the fall semester came around, the committee realized that because the initiative was new and originated within higher administration, students were not yet completely aware of Rural Reimagined's opportunities. Although students were getting involved through classwork and capstone courses, the opportunity for individual opportunity was not easily available. Michael and I brainstormed ideas to gain student involvement, such as setting up a Rural Reimagined booth at the "Dancin' on Dixie" event for freshmen at the beginning of the school semester. However, many students around campus were still unaware of the initiative and the opportunities that it could provide them with academic service hours, internships, and paid student worker positions. Upon this realization, I had the idea that the best way to involve students, therefore, would be to create a student organization. Thus, the Rural Reimagined Student Club was born.

I implemented the Rural Reimagined Club with the purpose of involving students of all majors to combine diverse skill sets and solve rural problems through service projects directly correlated through Rural Reimagined. The club would not only be an easily available gateway into being involved with Rural Reimagined, but it would also offer students resources to create and implement their own ideas towards solving rural problems, provide opportunities for service hours, and act as a potential highlight on their professional curriculum vitaes. After proposing the idea to the Grand Challenge committee, I presented a proposal to both the Student Affairs committee and the Administrative council. All three groups were enthusiastic about the club and its purpose, and after the constitution was written I could officially schedule a club meeting.

2020 Club Shirt Designed by Bailey Hooper, Club Member (*CustomInk LLC.)*

The first meeting in November, 2019 only saw about five interested students, but through communication strategies in the form of Tech Times Blogs and advertisement, the second meeting in December 2019 saw over 20 student members. I was ecstatic about the quick turnaround. The students ranged from nearly all nine colleges, including students from computer engineering, nursing, marketing, agriculture, business, human resources, chemical engineering, and communications. Before the start of winter break, the club members decided to meet once a month to go over updates, decide on service projects, and discuss the success of those projects. Our initial goal was to have one large service project per semester, but if there were to ever be multiple ideas we would divide and conquer multiple projects. In the first meeting after the break, there were over 30 student members, including members from partnering clubs such as iCare Nursing Club and the Remote Medical Area host group. For Spring 2020, Rural Reimagined club is working on

a service project to bring teachers back to rural communities to teach through public service announcements and community involvement with prospective
Tech students. Additionally, club members are inviting other students, proposing ideas to advertise the club, and truly finding their voice in Rural Reimagined - the future for the club itself, is bright indeed.

Rural Reimagined Club, December 2019

In addition to the growth of the club, the Grand Challenge: Rural Reimagined is growing exponentially, and it has already involved more than 50 faculty, 50 projects, and 1,000 students! Projects, faculty, and students range from departments and research ideas across campus. Dr. Bill Eberle, a professor in Computer Science, instructed his computer science capstone students to create a software product that could help students in rural communities. The students created apps for finding local produce and other great ideas and presented their prototypes at the end of Fall, 2019! Dr. Jeff Boles incorporated Rural Reimagined into his University Connections classes for biology students through instructing them on creating projects that could solve biological rural problems in surrounding communities. Communications students became involved with Rural Reimagined through Instructor Gina Padgett, in which they researched prominent problems that those in distressed counties face and presented persuasive speeches on the problems and suggestions to serve. Implementing Rural Reimagined into coursework not only provides students the opportunity to use their skills to brainstorm real problems right outside their doors, but it also creates the realization that every field has a place in solving rural problems. In addition to individual courses implementing Rural Reimagined, centers like the Center for Rural Innovation's EagleWorks competitions hold challenges for students to compete in creating ideas, prototypes, and research to solve a problem. The winning team of a recent EagleWorks challenge won the Rural Reimagined award of $500 for their research in developing a device that detects troponin levels before a heart attack for those in rural areas with
longer ambulance waits. The students will use the money to continue their research, and I see a true possibility that research such as theirs can someday make a tremendous impact on rural living.

Ultimately, students and faculty are already becoming involved with Rural Reimagined, and I view the Rural Reimagined Club as another step on the journey of serving rural areas through the Grand Challenge initiative. I am now pursuing my Masters degree as the graduate assistant for the Grand Challenge, and I am so excited to continue to see the student club grow. I am confident that its student involvement will spark passion about the Grand Challenge and serving rural communities campus-wide, and I can't wait to see what Rural Reimagined has in store for the community and our university alike. One of the most rewarding things about the club so far are its students and their passion for serving rural communities, and personal interviews with some of the club's original members are offered below.

**Rural Reimagined Club Members**

*Kester Nucum*

Kester is a freshman studying computer engineering and minoring in music, and he is the 2020 Vice President of the Rural Reimagined Club. Kester is from Paris, Tennessee, which he states "is a town of about 10,000 people located in a fairly rural, agrarian county." He states, "I decided to become a Golden Eagle because I knew from the moment I lived on campus for a week at Boys' State that this is where I would live for the next four years. I instantly fell in love with the small campus, the friendly atmosphere, the exceptional engineering and music programs, and the amazing faculty and student population. At the beginning of my senior year of high school, Tech had already captured my heart—I just knew Tech was where I had to be!" Kester is in the Honors Engagement Fellowship at Tech, and he is currently working on a research and civic engagement project examining the possible trends behind the low number of engineering students coming out of rural communities versus non-rural communities. When not working on research, Kester says, "I love to be very involved in whatever I am passionate about, whether it be making music, serving others, or growing deeper in my faith." Having played the violin for ten years, Kester is now the principal chair of the second violins section in the University Orchestra. He is also very involved as a leader in the TTU Catholic Campus ministry and a Career Ambassador for the Center for Career Development.

Kester states that he decided to join the Rural Reimagined Club as an officer as well as a student representative position on the Grand Challenge committee because, in his words, "I believe that it is my duty to use my God-given talents and abilities to serve others." He states, "I am very honored to be able to help the Rural Reimagined initiative through these positions, and I am very excited to see where the Grand Challenge will take off throughout my next four years (well, three-and-a-half) years at Tech!" Besides his passion for serving others, Kester also became interested in Rural Reimagined through his rural research in the fellowship program. He says, "After learning more about the problems that rural communities around the nation face as well as seeing an advertisement in the Tech Times about the Rural Reimagined Club, I knew I had to join." Kester believes that joining the club has not only helped him with his research and civic engagement project, but that it has also allowed him to serve the university and rural communities around Tech. He states, "Rural Reimagined Club is a great way to unite students across all majors and concentrations to come together and help these communities in need, through chapter-wide service projects, civic engagement, encouragement of individual research projects, you name it!"

Kester continues to shine as the Vice President for the club while conducting rural research and staying involved with multiple outlets at the university. His current goals consist of completing his Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science with a minor in music, and after graduating he plans on entering graduate school to pursue further research. He wants to earn a Master's Degree and a

Ph.D in engineering. Kester states, "As a freshman, my professional plans after college do seem like a distance away to think about. However, I know that I want to use my career and my platform to serve others. I hope that I could develop computer engineering and other technological solutions that could improve the lives of those in need, including those in rural communities. In addition, the more I delve deeper into rural engineering education, the more I think I may want to become a college professor to help inspire the next generation of engineers." Kester's biggest dream is to travel around the world and experience new cultures, stepping foot onto all six inhabited continents! Wings up, Kester!

*Courtney Savage*

Courtney is a biology graduate from TN Tech currently pursuing her second bachelor's degree in the Upper Division Nursing Program. She is from Livingston, TN, just a short 30 minutes away from the university. When not studying or focusing on academic goals, Courtney loves to read and spend time with her youngest siblings. According to Courtney, "My family is the most important thing to me."

In regards to rural reimagined, Courtney says, "I joined the Rural Reimagined Club in order to experience the I&E environment on campus at a higher degree." As the president of a partnering social entrepreneurship student organization, iCARE, Courtney wanted to link both organizations in hopes of collaborating on future projects and connecting missions. She states, "This collaboration would allow us to make a larger impact on our community." Courtney has even brought along other iCARE students to club meetings, and the Rural Reimagined Club is excited and thankful for the opportunity to partner as organizations.

In addition to her goal of helping surrounding rural communities, Courtney plans on working as a labor and delivery nurse at a local hospital after graduating with her BSN in December 2020. She wants to earn a doctorate degree in medicine in hopes of providing patient care and teaching future nurses. Courtney says, "I hope to impact our community by providing care to our residents. Since I have lived and will continue to live among this population, I plan to use this experience to find ways that I could improve patient care." Wings up, Courtney!

*Dawson Davidson*

Dawson is from Cookeville, Tennessee, and he is currently studying Agribusiness management. He feels lucky to have a good school like Tennessee Tech in his "backyard," as he loves and enjoys Cookeville. Dawson is a four-time National American Poultry Association Title Holder, which he has won through showing his chickens! As Dawson states, "showing chickens is a lot like showing a dog, but with feathers instead of fur." When not working with his chickens and winning national competitions, Dawson enjoys working on major television broadcasts and shows like PBS and CBS, chairing the Putnam County Junior Fair Board for four years, and hosting workshops to the public on agriculture advocacy to inform people on "How to get your Bird Show Ready."

Dawson decided to join the Rural Reimagined club for two main reasons. He states that he is “very passionate about agriculture, especially when it comes to informing or benefiting the public. One awesome aspect of this club is that it's not just for Agriculture majors, it's open to everyone. Coming from working on the fair board, I understand the process of hard work, and it makes life a lot easier if you have a team comprised of many different talents, instead of them all coming from the same pool.” In addition to joining the club because of its diverse student involvement, Dawson also joined because he wanted to bring something different to the table. He said that once he heard about the club’s mission to serve rural communities, he knew he needed to be involved. “I am not your typical AG major; I like to break the typical stereotype we are usually connotated with,” and he wanted to offer his own experience and talent to the club. Dawson believes that “rural communities are the backbone of our country and their representation matters in the future of today's agricultural society.” He hopes to “reach not only Tennessee but the whole country through my message of Agriculture Advocacy,” and he hopes that he can “touch the nation” through his love for agriculture, spreading appreciation and awareness for, as he says, “the practice that has made America what it is today.”

Dawson continues to be a large part of the club, and he is excited to work on the Education service project while bringing agriculture assets to the table. Beyond his goals to serve rural, he also has many other goals before leaving Tennessee Tech! Dawson would like to have his own television show based on Agriculture and Lifestyle, similar to Martha Stewart Living. He says that he also wants to further develop his product the Cackle Box, “allowing it to reach children involved in exhibition poultry, and creating a brand for myself that could turn into a major career opportunity.” Dawson believes that through dreaming big and working hard, anything is possible. Wings up, Dawson!

**Ongoing Project: Bringing Teachers Back to Rural Communities**

With students containing passion for rural and ideas in abundance such as the members mentioned above, the Rural Reimagined Club is already heading in the right direction with new ideas for serving rural communities. Within the short time period since the Rural Reimagined club was implemented in October 2019, it has already reached 37 members and has gained the attention of the university. The club is currently working on an ongoing project to bring teachers back to rural communities through Tennessee Tech, and the service project stands as the first ever Rural Reimagined Club project.

Soon after the club had its first meeting, Dr. Julie Baker, the associate dean of TN Tech’s education department, contacted me about the idea for the Education Project. She shared with me that currently, the retention rate of teachers staying within rural communities to teach is very low, and the number of students studying to teach primary and secondary schools is decreasing. According to the TN Educational Equity Coalition, “rural schools are uniquely affected by teacher shortages”

due to their geographic location, lower pay, and lack of incentives to offer incoming teachers (25-27).

Additionally, of the 15 school districts in the rural Upper Cumberland that responded to the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, 10 districts started the 2019 school year with unfilled teaching positions, and 630 unfilled teaching positions were reported throughout Tennessee in the 2019-2020 school year (1). Dr. Baker shared her data, as mentioned above, with me and suggested that the club could create a public service announcement that would inspire students to become teachers. I thought the idea was brilliant, and it could include all members to share their own experiences of impacts their teachers had made prior to college that led them to where they are today. Dr. Baker became a guest speaker for the Rural Reimagined club in Spring 2020 to share her inspiration for the idea, and she is continuing to provide her support in serving rural education through sharing her time, resources, and feedback to our members.

The service project is ongoing and shines as the club's first official service project. Members of the club will visit radio shows to present stories of teachers that changed their lives, urging pre-college students to study education and make a difference in their rural communities. The students will also create videos of heart-warming stories of how teachers do change lives, research statistical data on the shortage of teachers in rural communities, and provide suggestions to serve through teaching in the rural communities readers grew up in. Additionally, many club members wish to visit their rural communities and pass on the message of serving as teachers personally. I see the potential of this specific service project to become an ongoing service project for the club throughout the years to come, and I am excited to see projects in the future that the club will create as it continues to grow and new members with similar passions to the current members join in serving rural communities. The future is bright for Rural Reimagined, and I hope that the students' passions will not only create positive results in communities, but that they will also spark inspiration in surrounding areas, universities, and rural communities.

**Suggestion to Serve**

Our current service project and member growth represent just a small sampling of the initiatives that the Rural Reimagined Club would like to create and implement in the upcoming future. We are continuing to grow within our campus and communities through service project ideas and new involvement, and we want to invite faculty, students, and the community to serve with us. Find out the rural needs of your community and brainstorm ideas for ways that you can impact them. Needs could range from healthcare education to the need for freshwater, and it can be surprising what just one idea can do to spark involvement and change. As Margaret Mead states, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has," and we urge you to change the world with us. If you have any service ideas or would like to become involved with the club, we want to hear from you. For more information, please visit our page at https://www.tntech.edu/grand-challenge/ or email me at kbpotter42@students.tntech.edu.

# Works Cited

"Casting Our Vision: The Lay of the Land, A Closer Look at Rural Tennessee Schools." *TN Educational Equity Coalition,* 2015. Accessed 29 February, 2020. http://tnedequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/TEEC_ruralEd-Report-f.pdf

"Grand Challenge: Rural Reimagined." *Tennessee Tech.* Accessed 1 March, 2020. https://www.tntech.edu/grand-challenge/index.php

"Tennessee Teacher Shortage Survey Data." *Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents.* 20 November, 2019.

# Making the Way to Marriage: Language and Love in Shakespeare's Plays

By Rebecca Ann Franey

The language in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* turns love into a passion and a game through opposing sentiments of adoration and cynicism between Romeo and Juliet and Beatrice and Benedict, while differing dictions show opposing interpretations of courtship practices. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo and Juliet's youthfulness and intensity highlight their immature yet adoring dialogue; however, the social challenges they face are detrimental because they physically affect Romeo and Juliet's ability to be together, and Romeo and Juliet respond emotionally rather than reasonably, which leads to death at the hand of their own urgency and secrecy. The word choice of Beatrice and Benedict in *Much Ado About Nothing* creates an inverse reaction, where negative interactions precede a successful courtship because their maturity allows them to overcome their fears and realize the theoretical idea of marriage through the open involvement of their friends. Each couple employs various literary devices in their language to add new interpretations to meanings of words while progressing through the stages of courtship, showing their love in contrasting ways.

*Romeo and Juliet* is well known among archetypal stories of ill-fated lovers, but Shakespeare presents his lovers within a context of youthful ignorance and intense emotions made more evident through their use of metaphors during their first interaction that shows disregard for societal practices. Juliet, not yet fourteen and having not thought about marriage before, is suddenly thrust into the idea by her parents to "think of marriage now" (Shakespeare, *Rom.* 1.3.71). After the talk of marriage, her first interaction with a man is with Romeo, where their first conversation is a shared sonnet. Their ability to connect through language as strangers is possible by relating religious sentiments with their emotional desires of love. The sonnet

"lends words the power of prayer" (Greenblatt, Headnote to *Rom.* 959) through religious metaphors that present Romeo as the devout believer taking a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Juliet as an idol, playing with the idea of a Petrarchan lover. Within this conversation, their emotions overshadow the reality of what their words imply. The Elizabethan Anglican Church held that the worship of such images [of saints] was blasphemy; […] therefore, Romeo's description of his love could sound like idolatry (Shakespeare 983n7). Romeo's idolatrous implications mimic a perfidious act against religion, which transposes to his fickle relationship with women because his interaction with Juliet occurs on the same day that he weeps with courtly love for Rosaline. Although Romeo and Juliet's love displays intense emotions, the reality of their words is concerning. They disregard societal practices and etiquette by seriously offending the church and create a love based on frivolous attraction and a desire to be married.

Juliet continues the disregard for societal practices by deconstructing the meanings of family names, established by social interactions, to instead lend emotions as creators of the defining terms. In Act 2, scene 1, Juliet's monologue reveals her understanding that loving Romeo is forbidden due to their family names. Her language first constructs the family names of Montague and Capulet as synecdoches, so the names represent the feud and families as a whole:

> What's in a name? That which we call a rose
> By any other word would smell as sweet;
> So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
> Retain that dear perfection which he owes
> Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
> And, for thy name, which is no part of thee,
> Take all myself. (Shakespeare 2.1.85-91)

Juliet declares family names as arbitrary representations of a person by comparing a rose's qualities as indifferent to its name. Words are social constructions, communal creations that are neither complete unto themselves nor empty and hence malleable by individuals (Greenblatt Headnote to *Rom.* 961). Juliet wishes to reconstruct Romeo's name based on their intimate interaction and not the families' fights in the street, allowing the young couple freedom from the societal construction and preservation of their families' hatred. Romeo responds to Juliet's intimate request, "Call me but 'love,' and I'll be new baptized" (Shakespeare 2.1.93). The flowery language of Romeo and Juliet is set against the feuding interactions of their families, so by disregarding their negative connotative names for new, emotional definitions, Romeo and Juliet create a new circle of interaction. They become disillusioned with reality after "doffing" the language set up by the physical world for the emotional, which simultaneously sets up a lack of communication and secrecy against the families.

Romeo and Juliet's marriage is clandestine and designed through secret vows. By the seventeenth century many couples did not follow formal ways of announcing a marriage, but it remained binding nonetheless because "marriage was transacted between husband and wife…through vows and sexual consummation" (Dolan 622). Juliet's response to Romeo when they profess their love in the balcony scene is a representation of her vows, since the audience does not witness their marriage:

> If that thy bent of love be honorable,
>
> Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,
>
> By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
>
> Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite,
>
> And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,

And follow thee, my lord, throughout the world. (Shakespeare 2.1.185-90)

Juliet professes her love and demonstrates her eagerness to be a loyal wife by providing a plan to procure their marriage. As part of marriage practices, a messenger or broker played a role to connect two individuals in marriage. Juliet sends the Nurse as a messenger who becomes privy to the marriage plan and aides in the intention of secrecy by preventing the public from seeing Romeo and Juliet together. The Nurse's occupation as a servant permits her to have "a characteristic feature of more peasant societies strictly concerned with the initiation of marriage rather than with the more general conduct of courtship" (O'Hara 101). The Nurse does not broadcast their marriage intention, which is a crucial step in courtship practice for moral implications, but supports the ruse of secrecy, allowing Romeo and Juliet to marry without objections with the help of Friar Lawrence. The Nurse and Friar Lawrence act as go-betweens that were "considered to be the very voice of his [or her] sender, whose words carried the presumption of consent to any proposals he [or she] delivered" (Cook 109). Through the presumption of consent, the Nurse mistakes Romeo's "protest" with "propose" (Shakespeare 2.3.108), which prompts Romeo to quickly respond "Bid her devise some means to come to shrift this afternoon, / And there she shall, At Friar Lawrence's cell, / Be shrived and married" (Shakespeare 2.3.164-6). Romeo speaks instructionally, and his timeliness shows the same urgency as Juliet's vows, while using religious practice as an excuse to meet, which is reminiscent of the religious metaphor that covered their first lovely encounter.

After Tybalt's death, which rekindles hatred towards the Montagues, Juliet must play the role of supporting daughter in the guise of grief and anger towards Romeo for her cousin's death and her love despite his actions. Her use of a double entendre indirectly expresses her love for Romeo while sharing her family's anger:

Oh, how my heart abhors

To hear him named, and cannot come to him –

To wreak the love I bore my cousin

Upon his body that hath slaughtered him. (Shakespeare 3.5.99-102)

To her mother, Juliet's language is full of vengeance within the context of a murdered cousin. Capulet's wife believes Juliet's anger towards Tybalt's murderer is equivalent to the love she felt for her cousin; however, Juliet also grieves for her husband, which permits her to secretly confess her relationship with Romeo. Juliet uses a double entendre for fear of her parents' protests against the marriage and being disowned by her family. Her immaturity and ignorance of marriage legality spawns her unnecessary secrecy because "couples who had married themselves might be brought before a church court for their 'irregularity' and punished for their misconduct by excommunication, penance, or a fee" (Dolan 622), but as a young girl who only hears of marriage as arranged by the parents, Juliet was oblivious to the parent's limited power over annulments. The marriage could only be dissolved in specific circumstances and, during the Elizabethan age, it would be the non-consent of a parent for a minor at the time of the announcement; however, there was little to be done after the marriage, like in Juliet's case, except for disownment. Possible divorce from one's family carries special weight in a tragedy where house and name bear so much significance (Cook 101). So Juliet retains the secret out of fear of her family's reaction and also for social self-preservation.

Romeo and Juliet's love indirectly causes their deaths because it spurred their youthful intensity and urgency to experience their emotions together, which is evident through their death soliloquies. In Romeo's death soliloquy, he kills himself due to the realization that his love is now futile since Juliet is dead, but only to experience the same feeling of death, not due to a

belief in the afterlife. Romeo says "Here, here will I remain / With worms that are thy chambermaids; oh, here / Will I set up my everlasting rest" (Shakespeare 5.3.108-10). He intends to experience the same process of decay and remain in the same tomb as a representation of his commitment to Juliet, but does not mention the ability to behold Juliet again in a spiritual sense. Romeo "emphasizes only his material, corporeal fate: he repeats three times in the space of two lines that he will remain 'here'" (Targoff 33). He also emphasizes the physical action of decay by worms as death's presence in the physical world. Romeo's quick conclusion of death after seeing Juliet's body showcases his intense distress over his lover's death in the most extreme way. As a young person in love, Juliet also wishes for death after seeing Romeo's body, the poison, and his lips and dictates, "Haply some poison yet doth hang on them / To make me die with a restorative" (Shakespeare 5.3.165-6). Juliet seeks the poison that will act as "restitution" or "repayment" ("Restorative") to imitate Romeo's suicide, which aligns their identical displays of commitment. When the poison fails, Juliet commands the dagger to "…there rust and let me die" (Shakespeare 5.3.170), reflecting the idea of witnessing physical decay in the material world after death. Romeo and Juliet's love causes their deaths, but they will not go so far as to hope for a reconnection in the afterlife based on their literal interpretations of decay. The lovers' intense, emotional reactions to death create continuity in their language compared to the beginning of the play. The couple still physically commits themselves to each other using an action that is damnable in the church's view and ignores the religious belief of life after death, which demonstrates their private circle of interaction that is exempt from religious or social influence. Expression with serious, intimate language is the ultimate display of love to Romeo and Juliet. "The intensity of the young lovers matches the intensity of the play itself, a play that is singularly obsessed with the pressure of time, with the urgency of the moment" (Targoff 35) through the

emotions of children from feuding families who have society set against them and their only respite is in creating a furtive marriage. A quick path to love is followed by a quick marriage and a quick death.

Conversely, *Much Ado About Nothing* creates a contrasting couple to Romeo and Juliet in Beatrice and Benedict, who interact through sharp wit and cynicism, but slowly come to a marriage at the wishes and involvement of their friends. The majority of prose language contrasts with *Romeo and Juliet* because *Romeo and Juliet* "shares… the preoccupations with social pressure and the disruptive power of love, but is written largely…in exceptionally intense poetry" (Greenblatt, Headnote to *Ado* 1398). Beatrice and Benedict's dialogue create playful games typical of Elizabethan prose to hinder themselves from playing into society's conventions of courtship; however, persuasion from outside forces create a change in their impressions of marriage, which shows through their diction.

During the play's first encounter of Beatrice and Benedict, their familiarity and antipathy of each other is obvious through the ease with which they play word games that attack their traits:

> BENEDICT. What! My dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?
>
> BEATRICE. Is it possible Disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signor Benedict? Courtesy itself must convert to Disdain if you come in her presence.
>
> BENEDICT. Then is Courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted […] (Shakespeare, *Ado* 1.1.96-102)

Their dialogue takes on multiple layers of interaction between the use of an epithet, personification, sarcasm, and exaggeration that each link to the preceding one as a basis for a

new attack on a character trait. Benedict addresses Beatrice with an epithet that reflects her negativity towards Benedict, which reveals their familiarity, but also extends towards men and courtship in general. Beatrice carries the personification of "disdain" to assert her opinions of Benedict through sarcasm and employ a second personification of "courtesy," indicating that Benedict elicits a dreadful reaction while also combatting his own wordplay. Benedict redeems himself by insinuating that Beatrice is the outlier in regard to women who enjoy his company. Their repartee establishes their relationship as cynical while also alluding to their enjoyment of the game since they continually build off of each other; however, neither wants to form a relationship with the other because they disagree with the construct of marriage.

Beatrice and Benedict use common examples in metaphors and imagery to clearly convey their reasons against marriage. Beatrice's aversion to marriage is due to the assumption that wives must submit to their husbands:

> LEONATO. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.
>
> BEATRICE. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered by a piece of valiant dust? To make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none. (Shakespeare 2.1.48-53)

Beatrice uses a metaphor comparing men to dust or earth material, which refers to men as commonplace and useless as dirt, forming their status to be lower than hers. Her reluctance stems from "a fear that she might no longer be able to speak her mind or assert her will as a wife" (Dolan 630), made even more painful if the theoretical husband is a lesser being. As an independent female character, she fears a husband who will inhibit her personal expression by taking the male gender role as the head of the household. Gender roles based on societal

constructions would indirectly affect Beatrice, giving her no control over her own speech, which she expresses liberally even when disavowing men. Benedict has a similar insecurity believing that a wife can influence his reputation through actions he cannot control. He states, "But that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldric, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to mistrust none" (Shakespeare 1.1.204-8). Benedict explains that the only way to protect himself from becoming a cuckold is by avoiding marriage altogether in order to eliminate the risk completely. Imagery of physical horns represents the head horns that signified a man whose wife was sexually unfaithful. Benedict clarifies the horns to be invisible as "a sign of the cuckold's ignorance" (Greenblatt 1411n1) and not aligning with any woman is the only way to avoid paranoia. Fear of a partner altering a person's character through actions, like submission, or implications, like ignorance to infidelity, provokes Beatrice and Benedict to dismiss marriage. Their dismissal of each other is more poignant because Benedict has a commanding presence and Beatrice is clever —each has characteristics that are assumed to be incompatible.

Beatrice and Benedict have vague familiar sentiments towards each other, but the rumors that their friends devise eventually bridge the gap in their relationship, causing the couple to admit their love vows to themselves. When Benedict hears the rumor that Beatrice loves him, he muses:

> Love me? Why it must be requited. […] I did never think to marry. […] They say the lady is fair. 'Tis a truth; I can bear them witness. And virtuous? 'Tis so, I cannot reprove it. And wise, but for loving me. By my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. (Shakespeare 3.1.198-207)

Benedict's rhetorical questions allow him to sort through his emotions and verify that Beatrice's qualities align with those of an ideal wife. His response is a declaration of his love to himself and admonitions that Beatrice is a suitable wife, which he recognizes only after hearing his trusted friends discuss and approve Beatrice's love. Benedict's soliloquy is actually his marriage vow. Romeo and Juliet did not need community support to realize their emotions, but support aides the acceptance of the marriage by society. Beatrice reacts similarly to Benedict after hearing the rumor in the form of a vow:

> And Benedict, love on. I will requite thee,
>
> Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.
>
> If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
>
> To bind our loves up in a holy band. (Shakespeare 3.1.111-4)

Through rhyming poetry, Beatrice composes an expression of love in the most recognizable form. Beatrice's poetry reflects Juliet's poetic vows to Romeo because both women admit a will to be submissive to their future husbands if the man proposes a marriage, but Beatrice's language is more hesitant that Juliet's because Benedict did not profess his love directly. Beatrice suggests that Benedict should make a proposal, but does not give him explicit instructions on how or when to do it. The rumors created by the couple's trusted community prompt the couple to personally admit their attraction to the other, but the rumors also allow the admissions to occur without guilt or secrecy because trusted family and friends supported the idea. Don Pedro assumes the role of the go-between to create a marriage between the couple and engages their friends and family in his plan, which contrasts the Nurse's and Friar Lawrence's actions in *Romeo and Juliet*. The process of marriage formation in this period was one which accommodated both individual expression and family constraint (O'Hara 32). Don Pedro's plan

leads to an open involvement of the couple's community and, subsequently, open approval.

*Much Ado About Nothing* excludes a marriage scene like *Romeo and Juliet*, but the audience realizes a marriage will occur based on the exchange of vows and presence of witnesses before the end of the play. In the final scene, Beatrice and Benedict deny their feelings for each other in front of the gathered crowd before Hero and Claudio produce handwritten sonnets as their vows' tokens, causing them to admit their love and agree to a marriage. Despite their marriage contract,

Benedict and Beatrice still employ jocular language:

> BENEDICT. A miracle! Here's our own hands against our hearts. Come, I will have thee. But by this light, I take thee for pity.
>
> BEATRICE. I would not deny you. But by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life. For I was told you were in a consumption. (Shakespeare 5.4.91-6)

Benedict's language maintains the same sarcasm from the beginning of the play, but now includes a cheerful tone and Beatrice responds with a slightly more coarse play on his humor. In front of each other, they use playful language instead of the heartfelt vows they admitted to themselves. The couple maintains their personalities and repartee rather than completely conforming to a marriage social construct of complete adoration, which Romeo and Juliet devoutly express as a necessity in their relationship.

Romeo and Juliet's language contrasts with Beatrice and Benedict's language due to differing connotations of interactions through numerous literary devices that create adverse ideas of love and fulfillment of courtship practices. *Romeo and Juliet* ends as a tragedy and diverges from *Much Ado About Nothing* because Romeo and Juliet's youthfulness lends to their ignorance

and intensity towards expressing love, creating secrecy that spirals towards the idea of "'til death do us part," which prevents extensive community involvement and leaves some courtship rituals unfulfilled, ultimately ending the play in a tragedy. *Much Ado About Nothing* contradicts the manner of intense love with intense loathing between Beatrice and Benedict due to their hesitations towards marriage, which stem from conforming to marriage roles. Community approval influences their decision to agree to marriage, which ends the comedic play with a successful courtship. Each couple's dialogue contradicts the outcome of each play, so blind adoration does not equate to an enchanted marriage or happy end and disdain permits the opportunity to discover deeper feelings, reason through marriage, and form a mutual agreement to marry.

Works Cited

Cook, Ann Jennalie. *Making a Match: Courtship in Shakespeare and His Society*. Princeton UP, 2014. *EBSCOhost*. Accessed 29 Mar. 2019.

Dolan, Frances. "Shakespeare and Marriage: An Open Question." *Literature Compass*, vol. 8, no. 9, 2011, pp. 620-34.

Greenblatt, Stephen. Headnote to *Much Ado About Nothing*. *The Norton Shakespeare*, general editor Stephen Greenblatt, 3rd ed., vol. 1: *Early Plays and Poems*, W.W. Norton, 2016, pp. 1395-1402.

---. Headnote to *Romeo and Juliet*. *The Norton Shakespeare*, general editor Stephen Greenblatt, 3rd ed., vol. 1: *Early Plays and Poems*, W.W. Norton, 2016, pp. 957-63.

O'Hara, Diana. *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England*. Manchester UP, 2002.

"Restorative." Def. B2. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. www.oed.com.ezproxy.tntech.edu/ view/entry/163989. Accessed 23 Mar. 2019.

Shakespeare, William. *Much Ado About Nothing*. *The Norton Shakespeare*, general editor Stephen Greenblatt, 3rd ed., vol. 1: *Early Plays and Poems*, W.W. Norton, 2016, pp. 1406-62.

---. *The Most Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. *The Norton Shakespeare*, general editor Stephen Greenblatt, 3rd ed., vol. 1: *Early Plays and Poems*, W.W. Norton, 2016, pp. 967-1035.

Targoff, Ramie. "Mortal Love: Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and the Practice of Joint Burial." *Representations*, vol. 120, no. 1, 2012, pp. 17–38. *JSTOR*. Accessed 4 Apr. 2019.

# A Moral Interpretation of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

By Kathryn Elise Porterfield

Though *Romeo and Juliet* has historically been viewed as a work of romance by both the average reader and academic scholars, there are numerous elements of the play which heighten the possibility that the overarching theme of this iconic love story is not love at all, but moral dilemma. Traditionally, there are three ways of reading the play, as explained by Joseph Pearce (Pearce 20-22). In the first, fate is the antagonist; Romeo and Juliet are powerless and cannot be held responsible for their actions, no matter how unwise or imprudent, as fate is unconquerable. In the second reading, the adversary and driving force is the hatred and bigotry their feuding families possess; those who have this perspective view the lovers as victims of hatred whose only redemption is in their love. The third outlook, the cautionary reading, supposes that each character is responsible for their own reckless and incautious actions, which have extreme consequences.

Due to its polarization and dispassion, this practical aspect has not been sufficiently researched or discussed by academic scholars. It is impossible to know how William Shakespeare intended for his works to be interpreted. However, by analyzing the impassioned language and impulsive actions of the characters, we can draw an inference which supports the moral reading of *Romeo and Juliet* and disproves the fatalistic and romantic readings. In this cautionary and moral analysis, *Romeo and Juliet* becomes less of a romance and more of a cautionary tale in which the lovers' demise is the direct result of their immaturity, idolatrous actions, and lack of guidance in Friar Laurence.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is based off of Arthur Brooke's 1562 narrative poem *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet*, in which Brooke's Juliet is older than

Shakespeare's Juliet and Romeus is thought to be younger than the Romeo we are familiar with. We can infer this by Shakespeare referring to Romeo as simply being a "young" man (1.4.174.), whereas Brooke describes him as so young that his "tender chin" has no beard (Brooke 55). In Brooke's poem, Juliet is almost 16 (Brooke 1860). However, she is not yet 14 in Shakespeare's play (1.2.9.). This forces us to ask why Shakespeare deliberately made Romeo older and Juliet younger, when she was already considered too young to be married in the original poem.

The common explanation behind this is that he highlighted her age in order to soften the responsibility of the two young lovers, therefore making them less culpable for their own tragic ending. This reasoning is commonly cited by those in favor of the fatalistic and romantic interpretations of *Romeo and Juliet*. However, it is both more likely and more realistic that Juliet's age is made a focal point in the play as a representation of the ill-timed relationship and to serve as a deterrent to adolescent marriage. Former United States President and Harvard professor John Quincy Adams made a point of the importance of Juliet's age in his 1845 letter to James Henry Hackett, a Shakespearean actor:

> The age of Juliet seems to be the key to her character throughout the play, an essential ingredient in the intense sympathy she inspires; and Shakespeare has marked it, not only in her discourse, but even in her name, the diminutive of tender affections applied only to childhood. If Shakespeare had exhibited upon the stage a woman of nineteen, he would have dismissed her nurse and called her Julia. She might still have been a very interesting character, but the whole color and complexion of the play must have been changed. An intelligent, virtuous woman, in love with a youth of assorted age and congenial character, is always a deep interest in the drama. But that interest is heightened and redoubled when, to the sympathy with the lover, you add all the kind affections with which you

> share the joys and sorrows of the child. There is childishness in the discourse of Juliet, and the poet has shown us why; because she had scarcely ceased to be a child. (Hackett 222-23)

Adams's analysis of Juliet's age directly aligns with the theory that Shakespeare intentionally made Juliet younger to evoke a specific reaction from audience members. Females in Elizabethan England were considered children until they were between 14 and 15 years old and the ideal age for women to marry was 20, though they were not usually married until much later, around 25 or 26. (Franson 244). Karl J. Franson said of Juliet's age, "That Capulet would offer his daughter to Paris despite her 'extreme youth,' thus forcing Juliet to marry Romeo secretly, must have been appalling to an Elizabethan." (Franson 244) He then cites Shakespeare's unsatisfactory marriage at 18 years old to be the reason he lowered Juliet's age and used it frequently throughout the play as a warning to audiences of the consequences of marrying too young, as he evidently knew them quite well.

*Romeo and Juliet* is the most explicitly religion-oriented of Shakespeare's plays, as it takes place in Italy during a time when Catholicism was the vastly dominant religion. The feuding families are both Catholic and the mentor of the lovers was a Catholic priest. Therefore, it is assumed that faith would play a pivotal part in the daily lives of these characters if they practiced their religion devoutly, as they should. Readers are then forced to ask why faith is so quickly put aside by Romeo, a young man raised in a Catholic family the entirety of his life, when he metaphorically refers to kissing as a sin then indulges in it while persuading Juliet to do the same:

> ROMEO. O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do.
>
> They pray; grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

JULIET. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO. Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purged.

Now my sin has been taken from my lips by yours.

JULIET. Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

ROMEO. Sin from thy lips? O trespass sweetly urged!

Give me my sin again. (1.4.214-21)

By referring to kissing as a sin and acting on his desires anyway, Romeo is displaying his willingness to overlook his faith and knowingly indulge in sin. Furthermore, he persuades the innocent and naive Juliet to engage in sin as well, a sign his "love" is not love at all. On the contrary, it is nothing more than infatuation and inadvertent manipulation of a girl too young to recognize it. This kiss, unquestionably Juliet's first, throws her into confusion, making it impossible for her to distinguish between impulsive passion and true love. Romeo is the first to cast his faith aside, foreshadowing his end. Later, after a prudent and brief scolding of Romeo for engaging in such scandalous behavior as appearing at her home, Juliet breaks the First Commandment by naming Romeo "the god of [her] idolatry" (2.2.154).

Idolatry is defined as "Immoderate attachment to or veneration for any person or thing; admiration savouring of adoration." ("Idolatry, n."). By adoring and worshipping Romeo to the extent she does, Juliet is engaging in sin. By acknowledging her sin and not ceasing this behavior, she continues to sin. Like Romeo, her disregard for the faith and infatuation for romance incites her downfall. The lovers frequently let their passion overcome them throughout the play, letting love act as their their religion instead of Catholicism. This mindset drives them to dispose of all restraint and logic, eventually committing suicide to avoid being without one

another. Paul Siegel quoted William G. Dodd in his explanation of the paradisal afterlife of lovers:

> According to a tenet of the medieval religion of love that continued to be expressed in the Elizabethan adaptations of the novelle, joining the loved one in death qualifies the lover as one of Cupid's saints and ensures that the two meet in the "Paradise in which dwelt the god of love, and in which were reserved places for his disciples." According to Christianity, suicide, unless repentance occurs between the act and death, ensures damnation. In *Romeo and Juliet,* unlike *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth,* and *King Lear*, it is the lovers' paradise of the religion of love, not the after-life of Christian religion, which is adumbrated at the close of the tragedy. (Siegel 372-73)

In so short a time, Romeo and Juliet have become wholly engulfed in their own passion for one another that they see suicide as their only form of peace. In the eyes of these passionate and impulsive adolescents, suicide being a sin is irrelevant. The two would rather commit a mortal sin and face damnation than be apart, a sign their Catholic faith lacks strength and reverence within their minds and hearts.

Despite the flaws of both Romeo and Juliet, most responsible for their demise is the infamous Friar Laurence, who uses his status as priest and mentor to meddle in their relationship. Shakespeare noticeably goes out of his way to emphasize the reverence and godliness of the priest through the words of the friar himself and in the way other characters refer to him. These elements prove that his objectives are nothing but good. Though done with the best intentions, his actions contributed greatly to their deaths nonetheless. As Romeo and Juliet's trusted mentor, Friar Laurence has a significant influence on the lovers. They consult him when in need and put their confidence and trust in him wholeheartedly. The vitality of his guidance to Romeo and

Juliet becomes evident later on when Juliet is told she will be marrying Paris, though she's already secretly married Romeo. She begs Friar Laurence for a solution, threatening suicide if he cannot help her.

> And with this knife I'll help it presently.
>
> God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands.
>
> And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo sealed,
>
> Shall be the label to another deed,
>
> Or my true heart with treacherous revolt
>
> Turn to another, this shall slay them both.
>
> Therefore out of thy long-experienced time,
>
> Give me some present counsel, or, behold (4.1.54-61)

In secretly marrying the two, Friar Laurence inadvertently causes a chain of events which forces Juliet to choose between committing bigamy or suicide, both damnable offenses in the Catholic Church. Jill Kriegel describes him as "honorable and dishonorable, reverent and irreverent, salvific and damning." (Kriegel 132) When the play is viewed romantically, the priest is often seen as the hero. When read realistically, Friar Laurence is just another victim of impulse. He, like Juliet, is naive and romantic enough to believe this love between Romeo and Juliet is real. The other possibility is that he only proceeds with marrying the two in order to acquire the credit for ending the feud between the Capulets and Montagues, which is selfish and reckless. Mera J. Flaumenhaft argues that it is hope, not pride which drives Friar Laurence to marry Romeo and Juliet:

> "Hope" propels the Friar's plan to end the feud by marrying the young lovers. He does not appreciate how generations of hatred might lead to the violent disowning of children

> who refuse to marry according to their parents' wishes. The plan to reunite the lovers after Juliet's feigned death shows his lack of practical experience. Perhaps his confidence in the Providence of God has stunted his own "providence," that is, "prudence." He knows about medicinal potions, but it does not occur to him that his messenger might be delayed by an attempt to deal with the spread of disease. The Friar also does not anticipate that his beautiful boy will die for love if he thinks that Juliet is dead. (Flaumenhaft 552)

Whether he married them out of naivety, hope, or pride, Friar Laurence allowed his vices to propel his actions nonetheless, which greatly contributed to the death of two children who put their faith and trust in him. Readers would expect the knowledgeable mentor and priest to be less susceptible to such feelings. However, just as Romeo did, Friar Laurence, the godly man who was meant to act as a wise guide and second father to these children, cast his faith aside and let himself be swept into a mess of romance, pride, and immorality. Therefore, it seems more appropriate to label him nothing more than a weak accessory to an avoidable tragedy.

*Romeo and Juliet*, while undoubtedly one of the most popular love stories ever told, is saturated with moral reproach towards the actions of the lovers and their trusted mentor. This is illustrated to readers throughout the language and actions of Romeo and Juliet, whose adolescence, idolatry, and lack of sufficient guidance in the controversial and misled Friar Laurence led to their tragic deaths. The three most popular interpretations of the play presume the antagonist of this iconic story to be fate, familial feud, and immorality, respectively. The former two are overwhelmingly popular amongst literary scholars and average readers alike, whereas the moral or cautionary interpretation has been neglected and insufficiently discussed by both, most likely due to its dispassionate and pessimistic nature. Despite the lack of academia on

*Romeo and Juliet* as a cautionary tale, a deep analysis of the characters' actions and rhetoric as well as the literary elements used by Shakespeare throughout *Romeo and Juliet* makes it obvious that readers must rethink the idyllic message this work has historically had. These elements make it difficult to perceive the play as either fatalistic or romantic; instead, it becomes a cautionary tale by a man who witnessed firsthand the consequences of adolescent love and marriage.

## Works Cited


Brooke, Arthur. *The Tragicall History of Romeus and Juliet.* 1562.

Flaumenhaft, Mera J. "*Romeo and Juliet* for Grownups." *The Review of Politics*, vol. 79, no. 4, 2017, pp. 545-63. *ProQuest*, https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.tntech.edu/docview/1952428733?accountid=28833, doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.tntech.edu/10.1017/S0034670517000572.

Franson, J. K. "'Too Soon Marr'd': Juliet's Age as Symbol in *Romeo and Juliet." Papers on Language and Literature*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1996, pp. 244. *ProQuest*, https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.tntech.edu/docview/198445533?accountid=28833.

Hackett, James Henry. *Notes, Criticisms, and Correspondence upon Shakespeare's Plays and Actors*. Benjamin Blom, 1863.

"Idolatry, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, Mar. 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/91099. Accessed 16 Apr. 2019.

Kriegel, Jill. "A Case Against Natural Magic: Shakespeare's Friar Laurence as *Romeo and Juliet*'s Near-Tragic Hero." *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2010, pp. 132. *Academic OneFile*, http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A349609974/AONE?u=tel_a_ttul&sid=AONE&xid=602a7af0. Accessed 20 Mar. 2019.

Pearce, Joseph. *Shakespeare on Love: Seeing the Catholic Presence in* Romeo and Juliet. Ignatius, 2013.

Shakespeare, William. *Romeo and Juliet*. *The Norton Shakespeare, general editor Stephen Greenblatt,* vol. 1*: Early Plays and Poems*, 3rd ed. W. W. Norton, 2016, pp. 967-1035.

Siegel, Paul N. "Christianity and the Religion of Love in *Romeo and Juliet.*" *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1961, pp. 371-92. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2867455. Accessed 16 Apr. 2019.

# Feminism in the Works of Anne Bradstreet and Margaret Fuller

By Kathryn Elise Porterfield

Two hundred years before the first wave of feminism officially began in the United States, Anne Bradstreet challenged the idea that women were only capable of being wives and mothers in the prologue of her book, published in 1650. Her poem about her inferiority as a woman drips with irony and condescension for men who find her inadequate and incapable because of her gender. Five years before the first wave of feminism, Margaret Fuller did the same in her book, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. However, Fuller had the advantage of writing at a time when women were at long last, more independent, confident, and proud to be women, whereas Bradstreet did not. This is shown clearly in her writing compared to Bradstreet's. Fuller, and other feminists in the 1840s refused to sit idly by and allow themselves to be thought of and treated as less than men. Both of these women, though two hundred years apart from one another, served as pioneers of feminism in the United States, objecting to traditional ideas of what a woman's role in society is and should be and reminding readers that women are entirely capable of possessing the same degree of intelligence, worth, and independence as men.

While Bradstreet takes a more demure approach, Fuller brazenly proclaims her thoughts. Bradstreet begins her poem humbly, lowering herself and her ability as a writer. "To sing of Wars, of Captains, and of Kings/Of Cities founded, Common-wealths begun/For my mean Pen are too superior things;" she writes (1-3). These three lines, specifically the third, are an admittance of inferiority to readers. By referring to these grand topics as "superior" to her "mean Pen," Bradstreet is labelling herself inadequate as a writer, seemingly admitting she is not worthy of discussing such things as wars, captains, and kings. She continues, "Or how they all, or each their dates have run/Let Poets and Historians set these forth./My obscure lines shall not so dim

their worth" (4-6). Here, Bradstreet makes it clear that she does not consider herself a poet, even calling her work "obscure."Her choice of words in "obscure" is doubly clever, as it can mean her work is simply unknown or that it is too dim to see, especially in comparison to the bright works of "Poets and Historians," neither of which she associates herself with, though it is clear to readers that she is very well-educated in history and a talented writer. This gives readers the impression that Bradstreet is knowingly writing ironically.

This modest and very possibly, sarcastic, first stanza is in stark contrast to the method used by Fuller in her book. "What women needs is not as a woman to act or to rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded, to unfold such powers as were given her when we left our common home," she writes (Fuller). Fuller's tone is not gentle or humble, as Bradstreet's is; it is a proud declaration. She avoids ambiguity, making her beliefs easily known to readers. She boldly asserts her rights as a woman to have a recognized intellect, a free soul, and innate power while still maintaining a graceful, knowledgeable tone similar to Bradstreet's, though louder and more confident. Readers can attribute this difference in tone to the difference in setting of these two works, Fuller's being two hundred years later than Bradstreet's and surely influenced by women such as her.

Bradstreet and Fuller both discuss the nature of women in their respective works and while the methods differ, the message is the same - women are no less than men. In the third stanza of Bradstreet's prologue, she writes, "From School-boy's tongue no Rhet'ric we expect,/Nor yet a sweet Consort from broken strings,/ nor perfect beauty where's a main defect" (13-15). These metaphors serve as a way to explain to readers how one cannot do more than they are made to do. Just as a child cannot be expected to give an amazing speech and a broken instrument cannot be expected to create beautiful music, a woman cannot be expected to write

good poetry. However, the sheer power and genius of these lines gives readers the impression that Bradstreet's words are deliberately saturated with sarcasm and irony. The perfect rhythm and rhyme of her poetry is just that - perfect. She continues, "My foolish, broken, blemished Muse so sings,/And this to mend, alas, no Art is able,/'Cause Nature made it so irreparable" (16-18). This language, though clearly not what Bradstreet genuinely thinks of herself and her poetry, is self-deprecating to its greatest extent. There is no fixing what is wrong with her, as the only thing "wrong" is that she was born a woman. This brokenness, inflicted upon her by nature, is "irreparable."

Fuller approaches the topic of the nature of women much differently, with no uncertainty and a steadfast belief that inferiority is nurtured. She discusses a conversation she had with a woman named Miranda, whose father "addressed her not as a play-thing, but as a living mind" (Fuller). Miranda, like all women, was born with dignity and self-dependence, the difference between her and other women being that those qualities were nurtured and encouraged by her father, rather than discouraged and hidden. "This self-dependence, which was honored in me, is deprecated to a fault in most women. They are taught to learn their rule from without, not to unfold it from within. This is the fault to Man, who is still vain, and wishes to be more important to Woman than, by right, he should be," she says (Fuller). She explains that the source of women's inferiority lies in the selfish state of men, not nature. All women are born with a sense of dignity and equality, but it is extinguished by men, who do so in order to satisfy their own vanity and general need to feel superior. The tendency of men to treat women as "play-things" rather than "living minds" is nurtured by their fathers, who undoubtedly treated their wives, sisters, and daughters the same way - as something lesser than themselves, who lives to do as they're told.

Both Bradstreet and Fuller emphasize the idea that a successful woman must be masculine in order to have achieved such success. Bradstreet says in the fifth stanza of her poem, "A Poet's Pen all scorn I should thus wrong,/For such despite they cast on female wits./If what I do prove well, it won't advance,/They'll say it's stol'n, or else it was by chance" (27-30). She begins these lines by pointing out the scorn and contempt men felt at the idea of her, or any woman, engaging in "masculine" things such as poetry, as she might damage or "wrong" the intellectual, classy, and male-dominated world of poetry as a whole with her inferiority femininity. Men in Bradstreet's time generally refused to acknowledge women as being intelligent or capable of things men were capable of doing, hence her statement, "For such despite they cast on female wits." She then says that even if she were to write beautifully, she would not get any credit for it, as it would be assumed stolen from a man, or just luck, since women could not possibly have written notable or profound poetry.

Fuller's take on this subject is, of course, less subtle. She says, "When they admired any woman, they were inclined to speak of her as 'above her sex''' (Fuller). Backhanded compliments such as these were, and still are, used to lower women and raise men. Men were only able to praise a woman by insulting her gender and comparing her to himself. She then writes of a time when a friend told her she "deserved in some star to be a man." Her response to this ignorant "compliment" was as such: "I declared my faith that the feminine side, the side of love, of beauty, of holiness, was now to have its full chance, and that, if either were better, it was better now to be a woman; for even the slightest achievement of good was furthering an especial work of our time" (Fuller). Fuller's wording here is heavily weighted, written at a time when women's suffrage was on the cusp and things were beginning to look up for women in America. Fuller was well aware of the impact her words and actions regarding women's rights would have

in the future. In writing, “For even the slightest achievement of good was furthering an especial work of our time,” Fuller did exactly that - furthered a pivotal movement for women and served as a pogressive leader for those willing to fight for what they deserve.

Bradstreet begins wrapping up her poem with the lines, “Let Greeks be Greeks, and Women what they are./Men have precedency and still excel;/It is but vain unjustly to wage war” (37-39). Here, she is seemingly letting it all go. She acknowledges that men will not see the Greeks, who praised women as goddesses and muses, as an example of how to treat women in her time. She is willing to let men believe they should be first and excel above women. She sees no point in waging a war over poetry, and as she said in the beginning, she will leave war to the men. She then writes, “Men can do best, and Women know it well./Preeminence in all and each is yours;/Yet grant some small acknowledgement of ours” (40-42). The faux humility in the first two lines of this section is obvious, though this assurance of male superiority may also be Bradstreet’s way of trying to appeal to her male audience and make them feel less threatened by her talent and intelligence. Additionally, the idea of men feeling threatened by a woman for her poetry adds a sense of comedy to these lines. The final line in this stanza is simply her asking that men at least acknowledge her capability.

Fuller’s thoughts on women’s independence and capability are much more brazen. She wants women to be strong and free from all the things that hold her back:

> It is therefore that I would have Woman lay aside all thought, such as she habitually cherishes, of being taught and led by men. I would have her, like the Indian girl, dedicate herself to the Sun, the Sun of Truth, and go nowhere if his beams did not make clear the path. I would have her free from compromise, from complaisance, from helplessness,

> because I would have her good enough and strong enough to love one and all beings, from the fulness, not the poverty of being. (Fuller)

Fuller's tone here is confident and strong, the opposite of Bradstreet's. She encourages women to be independent and self-reliant. She urges them to lay aside the things taught to her by men, as they are not their own, and stop allowing themselves to be led by men. This call for action is a considerable change from Bradstreet's gentle plea for acknowledgement and emphasizes the difference in character, setting, and sense of independence and equality of these two women. She tells women to follow the sun, and "go nowhere if his beams did not make clear the path." Here, Fuller is encouraging women to follow their nature, or "Sun of Truth," and do only want they want to do. She urges them to stop following men and break free from compromise, complaisance, and helplessness, as that is not what should define women.

Feminists in 1650, such as Bradstreet were unable to be outright and direct with their forward-thinking beliefs, whereas feminists in the 1840s had more freedom and support to do so. They were more confident and less ambiguous about what they believed in, as seen in Fuller's bold words. Though the tone and setting differed, both Bradstreet and Fuller used their platforms to challenge the idea of female inferiority. While Bradstreet tended to be more gentle, clever, and ambiguous in her poem, Fuller unabashedly proclaimed her thoughts with no ambiguity. The similarities and differences between these two feminist writers are obvious and it is inspiring to see that female empowerment and the urge for equality has been a part of women's history and nature since far before feminism truly began in the United States.

## Works Cited

Bradstreet, Anne. "The Prologue." *The Tenth Muse, Lately Sprung up in America.* London, 1650.
Fuller, Margaret. *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. Boston, The Dial, 1843.

# Gender in Flux: Transvestism and Gender Roles in *The Merchant of Venice* and "Venus and Adonis"

Ian Grant McLean

The Elizabethan period was a time of upheaval; long standing religious systems were smashed and uprooted, economic and class systems were rapidly changing, and England's first autonomous queen's royal procession was in living memory. No area of British culture was more affected than the matrix of gender presentation, as roles and expectations—many of which predated even the medieval era—began to collapse. More than ever, England began experiencing an emergence of a transvestite counterculture, officially defined as "the action of dressing in the clothes of the opposite sex" (OED) but characterized as a subversive and challenging movement by the actions of famous transvestites like Mary Frith. The creation of the word "transvestite" itself dates back to the 17th century, showing the prevalence with which this counterculture appeared. This change was perhaps most visible on the Elizabethan stage, wherein male actors frequently crossdressed as women, even acting out love stories with other men before large cross-class audiences. Behaviors which were punishable by death merely generations ago, and which included activities directly condemned by the Bible were now popular means of entertainment. Despite the common misconception of many modern interpreters, the practice of crossdressing actors was not "an unremarkable convention within Renaissance dramatic practice," but was instead a source of scandal and "'homoerotic attraction' arousing 'deep-seated fears' of an 'unstable and monstrous' and feminised self" (Cressy 438). Appearance of transvestism on stage, as well as the spread of this activity on the streets of London, led to a large amount of backlash from Protestant reformers who hoped to repair the damaged old systems of gender relation (Cressy 438-9). Among the wide variety of playgoing research in the Elizabethan period, "discussion of the ubiquitous practice of having boys play the women's parts is almost conspicuously absent. That stated, the convention did elicit responses, rather strong ones, from a

particular demographic: individuals who found the practice opprobrious. Antitheatrical writers published a number of tracts during the early modern period that attacked the institution of theatre, and some of them specifically mention the iniquity of transvestite drama in the theatrical enterprise" (Lublin 67).

Crossdressing, and the larger trend of transvestism, reflected a marked change in gender roles within Elizabethan society as a whole—a trend which echoes throughout several of William Shakespeare's seminal works. In this paper, I will focus on the positive portrayal of queer gender presentation within *The Merchant of Venice,* as well as the strong elements of gender role subversion within the poem "Venus and Adonis." Further, I will argue that the inclusion of these elements helps to frame Shakespeare's role and position in the gender revolution of the Elizabethan period, and furthers appreciation for the impact which his plays and poems had on the cultural matrix of England as a whole.

In the comedy *The Merchant of Venice,* first performed around 1595, three of the primary female characters crossdress throughout the play. The intelligent and beautiful heiress Portia and her friend and lady-in-waiting Nerissa take on the roles of a successful lawyer and his assistant, respectively, while the villain Shylock's daughter crossdresses as a boy in order to steal from her father and elope with her Christian lover. Regardless of the morality of their actions, each woman in *The Merchant of Venice* uses her ability to assume a male persona to gain freedoms which she otherwise would not have access to. Transvestism, in this sense, is framed as a liberatory device within the poem.

This positive view of gender non-conformity is further developed through the character of Portia. Throughout the poem, Portia is consistently valorized by the plot and characters, to the point that she seemingly has no flaws. In Jessica's words, "if two gods should play some

heavenly match/ And on the wager lay two earthly women, / And Portia one, there must be something else/ Pawn'd with the other, for the poor rude world/ Hath not her fellow" (3.5. 70-74). Portia is depicted as an honorable woman, following her father's wishes for her chastity and conduct long after his death, and famously extolls the virtues of Christianity to Shylock in the play's climactic courtroom scene.

Shakespeare's support of early English transvestism can be further seen in the context of the play itself, particularly in the narrative support of Portia's braggadocious claims. Portia's monologue upon deciding to crossdress is the primary point of evidence, as she both mocks the men who she is imitating and claims her own superiority.

> They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
>
> That they shall think we are accomplished
>
> With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
>
> When we are both accoutred like young men,
>
> I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
>
> And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
>
> And speak between the change of man and boy
>
> With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
>
> Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
>
> Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
>
> How honourable ladies sought my love,
>
> Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
>
> I could not do withal; then I'll repent,
>
> And wish for all that, that I had not killed them;

And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,

That men shall swear I have discontinued school

Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind

A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,

Which I will practise (Shakespeare, MV, 3.4 60-74).

Portia, hitherto regarded as a flawless character, is now criticizing the behavior of young men and claiming her own superiority, both as a person and even as a man. This claim, which one might expect to be refuted or humbled later in the play's events, is in fact only supported by the structure of the play's dramatic arc. Portia is poised as the play's heroine, as her last minute arrival at court saves the life of the protagonist and ensures the villain's defeat. For this seemingly righteous figure to also be the instigator of a gender-critical crossdressing plot which in itself leads to the salvation of the central character and positive resolution of the plot certainly adds to the play's overall positive portrayal of crossdressing as a means of liberatory self-expression.

When considering that this play was initially performed by male actors crossdressing as women who were in turn crossdressing as men, it is hard not to see this appraisal of Portia's own transvestment as appraisal of the rising trend of transvestism as a whole. In the play's final act, there is no punishment or moral judgment against Portia and Nerissa's deception; contrarily, the two women are allowed to play a practical joke on their new husbands, positioning themselves as the more intelligent and heroic duo of leading figures. The husbands' response to this joke itself is strangely homoerotic; Bassanio cheerfully exclaims "Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow" while Gratiano—Nerissa's husband—more bluntly "wishes it dark/ Till I were crouching with the doctor's clerk" (5.1.304-5). While these jokes are publicly acceptable due to

their surface heterosexuality, Eliza Greenstadt argues that the jokes "call attention to the bodies of the boy actors playing the wives, multiplying rather than constraining the erotic possibilities created by the 'as if' world of the theater" (221). In other words, the subtle taboo of the transvestite stagecraft is further amplified by the myriad ways in which gender roles are subverted, diminished, and broken down throughout the Shakespeare's scripting.

This type of subversive playwriting mirrors the work of Shakespeare's contemporaries, as well—more specifically, transvestite elements which Shakespeare borrows for his plays and poems can be found elsewhere in the world of the late 16th century and early 17th century. One example of a politically challenging contemporary play is *Roaring Girl* by Dekker and Middleton, published in 1611, which focuses on the activities of the aforementioned Mary Frith; Frith, also known as Moll Cutpurse, was a historical woman alive in Shakespeare's time who was known for being a thief, illegally performing shows on stage as a woman, and most notably crossdressing (Mowry 34). Within the play, Frith is frequently depicted in a favorable light, to the extreme point that "more often than not, [her] robbery victims are grateful to Moll for returning their property and see her 'enterprize' as somewhat of a public service" (36). While the relationship between Frith's behavior and public acceptance by large sections of Elizabethan London and Shakespeare's plays is not imminently visible, the strange relationship between Elizabethan London and transvestism is of important note. If a non-fictitious criminal transvestite such as Frith could be accepted by the public, the acceptance of Portia's transvestism within *The Merchant of Venice* and audience favor of Portia implied in the play's structure begins to make more sense, for starters.

Outside of his plays, evidence of Shakespeare's support of queer gender presentation can be found in his poems—particularly within "Venus and Adonis." Throughout the poem,

Shakespeare inverts the typical Petrarchan roles of a pining male lover and indifferent female beloved, as the masculine coded Venus continuously seeks the affection of the more submissive, feminine Adonis. Shakespeare frequently draws special attention to Adonis' tender daintiness and almost constant blushing, described therein as the "maiden burning of his cheeks" (Venus and Adonis, 50). Even in Adonis' death by a boar's tusk, which itself is a symbolic penetration of Adonis, the poem's speaker describes a kind of inescapable beauty and magnetism intrinsic to Adonis' non-masculine charm, powerful enough to woo a goddess and the forces of nature itself. "The foul boar's conquest on her fair delight" (203), is later recontextualized in line 241 when Venus muses "If he did see his face, why then I know/ He thought to kiss him, and hath kill'd him so." Again, a character with a queer gender identity is the idealized symbol of purity within Shakespeare's work, now hidden behind even fewer layers of heterosexual posturing. In Simone Chess' words, "this poem… celebrates androgyny, queer gender roles and a youth who, while not crossdressed, is celebrated for his attractive, erotic, appealing feminine characteristics" (231). Chess further argues that Adonis is described not as an immature man, but rather as a *transfeminine* one, queer both in gender presentation and sexual presentation. Susan Stryker, a renowned transgender studies scholar, describes this effect as 'renarration,' in which "foreground and background seem to… reverse, and the spectacle of an unexpected gender phenomenon illuminates the production of gender normativity in a startling new way. In doing so, the field of [gender studies] begins to tell new stories about things many of us thought we already knew" (13). Through the emphasis on Venus and Adonis' nonconforming gender presentation and interaction, it is easy to renarrate this poem as an example of queer literature in the Shakespearean canon.

Together, the analysis of these works paints a clear picture of Shakespeare's supportive stance in the changing systems of gender within Elizabethan London. By revealing the lesser known reality of the early modern transvestite counterculture and the vitriol with which the practice of crossdressing actors was met by a small but vocal minority—a group which later banned the practice of theater in England later in the same century—the climate around Shakespeare's writing and the controversiality of his writings can become more obvious, and the significance behind the queer supportive subtext in his writings becomes much more clear. In writing plays which emphasized the subversive nature of his crossdressing actors while simultaneously promoting a seemingly flawless crossdressing female heroine, Shakespeare allies himself against the status quo of pre-Elizabethan England. Through reversing the standard gender roles associated with romantic poetry and creating stories with genderqueer, androgynous protagonists, Shakespeare further solidifies his stance and influence on the movement subverting and replacing long-held stances on gender roles. In renarrating these stories, looking at them from the perspective that they *are* queer narratives instead of assuming them to be heterosexual texts, readers in the modern day can gain exciting and relevant new perspectives on these four hundred year old plays and poems which would otherwise never exist.

Works Cited

Chess, Simone. “Male Femininity and Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Shakespeare’s Plays and Poems.” *Queer Shakespeare: Desire and Sexuality,* edited by Goran Stanivukovic, *Bloomsbury,* 2017, pp. 227-44.

Cressy, David. “Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England.” *Journal of British Studies,* vol. 35, no. 4, 1996, pp. 438-65. *JSTOR,* doi:176000. Accessed 25 Mar. 2019.

Greenstadt, Eliza. “Strange Insertions in *The Merchant of Venice.” Queer Shakespeare: Desire and Sexuality,* edited by Goran Stanivukovic, Bloomsbury, 2017, pp. 197-226.

Lublin, Robert I. "Anxious Audiences and the Early Modern English Transvestite Theatre." *Theatre Symposium*, vol. 20, 2012, pp. 66-73. *Project MUSE,* doi:488300. Accessed 9 April, 2019.

Mowry, Melissa. “Thieves, Bawds, and Counterrevolutionary Fantasies: The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith.” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2005, pp. 26–48. *JSTOR*, doi:40339541. Accessed 20 April, 2019.

Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. *The Norton Shakespeare*, general editor Stephen Greenblatt, 3rd ed., vol. 1: *Early Plays and Poems*, W.W. Norton, 2016, pp. 1327-94.

Shakespeare, William. “Venus and Adonis.” *The Norton Shakespeare*, general editor Stephen Greenblatt, 3rd ed., vol. 1: *Early Plays and Poems*, W.W. Norton, 2016, pp. 659-94

Stryker, Susan. “(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies.” Foreword, *The Transgender Studies Reader,* general editor Susan Stryker, Routledge, 2006, pp. 1-17.

“Transvest, Transvestitism.” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/205134?redirectedFrom=Jealousy#eid. Accessed 25 Mar. 2019.

# Victims of Gender Politics: A Comparison of Jane Shore in *The Second Part of King Edward IV* and Margaret Thatcher

By Abbigail Jackson

When thinking of powerful women during the Tudor or Elizabethan eras, one normally does not think of the literary character Jane Shore. Jane Shore, who did not even have a speaking role in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, is most well known as King Edward's mistress. However, *The Second Part of King Edward IV* by Thomas Heywood shows her in a different light. In Heywood's play, Jane Shore is written as more than a reason for Richard to execute Hastings, unlike Shakespeare's play where Richard orders for Hastings' execution for simply giving Jane the benefit of the doubt (Shakespeare 3.4.74-76). Heywood wrote her as more than a powerful man's concubine. He wrote her as an active participant in the political game. For example, in scene 10 of *The Second Part of King Edward IV*, the queen asks Edward for the pardon, and he denies her (Heywood 10.155-60). However, after Jane asks him, albeit on the queen's behalf (Heywood 10.164-65), he complies, and Jane brings the "gracious pardon [that] frees the gentleman" (Heywood 10.124). Heywood had Jane Shore use her influence over King Edward to obtain the pardon for Stranguidge, which was something even the queen could not do in the play. This move alone is enough to make her a minor political figure in the play, at the very least, because it shows her ability to sway King Edward. It is also enough to make the powerful male characters want her out of the picture for the same reason. On the other end of the political spectrum is Margaret Thatcher: the first female leader of a political party in Britain and the first female Prime Minister of the UK (Ribberink paragraph 10; Stepney 136). Margaret Thatcher left behind an intensive legacy, and while she certainly made and executed some unfavorable decisions and policies, such as her method of financial reform (Stepney 137), it is undeniable that one of the reasons people disliked her was because she was a powerful woman. Heywood's

character Jane Shore and Margaret Thatcher are used as comparisons to show that gender politics in Britain have not changed much, despite the fact that they are centuries apart. While Heywood's Jane Shore and Margaret Thatcher are from completely different times, had different roles in society, and held different positions of power, one thing they have in common is they were both victims of gender politics. Both women went against gendered expectations by demanding autonomy, making their own decisions, and joining the world of politics, and they suffered the consequences for it.

"Gender politics" are defined as "the assumptions underlying expectations regarding gender difference in a society; (also with *singular* agreement) an ideology based on such assumptions" ("Gender politics"). In other words, society as a whole has expectations for people based on gender, and expects the people to abide by them. If they choose not to, the society's entire idea of how to function would crumble because people will no longer fit in the boxes made for them. In regards to Jane Shore and Margaret Thatcher, this means that there were societal expectations in place for them that they went against, or at least attempted to go against. In *The Second Part of King Edward IV*, Jane Shore was not content with staying home or acting as an extension to her husband. She chose to go off on her own and create her own path. Heywood's play is a fictionalized play, but it is still very much based in reality for its time period, so one can assume that the circumstances of the play reflect the reality of the time period it is set in. Margaret Thatcher wanted to make her own moves and stand independently. She was a married woman, and the common belief was that her job was to take care of her husband and children and to not have a job outside of the home (Ribberink paragraph 5). Not only did she have a paid job, but Thatcher had a paid, powerful job that required her to travel away from home often. This was rare for a woman of her time. A male historian even claimed "Margaret Thatcher [was] not a

woman" (Ribberink paragraph 1). It was not just men that were upset about Thatcher's dismissal of gender roles. Other women claimed that she was "unfeminine" because she was too "dominant" and "more like a man every day" (Ribberink paragraph 1). The gender politics of her time were so extreme, that even other female citizens in the UK were against Thatcher.

Due to the way Jane Shore is written, notably by Thomas More and William Shakespeare, most people do not see her as a political figure. They see her as King Edward's mistress, or the other woman, because she is commonly portrayed as such. However, if a mistress was all she was, why did Thomas Heywood write her differently? Why did her story in *The Second Part of King Edward IV* end the way it did? When she was arrested, she was told to shed her clothes, wear a white sheet, and cut her hair, which were all indicators for public shame for being a whore (Heywood 18.193-96; Heywood 289 n.0.2). Rufford was placed in charge of her, and declared that no man could help her, and if they tried they would be sentenced to death (Heywood 20.249-53). Why did she receive such a harsh sentence? Heywood chose to portray Jane as a more complex character because it added more controversy. It is possible that Jane received her sentence for being an adultress, and Heywood intended to maintain her classic representation, but considering how Heywood included that Jane's own husband forgave her, the queen allegedly forgave her, and the king committed the same crime, yet died with his reputation seemingly intact, that does not seem likely. Jane's relationship with the king seemed consensual on both sides. Jane says, "My tongue, that gave consent, enjoined to beg" (Heywood 20.27). The verb "gave" indicates that Jane was the one giving consent, therefore she was the one persued by the king. She did not coerce the king, or force him to do anything he did not want to do. The affair was known while the king was still alive, yet it was only after his death that Jane was punished. This means that it is possible that there was another reason Jane was arrested, and that

reason could be that other men in the play saw her as a problem. They saw her as someone who had power and influence when Edward was still alive, and therefore stood in their way when they were seizing power and control after Edward died.

Jane Shore was a functional, active character in the play. There is a chance that she would have retained her power after Edward's death, because she was well-liked and people would have followed her or stood by her. Brackenbury refers to her as a "comforting, minist'ring, kind physician" after Jockie informed him of how Jane helped people (Heywood 9.25). The apparitors who arrested her showed her "all the favour poor men could" (Heywood 20.17). When Brackenbury sees her arrested later, he acknowledges that she was wrongfully imprisoned (Heywood 20.64-5). After she was arrested, those working for Richard isolated her and ensured no one could or would help her. Rufford declared it "present death" if anyone gave her food or water (Heywood 20.252). This was done to shame her, humiliate her, and make sure she lost any power or influence she had left. No one wanted to put themselves at risk for someone so publicly hated, and the few who did, such as Aire, were executed (Heywood 22.46).

While this violence occurred in a fictional play, it is not uncommon for women in politics to receive acts of violence, which adds to the play's accurate depiction. "Efforts to impede women's political participation are not new. Many societies around the world have long associated men with the 'public sphere' of politics and the economy and women with the 'private sphere' of home and family" (Krook 74). Men try to keep their hold on political power by doing what they find necessary to keep women away, even if it is violence or fear, and "dynamics of intimidation and harassment are often intertwined with threats and acts of physical violence up to and including murder" (Krook 75). It is not outrageous to read the treatment of Jane Shore as a result of her gaining some political power or influence over the public. She was closest with the

lower class and middle class, which outnumbered the upper class that Richard and his men were part of. It is likely that, in Heywood's play, Richard feared Jane because she easily outnumbered him, and could then lead a revolt when he wrongfully came to power. Jane Shore was only a minor political figure in the play, but she still had some power, and a little influence over people, and that was enough to scare men desperate to hold on to power.

Margaret Thatcher differs from Jane Shore not only because she was a real person, but also because she was elected into her positions of power. However, the reasons behind her being elected did not start as beneficial for her, seeing how there is a history of women being elected during times they are destined to fail:

> In short, a female party leader leads a team who not only share power, but can remove her from power as well. Under gendered assumptions of women as political outsiders (even among political elites) and of male political elites' hostility or resistance to women's political power, the power-sharing and power-removal components of prime ministerial parliamentary government may facilitate women's rise to party leader and prime minister. Removal mechanisms permit male political elites, with ambitions of their own, to support a woman as leader and potentially as prime minister, because they know they retain the power to remove her in the future and to create thereby opportunities for themselves. (Beckwith 723)

This means, as far as prime ministers or party leaders are concerned, men feel comfortable electing women for the position during hard times because they will be easy to remove in the future. The women are set up for failure, which in turn will make men look more capable than women to lead a government. It is believable that Thatcher fell victim to this practice because "after the free school milk fiasco the Conservatives duly lost the 1974 general election to Labour.

Later in 1975 Margaret Thatcher became leader of the Conservative party, now in opposition. She then won the 1979 general election and became Britain's first and only female Prime Minister" (Stepney 136). Thatcher's party made an error that angered the public, lost an election, and then elected her as leader when they did not have much to lose, but a lot to gain. If they won, she could potentially be removed. If they lost, she would look bad, and in turn so would women in politics. Beyond the milk blunder, the Conservative party was already weakened by the incumbent party leader, Edward Heath, who "led his party into two election defeats in the course of a single calendar year" (Beckwith 731), which also aided to Margaret Thatcher's election. Thatcher's "ability and experience intersected with the political opportunity of the 1974 electoral defeats of the Conservative party" (Beckwith 733), and she campaigned against someone with a bad reputation. She did not have tough competition considering how she was a qualified politician, having served sixteen years in parliament, and was "relatively untouched by the fallout of the government's defeat" (Beckwith 731). Thatcher was clearly a strong candidate.

The timing and circumstances could not have been better for Thatcher, but political crises open up opportunities for women to protect the men, and if the Conservative party were not in shambles, elite men would have ran for office and kept Thatcher out (Beckwith 734). The Conservative party used her to repair their reputation, instead of risking a male member. Thatcher was passable because of her experience, and she had reason to challenge the incumbent party leader for leadership, which was allowed under Conservative Party rules (Beckwith 731-32). Her party could get away with electing her, but they were not planning on keeping her. Removal mechanisms would provide men with power to remove her from office and create opportunities for themselves (Beckwith 723). It is reasonable to believe that male members of the Conservative party were satisfied with electing Margaret Thatcher because they knew that

once their reputation was repaired, they could come up with an excuse to remove her from office and elect someone else in her place, and the general public would be okay with that considering several believed she was out of place to begin with. The Conservative party could trust her with repairing their reputation, but they could not trust her with holding power for a long period of time. Thatcher held her position for as long as she did because junior men kept postponing their candidacy too long due to her dominating both national and international politics (Beckwith 742). She was too strong of a figure for the party to quietly replace, and after her time as Prime Minister there were changes made to the election process to ensure that no one could "come to power under the rules that favored Thatcher's selection" (Beckwith 743). The Conservative party made a mistake with electing Thatcher, and they were not going to make it again.

Heywood's Jane Shore and Margaret Thatcher are extremely different, but their uniting characteristic is that men wanted to tear them down due to them being powerful. In the play, Jane had influence over the King of England that she had the potential of using to her advantage, and while Thatcher cared deeply about her image, she did not care what people truly thought about her. She was far from modest, but she tried to make herself invisible by crafting the perfect image (Ribberink paragraph 6). She knew that the public would rip her apart in any way they could, and she gave them as little ammo as possible to make her career easier. "A perfected political image was her answer to the problem of being a woman in a man's world and the vulnerability this implied" (Ribberink paragraph 6). Margaret Thatcher was self aware. She used the Iron Lady "insult" to her advantage (Stepney 136), despite it going against the stereotype for women, and otherwise let the insults and criticisms from the public role off her back. Both Heywood's Jane and Thatcher held a unique power that led to men, as well as other women in Thatcher's case, hating them. Richard could have hated Jane Shore because she was close with

King Edward, or because the public favored her. Men hated Thatcher because she did not fit into the role they believed married women or mothers should have. Women hated Thatcher because they saw her as a masculine woman. Both positions of unique power led to unfortunate endings. Thatcher's legacy is viewed as controversial, and not just because of her rulings. Jane Shore died after being wrongfully arrested, publicly shamed, humiliated, "And by a king again she was destroyed" (Heywood 22.112). It is true that both women had moments where they were in the wrong; neither woman was fully innocent. Margaret Thatcher made some questionable political decisions, and Jane Shore consensually cheated on her husband with a married man, but they were not bad people, or at least not intentionally.

Heywood's Jane Shore and Margaret Thatcher were both victims of gender politics. By going against the gendered expectations set in place for them, they suffered consequences. Specifically, they passed away with their names tarnished. The question needing answered is if they were men, would their names have been as tarnished, if tarnished at all. King Edward passed away seemingly with his reputation in tact in *The Second Part of King Edward IV*, yet Jane was horrifically shamed, and politicians are not known for making the entire public happy, yet Margaret Thatcher is partly known for being a controversial figure. Is it fully because of her political moves, or is it because she is a woman? Both Heywood's Jane Shore and Margaret Thatcher made choices despite knowing society was set up against them, and they did the best they could. Jane did what she could to help others. Thatcher made a name for herself by changing politics and setting up a precedent, not to mention reviving the Conservative party. Jane Shore may have died for what she did, and there has only been one other female Prime Minister since Margaret Thatcher, but their reputations and impact have lived past them, and that should speak for itself.

# Works Cited

Beckwith, Karen. "Before Prime Minister: Margaret Thatcher, Angela Merkel, and Gendered Party Leadership Contests." *Politics & Gender*, vol. 11, no. 4, 2015, pp. 718-45. *ProQuest*, https://search.proquest.com/docview/1749295392?accountid=28833, doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X15000409. Accessed 29 Oct. 2019.

“Gender politics.” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77468?redirectedFrom=gender+politics#eid23699494 Accessed 11 Nov. 2019.

Heywood, Thomas. *The Second Part of King Edward IV*. *The First and Second Parts of King Edward IV*, edited by Richard Rowland, Manchester UP, 2005, pp. 205-311. The Revels Plays.

Krook, Mona Lena. “Violence Against Women in Politics.” *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2017, pp. 74-88. *ProQuest*, https://search.proquest.com/docview/1862036451?accountid=28833, doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jod.2017.0007. Accessed 11 Nov. 2019.

Ribberink, Anneke. "Gender Politics with Margaret Thatcher: Vulnerability and Toughness." *Gender Forum*, no. 30, 2010, pp. 1-12. *ProQuest*, https://search.proquest.com/docview/818683572?accountid=28833. Accessed 29 Oct. 2019.

Shakespeare, William. *Richard III*. *The Wadsworth Shakespeare*, edited by G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd ed., Wadsworth, 1997, pp. 748-804.

Stepney, Paul. “The Legacy of Margaret Thatcher—A Critical Assessment.” *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2014, pp. 134–43. doi: 10.4236/jss.2014.21013. Accessed 29 Oct. 2019.

# "It is holy ground where the shadows fall": An Analysis of Light and Dark Imagery in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" and House of the Seven Gables

**By Jensen Lyons-Sabados**

Nathaniel Hawthorne filled his works with protagonists trying to find the light in an ever-darkening world. Where some failed to find the light, others set it upon themselves to be the light. Two prominent examples of this idea in action come from Hawthorne's acclaimed short story "Young Goodman Brown" and novel *The House of the Seven Gables*. From Goodman Brown's journey into the dark woods with the mysterious figure to the crippling curse on the Pyncheon house, Hawthorne wove light and darkness into his works in exploration of the human soul. In his tales, darkness corrupts the souls of the innocent, defaces once beautiful architecture, and instills distrust in the hearts of the most faithful. Darkness might seem all-encompassing and incredibly lonely, but light can still be found in the characters Hawthorne introduces. Hawthorne's use of light and dark imagery through setting and characters reflect the intricacies of the human consciousness.

Goodman Brown's journey into the woods signifies not only his stray from faith, but the shameful untold truths in the Brown family. As he prepares to leave his new wife's side, Hawthorne provides the audience with the first light imagery—the pink ribbons in Faith's hat. Pink traditionally symbolizes innocence, particularly in women. However, Faith's ribbons appear again later in the tale, to the horror of her husband:

> The cry of grief, rage and terror, was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something

> fluttered lightly down through the air, and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and be held a pink ribbon. (“Young” 141)

The brightly colored, innocent ribbons that adorn an obedient, young wife’s hat have somehow made their way into the dark, decrepit woods. The diction of the above passage showcases the ease that darkness can overtake light. Screams hold no power compared to the laughter of those that do not care. More than that, Brown’s fear for his wife’s safety starts him down a path of doubt and fear.

The darkness in “Young Goodman Brown” begins around the time that the tale does. Goodman Brown takes his journey into the woods at twilight. The audience learns that “[Brown] had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest of trees in the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely could be.” (“Young”134) Look at the way the scene sets itself up. Dreary, gloomiest, lonely all come together to create the scene. This personification of the forest creates the image of the world as being twisted, shadows reaching out in this tight dark space to grab at any stray traveler. Later, with the appearance of Faith’s ribbons, the darkness has taken a stronger hold. Even though Faith’s character has roots in religious element, Brown’s belief in his wife’s innocent nature becomes shattered once “ by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched man beheld his Faith, and the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed alter…Whether Faith obeyed, he knew not.” (“Young” 146) Their only light in this monstrous night comes from the fires of Hell. If heavenly light protects those who follow it, hellfire’s malicious nature promises only destruction for those unlucky enough to find themselves in it.

As Goodman Brown meets the traveler, he learns that his father and grandfather took this journey years before him. The figure tells him "I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem. And it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine torch, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to set fire to an Indian Village, in King Philip's war. They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight." ("Young" 136) Again, this journey's setting in the dark woods remains in the forefront, but now with an added layer; What began as a solitary journey for Brown has become the continuation of shameful legacy. The narrator of the tale wonders if "Goodman Brown [had] fallen asleep in the forest, and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch meeting?" ("Young" 147) If Goodman Brown's trip into the forest came from a dream, then the audience must ask themselves if this justifies his actions at the end of the tale. Goodman Brown turns his back on his fellow man, beliving the supposed truthfulness of a dream. The dark elements in the tale, particularly in the setting, create a dark world with no refuge for those in danger. When those persons who embraced the dark element then appear in his life, his trust for the goodness of their character no longer exists.

Hawthorne continues this ideology in his book *The House of the Seven Gables*. Following the Pyncheon family's misdeed generations earlier, the house built has begun to to decay as the years have worn on. "However, the flowers might have come there, it was both sad and sweet to observe how Nature adopted to herself this desolate, decaying, gusty, rusty, old house of the Pyncheon family; and how the ever returning Summer did her best to gladden it with tender beauty, and grew melancholy in the effort." (*House* 27) The

adjectives used have distinct tone to them, pulling the audience to the darker parts of their minds. Death and decay fill this house and not even the summer sun can drive it away.

Darkness finds itself not only in the setting of Hawthorne's tales but also in characters as well. In *House of the Seven Gables*, darkness comes in the form of Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. Judge Pyncheon creates an interesting element in the tale. His high regard of himself as "a man of eminent respectability... there was not an individual…who would have dreamed of seriously disputing his claim to a high and honorable place in the world's regard." (*House* 228) Judge Pyncheon believes himself as better than those around him because of the reputation he holds. Having a good reputation creates a persona of lightness, one who will change the world, however Judge Pyncheon's light holds no merit. Judge Pyncheon's actions "[manifest] an imbalance between the spirit and the flesh, the intellect and the body, such characters attempt to impose a ridged control upon the impulses of others who remind them of their own weakness and physical limitations (Steele 154). Light does not restrict those around them, it guides them to the possibilities ahead. Judge Pyncheon's reputation with his righteous light finds only one naysayer. "His conscience, unless, it might be for the little space of five minutes in the whole twenty-four hours, or, now and then, some black day in the whole year's circle—his conscience bore an accordant testimony with the world's laudatory voice." (*House* 229) His own conscience knows that his stellar reputation does not make him better than those around them. No matter what he does, at the end of the day, Judge Pyncheon will still be a flawed human like everyone else.

Again, despite the darkness that rots the house and Judge Pyncheon's faux persona, light comes in the form of Phoebe. In numerous works, Hawthorne presents young women as central characters to change. Phoebe's "sunny cheerfulness shines pervasively on each of

the other characters, on the garden and on the house itself. No one and nothing that matters remains untouched by her genial influence." (Birdsall 251) Consider the possibilities that come with being young, having one's entire life ahead of them. What control should the past have when the future holds endless possibilities. "Phoebe is the best symbol of the change—all color and light—a blooming rosebud of a girl who brightens the dark old house by living in it…When she leaves the house, darkness falls over it; when she returns—as the curse is concluded—sunshine comes with her" (Blair 81). Phoebe's characterization holds elements of hope and love, but not naiveté. She knows that horrible people exist in the world and some circumstances cannot be changed no matter how much someone might want them to. However, the things that she can change, she does. Her sunshine allows the house to move away from the dark past.

Phoebe's return to the house contains little dialogue in the beginning, relying heavily on the imagery within the text to show the audience her importance:

> Phoebe, coming so suddenly from the sunny daylight, was altogether bedimmed in such density of shadow as lurked in most of the passages of the old house. She was not at first aware by whom she had been admitted. Before her eyes had adapted themselves to the obscurity, a hand grasped her own with a firm but gentle and warm pressure, thus imparting a welcome which caused her heart to leap and thrill with an indefinable shiver of enjoyment... The sunshine came freely into all the uncurtained windows of this room, and fell upon the dusty floor; so that Phoebe now clearly saw—what, indeed, had been no secret, after the encounter of a warm hand with hers—that it was not Hepzibah nor Clifford, but Holgrave, to whom she owed her reception. (*House*, 300)

Sunshine follows Phoebe as she re-enters this house, and before she's even used to the lingering darkness inside, someone offers their hand to her. The warmth and sureness of that hand in hers calms her as she's lead to a room with curtainless windows, a mind ready to let the light in. Holgrave tells her that before she came it was "a dark, cold miserable hour! The presence of yonder dead man threw a great black shadow over everything; he made the universe so far as my perception could reach, a scene of guilt… but, Phoebe, you crossed the threshold; and hope, warmth, and joy, came in with you! The black moment became at once a blissful one." (*House* 306) Phoebe provides the members of the Pyncheon house with hope for a better future. She does not try to change what has happened in the past; instead she moves them forward to a better tomorrow.

As one reads Hawthorne's tales, they may notice the overlap of characters, settings and themes, particularly in the language that he chose to write with. During the 19th century, authors wrote pieces on the nature of language, but Hawthorne took a different approach. He found "both that language often [could] not directly express the spiritual meanings of physical things and that words often [had] the tendency to create unforeseen possibilities for meaning." (Roger, 444) Hawthorne's stories have no shortage of rich description, so how did he come to this conclusion? Earlier in the same article, Rogers expands on her point:

> Although Hawthorne did not write specifically about the nature of language, as many of his contemporaries did, his *Notebooks* are full of explorations of its limitations and capabilities. He often experiments with the idea that that language cannot describe a scene accurately or convey his own impressions truthfully, he also frequently indicates the possibilities that language has to convey meaning,

> particularly in his notes of what he calls "literal pictures of figurative expressions." …The "literal pictures" allow him to explore relations between the literal and figurative meaning and between the literal and the physical and the figurative and the spiritual. (Rogers, 440-441)

Hawthorne understood that language cannot accurately describe any single aspect of a story. However, the world does not limit itself to singularity and neither does he. Life layers itself with people, places, memories, ideas that do not always make sense. This stylistic choice invites the audience to reflect on the story more personally. Could Goodman Brown's journey into the woods tell a tale of a youth straying from his faith or of the corruption inside all those around him? Do the crumbling gables of the Pyncheon house represent a real curse or an imagined one? Hawthorne's stance on language does not take away from his tales, if anything his stance strengthens them. He invites the audience to reflect on the tale as they read, to reflect on their own past as a way to connect with the piece. "When he is cheerful—when the sun shines into his mind—then I venture to peep in, just as far as the light reaches, but no farther. It is holy ground where the shadow falls!" (*House* 178) People bring joy and memories bring pain. Phoebe's youth and shining spirit fill the house with life, allowing the past sins to fade into the background. Goodman Brown's doubt of his fellow man's integrity leads to a life of bitterness and dissatisfaction. The holy ground that Phoebe mentions breeds insecurities and doubt, which, when left uncheck, fester into isolation and fear.

Darkness does not just present itself as crumbling buildings or twisted forests. Darkness lives inside the mind of men, nursed into fruition by one's environment. "On the psychological plane, nevertheless, it necessitates for Hawthorne's kind of "metanoia," a

change in mind, in his whole attitude toward things…If such salvation consists in bringing about a "metanoia", that change, in turn, can itself come about only through repeated fulfilment, until what had once be done by conscious and anguished choice becomes as it were, part of the individual's own nature." (Chai, 205) Hawthorne's endings come from the character's reaction to the events in the story. Goodman Brown actively chooses to reject the good in those around him, leaving him a life apart from the world. Phoebe's actions and return to the house push the Pyncheon family from the past and lead to long fulfilling lives. Circumstances induce reaction, but reaction creates circumstance.

Hawthorne's use of light and dark imagery reflect the intricacy of the human conciousness. Hawthorne uses the setting as a visualization of the corruption. Darkness filling the world around the characters makes it harder to know what around them does and does not exist. The bright characters provide the world with hope for a better tomorrow. However, not everyone finds their way to that light, allowing the seductive darkness to encase them forever. They might fulfill the societal expectations that come with their status at the time, but they take no pride, no joy in it. A person will focus on the darker parts of their lives as they feel that is what they deserve. However, other characters in the story provide balance. Where one character sees nothing but twisted corruption, another sees shining light bringing light into a bad situation. Hawthorne's imagery creates incredibly layered worlds in reflection of our own.

Works Cited

Birdsall, Virgina Ogden. “Hawthorne’s Fair-Haired Maidens: The Fading Light.” *PML,* Vol. 75, No. 3, Jun. 1960, pp. 250-256. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/460336.

Blair, Walter. “Color, Light, and Shadow in Hawthorne’s Fiction.” *The New England Quarterly,* Vol. 15, No. 1, Mar. 1942. Pp. 74-94. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/360231.

Chai, Leon. *The Romantic Foundations of the American Renaissance*. Cornell University Press. 1987.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The House of the Seven Gables.* Ohio State University Press. 1965.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. “Young Goodman Brown.” *Selected Tales and Sketches,* Introduction by Michael J. CC Laucurico, Viking Penguin Inc. 1987 pp. 133-148.

Roger, Patricia M. “Taking a Perspective: Hawthorne’s Concept of Language and Nineteenth Century Language.” *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 51, No. 4, Mar. 1997, pp. 433-454. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/2933854.

Steele, Jeffrey. *The Representation of the Self in the American Renaissance*. The University of North Carolina Press. 1987.

# Secrets Revealed: Freud and Families in *Jane Eyre*

By Linda Mae Stegall

The novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë tackles many topics that refer back to the author's life; however, one of the most important comparisons is the dynamic between the Brontës and the Reed and Rivers families. A multitude of analyses could be used, but Sigmund Freud's "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming"—though not directly about *Jane Eyre*—critiques the family dynamics stupendously. Using Freud's essay, the suspicion as to how the families compare is evident via the division of good and bad, the plot's wish-fulfillment, the notion of reparation, and imagery justification.

Freud argues that the difficulties in daily life are magnified in creative works, that characters are exaggerated into strictly moral or immoral. He claims that the "other people in the story are sharply divided into good and bad, with complete disregard of the manifold variety in the traits of real human beings; the 'good' ones are those who help the ego in its character of hero, while the 'bad' are his enemies and rivals" (Freud 180). This division of good and bad is evident in the Reeds; Jane tells the reader that John shows only "antipathy to me. He bullied and punished me… continually…" (Brontë 24). John, instead of being the caring cousin he should be, is nothing but a bully to Jane, a girl who deserves affection and some sympathy. Similar to John's torment, Mrs. Reed's evil affects Jane through exclusion, degradation, and neglect. Although Branwell and Charlotte had—arguably—the closest relationship among the siblings and her aunt gave her the money to go to school, Brontë exemplifies the negative aspects of their characters through the constant bullying and her aunt's strict, stern, and cold nature. Just as Freud mentioned, Brontë took these negative qualities of her family members and exaggerated them—transforming the Reed family into monsters with no redeeming qualities. St. John Rivers is another example of exaggerated traits. Jane describes him as being so devoted to God that he shuns any thought of true

affections; this unyielding religious devotion recalls to a passage from Julie Barker's *The Brontës* regarding Charlotte's father Patrick when she says that "It must have been a relief to Patrick to relinquish the supervision of his daughters' education to Charlotte. The demands of his time were so great that he can have little time to indulge…Despite this, he was relentless in his campaigns…he tried to encourage pious men in his parish to go for ordination" (183). Like St. John, Mr. Brontë shunned his family and relinquished the responsibility of teaching girls to Jane/Charlotte in order to focus more on his religious studies and teaching males—as Mr. Brontë maintained jurisdiction over teaching Branwell. He also turns away from personal affairs and even his own well-being to pursue his relationship with God and spreading that relationship to others—as St. John denies his true love and plans to go on a mission trip to India where he will likely die in order to further his devotion and that of others. For similar reasons, St. John relates to Branwell, but mostly it is the family structure itself that suggests this conclusion. Branwell was alone with his two younger sisters who were much closer with one another than with him, his mother being deceased, and father absent. Later Charlotte came in and took over the family dynamic as benefactor of their well-being and education. Similarly, Jane finds St. John with his two sisters, no parents, and lacking help in education. Jane becomes their literal benefactress and supervises female education. She feels close to St. John but views him as only a family member, which she exploits when she constantly reminds him of her brotherly feelings towards him. Again, recalling to Barker's book, Charlotte lacks a major adult closeness with Branwell due to their differing paths of life, and finds that—in writing to him—she recalls to their childhood and misses when their relationship was on the childhood basis, similar to how Jane wants her relationship with St. John to be pure and not "adult," or sexual (421). While reading certain parts of Barker's book, I noticed that Charlotte and Branwell often disagreed and had fallings-out in their adult years due to their

conflicting views, and the two of them both wanted to return to their childhood—perhaps Brontë is reflecting that desperation for familial closeness with Jane and St. John's relationship.

Much like other works by Brontë, *Jane Eyre* is a reflection of certain aspects of her life, specifically her love of Constantin Heger, her French professor at Cowan Bridge School, and her desire for her infatuation to become realized. Freud calls this kind of fantasy wish-fulfillment and remarks that "Unsatisfied wishes are the driving power behind phantasies; every separate phantasy contains the fulfillment of a wish, and improves an unsatisfactory reality" (176). Such is certainly the case with Brontë and Jane. Freud continues to explain the theory of the wish-fulfillment fantasy in relation to gender, saying that although women in his time period are raised to be practically asexual, their fantasies are dominated almost exclusively, by eroticism "for their ambition is generally comprised n their erotic longings" (176-7). Their sexual tension arises from their societal expectations of being confined to the domestic sphere, making their entire lives revolve around mindless housework and pleasing their husbands—one obviously being more exciting and dominating their psyche. Once again, Freud's claims hold true to Brontë and Jane—as Brontë's desire for Heger, though not allowed expression in the real world, becomes the focus of her creative writing. Jane, too, though a brilliant intellectual capable of chasing her ambition professionally, relies on her obsession with Rochester throughout the course of the novel, even though she knows it is fundamentally wrong in relation to the original impression of Jane, who had more educational ambition originally than intimate ambitions.

Brontë uses Jane as a way of not only fulfilling her secret desires but also as a means of righting her wrongs. Freud states the greatest and deepest pleasure one can achieve—"fore-pleasure"—is the same kind readers get from reading and "that the true enjoyment of literature proceeds from the release of tensions in our minds. Perhaps much that brings about this result

consists in the writer's putting us into a position in which we can enjoy our own day-dreams without reproach or shame" (183). Yet another of Freud's claims apply to *Jane Eyre* as the piece was written with fore-pleasure in mind. Brontë wanted to write a romance novel about Heger, but she also wanted to repair her guilt on the subject, especially that she wanted to be with a married man so much and condemned her brother for wanting to be with a married woman. In order to achieve this notion of reparation, Brontë made Jane wealthy and has her divide her fortune among the members of the Rivers family. This money is given to St. John (her father/brother figure in the story) and his sisters (who represent some of Brontë's sisters); perhaps the division is to make-up to her family for the shame that her realized sexually fantasies will bring to them. Ultimately, though, it falls upon her repentance for portraying her father so negatively and her own guilty conscience that drives Jane's fancies.

Brontë uses imagery to describe the frigidity of the Reeds and Rivers families and to justify the ending of the novel. She names all of the three main families after elements of nature, but a reed is obviously a plant that sprouts from a river, a weed. This represents the Reed family because their wealth indirectly stems from part of the Rivers' and is a pest in Jane's life. When describing John Reed, Brontë uses imagery such as John "thrusting out his tongue at me as far as he could without damaging the roots…" (25). The word "roots" call to mind the image of a plant, which is exactly Brontë's goal. Just a few pages later, Brontë says Mrs. Reed was only trying to uproot her bad tendencies (34). Once again, she uses the plant imagery with a negative connotation to give the impression that the Reed family is frigid and cruel band of tormenters. Brontë better develops the frigidity through the Rivers family. Towards the end of the novel, she calls upon an allusion to describe St. John as a stoic person ready to " 'burst' with boldness and good will into 'the silent seas' of their souls" (362). This line is powerful because St. John is willing to pour his emotions

for the woman he loves into the nothingness in Jane instead of his love simply for his religion. It describes him as bursting, like a dam, ready to drown others quietly. This reflects what he attempts to do to Jane: tempt her with the promise of life and salvation only to sweep her away to death like a baptism river running too rampant. The frigidity, or coldness, really is addressed a few pages later before St. John confesses his intentions to Jane. He comes in unannounced during a storm, "out of the frozen hurricane…the cloak that covered his figure all white as a glacier" (366). Throughout this entire scene, Jane keeps bringing up images of frozen water. Comparing St. John to frozen water sets him up as another inhabitable place for Jane—one that would get her killed if she stayed—whereas Rochester is given a more intimate hue. His name could be broken up to mean "rock-nesters," yet another nature themed name. However, Brontë strategically makes him more permanent, as reeds will grow old and die, rivers are semi-set but can dry up or freeze over, but rocks stand for ages. Jane plans to nest with a rock, literally she is settling down with someone who isn't going anywhere. When combined with the supernatural call and convenient death of his wife, this better description serves to make Rochester the only right choice and therefore justifies the ending.

The division of morality, wish-fulfillment, notion of reparation, and frigid nature imagery best represents the Reed, Rivers, and Brontë families. *Jane Eyre* and the "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming" come together to show an analysis of Charlotte Brontë's personal and creative life that is as detailed as it is shockingly accurate. Although it is fairly unclear as to why the families all have to be nature-themed with "r's," the comparisons between the Reeds and Rivers are so obvious and obviously related to Brontë's own family that one must wonder if her true intention was to tell the truth of her desires, as hyperbolic as they were. Regardless, Brontë's literature will

continue forward in the changing literary canon because of the ever-applicable and thought-provoking material.

## Works Cited

Barker, Juliet. *The Brontës*. St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Edited by Beth Newman, Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism, 2nd ed., Bedford, 2015.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming." *Sigmund Freud's Collected Papers*, Vol. IV, NY Basic Books, 1959, pp. 176-183.

ATTENTION
STUDENT SCHOLARS!

# JOURNAL of CREATIVE INQUIRY