



*edited by Jan Lloyd Jones and Julian Lamb*

# ART & AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity is a formidable word, a dangerous word, a word whereby fortunes, careers, and reputations can be won or lost. But what has authenticity to do with Art?

The essays in this book focus on the turbulent relationship between art and authenticity, ranging widely across the fields of literature, the visual arts, and philosophy and exposing assumptions about the nature of originality, of reality, of authority, of the self.

In pursuit of authenticity the contributors engage with Erasmus, Rousseau, Heidegger, Beckett, Borges, and Houellebecq. They consider subjects as varied as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, da Vinci's *La Belle Ferronnière*, and *Million Dollar Baby*, and topics as diverse as fictional biography, portraiture, copies and forgeries, war photography, letters as testimony, and texts in translation. And they ask questions such as:

Is art engaged with presenting reality or does it present a rival world of its own?

Exactly which self was Hamlet to be true to?

How is the line drawn between history and fiction? Between fiction and biography?

Questions which cannot necessarily be answered with any guarantee of authenticity.

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*In memory of Graham Cullum (1946-2009),  
Renaissance scholar and teacher of English  
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## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING (ABSOLUTELY) AUTHENTIC

J. K. Lloyd Jones

*In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity, is the vital thing.*

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*

*It doesn't matter what the jargon [of authenticity] says, so long as it is spoken in a voice that resonates properly.*

Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*

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Many, perhaps far too many philosophers have written on authenticity, often without clearly explaining what they meant.<sup>1</sup> Do not be alarmed: I am not going to give an account here of all that has been written on the subject, or anything at all serious.<sup>2</sup> For Sartre has said that to be authentic one must never be serious; and most philosophers, of course, are serious; including, interestingly, Sartre himself.<sup>3</sup> But let us look a little closer at this very entrancing word. Authenticity is one of those words that can do no wrong. It is a word that always manages to be on the side of the angels. It positively wears a halo. It glows. Like 'motherhood' or 'democracy', it is a hooray word. Nothing was ever thought the less of because it was deemed to be 'authentic'. Indeed, the adjective is much-prized, for it has the ability to cast a virtuous light upon any word it is associated with. Such is its power that even things normally regarded as quite detestable become acceptable once within its ambit: it confers an untouchable status, an absolute unassailability; it performs magical acts of transvaluation.<sup>4</sup> Thus, boasting the much-coveted accolade 'authentic', vulgarity, thanks to Sartre,<sup>5</sup> becomes admirable, and madness, thanks to Foucault, becomes the only truly respectable state for the thoughtful existentialist.<sup>6</sup> Even death, courtesy of Heidegger, becomes fashionable—at least as a topic of discussion—because it has been surrounded by the aura of authenticity.<sup>7</sup>

Given the remarkable properties of authenticity, it is not surprising that advertisers and marketeers, no less than philosophers, have rushed to embrace the concept. As a marketing device, it seems destined to run and run—like the long-haired girls through the grass (promoting petrochemical products for the hair) or

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the 'green' cars that make the driver feel so virtuous he decides to drive that little bit farther, that little bit faster. Then the celebrity magazines take off on the notion of the authentic self, with Britney/Lindsay/Kate: what are they REALLY like; what are the quirky little differences that make each of the Spice Girls so inimitably, so undeniably (until the next make-over) themselves? And what are YOU really like? Are you an introvert, an extrovert, a pervert? Perhaps you have suppressed tendencies towards sadism/cannibalism/mambo dancing? All of these intensely fascinating articles are pivoted on the unstated but pervasive belief that there is a core and central self to which one must be true, which one must reveal and in fact rejoice in with the loudly proclaimed motto: 'That's just me!'. There is even an online test so that you can determine how authentic you are. And how dreadful to fail! For what would that mean? That you are indeed someone else? Or just not good enough at being yourself—try harder! Buy more genuine products to fit your personality! Adopt a lifestyle, for goodness sake, before you are revealed as a fraud and an impostor, the sort of person who is avoided at cocktail parties and only just tolerated in the post office queue.

But surely it is just a coincidence that certain philosophers and those who manipulate the mass consumer market should share a fascination with authenticity? Theodor Adorno argues that, far from being accidental, the link is direct and insidious. His view is that, regardless of the *intentions* of 'The Authentic Ones',<sup>8</sup> what they achieved was to turn authenticity into a doctrine with its own treacherous jargon that 'gives itself over either to the market, to balderdash, or to the predominating vulgarity'.<sup>9</sup> What they provided was a metaphysics of the marketplace that could easily be adapted for use by the totalitarian state. In placing death at the centre of the authentic self, Heidegger created, in Adorno's words, a 'theodicy of death'.<sup>10</sup> For the inexorable consequence of this move is the negation of that self—the dialectic of being and non-being is dissolved, and death, the principle of non-being, reigns triumphant. Adorno states his conclusion starkly and unambiguously: 'Authenticity is death'.<sup>11</sup>

Here we have a transvaluation indeed. Authenticity, like Iago, has been playing some dangerous games.<sup>12</sup> The astonishing inversion of meaning that it has undergone demonstrates how a word, carrying with it (as all words do) the aura of its associations and the evaluations that are linked to it, just as certain overtones will accompany a given chord, can import a value system into a domain where it previously had no place. And remembering this, when advertisers present their products as 'all natural', favoured by flower-bedecked youths and maidens cavorting in the open air, as genuine, real, true—whether jeans or jerseys, tea or toothpaste—we might pause for a moment, think of Heidegger in his lederhosen, in his peasant-style hut in the Black Forest, and drink a toast to him, perhaps with genuine Bavarian-style beer.

*The first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible. What the second duty is no one has yet discovered.*

Oscar Wilde, *An Ideal Husband*

In *An Authentic Enigma*, Valerie Trumpington<sup>13</sup> tells the story of Celestina, a librarian who on an afternoon off walks into an art dealer's shop and buys on impulse an Etruscan vase, paying for it as much as one might for a painting by Velázquez. But suddenly on the way home Celestina has doubts. The art dealer had given his name as Phileas Fogg, which was almost certainly not true. Could he also have been lying about the vase? We follow Celestina on her urgent quest to discover whether or not the vase is in fact authentic. It is, of course, authentically a vase, but is it Etruscan? Did the Etruscans have vases? And if so, what did they put in them? The idea of an Etruscan rose is very appealing. But Celestina has no time to investigate the state of flower-arranging, a secondary but most delightful art, during the Etruscan era. Perhaps she has been duped by a charlatan! Her constant question still must be, 'Is it authentic?'

But what does Celestina mean here? She means, does the vase belong to that time and to that place associated with the rich and evocative, enigmatic word, 'Etruscan'? This is a difficult question, however, for the chief and most romantic thing about the Etruscans is that so little is known about them; indeed, she has nothing to compare the vase with except a painting by Matisse—and he, being an artist, might well have been making it up.

So Celestina decides to visit the Hesperides (where collectors of Etruscan art gather each winter) to verify not only that her vase is authentic, but that the stories she has heard about the Hesperides (sometimes called the Isles of the Blessed) are also authentic. As it turns out, she needs a new passport for this journey (for her previous passport had been confiscated when it was discovered that she was a character in a book). This requires her to produce an authentic likeness of herself, one that an upstanding member of the community can readily vouch for. Of course, this proves problematic, as her photographic likeness is a little wayward (as Sartre had recommended it to be, in order to be truly authentic). Nevertheless, she eventually finds someone who is both upstanding and has read nearly all of *Being and Nothingness* (or so he claims) and so signs the photograph; but when she arrives in the Hesperides (not their real name) the customs officer (who constantly reads Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Irony* and never anything else) declares that this is not an authentic likeness, nor is Celestina her real name. And to top it all off, he adds that the Hesperides, or the Happy Isles as they are sometimes known, do not exist. In other words, neither she, nor her passport, nor the country she has landed in

could be said to be authentic! But what about the vase? Luckily there is absolutely no doubt about that; the customs official turns out to be an art expert and immediately provides her with a certificate stating that the vase is most definitely the real thing.

*Art is the only serious thing in the world. And the artist is the only person who is never serious.*

Oscar Wilde, 'A Few Maxims for the Instruction of the Over-Educated'

*The concept of authenticity can deny art itself, yet at the same time it figures as the dark source of art.*

Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*

There are many more diverting stories of Celestina and her desperate attempts to find authenticity, but alas there is no space to relate them here. And the point of this very serious (for I am not at all authentic) introduction is to introduce the essays that follow. These have been divided into four sections, although many other ways of grouping them would have been appropriate; and this is not to suggest that in fitting into one category an essay is automatically barred from another; lines of division should ideally be erased and re-drawn frequently, like chalk drawings on the pavement or fog sculptures. But let us play by the rules and use the categories as given (it was Celestina who suggested them to me), bracketing, as the philosophers like to do, all factors that are likely to cause objections.

Part One is called Authenticity and the Original. These essays look at various concepts of originality, of returning to the source; for nothing (and perhaps not even that) is *ex nihilo*. But is there virtue in being the very first, the only begetter, the *primum mobile*? Not necessarily, says Livio Dobrez: 'some of the great works of art are copies; many are touched up, and indeed in some cultures overpainting is part of the tradition'. But where does that leave the original? Dobrez considers Borges' proposition that it is perfectly possible to write the original *Don Quixote*, regardless of the existence of any text by Cervantes, and argues that this claim, while rather surprising, is not unreasonable: 'all that is required is for time to be abolished, for if this is achieved, then copies turn into originals and originals into fakes'. Which is to say, it is all a matter of perspective; although perspective itself is not a fixed point but always in a state of historical flux. For this reason, the 'original' meaning of a text is best understood as coming about through an interaction of reader reception and authorial intention, as a fusion of horizons, in Gadamer's terms, but horizons that are themselves always moving.

Rolph Elliott recounts the story of his quest to find the original Green Chapel described in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a long alliterative poem written in the fourteenth century in the dialect of the north-west midlands of England. It was to the Green Chapel that Sir Gawain went so reluctantly to meet the Green Knight—reluctantly, for the understanding was that it was here he was to have his head cut off in recompense for having done the same to the belligerent Green Knight (at his own insistence) the Christmas before. The Green Knight had at the time seemed none the worse for this experience, but nevertheless Sir Gawain is more than a little anxious as his appointment approaches, and the poet's description of the strange Green Chapel adds to the reader's suspense. In fact, so fine and detailed is this unknown poet's descriptive power that, with a little detective work, some knowledge of the local topography and dialect, and a willing band of students, Elliott was able to locate the exact site of this mysterious chapel where fabled Sir Gawain went so long ago to meet the Green Knight.

Amanda Crawford looks at Peter Ackroyd's patently fake and contradictory biography of Thomas Chatterton (himself a forger) and asks why fictional biography has recently become so interesting to writers—and why it is so provocative to readers. Ackroyd's novel shows that attempts to track down an 'original' Chatterton only lead to an ever-increasing multiplicity of tales: the promise of finding an absolute, pristine, original source turns out to be a lure, a trick, a device by which the reader is led down through the many-mirrored labyrinth that is history, only to find himself not at the source, as he had hoped, but exactly where he started.

Judi Crane asks how an historical character is constructed, looking in detail at the way Margaret of Anjou (later Queen Margaret, consort of Henry VI of England) is presented by Shakespeare in the *Henry VI* plays and in *Richard III* and comparing this with the evidence from Hall and Holinshed's chronicles of the times. She notes along the way that Shakespeare is the source of much of our historical knowledge of the era, so the line between history and fiction must here, as elsewhere, be rather tentatively drawn.

Elisabeth Findlay takes the subject of portrait-painting and examines a variety of views on what constitutes authenticity in portraiture—including those of Thomas Carlyle, who believed that a portrait painted from life was uniquely able to reveal the inner character of the subject. She concludes that it does indeed matter whether a portrait is painted from life, although perhaps for reasons other than those suggested by Carlyle.

Authenticity and Reality, Part Two of the book, deals with the problematic relationship of art with the real world. Derek Allon begins this section by outlining André Malraux's theory of art and discussing his contention that art presents not a reflection of the real world, but rather a rival world of its own. According

to Malraux, the artist creates in the teeth of reality, not in deference to it, and is inspired not by nature or by personal experience in the real world but by the work of other artists. Art therefore is not mimetic: it is never in subservience to mere reality, but instead presents a challenge to it.

Paul Campbell examines a tradition in Renaissance drama whereby highly fictional characters were free to consort with the most thoroughly well-documented historical characters. The fictional and the factual were blatantly and unapologetically confused in a way that we would otherwise suppose to be post-modern and terribly new. He looks in particular at plays which presented the fickle goddess Fortuna on stage alongside weighty historical figures.

David Bell compares the work of two Australian World War I photographers, Frank Hurley and Charles Bean, and their very different attempts to capture what they perceived to be the reality of warfare—one using composite photographs, the other insisting upon the single shot. Both were aiming to convey the authentic experience of warfare, but they were distinctly at odds over which photographic method would best achieve this.

Geoffrey Borny discusses how Anton Chekhov's training as a scientist influenced the way he presented the characters in his plays. Chekhov preferred a naturalistic, undramatic style in which, as it is often claimed, 'nothing ever happens'. The real action, however, lies in the interplay between 'life as it is' and 'life as it should be', for against his characters' unremarkable lives Chekhov counterpointed, most poignantly, their dreams and aspirations.

James Grieve considers the works of Michel Houellebecq, a contemporary French novelist often praised by critics for his depictions of modern life as grim, indeed revolting. Are these stories bravely bearing witness to the hideous truth, or just another example of prurience masquerading as dedication to art? Since Sartre associated authenticity with vulgarity there has been a tendency to believe that a description of reality will only really do if it is sufficiently repellent. But the question then arises, how much authenticity can art bear?

Patricia Dobrez looks at three Australian authors and their very different approaches to the challenge the novelist faces: how best to render subjective experience in words. She compares the post-modern pastiche of Peter Carey's trick 'autobiography' *My Life as a Fake* with the Romantic realism of Henry Handel Richardson's *The Getting of Wisdom* and the symbolism of Patrick White's modernist novel *The Aunt's Story*.

Authenticity and Authority, Part Three, starts with Julian Lamb looking at the *Ciceronianus*, a satire by Erasmus directed against the purists who believed one should only ever write as Cicero did. Erasmus in this text explores a number of the very ridiculous positions purists are led to in following the letter rather than the spirit of a rule. Lamb argues that the Ciceronians (not to mention some latter-day

critics writing on Erasmus) miss the very important point that it is decorum—the appositeness of a word or an act to an occasion or a context—that determines what is appropriate use or behaviour, not blind adherence to a doctrine, a set of rules, or a supposed authority.

Francois Oppel remarks upon the unmistakable sense of authenticity, of authority, conveyed by a hand-written letter. She examines a collection of letters written by her own grandparents while they were missionaries in India during the earlier part of the twentieth century. The letters reveal an interesting interaction between two very different cultures, including the inevitable (and sometimes comical) misapprehensions each has of the other, as well as the tolerance and generosity of spirit shown on both sides.

Diana Kostyrko describes the case of *Hahn u. Duveen*, in which a jury was asked to decide which was, of two paintings, an original da Vinci and which was merely a copy by a journeyman. Clearly such pronouncements can have enormous financial implications for the owners of the paintings involved, and this notorious court case raised a number of very difficult questions. When does a work of art become primarily a commodity? What is the value of an art expert's opinion? Who decides what is right when there are different points of view on the provenance of a work of art?

Brigid Moher braves the minefield of literature in translation and asks, in the course of looking in particular at translations of a play by the Italian playwright Dario Fo, should the translator be doggedly faithful to the source text, or only intermittently so? Should translation aim primarily at capturing the words or the feeling, the meaning or the style? And is it possible for a translation to be better than the original, or does the aura of the original mean that it will always shine brighter?

Russell Smith points out that claims to authenticity immediately engender suspicion and draw attention to a lack that perhaps was not previously evident. He cites Derrida's logic of supplementarity to explain this seeming paradox, which he sees as well illustrated by the inter-textual relationship of Samuel Beckett's *How It Is* to Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Smith demonstrates how the Beckett text, by alluding to Dante's text with distorted or perverted versions of the original, effectively exposes and undermines the unquestioned authority that is presupposed by the *Divine Comedy*.

Authenticity and the Self, Part Four, begins with Simon Haines, who reveals the degree to which Jean-Jacques Rousseau can be said to lie behind the discourse in continental philosophy that locates authenticity, mysteriously, within a construct called the self. He writes: 'the idea that we have to look inwards to find the real self is, in its modern form, first and foremost Rousseau's'. Rousseau's doctrine of the noble savage, of natural man embodying goodness and society necessarily leading to depravity, can be seen as a sentimentalised version of Hobbes' state of nature, with a Robinson Crusoe-like figure (the book was a favourite of Rousseau's) as the

exemplary, self-sufficient and unsullied hero of this paradise from which civilised practices have so cruelly removed us.

Duncan Driver asks: 'Who is the authentic Hamlet?' Critics for the last four hundred years have felt entitled very much to make what they would of Shakespeare's Prince of Denmark—some analysing him as if he were a 'real' person, with supposed dimensions beyond those revealed on stage; some, like Coleridge, reading their own melancholy into his; and some determined to regard him as no more than 'a loose set of inconsistent speeches'. Thus, *Hamlet* criticism can be seen to reflect the larger debate about the nature of the self. 'I have that Within, which passeth show', says Hamlet. But is this essence ever revealed in the play, or is the promised revelation merely endlessly deferred?

The self is sometimes spoken of as if it were a singularity, an indivisible entity; and it is this singularity that is supposed to be the guarantee of authenticity. But Danijela Kambasković-Sawers shows how Shakespeare's sonnet sequence presents an infinitely fascinating portrait of the speaker as a splintered self whose essence is inconsistency, a self that alters and prevaricates, that confounds the reader's expectations and thereby prolongs (through 154 sonnets) the intense interest it inspires. As if in a dance, the reader is led first this way then that by an elusive being who finally escapes back into the mind from which it was originally drawn.

Wolfgang Brückle examines the way in which the photographer Nan Goldin combines the seeming objectivity of documentary photography with her own idiosyncratic subject matter. Goldin has recorded, over an extended period of time, images of herself, her friends, and the milieu in which she lives—the *demimonde* of transvestites, drag queens and homosexuals in Boston and New York. She supplements her slide shows of the photographs with a considerable amount of biographical information and this, along with her 'styleless' style, creates the impression that the viewer has direct access to the unmediated, 'authentic' truth of the artist's life and experiences.

Havi Carel discusses the film *Million Dollar Baby* in the context of Heidegger's writings about authenticity and being-toward-death. In the film, a young woman who has trained for years to become a prize-fighter is suddenly paralysed and therefore wishes to end her life. But, Carel asks, who is to judge when a life is no longer worth living? She challenges the film's either/or position on being able to be and proposes a wider acceptance of a spectrum model that incorporates all manner of abilities, through the full range of human capacities and possibilities.

Jeremy Shearmur ends the collection in defiance of Heidegger, whose particular slant on authenticity has framed much of the debate on the subject and whose views, despite Adorno's debunking, remain difficult for continental philosophers to escape. Shearmur contends that a too-literal reading of Heidegger's being-toward-death is not always advantageous and leads to unnecessary gloom and

despondency. One is far better, he argues, to follow the example of Otto Neurath, a philosopher, economist, and general polymath who lived life to the fullest by occupying himself with projects so numerous he could never have finished them all had he lived three hundred years. Shearmur cautions that living too much in the shadow of finitude can lead to unproductive despair, whereas a blithe and insouciant (although not necessarily irresponsible) dismissal of mere mortality can be infinitely more rewarding.

*Part One*

**AUTHENTICITY AND THE ORIGINAL**

known by that other? To him a real woman, another gaze looking into the reality only he must ever know, is just *too* real. *Amour* in Rousseau is the culmination of 2000 years of nuclear romanticism, and the source of 200 more of modern *folie romanesque*, in which poetry has often been a search for some perfect inner self, philosophy for some perfect inner concept: while the self, ethical or political, is seen as the kind of thing which *can* be searched for in that way.

## → THE AUTHENTIC HAMLET

Duncan Driver

In 1889 Oscar Wilde remarked in a letter to Robert Ross that it was time to stop considering the question of Hamlet's sanity in favour of a far more pressing concern. 'My next book', he wrote, 'will be a discussion as to whether the commentators on *Hamlet* are really mad or only pretending to be'.<sup>389</sup> We can appreciate the sentiment: to cast an eye over *Hamlet's* 400-year critical heritage is to encounter an unsettlingly intense and bewilderingly inconsistent body of work that seems to mirror Shakespeare's melancholy Dane in its madness. While critics tend to be passionate about *Hamlet*, there does not seem to be any consensus as to what the play is about, or, more specifically, what explanation can be given for Hamlet's 'wilde and whirling words' (Q2: 825). What drives Hamlet to madness, whether real or feigned? Why is he so cruel to Ophelia and Gertrude? Why can he not exact the revenge the Ghost demands of him? Answering these questions has proved to be a difficult task. Many a sober-minded critic seems to have become intoxicated by the play's rich and strange language or, as Wilde suggests, to have gone mad trying to negotiate their way through the labyrinthine mysteries of the Prince's mind.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge argued in an 1813 lecture, for example, that 'the character of Hamlet may be traced to Shakespeare's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy ... [H]e seems to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to the objects of our senses, and our meditation on the workings of our minds ... In Hamlet this balance is disturbed ...'.<sup>390</sup> On hearing this, one audience member turned to another and said 'This is a satire on [Coleridge] himself'—'No', replied the other, 'it is an elegy'.<sup>391</sup> The more Coleridge became fascinated with the play, the more he saw in Hamlet's irresolution a version of his own 'thinking disease'.<sup>392</sup> Both the critic and his subject were prone to strange fits of passion and long periods of torpor; both fitfully planned projects that were never executed and both chastised themselves for their inaction.

Coleridge's is a case in which something like 'madness' did indeed affect the critic in a way comparable to his subject. The same is true of A. C. Bradley and

the early Freudian critics in a different sense: Bradley did not identify himself with Hamlet, but he did get caught up in the inconsistencies of the play's plot and the intricacies of the Prince's character such that he began to lose sight of *Hamlet* as a work of dramatic fiction. He involved himself in the lives of the characters, whom he considered to occupy a kind of imagined 'reality' as complex and involving as the one in which he lived and wrote. He felt it prudent to attach to *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) an appendix in which he speculated upon Hamlet's life prior to the play and analysed the precise timing of events that never occur onstage. In this case, 'madness' manifests itself as a tendency on the part of the critic to regard Hamlet not as if he were words on a page but rather as if those words were the index of a 'real' person possessed of a 'real' inner life. Early psychoanalytic critics who followed in Bradley's wake can be regarded similarly: Freud and Ernest Jones treated Hamlet as they treated their patients, examining revelations and concealments in order to discover the 'real' psycho-sexual complexes at their root. Oscar Wilde did not live to read Bradley, Freud or Jones, but we can assume that they would have reinforced his conviction of the *Hamlet* critics' madness.

These examples of *Hamlet* criticism are chosen because they tend towards a particular extreme, but we are within our rights to look at them and wonder whether there is indeed a kind of madness attending them. Can the play really be that perplexing? Watching some of the greatest minds of the last 400 years struggling to explain Hamlet's character according to their chosen psychological theories makes one ask: is it possible ever to achieve a definitive understanding of the character? Can anybody remove the veil of uncertainty and misapprehension obscuring the text of the play and reveal an 'authentic' Hamlet beneath? I think that if there is hope, it can be found in a less despairing regard for *Hamlet's* critical heritage than Oscar Wilde's. I think that we need to look more carefully at what has been said about the play and the Prince and see if we can find recurrent patterns or evolutionary developments in the history of the play's criticism that might provide some clue as to where critics have gone wrong, and whether there have in fact been any consistencies in criticism that might point to something of the play's authentic substance.

One of the problems involved in an attempt to get at *Hamlet* through its criticism, however, is that most of it is absurdly anachronistic. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century neo-classicists dismissed the play as (in Voltaire's words) 'the fruit of the imagination of a drunken savage':<sup>393</sup> unlearned and ignorant of Aristotle's unities and poetic justice. Such critics could not appreciate that Shakespeare's theatre was one to which their refined aesthetics and moral scruples did not really apply. Then when British and German sentimentalists and Romanticists tried to rescue the play from its neo-classical attackers, they turned it into a kind of psychological novel and Hamlet into the tortured Romantic self

that Coleridge wrote of. I would agree with Serlo, a minor character from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (1795–96), who responds to Wilhelm's 'mad' rhapsodising over *Hamlet* with the criticism, 'You pay no great compliment to Providence, in thus exalting Shakespeare; and besides, it appears to me, that for the honour of your poet, as others for the honour of Providence, you ascribe to him an object and a plan, which he himself had never thought of'.<sup>394</sup>

Despite this, I think that if we look past the various theories to which *Hamlet* has been subordinated by its critics we can identify surprisingly similar techniques with which those theories have been applied. As diverse as Romanticism, Bradlean criticism and Freudian psychoanalysis are, they can all be seen to locate the key to an understanding of Hamlet's character beneath the textual surface in the depths of his psychology. For Goethe, Schlegel, Coleridge, Hegel, Bradley, Freud, Ernest Jones, Otto Rank and a great many others, plucking out the heart of Hamlet's mystery is a matter of believing in the existence of his interiority, treating him as if he were as complex and as 'real' as any 'real' person. For these critics, too, a correspondence can be said to exist between Shakespeare, Hamlet and the critic, a union or sympathetic association of selves that occurs for as long as they engage with the text. In William Hazlitt's words, when we read or see the play, 'it is we who are Hamlet'.<sup>395</sup> I would argue that, while we need to recognise the considerable differences between these critics and their portraits of the Prince, there is a recognisable method in their madness, a similar approach to the play that allows us to regard them as one discrete group, one loose association that I designate with the term 'character criticism'.

However, almost all of the examples of *Hamlet* criticism that I have mentioned above are part of this association of 'character critics'. Is the term, then, too broad? Does it encompass the play's whole 400-year critical heritage without any attempt to discriminate between schools of thought or critical practice beyond this vague consideration of interiority? I think that I can defend my claim for a semi-unified 'character criticism' by being able to identify its opposite: an 'anti-character criticism'. The neo-classical regard (or disregard) for Hamlet's character is the first instance of this. Neo-classical critics, following a set of rules developed in France over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sublimated 'character' to 'action' in their theory of what made for good drama. *Bienséance* (a concept of artistic decorum) forbade the depiction of the inconsistent, horrible, ugly, low or mean when it came to the playwright's construction of character, and *vraisemblance* (the law of probability) insisted that characters be loosely drawn as representations of pre-existing 'types', examples of a species of character (clown, king, miser, villain, and so on) rather than individuals. Neo-classicists, consequently, had no time for the riddling inconsistencies of Shakespeare's Prince of Denmark. This attitude can be safely set against character criticism as 'anti-character' in spirit.

It would be a long time before a similar disregard for the importance of 'that within' Hamlet became prominent in *Hamlet* criticism, but it did occur. As the nineteenth century became the twentieth and character criticism reached its apogee in the work of A. C. Bradley and those who followed Freud, there was once again a strong reaction in *Hamlet* criticism against the privileging of character. The two salient figures in this respect are Leo Tolstoy and T. S. Eliot. Tolstoy hated the 'bardolatry' of Romantic and post-Romantic Shakespeare criticism (which was especially strong in Russia) and sought to take the English bard down a peg or two by attacking *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. He argued that Shakespeare had clear, workable source material for *Hamlet* but that his ham fists could not work it skilfully. It was not just that Hamlet was an inconsistent or improper character, but that he was not really a character; rather, he was a loose set of inconsistent speeches. In sympathy with Tolstoy, Eliot argued that *Hamlet* is an artistic failure; that 'creatively minded' critics attach a weight to the character the play cannot sustain. While it is true, he wrote, that Hamlet gestures towards a space within himself in which his own personal truth and substance dwell, that truth and substance is never made manifest, and, as such, it is inappropriate to go looking for it in the way character critics do. There is, famously, no external 'objective correlative'<sup>396</sup> to match Hamlet's interiority, and searching for it is as futile as pondering over what makes the Mona Lisa smile.

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In their own ways, Tolstoy and Eliot re-introduce a fervent anti-character attitude into the practice of *Hamlet* criticism. It was one that really took hold when Structuralism and post-Structuralism entered Shakespeare studies. New Historicist critics such as Stephen Greenblatt and their Cultural Materialist counterparts such as Jonathan Dollimore, Francis Barker and Catherine Belsey were firm believers in the non-existence of what they frequently called 'essentialist' selfhood. The idea that the individual self has a core of being—an interiority deep within—was, they argued, an historical fiction. Furthermore, the idea that Hamlet, a fictional character to begin with, could be said to possess an interiority that explained the mysteries of his play was ludicrous. Greenblatt wrote in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* that, as far as the Elizabethans and their literature were concerned, 'there [was] no layer deeper, more authentic' than what he called 'theatrical self-representation'.<sup>397</sup> There is no such thing as an 'authentic' Hamlet beneath the text because, like all early-modern men, Hamlet is acting all of the time. The text is all there is. Francis Barker agrees: "The text continually offers to fulfill [Hamlet's] claim [for his own interiority], but whenever it appears that the claimed core of that within which passes the show of the spectacle will be substantially articulated, Hamlet's riddling, antic language shifts its ground and the text slides away from essence into a further deferral of the mystery ... At the centre of Hamlet, in the interior of his mystery, there is, in short, nothing'.<sup>398</sup> If, then, we telescope certain aspects of

neo-classicism, early-twentieth-century criticism, New Historicism, and Cultural Materialism in the way that I have been doing we can see a recurrent 'anti-character' theme that, in different ways, sets itself quite neatly against the 'character criticism' of sentimentalism, Romanticism and psychoanalysis.

If we are willing to accept that much of the perceived sprawling, inconsistent mess of *Hamlet* criticism can be organised into a 'character/anti-character' dialectic, then a number of interesting questions suggest themselves. Which side of the dialectic does the play itself appear to favour? If we place Hamlet's character within the frame of our critical dialectic, how does our perspective on it change? Is it possible to identify an 'authentic' Hamlet by nudging him with our regard for the play's critical heritage and seeing if he leans in either the 'character' or 'anti-character' direction? It is these questions that prompt the remainder of this paper.

I think the first thing that becomes clear when we approach Hamlet's play with a view to proving one side of this 'character/anti-character' dialectic is that there are no easy answers. Trying to find evidence for an 'authentic' Hamlet based upon the presence or absence of his hidden interiority is troublesome, partly because no *direct* evidence is possible. Interiority cannot be produced or pointed to; it is not something that would physically exist inside Hamlet like a pair of kidneys or a liver. If the madness that attends character criticism has shown us anything, it is that the vagaries of Hamlet's interiority are a problematic reality. If we want to find evidence of interiority we need to cast our net wide and inspect carefully what we find in it; for all claims can only be based on indirect evidence, cryptic words and actions, telling absences or strange erupting presences.

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Fortunately, there are many such moments in *Hamlet*. From the first words of the play, 'Who's there?' (Folio: 1.1.1), through to Hamlet's cryptic dying words, 'The rest is silence' (Q2: 3847), questions of identity, the establishment of identity, and the difficulties attending its establishment, are raised. In selecting material from which to draw a portrait of Hamlet in either 'character' or 'anti-character' likenesses one is spoilt for choice, but if one is limited to a couple of telling examples then the profundity and complexity of his character is made clear.

There are at least two moments in *Hamlet* where the Prince applies his considerable mental powers to an analysis of himself, speculating not just on the nature of man and mortality (as is the case with 'To be, or not to be') but on his own experience of himself as an individual. To take them in sequential order, the first is Hamlet's oddly unprompted discourse on the difference between exterior show and interior substance as they relate to grief. His insistence that, unlike the grief of others, his grief 'passeth show' (Folio: 1.2.85) can be taken to mean that grief is beyond what can be seen (it

*passes by show*), and it can also be interpreted as a grief that surpasses anything visible in its authenticity: it is unimpeachable, unlike outward shows. Hamlet asserts that exterior shows are partial, misleading, falsifiable and unsubstantial. A person is a thing that inwardly *is*; their outward aspect may only *seem*:

*Ham.* Seemes Madam? Nay, it is: I know not Seemes:  
'Tis not alone my Inky Cloake (good Mother)  
Nor Customary suites of solemne Blacke,  
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,  
No, nor the fruitfull River in the Eye,  
Nor the dejected haviour of the Visage,  
Together with all Formes, Moods, shewes of Griefe,  
That can denote me truly. These indeed Seeme,  
For they are actions that a man might play;  
But I have that Within, which passeth show;  
These, but the Trappings, and the Suites of woe. (Folio: 1.2.74–86).

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It could be argued that there is nothing radical in this speech, that its regard for an inner/outer schema recalls only a conventional world of poetic diction. If we wanted to substantiate the claims of anti-character criticism we could argue for a certain unreality in Hamlet's grief here, a kind of histrionic self-regard. He seems, for one thing, suspiciously sensitive to any suggestion that he might be feigning his grief. He seizes on his mother's unintentional use of the word 'seems' in order to launch an unprompted defence of his inner authenticity. He does it, moreover, by cataloguing each formal show of grief in a formal way. If Hamlet were a 'real' person, as so many character critics claim, one might be tempted to argue that he reveals his guilty knowledge that he is indeed feigning what only seems authentic. Alternatively, one might argue that, even if Hamlet does have an authentic inner being that genuinely feels grief, it is a grief appropriately demonstrated in shows that he tells us himself 'can denote [him] truly'. In this case there is no disparity between outward show and inner substance.

Such a regard for the correspondence between inner and outer, however, does not sit well with Hamlet's uncomfortable insistence upon the distinction between the two. He does not, after all, say that his shows of grief *do* denote him truly, only that they *can*, which is as much to say that they might or might not. The thrust of the speech and its concluding couplet clearly state that it is not outward shows that really do denote Hamlet truly, but 'that Within'. That we are entitled to read the lines this way is suggested by the way Hamlet's speech evolves over Q1 and Q2 to become the quoted Folio version. The Q1 Hamlet's words do indeed seem to carry only a commonplace sense of the difference between the inner and outer man:

Nor all together mixt with outward semblance,  
Is equall to the sorrow of my heart,  
Him have I lost I must of force forgoe,  
These but the ornaments and sutes of woe (Q1: 182–5).

When contrasted, the Folio's greater complexity is apparent. Despite the catalogue of examples he gives of how grief can be 'shown' theatrically, the Q2 and Folio Hamlets can only render the inner, authentic alternatives to 'show' in the most imprecise and suggestive of ways, the intrigue of which is clear when set against the orthodox and ornamentally poetic 'sorrows of my heart'. Hamlet's interiority is a rich and strange thing denoted by a difficult phrase that points inward to invite speculation, but without revealing much. 'That Within' is a spur to prick the sides of our imagination: it might refer to a late twentieth-century anti-character critic's regard for bourgeois essentialism or to an older, established regard for what constitutes the core of a man (a soul or heart, for instance); it might signal Hamlet's melancholy or any number of things. What is clear is that it remains for Hamlet indescribable, and for us the subject of speculation.

There is a second speech particularly relevant to questions of authenticity, interiority and the respective claims of 'character' and 'anti-character' criticism: that beginning 'I have of late, but wherefore/ I know not, lost all my mirth' (Folio: 2.2.296–7). In the course of this speech Hamlet considers both the dignity and the indignity of man's condition, and in doing so reveals something of his own understanding of himself. Just after proclaiming Denmark to be a prison, Hamlet tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he 'could be bounded in a nutshell, and count [himself] a King of infinite space; were it not that [he has] bad dreames' (Folio: 2.2.254–6). He continues:

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... I have of late, but wherefore  
I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custome of exercise; and indeed, it goes so heavenly with my disposition; that this goodly frame the Earth, seemes to me a ster-rill Promontory; this most excellent Canopy the Ayre, look you, this brave ore-hanging, this Majesticall Roofe, fretted with golden fire: why, it appears no other thing to mee, then a foule and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how Noble in Reason? how infinite in faculty? In forme and moving how expresse and admirable? in Action, how like an Angel? in apprehension, how like a god? The beauty of the world, the paragon of Animals; and yet to me, what is this Quintessence of Dust? Man delights not me ... (Folio: 2.2.296–309)

There is much here to support a character critic's claim for the authenticity of Hamlet's interiority. Here the Prince acknowledges two perspectives from which to view the world: an objective perspective from which one may regard it as a 'goodly frame' and a subjective perspective, peculiar to him, from which it is a 'sterile promontory'. In acknowledging this dual perspective, Hamlet acknowledges that his experience of the world is coloured by his unique condition. His use of phrases like 'seemes to me' are very important: they are perceptive verbal tags reflecting his awareness that he is himself construing, and construing in a way that transforms things outside of himself to reflect his inner state. He does the same thing much earlier on in his first soliloquy, when he declares 'How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable/ Seemes to me all the uses of this world [my italics]' (Folio: 1.2.133-4). The phrase 'Seemes to me' is at odds with the sententious tone of the speech and allows for the possibility that Hamlet's despairing view of his world and the people in it is determined largely by an inner state: it reveals the subjective nature of the Prince's vision. Hamlet demonstrates here what has been called by Charles Taylor (in *Sources of the Self*) 'radical reflexivity': the ability to perceive the unique nature of one's own perception. Hamlet urges us, through his example, to 'become aware of our awareness, [to] try to experience our experiencing, [to] focus on the way the world is for us'.<sup>399</sup>

Sir Walter Raleigh, in his *Sceptick or Speculations* (first published in 1651), gestures towards a similar regard for the subjectivity of one's own experience by insisting that the internal workings of other people's minds, what he calls their 'inward discourse', is remote and inaccessible. Indeed, he uses variants of Hamlet's phrase 'seems to me' to explain this: 'I may tell what the outward object seemeth to me; but what it seemeth to other creatures, or whether it be indeed that which it seemeth to me, or any other of them, I know not'.<sup>400</sup> Raleigh documents his attempt to duplicate in himself the conditions of animal perception by rubbing his eye into the shape of a cat's, and he notes the inevitably unsatisfying results. Each man, like each creature, we infer, has his own unique 'inward discourse' through which his experience of the world is shaped. When Hamlet says 'this goodly frame the Earth, seemes to me a sterill Promontory', he laments that he is locked in the prison of his own perceiving self, able to feel and think only according to the demands of his disposition and to see only with what he calls elsewhere his 'mind's eye'. For someone who feels the whips and scorns of time as keenly as Hamlet does, this prison-like selfhood makes a tragedy of life. This, arguably, is why a reference to prisons prompts the speech in the first place.

It would seem that the character critics have some justification for their technique of probing 'that within' Hamlet. As in the shorter speech on grief, Hamlet asserts the stubborn subjectivity and authenticity of his own experience and gives us a tantalising glimpse at the 'mind's eye' within him that colours the world it perceives. This reading of the speech, however, is not the only one.

The speech is hugely complex and contradictory, and it can be made to serve anti-character criticism just as easily as it can character criticism. For one thing, the shrewd Hamlet critic is always wary of regarding anything the Prince says to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as truthful. Hamlet plays with his old school friends like a cat with a ball of string, teasing them with clues as to the heart of his mystery, leading them on. Would he let his guard down here, of all places? Hamlet has only just discovered that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been sent to spy on him—is he really going to put himself in so vulnerable a position as to tell them the truth? Is it at least possible that this speech is a shadow-play about the nature of man, a melancholic pose, the antic disposition Hamlet said he would put on, designed here to delude his inquisitors? Just as Hamlet's speech on grief can be read as a rather formal, suspiciously unprompted discourse on the nature of the authentic and inauthentic, is this too an assumed, an *inauthentic* self-presentation?

If all the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players, then Hamlet is not a real man whose words might or might not betray an authentic interiority but a character played by an actor who expresses and conceals nothing, but offers only a performance, a speech that does not imply an anterior substance. Indeed, Hamlet himself gestures towards this possibility when he refers to 'this most excellent Canopy the Ayre ... this brave ore-hanging, this Majesticall Roofe, fretted with golden fire'. Those who know about Elizabethan outdoor theatres will recognise this as an invitation to consider 'the heavens', the canopy supported by two pillars rising from the stage that was painted on its underside with the sun, moon, stars and the signs of the zodiac. This canopy was to shelter the stage from the weather and to provide a place from which things could be let down, but 'the heavens' also provided a visual sign for the audience who saw the action of *Hamlet* play itself out in what Hamlet calls the 'promontory', the sub-lunar world of man beneath the heavens and above hell ('hell' was the cellarage under the stage, into which the ghost most likely descended). In making such an explicit reference to stagecraft, Hamlet could be said to deny his own realistic aspect.

Anti-character critics, then, have as much to argue for as character critics do. If we are being open-minded about the different perspectives from which Hamlet's character can be viewed we have to acknowledge that, while his speeches assert the unique perspective from which his mind's eye views the world and everything in it, he quite deliberately counters its earnestness by drawing attention to the fact that he is only an actor on a stage. One might say that what Hamlet says points inward to a hidden core of self; but the way he says it, in its overt theatricality, denies the existence of anything beneath exterior 'show'. This extraordinary paradox is the hinge on which an audience's perspective turns.

The speeches by Hamlet that I have glanced at above are just two examples of the many problematic, evasive passages in the play that suggest something of the Prince's character without yielding any absolute truth. On the one hand, while we may not be able to find direct evidence of the Prince's interiority, it is true that we can find certain turns of phrase that act as signposts pointing inward. On the other hand, these signposts direct us only towards profound contradictions. The intriguing passages that deal with Hamlet's character, such as it is, can be read to support both sides of the critical dialectic that I have examined. Hamlet's self can appear a performative, histrionic, inconsistent thing *and* a thing possessed of a 'real' interior essence at the same time. I would argue that it is not simply the case that Hamlet's play is vague enough to allow for such radically different interpretations, but that it is written in such a way as to encourage them. There is an extraordinary and evident tension in the play itself between antithetical impulses, between mighty opposites that fascinate and that court the interpretive dialectic that I have divided the play's critical heritage into.

Part of the way it does this is through a rhetorical trope known as hendiadys. Literally meaning 'one by means of two', hendiadys is a verbal trick that aims to convey a single, complex idea through a pairing of nouns linked by the word 'and' (common examples are 'law and order' and 'house and home'). The effect of a hendiadys is to allow each noun to qualify the other, to combine in a way that suggests something greater than the sum of its two parts. It is a trope that perfectly suits the way Hamlet speaks, suggesting the strain between opposite impulses within the Prince's character that make a definitive understanding of his selfhood so difficult.

Hamlet's description of himself as heaven's 'scourge and minister' (Folio: 3.4.175) is a very good example. To be a Minister of God was, of course, a blameless occupation—administering justice, following the commands of God's will obediently and virtuously (at first sight of the ghost it is ministers of grace that Hamlet invokes for protection). To be the Scourge of God (*flagellum Dei*), however, was to be something very different from a Minister. The term evokes something that is controlled by God, though at the same time is devilish: an Atilla the Hun or a Tamberlaine as Marlowe wrote of him. To be the Scourge of God is to act in defiance of all earthly authority, to be God's instrument, the whip used to punish wrongdoers on the day of judgement. To describe oneself as both the Scourge *and* Minister of God is, then, to speak of oneself as both instrument and agent, criminal and innocent, damned and virtuous at the same time: Hamlet makes himself a walking, talking contradiction.

The point is that the only 'authentic' Hamlet that we can identify is one who is irreconcilable with himself, a man fundamentally divided who, in turn, divides critics. It is only when we try to argue for the pre-eminence of one side of the dialectic or when we try to combine or synthesise them, rashly ignoring what has happened over 400 years of criticism, that we are really in danger of resembling Hamlet in his madness.

## THE ART OF AMBIGUITY: THE SPEAKER'S VOICE IN SHAKESPEARE'S SONNET SEQUENCE

*Danijela Kambasković-Sawers*

The speaker in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* is profoundly unreliable. He contradicts and undercuts his own statements, sometimes simultaneously with saying them. It is this constant prevarication, this quicksilver changeableness and unpredictability, indeed, this inconstancy, which makes the sonnets infinitely fascinating to the reader. It also makes the voice of the speaker very difficult to analyse or pin down. Which is the speaker's authentic voice? Which one is dissembling? In this essay I hope to show that it is impossible to give definitive answers to these questions because Shakespeare maintains the speaker's enigmatic stance throughout and in fact grounds his sequence in unsettling ambiguities—such as metaphors and symbols which have at once positive and negative connotations. To demonstrate the difficulty of pinpointing a single voice for the speaker I shall look first at how he alternates between self-admiration and self-deprecation, and then at how this ambivalence towards himself and his art is echoed in his ambivalent attitude towards praising the beloved. Following on from this I shall examine the contradictory notions suggested by the figure of Nature in the sequence and the concomitant ambiguities contained within references to the act of procreation. Finally, I shall look at an example of the speaker's use of words which have at once positive and negative implications.

'This poor rhyme'

In the course of Shakespeare's sonnet sequence, the speaker makes a number of statements that appear to be flagrantly self-admiring, even hubristic. He proclaims that immortality is achieved through poetry, indeed through *his* poetry. Many of these lines are well known, for example:

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

(Sonnet 18: 13–4)<sup>401</sup>

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- 389 Quoted in Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1897), p. 282.
- 390 From the 'Notes on Hamlet', in *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, reproduced in David Farley-Hills (ed.), *Critical Responses to Hamlet: 1600-1900*, Vol. 2, 1790-1838 (New York: AMS Press, 1996), pp. 60-1.
- 391 From a letter of H. C. Robinson to Mrs. Thomas Clarkson, January 3, 1812, reproduced in *ibid.*, p. 60.
- 392 See the passage of Coleridge's *Anima Poetae* (composed 1805, published 1895), quoted in Martin Greenberg, *The Hamlet Vocation of Coleridge and Wordsworth* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1986), p. 40.
- 393 Quoted (in translation) in Thomas R. Lounsbury, *Shakespeare and Voltaire* (London: David Nutt, 1902), pp. 143-4.
- 394 Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister* (1795-96; London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1925), p. 219.
- 395 From Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817), reproduced in Farley-Hills (ed.), *Critical Responses to Hamlet*, p. 114.
- 396 See 'Hamlet' (1919), reproduced in T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 145.
- 397 Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 143.
- 398 Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London; New York: Methuen, 1984), pp. 36-7.
- 399 Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 195-6. (Taylor's italics in the quotation.)
- 400 Sir Walter Raleigh, *Sir Walter Raleigh's Sceptick, or Speculations and Observations of the Magnificency and Opulency of Cities, His Seat of Government, and Letters to the Kings Majestie, and Others of Qualitie: Also, His Demeanor before His Execution* (London: Printed by W. Bentley, 1651), p. 4. (My italics in the quotation.)

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- 401 All quotations have been taken from *The Complete Oxford Shakespeare*, Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, (gen. eds) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- 402 Ernst Curtius proposed that such creation myths personify the rhetoric of a panegyric. This myth stands as a 'crucial a link ... which connects late Paganism with the Renaissance'. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, Willard R. Trask, trans. (1953; New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 111 and pp. 180-1.
- 403 Although the exact extent of Shakespeare's knowledge of the creation myths of Natura remains unknown, we should note a fairly clear allusion to the figure in the mention of the 'book of honour', an echo of Natura's 'Book of Memory', in Sonnet 25, line 11: 'Is from the book of honor razèd quite'.
- 404 For a cogent historic recapitulation of critical views voicing disgust with this sonnet, and a useful guide to early modern medical attitudes towards sex transformation and bisexuality and interpretation of bisexual myths in the sixteenth century, see Raymond B. Waddington, 'The Poetics of Eroticism: Shakespeare's Master Mistress', in *Eros and Anteros: The Medical Traditions of Love in the Renaissance*, Donald A. Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella (eds) (Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1992), pp. 177-92.
- 405 Plato, *Symposium* 189 e and 190 d, Michael Joyce, trans. *Plato, The Collected Dialogues*, Bollingen Series LXXI (Princeton University Press, 1961).
- 406 William Keach, 'The Epyllion and the Poetry of the 1590s—Alternatives to the Spenserian Synthesis', in *Elizabethan Erotic Narratives* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1977), p. 231.
- 407 'By Apollo is meant the Sunne, and being withoute a Beard, Lustines of youth'—Stephen Batman, *The Golden Booke of the Leaden Goddess* (1577, folio 2 verso, New York and

- London: Garland Publishing Inc, 1976); 'the auncients ... shaped [Apollo] with a very youthfull countenance, beardless, and young-year'd ... in the shape of a beauteous Nymph, with her apparel exquisitely well wouen, excelling in curious worke of foliature, hauing her [sic] temples bound about, and instrophiated with sweet smelling garlands, resembling much the goddesse Flora'—Richard Lynche, *The Fontaine of Ancient Fiction*, 'Alciatus' (London 1599; New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc, 1976), without pagination. Gender-ambiguous Roman representations of Apollo as god of poetry (*Phoebus Kitharoidos* or Apollo Citaredo, Apollo with the Lyre), dating from the third century BC to the first century AD, are now kept, amongst other places, in The Capitoline Museum, Palazzo Alle Terme, Galleria Villa Borghese, Palazzo Altemps and the Vatican Museum in Rome, as well as the British Museum in London. Gender-ambiguous representations are reserved for Apollo as god of poetry: they are rarely used to represent Apollo in his guises as god of sun or, after the Laconian tradition, the God of hunting. All statues have a woman's head (sometimes also breasts) and male genitalia. This suggests that the Romans saw emotional categories, sensibility and drive, as the hallmarks of poetry; intellectual categories such as rhetorical training and gestation would have been implied by a reversed ordering of body parts.
- 408 *Venus biformis* is recalled in Keach, as well as Graham Atkin: "Both kinds in one/both male and female": Hate, lust and hermaphroditic Venus in Book IV of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, *Chester College of Higher Education*, 1996.
- 409 As I have argued in detail in my article "Never was I the Golden Cloud": Ovidian Myth, Ambiguous Speaker and the Narrative in the Sonnet Sequences by Petrarch, Sidney and Spenser', *Renaissance Studies, Journal of the British Renaissance Society*, November 2007.
- 410 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IV, 379.
- 411 See also Waddington, pp. 182 and 190.
- 412 As Spenser hides the statue of Venus in *The Faerie Queene*: 'Nor any blemish, which the worke mote blame; But for, they say, she hath both kinds in one,/ Both male and female, both under one name' (Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, IV.x.41). See also Luc Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence, Androgyny and Hermaphroditism in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, Janet Lloyd, trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
- 413 This process was seen to symbolise the panegyric because of the painstaking effort, care and forethought it involved. For a summary of Bernard de Silvestris' *De Universitate Mundi* (written between 1145 and 1153), which provides the account of Natura's creation of a perfect, specifically male Man, see Curtius, pp. 110-1.
- 414 This belief was clearly known to Shakespeare. For instance, in the *Book of the Courtier*, Castiglione writes: 'since nature always intends and plans to make things most perfect, she would constantly bring forth men if she could; and that when a woman is born, it is a defect' and mistake of nature ... as is ... one who is born blind, or lame, or with some other defect (III:11). Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), Charles S. Singleton, trans. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959). Also, in *Macbeth*, Macbeth says to lady Macbeth: 'Bring forth men-children only! For thy undaunted mettle should compose/ Nothing but males' (I.7.73-5).
- 415 And elsewhere. Note that Sonnet 15 alone among the first seventeen sonnets does not directly encourage the beloved to reproduce.
- 416 Bernard de Silvestris cited by Curtius, 111. There is a link between the creation myths involving Natura and the rhetoric of panegyric which equates the creation of male reproductive organs with decorum.
- 417 Michael Schoenfeldt, 'The Matter of Inwardness: Shakespeare's Sonnets', in *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 83.
- 418 The idea can be traced back to Plato: 'There is one voluntary submission that shall be blameless—a submission which is made for the sake of virtue. ... He and his friend will help each other rear the issue of their friendship—and so the bond between them will be more binding, and their communion even more complete, than that which comes of bringing children up, because they have created something lovelier and less mortal than human seed. And I ask you, who would not prefer such fatherhood to merely human propagation, if he stopped to think of Homer, and Hesiod, and all the greatest of our

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