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ROSALIND, AND THE MYSTIFICATION OF MALE-FEMALE
IN ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE

A Short Outline of a Literary Study

Colin Clout, the traditional clown whom John Skelton introduced earlier in his improvised lines, complains in Spenser's "The Shepherds Calendar" of his unfortunate love for Rosalind in the following manner:

"It is not Hobbinol wherefore I plain,
Albe my love he seek with daily suit;
His clownish gifts and court'sies I disdain,
His kids, his cracknels, and his early fruit,
Ah, foolish Hobbinol! thy gifts been vain;
Colin gives them to Rosalind again." (1)

As we know, Hobbinol stands for Spenser's friend Gabriel Harvey, whom he called "Benevolo". Gabriel Harvey, in turn, called Spenser "Immerito". A letter from Harvey to Spenser ends with the following valedictory remark in Latin: "O mea Domine Immerito, mea bellissima Collina Clouta, multo plus plurimum salve, atque vale."(2) These lines undoubtedly can be called "clownish gifts and court'sies". It can easily be understood why Colin Clout, towards whom, as it is confessed in the Glossary, (3) Hobbinol stood in a relation of socrat

(1) Eclogue January.

(2) Works of Gabriel Harvey, edited by Dr. Alexander Grosart, Vol. 1, page 107

(3) Glossary to Eclogue January

love, disdained such clownish gifts and court'sies. That Colin gave them to Rosalind, ^{is not the conclusion} leads us to infer that Rosalind, Spenser's poetic mistress, was intended to be a jocose mystification; a mystification in harmony with the mocking, clownish, parodistic tone of Spenser's pastoral poetry. Rosalind refers to a man and not to a woman. It is a Rosalindus, not a Rosalind.

With this inference, for which there is a wealth of facts in support ^{and} if we delve deeper into the study of the esoteric language of Elizabethan literature, we find ourselves in the centre of the problem of original sonnet ^{poetry} literature, from Petrarch to Shakespeare. There are sufficient reasons for including also the great lyric poetry of Greek and Latin literature. In a word, we are on the way to understand the fiction and mystification of the poetic mistress in the literature of western civilization. What characterizes most poetic mistresses is the fact that they are biographically a riddle. From a poetic and psychological point of view, the feeling of love expressed is cold, stilted, artificial. There is no genuine expression of that feeling which we call love. There are all signs that the poems dealing with the great mistresses were an invention of ironic wit. In this connection Petrarch's utterances in a letter to Boccaccio, where he speaks of himself and Dante, may be interesting to note: "How could I be envious of a man who passed his whole life in a kind of work which only served to amuse my youth, a man who had made his principal and perhaps his only occupation that which to me

was only a game and trial of my wit? Tell me, I ask you, is there any reason for envy in this...?" (1) From this letter it is clear that Petrarch considered his own poetry merely as an amusement of his youth and a game and trial of his wit.

Shakespeare's sonnets to a young man seem to be the expression of an ancient esoteric tradition which had concealed itself with feminine veils. Though so much has been written about Laura, it has not yet been sufficiently pointed out that this poetic figure, who by some literary critics is suspected to be a phantom figure, is rooted more in the laurel tree, the symbol for the poet, and in the Daphne myth, than connected with an actual woman. The Daphne myth is the generative myth of original sonnet ^{poetry} literature. A man disguised with feminine veils plays a great role in this myth, as the account given by the Greek writers Pausanias and Parthenius can convince us. The story runs that Leukippos, the son of King Onomans, fell in love with Daphne, the daughter of Amykias. She had fled from the acquaintance of young men, and had devoted herself to hunting. Chaste Artemis, whom she revered, had made her a first-class shot. Leukippo disguised in feminine veils, succeeded in joining the company of Daphne and her nymphs. The friendship of Daphne with Leukippos aroused the jealousy of the god Apollo, who himself was in love with this chaste maiden. He put it into the minds of Daphne and her nymphs to invite the supposed virgin Leukippos to bathe with them in the Arcadian river Ladon (the Daphne myth is an Arcadian myth). When Leukippos refused to bathe the nymphs tore off his veils, and on dis-

(1) De Sade, III. pp. 508-512

covering that he was a martyr they slew him with their weapons. Parthenius, who, by the way, was very well known among Elizabethan writers (Sir Alexander Sterling used the name Parthenius as that of a patron of the poet Drummond of Hawthowdon),^{and} whose name seems to be a pseudonym for "the virgin man", was a Greek writer who lived in Rome. He winds up the Daphne story in the following way: On the counsel of the gods the slain Leukippos became invisible, and instead of him Daphne perceived the god Apollo himself. The latter stepped forward to seize her, and Daphne attempted to run away. Seeing that she could not escape from Apollo, Daphne prayed to Zeus to free her from human life. It was Zeus himself who granted her wish and changed her into a laurel tree, since then holy to the god Apollo. (1)

Petrarch's sonnets to Laura are intimately connected with the Daphne myth and the laurel tree. The great Elizabethan scholar, Gabriel Harvey, gives us a very important hint how to accept the Laura fiction.

(2) He wrote to a friend:

"Thinke upon Petrarches
Arbor vittoriosa, trionfale
Onor d'Imperadori el di Poete

and perhaps it will advance upon the wynges of your Imagination a degree higher: at the least if anything can be added to the loftinesse of his conceit, whom gentle Mistresse Rosalinde once reported to have all the Intelligences at commandement and another time, Christened her,

Signior Pegaso." (3)

(1) Parthenius, Erotica 15; Pausanias VIII, 20.
 (3) Works of Gabriel Harvey, edited by Dr. Alexander Grosart, Vol. 1, pages 80/81
 (2) Compare Harvey's remarks, where he speaks of "Petrarches Invention":
 "....His Laura was the Daphne of Apollo, not the Thisbe of Pyramus:
Petrarches Verse (was) a fine loover, that learneth of Mercury,
 to exercise his fayrest giftes in a faire subject; & teacheth Wit
 to be inamored upon Beautye: as Quicksilver embraseth gold;...."
 Works of Gabriel Harvey, edited by Dr. Alexander Grosart, Vol. II.

What Harvey here points out is that the "conceit" of Laura as well as of Rosalind consists therein that the "she" is a he -- a man, a poet, a Signior Pegaso, an illuminated poet who in a mystic, spiritual sense has all the "intelligences at commandment."

The "conceit" is buried in the mystic psychology, the hermaphroditic, hermetic, mercurial psychology of the ages which preceded our esthetic, rationalistic, individualistic, scientific culture -- a psychology from which we are entirely estranged. The hermaphroditic psychology and mystification is to be found throughout Elizabethan literature. To give an example, I quote a few lines from George Gascoigne's "The Steel Glass":

"I'm a man as some do thinke I am,

(Laugh not good Lord) I am indede a dame,

Or at least a right Hermaphrodite." (1)

The following lines from Spenser's "Colin Clout's Come Home Again" will give another instance:

"For Venus' self doth solely couples seem,

Both male and female through commixture joined,

So pure and spottless Cupid brought she forth

And in the gardens of Adonis nursed." (2)

A rational approach to this mystic, hermaphroditic psychology can best be made from Otto Weininger's point of view, as given in his book "Sex and Character". According to him, the ideal man (M) who possesses manly qualities only, or the ideal woman (W) who possesses womanly qualities only, is a mere idea never realized in nature. There

(1) -- George Gascoigne, The Steel Glass.

(2) Spenser's Works.

is in every man (M) a mixture or addition of feminine qualities (w); in every woman, a mixture or addition of masculine qualities (m). The attraction of the sexes for each other is determined by the direct proportion of small w in large M, and of small m in large W. Weininger's point of view is static. The hermaphroditic psychology which we find indicated in mythical form in ancient literature, and mystically and theosophically deepened in esoteric writings (as for instance in the Kabbalah, in hermetic writings, and in alchemistic writings), is not static but dynamic, nearer to life and intuition than to science and analysis; not rationalistic, but spiritualistic; not stated from the point of view of a judgment of fact, but of spiritual value.

According to the Kabbalah, for instance, an unmarried man or an unmarried woman is both male and female. With marriage the man loses his feminine part; the woman, her masculine part. The great mystics and mystae knew not only about the bisexual tendencies of the human soul, but they had an anagogic system of religious education, anchored in spiritual conceptions, which showed the way of salvation and grace whereby the man could become a real spiritual man, freed from his womanish traits. According to their teachings, the spirituality of the husband determined the happiness of his wife. The great mystics and mystae saw the spiritual problem of the human race not from the viewpoint of individualistic rationalism, but from the viewpoint of super-individual, religious consciousness.⁽¹⁾ The relation of man to woman, and the deep significance of the conjugal union was the central point of their

(1) Compare also Swedenborg: "On Conjugal Love".

anagogic writings. This hermetic or mercurial psychology was so common among the enlightened men of the sixteenth century, that we find a theologian like the Anabaptist Campanus saying: "Nicht der Mensch an sich, sondern der eheliche Mensch ist das gleichnis Gottes." (1)

This spiritual psychology was set forth in an age of religious consciousness not by way of "Methodist discourse", but by way of irrational symbols. It was set forth by means of humorous mystifications which used the antinomic paradox of sex to bring about a deeper spiritual insight in those young male readers with whom the poets stood in personal relation. The erotic fiction of Shakespeare's age was not romantic and sentimental, but ironic.

At the end of the sixteenth century there were formed all over Europe pythagorean Christian groups of enlightened men whose aim was to purify the age through the young male generation, and to bring them to self-reformation and the consciousness of the spiritual reality of the world. The literary expression of this spiritual movement is the "Die Reformation der Ganzen Weiten Welt", Rosicrucian Manifesto. The means employed were mystifying. The method of mystification is most visible in "Die Chymische Hochzeit des Alchimisten Christian Rosenkreutz", written by the German Abt Johann Valentine Andrease. The illusion of poetry was used to bring the young ^{er male} generation to disillusion and contrition, to a descent from which they could rise to spiritual consciousness. Elizabethan literature on the whole seems to be the expression of such a Christian group of pythagoreans, all of whom shared one common inspiration, or, as we might say, one common "Urerlebnis".

Elizabethan poets, in imitation of Petrarch and the Roman poets, sang of a cruel mistress with flinty heart who did not reward

(1) Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi, Berlin, 1853, Dr. E. A. Dornier, Vol. 11, page 648

their love. The fiction of the cruel mistress was an exterior romantic erotic fiction of the age, -- a mere fashion of speech. The young men with whom the poets came into contact were mystified and teased or, as the expression went, "gulled", and brought to poetic exaltation. The poets befriended their young male admirers with sweet gentleness, the irony of socratic love, until the young men entered marriage or love relations. The poets then feigned to be platonic admirers of the wives or mistresses. Such sonnets were "conceits". The erotic fiction of the cruel mistress was paradoxical, ironic, facetious, clownish. While the "cruel mistress" was praised to heaven with hyperbolical and esoteric speech, the satire and irony were directed against the young husband or lover of this "cruel" mistress. The sonnets had the anagogic aim of bringing the young lover or husband to understand that the cruel one was not the woman, but the man who did not treat a woman with gentleness. The spiritual irration of the young man began with the insight that the beginning of a spiritual life lies in protecting womanhood, and in keeping holy the marriage relation. From this point of view the young husbands and lovers were brought to the significance of the Christian ceremonial law. The love for the wife had to lead the husband to "adoptive christendoms", as Helena says in the comedy "All's Well That Ends Well". (1)

In this sense should we interpret the stilted and artificial sonnets, such as those written in honor of Stella, Parthenophe, Licla,

(1) Act I, scene I

Diana, Delia, Coelia, Zepheria, Idea, Fidessa, Diella, Chloris, Phillis, and Laura ad infinitum. Behind the irony of the erotic romantic fiction of that age are hidden Anglo-Saxon Leukipposes. The naive report of William Drummond of Hawthorndon about Ben Jonson's visit is a biographical illustration of the "gulling" methods used by the poets. Just before his departure Ben Jonson dedicated an ironic poem to Drummond of Hawthorndon. In it he complains about his cruel mistress who does not understand him. All that Drummond of Hawthorndon reported of his conversation with Ben Jonson has the visible sign that the humorous and foxy Ben Jonson had only mystified him in a grandiose manner. We have an illustration of the manner of writing by way of "cross conceits" or "contraria contrariis", in the well-known literary hoax "Willobie His Avisas", where the key to the mystification is given in the preface, which states that Avisas stands for "Amans uxor inviolata semper amanda". We find illustrations of this fact in the entire range of Elizabethan literature once we have learned to understand its peculiar esoteric language. For not only the lyric poetry of Elizabethan sonnet literature bears this stamp of irony and deep spirituality, but also the erotic fiction of the novel, as for instance Lyly's "Euphuus". The biographer of Lyly, Albert Feuillerat, writes: "L'origine de l'euphuisme est peut-être la plus difficile des questions lyliennes." Euphuism has been defined principally as a certain mannerism of style of writing. There is no new style born unless of a new spirit and a new psychology. We need

to comprehend the new spirit and the new psychology which Lyly introduced into Elizabethan literature, to understand from within the peculiar form of the euphuistic style. Heinrich Khunrath, the Rosicrucian mercurial hierophant, a disciple of Paracelsus, wrote in his "Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Eternae" (1), in the explanation of the fifth grade of spiritual attainment: "*...naturalem significat ingenii animique bonitatem quae in doles a Latinis solet appellari. Non enim ex quovis ligno fit Mercurius, sed conveniente aptoque nato.*" (1) The presupposition for mercurial spiritual illumination, according to Khunrath, is euphuia, the platonic ideal which Ascham had popularized in "The Schole Master". The similes which Lyly employed in his "Euphues" were taken, as we know, from the "Booke of Secrets of the Vertues of Herbes, Stones and certaine Beasts" by Albert le Grand (1560), a lore which went hand in hand with mercurial writings, and which was also significantly inserted in Chester's "Love's Martyr" for his age. The erotic fiction which Lyly created in novelistic form was rooted in mercurial psychology. He used the romantic theme of the cruelty and inconstancy of woman with irony, contradicting it paradoxically with the construction of the plot, which shows how faithful women are to men who return their love. At the end of the story we are told that Euphues had retired to the Mountain of Silixedra, the seat of flint. It must have been this mountain which supplied all the flints which were feigned to be in the hearts of cruel ladies, and which were in the hearts of their Philautic lovers. According

(1) Heinrich Khunrath, "Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Eternae", Hanoviae 1609, page 121. (Original in 42nd Street Library, New York.)

to J. J. Jusserand (1) "Euphues" was "expressly written for women", while Albert Feuillerat (2), ~~the most competent man on the subject~~ states: "L'Anatomy of Wit etait pour lire entre hommes. La femme n'y apparaissait qu'a titre d'eternelle ennemie." The paradox of mercurial psychology will help us to combine harmoniously the antinomy of two contradictory statements. "Euphues" was written to be read by women, and to be understood by men; It gave a fashion of new speech to the female sex, and a discreet code of honor for men in their love affairs. To quote a proverb which Lyly ^{in Euphues,} uses, he had created an erotic fiction which made out of "Adam's old apron Eve's new kirtle."

The spiritual background combined with feigning irony, can be found also in the plays of the Elizabethan stage. The poetic construction of the plays was a crafty, clever conceit. The illusion of the stage was intended to bring about spiritual disillusion: the spirit was not histrionic. The poets seemed to have laid more stress on the contact

(1) The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare, translated by E. Lee, London 1890

(2) Albert Feuillerat, John Lyly. page 91

with the audience, especially with the young male admirers, than on their own poetry. A striking example of this ironic sonnet spirit is an utterance of Thomas Dekker in "The Gulls Hornbook". In Chapter 6, "How a Gallant should behave himself in a Play-house", we read: "By sitting on the stage, if you be a knight, you may happily get you a Mistresse; if a mere Fleet-street Gentleman, a wife: but assure your-selfe, by continuall residence, you are the first and principall man in election to begin the number of "We Three". (1) The aim of the joco-serious socratic poetry was the re-awakening, the regeneration, the rebirth of the Christian spirit of man. Elizabethan poetry was the expression of the sober "male wisdom" of that age to which Francis Bacon gave the name of "Partus masculus temporis": the male birth of time. With the reverence for womanhood went a very deep intuition for the logical whimsicality and inconsistency of feminine nature. The poets knew about the purifying method of freeing a man from his womanish traits.

The word-signs for this mystic, hermaphroditic and hermetic or mercurial psychology are the symbols of alchemy, with which the language of Elizabethan literature is permeated. Ethan Allen Hitchcock, A. E. Waite, and Herbert Silberer have already recognized that under the veil of the transmutation of base metals into gold, the symbols of alchemy concealed references to spiritual experiences. *The symbols* refer especially to the ^{spiritual} experience of ^{rebirth} ~~death and regeneration~~ and to the sublimation of the libido in the sense ~~text~~ of "In Vestas honor, Venus lusts to tame" (2): that is, in the sense of true conjugal love. A

(2) Chester's "Loves Martyr" edited by Dr. Alexander Grosart, page 144.

(1) The Non-Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, edited by Dr. Alexander Grosart, 1609 -- Vol. 11, page 249.

popular play like "Eastward Hoe", through the names of some of its characters: Quicksilver, Golding, Touchstone, and through the construction of the plot, shows the underlying mercurial psychology. Quicksilver is a profligate young man who is brought to a descent, a repentance of his deeds and then a conversion; he confesses of himself: "I heard my father say, I heard my mother sing, an old song and a true: "Thou art a she-fool, and know'st not what belongs to our male wisdom". (1) Mercurial psychology underlies the construction of many of the Elizabethan plays also, and leads to the discovery of their central ideas. An understanding of mercurial psychology will be of special help in getting nearer to the still-debated central ideas of Shakespeare's plays, of most of his comedies, and of some of his tragedies.

The central ideas of ~~many~~ many of the plays of the Elizabethan stage were rather concealed than revealed. Only indirect esoteric allusions lead to the discovery of these central ideas. In Ben Jonson's play, "The Magnetic Lady, or Humours Reconciled", we find in the "Theoretical Induction", which deals with the construction of the play, the following remark of a stagehand called "the boy of the house": "Sir, all our work is done without a portal or Vitruvius. In foro, as a true comedy should be. And what is concealed within, is brought out, and made present by report." (2) There is indeed no "open entry or portal" to the central ideas of most Elizabethan plays. The Elizabethan poets understood playwriting from the viewpoint of traditional motives, hyperbolic and parabolic characters, and realistic masks of clownish

(1) "Eastward Hoe", Act II, scene 1

(2) Ben Jonson "The Magnetic Lady" - Induction

disguise and dissimulation which often veiled a mystical secret.

From this viewpoint of mercurial psychology we gain a different relation to the licentious language of Elizabethan poets who, in a small degree, imitated the Roman poets in this respect. Literary critics have not ceased to be astonished that such a spiritual man as John Donne, later Dean of St. Paul, had in his youth written poems which are objectionable from our point of view. These poems are purer in thought and intention than in expression. The lines of a Catull give us the perspective to the licentious expression:

"Nam castum esse decet pium poetam

Ipsum, versiculos nihil necessesse." (1)

(1) Catull's Poems, XVI, lines 5-6

Or as Martial expressed it:

"Lasiva est nobis pagina, vita proba." (1)

Beginning with Spenser's "The Shepherds Calendar", the figure of Rosalind became the mystifying "conceit" of the age. In his novel "Rosalyn", Thomas Lodge combined this mystifying figure of Rosalind with Lyly's paradoxical "conceit". In this novel the old Euphues gives Philautus the advice to "whip his sons with roses if they are wanton". Sonnet literature, an ironic whipping with roses, was used to chastise the spirit of man, and so also were used all the other beautiful flowers and jewels of speech. Robert Chester's "Love's Martyr", with its additional poems by Shakespeare, Marston, Ben Jonson and Chapman, has the sub-title "Rosalin's Complaint". The mystifying figure of Rosalin is here represented as Dame Nature. This sub-title can be explained only as a reference to the mystifying "conceit" of the age. There are many definite indications that this allegory and the additional poems which deal with the esoteric symbols of the Phoenix and the Turtle, were the expression of a secret circle of friends, and that this book belongs to early Rosicrucian or Masonic tradition. The symbol of the Phoenix was used by the Rosicrucian Count Michael Maier in a similar esoteric and mystifying sense as in Chester's "Allegory". (2) An insertion of Posies which we find quoted by Chester, has its parallel in a Masonic book, the title of which reads: "Brown James, Roberts. Loves garland; or Posies for rings, handkerchers, and gloves and such pretty tokens that lovers send their loves. London 1674. A Reprint. Whereunto is added a collection

(1) Martial's Poems, Lib. 1, No. IV, line 8

(2) Compare "The Hermetic Museum, Restored and Enlarged, Vol. 11, London 1893. Count Michael Maier: A Subtle Allegory Concerning the Secrets of Alchemy very useful and pleasant to read." This essay, dealing with the symbol of the Phoenix, is the best example of the ironic mystifying style of Shakespeare's age.

of poetic mottoes, gathered from divers sources and entitled Ye garland of the sette of odd volumes. To which is prefixed an introduction in which some trite things are said concerning the efforts of the early alchemists to transmute the baser metals into gold, showing a way through the labyrinth of "ye mystic art" to the ^{abode} ~~abode~~ of Cupid." (1) A psychological analysis of the "Allegory" and its additional poems can convince us that Chester as well as Chapman, Marston, Ben Jonson and Shakespeare dealt, from different angles, with one and the same theme of the Phoenix and the Turtle: the theme of spiritual illumination. The series of poems included "Castoes Alphabet-wise to faire Phoenix made by the Paphian Dove", are mystifying esoteric poems, addressed to young men, ~~which~~ ^{and} have a tenor similar to the first seventeen sonnets of Shakespeare, which urge matrimony upon a young man.

Shakespeare's comedy "As You Like It", gives us in the figure of Rosalind the key for interpreting sonnet literature. Shakespeare concealed and revealed the secret with the mystifying technique of the age, where "the male puts on the apparel of the female, and the female puts on the apparel of the male". (2) Cruel Phoebe does not return the love of the faithful Silvius, but is in love with Ganymede, who is Rosalind in disguise. Phoebe sends a sonnet to Ganymede through Silvius, in which she tenderly entreats Ganymede to love her. Rosalind astonishes all those present by her interpretation of this sonnet, which discloses the esoteric intention of

(1) London, G.W.H. Wynn, 1883, 102 pages, l. 1 pl Sq 16s (Sette of Odd Volumes No. 4) (250 copies printed)

(2) Ben Jonson, Bartholomew Fair

original sonnet literature. ^{poetry.}

Rosalind. Patience herself would startle at this letter,
And play the swaggerer; bear this, bear all:
She says I am not fair; that I lack manners;
She calls me proud, and that she could not love me,
Were man as rare as Phoenix. O'd's my will!
Her love is not the hare that I do hunt:
Why writes she so to me? -- Well, Shepherd, well.
This is a letter of your own device.

Silvius. No, I protest, I know not the contents:
Phoebe did write it.

Rosalind. Come, come, you are a fool,
And turn'd into the extremity of love.
I saw her hands: she has a leathern hand,
A freestone-colour'd hand: I verily did think
That her old gloves were on, but 'twas her hands;
She has a huswife's hand: but that's no matter:
I say she never did invent this letter:
This is man's invention, and his hand.

Silvius. Sure, it is hers.

Rosalind. Why, 'tis a boisterous and a cruel style;
A style for challengers: why, she defies me,
Like Turk to Christian: woman's gentle brain
Could not drop forth such giant-rude invention.
Such Ethiop words, blacker in their effect
Than in their countenance. -- Will you hear the letter?

Silvius. So please you, I never heard it yet;
Yet heard too much of Phebe's cruelty.

Rosalind. She Phebes me: mark how the tyrant writes.
(reads)

Art thou god to shepherd turn'd,
That a maiden's heart hath burn'd?

Can a woman rail thus?

Silvius. Call you this railing?

Rosalind.
Why, thy godhead laid apart,
Warr'st thou with a woman's heart?

Did you ever hear such railing?

Whiles the eye of man did woo me,
That could do no vengeance to me. --

Meaning me a beast. --

If the scorn of your bright eyes,
Hath power to raise such love in mine
Alack, in me what strange effect
Would they work in mild aspect?
Whiles you chid me I did love;
How then might your prayers move?
He that brings this love to thee
Little knows this love in me:
And by him seal up thy mind;
Whether that thy youth and kind
Will the faithful offer take
Of me, and all that I can make;
Or else by him my love deny,
And then I'll study how to die.

Silvius. Call you this chiding?

Celia. Alas, poor shepherd!

Rosalind. Do you pity him? no, he deserves no pity. --

Wilt thou love such a woman? -- What, to make thee an instrument,
and play false strains upon thee! Not to be endured! -- Well, go

your way to her, -- for I see ~~the~~ love hath made thee a tame snake, --
and say this to her; -- that if she loves me, I charge her to love
thee: if she will not, I will never have her, unless thou entreat for
her. -- If you be a true lover, hence, and not a word; for here comes
more company. (exit Silvius) (1)

It is to be noted that Phoebe's sonnet, which in its exterior form is
a tender plea for love, is interpreted by Rosalind in complete con-
tradiction of its literal sense.

The invention of original sonnet ^{poetry} literature was of a man,
and not of a woman. The style, in all its sweet gentleness, was
nevertheless a style of challenge of one man to another. The irony
of socratic love was used to bring about a contrary effect; viz., ^{the transference of love to the opposite sex, and} that
fine-humored understanding and spiritual distance which is fitting
in the relation of one man to another. The real plea was to love
there where love was needed. In this sense did Rosalind entreat
Phoebe to love Silvius. Shakespeare's age understood far better than
our own age of academic psychology the real ironic intention of
socratic love. In Plato's dialogue "The Banquet", the physician
Eryximachus expressed the view that that man was the right physician
who was able to expel love where it ought not to be, and to instil
love there where it ought to be. The Elizabethan poets were such
physicians of the soul, and Shakespeare's sonnets to a young man
were the most refined, ironic expression of a socratic physician

(1) As You Like It, act II, scene 3

of the soul who, with ironic love compliments, provoked his young friend to a manly attitude. He told his young friend that he was still young and beautiful, so as to lead him to the insight that he had not attained male wisdom, and had not lost his Philautic and Narcissistic tendencies. The poet pleaded with him in veiled, esoteric language, to love that woman who loves him. The "colored" lady who seemingly is a cruel mistress, is in fact a Phaedra, in despair that her love is not answered by the "sweet boy". The poet pleaded with the young man to love her. The black color is a traditional esoteric symbol which has its long history.

The comedy "All's Well That Ends Well", which Mr. Arthur Acheson rightly recognized as being connected with the sonnets, contains precisely the same dramatic situation, symbolized in a fairy-tale form, which we find expressed in Shakespeare's Sonnets. The King says to Helena before she chooses her husband: ~~Make choice; and, see,~~

"Make choice; and, see,
Who shuns thy love shuns all his love in me." (1)

After she has chosen Bertram, the King says to him:

"As thou lov'st her,
Thy love's to me religious; else, does err." (1)

This, in a nutshell, is the precise plea of Shakespeare's sonnets to a young man. This brings us to an understanding of how Shakespeare could use the traditional motives of original sonnet ^{poetry} literature, which sang of a cruel mistress, while he addressed them to a young man.

Shakespeare's Sonnets, in their address to a young man, are the unveiled form of original sonnet ^{poetry} literature. His dramatic instinct forced him to do away with the thread-bare tradition of Petrarch. He veiled his content by more clever disguises of ironic wit.

(1) All's Well That Ends Well, Act II, scene 3

Sir Philip Sidney's sonnets "Stella", in praise of Mrs. Rich, were in reality a challenge to Mr. Rich, whom Sidney satirized. Penelope, the daughter of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, was married in 1581 to Robert, second Lord Rich, and became the mother of a large family of children. Sidney, ^{was} married two years later, in 1583. As we know, when he wrote the sonnets to Stella he "lived on the best terms with his wife". (1)

Sidney made use of the stereotyped "conceit" of Petrarch to remind the somewhat effeminate courtier, Mr. Rich, to better his behavior to his wife. The enlightened men of the age knew how to smile at Sidney's feigned poetic courtship of Stella. Thomas Nash wrote in his introduction to the sonnets: "...Here you shall find a paper stage strewed with pearl, an artificial heaven to overshadow the fair frame, and crystal walls to encounter your curious eyes; whiles the tragi-comedy of love is performed by starlight. The chief actor here is MELPOMENE, whose dusky robes, dipped in the ink of tears (which) as yet seem to ~~drop~~ drop, when I view them near; the argument, cruel Chastity; the prologue, Hope; the epilogue, Despair. Videte quæso et linguis animisque favete."

(2) Nothing in these poems is meant seriously except the satire directed against Mr. Rich. What the poet criticized in Stella was that her name was Rich, thereby implying that her husband was not worthy of her. The real ethos of the sonnets is expressed in the following lines:

(1) Cambridge History of Literature, Vol. , page 289

(2) Elizabethan Sonnets, edited by Sidney Lee, Vol. 1. Sir P.S. His Astrophel and Stella, page 5

But that rich fool, who by blind Fortune's lot,
The richest gem of love and life enjoys;
And can with foul abuse, such beauties blot:
Let him deprived of sweet but unfelt joys,
(Exiled for aye from these high treasures, which
He knows not) grow in only folly rich! (1)

These lines are not feigned. They accuse a man who does not treat his wife as she deserves. That is the "cruelty" of Stella.

Spenser's sonnets "Amoretti" seem to have been written to Mr. Lodwick Briskett, who is mentioned in one of them. That sonnet reads:

Great wrong I do, I can it not deny,
To that most sacred Empress, my dear dread,
Not finishing her Queen of Faery,
That mote enlarge her living praises, dead.
But Lodwick, this of grace to me aread;
Do ye not think th' accomplishment of it
Sufficient work for one man's simple head,
All were it, as the rest, but rudely writ?
How then should I, without another wit,
Think ever to endure so tedious toil!
Sith that this one is toss'd with troublous fit
Of a proud love, that doth my spirit spoil.

Cease then, till she vouchsafe to grant me rest;
Or lend you me another living breast. (2)

(1) Elizabethan Sonnets, edited by Sidney Lee, Vol. 1, page 23, sonnet

(2) Ibidem, Vol. 11, page 233, sonnet XXXIII

The poem has to be read with the understanding of the irony of the "Anatomy of Wit" of Shakespeare's age. The living breast which Spenser wants Lodwick to lend him, refers to the exchange of hearts between poet-master and friend: Lodwick should behave in his love affairs as dictated by ^{the heart of} his poet-master. It is the same plea of the exchange of hearts which we find in Shakespeare's sonnets. (1) The "proud damsel" who "resists in rebellious pride"; who "lordeth in licentious bliss of her freewill", scorning the poet and love; whom the poet hopes to deck with "glorious bays"; at whom he hopes to laugh "in equal sort, as she doth laugh" at him; the damsel enamoured with her beauty, whom the poet wants to teach that "the true fair, is the gentle wit, and virtuous mind", and that true beauty is "to be divine, and born of heavenly seed"; this "proud damsel" seems to be none other than Lodwick himself. In his "Amoretti" Spenser taught the wisdom of spiritual wisdom to a man, not to a woman. The sonnet sequences had

(1) We need to go back to the more precise Latin lyric poetry of that age to arrive at a complete understanding of this point of identification between poet-master and friend. The Latin anthology of poems, "Delitiae Poetarum Germanorum huius superiorisque aevi 1612 Francofurti", contains a number of congratulatory poems to young men who are betrothed. One poem by Valentin Acidalius contains the following lines dedicated to "Joanni Muselio Sponso: 7
"Sit tibi nostra Venus, sit tua Musa mihi
Tu modo Acidalius sis, sin Muselius ipse." (page 44)
Muselius, the engaged young man, as a lover should be the poet Acidalius; while Acidalius should be Muselius.

Compare Shakespeare's sonnet XXII.

the anagogic aim to lead self-willed, proud young men to learn, through the experience of love, to submit to the superindividual divine will, and to act as love bids and necessity commands. In this sense Shakespeare's two sonnets, CXXIV and CXXVI, which play with the word "Will", will become clear. That Spenser mentioned the Faery Queen in connection with his plea to Lodwick, and hoped he would be another wit to help in his tedious toil, has an inner organic logic: The Faery Queen is an anagogic epic poem which, by means of a romantic pageant of knights and ladies, and of a system of religious, ethical conceptions, leads on to the ideal of spiritual manhood. Spenser pleaded with Lodwick to inspire him by deeds of love to continue this poem. In this sense he wanted the help of another wit.

At the end of the sonnet sequence "Amoretti", in a ~~satire~~ that is feigned, melancholy mood, Spenser complains that his mistress has left him. What has remained with him is only the "Idaea plain" of her, which he beholds "through contemplation" of his "purest part". The friend of the poet-master, according to the platonistic teachings of the age, was expected to live up to the idea of what the poet-master wanted him to be: he had to become the entelechy of his vital spirit, and, in a larger sense, the entelechy of the divine spirit. From this point of view we should interpret the title of the sonnet sequence by the humorous, deep, and philosophic poet Michael Drayton, "Idea". This sonnet sequence has a wealth of deep conceptions referring to the spiritual discipline of the soul. In Sonnet 16, "An Allusion to the Phoenix", Drayton compares his mistress to the Phoenix who, by dying, is reborn. This

sonnet is connected with Shakespeare's theme, "The Phoenix and Turtle." There are intermixed sonnets full of dramatic irony, humor and verve. In Sonnet 21 Drayton tells how a witless gallant who had wooed a young wench, had entreated him to write a sonnet to his love. With this sonnet the gallant won his mistress. But the poet feigns to be unhappy because he himself is destined, through his sonnets, to lose his cruel mistress. It is a striking example for the conceited, sophisticated rhetoric of original sonnet poetry. The poet who "berhymes" his cruel mistress (to use a word from Shakespeare, who says in *Romeo and Juliet*, that Petrarch had berhymed Laura) (1), hopes to lose, not to gain his mistress, the cruel young man. Compare the paradoxical contradictory lines of Drayton's sonnet 62:

"Where most I lost, there most of all I wan;
What most I seem, that surest am I not." (2)

Original sonnet poetry has thus a sharp-edged oracular ambiguity. It is not the poetry of love, but the poetry of love and hatred: an old lyric and esoteric theme which we find as early as in Catull's "Odi et amo". The poet-master who berhymes his young friend by calling him a cruel mistress, intentionally arouses the hatred of the wild creature: the "aspra fera", as Petrarch calls Laura, (3) in order to tame him by means of gentle irony. Original sonnet poetry is an ironic dramatization of the spiritual education to manhood; as G. K. Fletcher says in his preface "To the Reader": "If thou muse, what my LIGIA is,Perhaps under that name I have shadowed "(The Holy) Discipline." (4)

(1) *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, scene IV, lines 41-44

(2) *Elizabethan Sonnets*, edited by Sidney Lee, Vol. II, page 212

(3) Compare Petrarch's poem, "A qualunque animale alberga in terra" where the poet wishes that Laura might atone for long years for her cruelty.

(4) *Elizabethan Sonnets*, edited by Sidney Lee, Vol. II, page 32

"For this kind of poetry wherein I wrote, I did it only to try my humour." ⁽¹⁾ This is Gil Fletcher's confession in his preface "To the Reader", which precedes the sonnet sequence "Licia". In "The Epistle Dedicatory to the worshipful, kind, wise and virtuous Lady, the Lady Mollineux, wife to the right worshipfull Sir Richard Mollineux", he wrote: "Now in that I have written Love Sonnets, if any man measure my affection by my style, let him say, I am in love. No great matter! For if our purest Divines have not been so, why are so many married? I mislike not that nor I would not have them mislike this. For a man may be in love, and not marry; and yet wise; but he cannot marry and not be in love, but be a mere fool." ⁽²⁾ Gil Fletcher, like Sir Philip Sidney, wrote sonnets as an ironic satire against the husband, who would be a fool if not in love though married.

(1) Elizabethan Sonnets, edited by Sidney Lee, Vol. II, page 30

(2) Ibidem

The complete proofs for these broad literary facts can be established, but would require the methodic, scientific disclosure of the esoteric traditional language, which is rooted in Greek and Roman poetry, and was revived by Petrarch and the poets of the Renaissance up to Shakespeare. Here we take the time to mention only one point more. Shakespeare's Sonnets appeared in 1609 with the poem "A Lover's Complaint". It has not yet been sufficiently stressed that it was a custom, if not a tradition of Elizabethan poets, to add ~~meaningful talk~~ to sonnets in a weeful tale in the form of a complaint. Daniel's sonnets "Delia" were published with "The Complaint of Rosamund". In Quincy Adams' biography of Shakespeare we read: "In composing his cycle, Shakespeare drew inspiration chiefly from the Delia collection with the Complaint of Rosamund."

(1) The Sonnets to Delia seem to refer to William Shakespeare himself, for he is that esoteric lady "living on the Avon and interested in the theatres of London". (2) Thomas Lodge had added to his lyric

(1) Quincy Adams, "Shakespeare", pages 170/171

(2) Elizabethan Sonnets, edited by Sidney Lee, Vol. 11, page 134
Samuel Daniel's Sonnets to Delia, llll:

None other fame, mine unambitious Muse
Affected ever, but t'eternize Thee!
All other honours do my hopes refuse,
Which meaner prized and momentary be.
For GOD forbid! I should my papers blot
With mercenary lines, with servile pen;
Praising virtues in them that have them not,
Basely attending in the hopes of men,
No! no! My Verse respects not Thames, nor Theatres;
Nor seeks it to be known unto the great:
But Avon, poor in fame, and poor in waters,
Shall have my song, where D E L I A hath her seat.
Avon shall be my Thames, and She my Song;
I'll sound her name, the river all along.

cycle Phillis, the "Tragicall Complaint of Elstred". These complaints, cloaked in woeful tales, seem to contain personal allusions to those persons to whom the sonnets were addressed, and for whose spiritual chastisement they were written. Shakespeare's "A Lover's Complaint" is a satire of a man who has been faithless to a true loving woman. It thus sums up and reveals the inner dramatic situation of the sonnets.

Harvey's pamphlet against Nash, "Pierces Supererogation, or a New Prayse of the Old Asses", brings us a striking example of the mystification male-female, the unearthing of which is all the more interesting and important because we have weighty reasons to believe that it refers to the relation of Gabriel Harvey to the young William Shakespeare. Gabriel Harvey apparently was the secret socratic, pythagorean leader of a circle of poets, a group of "sworn brothers". The first man whom Gabriel Harvey inspired was Edmund Spenser, the songster he sent out to gather a flock of poets. Gabriel Harvey's writings are mystifying, and filled with the hieroglyphic language derived from the esoteric symbols of alchemy. In Gabriel Harvey's pamphlets written in 1595, all the significant poets of the age are mentioned by name except William Shakespeare. It is our contention that the young poet William Shakespeare plays a very important

Andronicus than the expression "a furious tragedy which is a bloody chair of estate". Harvey speaks critically of the Tragedy Antonius. Gabriel Harvey himself gives us a clue as to what he refers. The name Antonius contains the same vowels as the name Andronicus, A-o-i-u, and in one of his passages of his mystifying pamphlets, Gabriel Harvey speaks of a method of writing where "vowels are coursed and mutes are haunted"⁽¹⁾; viz, a method where vowels are written out and consonants are spirited away or left out. We have here two very dependable indications, one of an exterior and one of an inner nature, which dovetail marvelously into each other.

The "Discourse of Life and Death" is the other work which Harvey credits to the "gentlewoman". Again, of course, it is a disguised title. Shakespeare had honored the Earl of Southampton with two works: "Venus and Adonis", and "Lucrece". These two productions can be likened to two Gobelins which, as decorative poetic tapestries for the imagination of a noble young lord, may fittingly have the titles "Ars Amandi" and its pendant, "Honor Amandi". The striking scene in "Lucrece", from a picturesque point of view, is the moment where she kills herself; from a poetic point of view, it is the dramatic resolution to prefer an honorable death to a shameful life. As a matter of fact, Shakespeare worked out with utmost rhetorical skill/ the decision of Lucrece to die, and the contrast of life and death is brought to the following paradoxical expressions:

(1) Works of Gabriel Harvey, edited by Dr. Alexander Grosart, Vol. 1, pages 203/204

'Poor hand, why quiver'st thou at this decree?
Honor thyself to rid me of this shame;
But if I live, thou livest in my defame:
Since thou couldst not defend thy loyal dame,
And wast afraid to stretch her wicked foe,
Kill both thyself and her for yielding so.'
(Lines 1030/1036)

'In vain,' quoth she, 'I live, and seek in vain
Some happy mean to end a hapless life.
I fear'd by Farquin's falchion to be slain,
Yet for the self-same purpose seek a knife:
But when I fear'd I was a loyal wife:
So am I now: O no, that cannot be,
Of that true type hath Farquin rifled me.'
(Lines 1044/1050)

'O, that is gone for which I sought to live,
And therefore now I need not fear to die.
To clear this spot by death, at least I give
A badge of fame to slander's livery.
A dying life to living infamy:
Poor helpless help, the treasure stol'n away,
To burn the guiltless casket where it lay!'
(Lines 1051/1057)

'My honor I'll bequeath unto the knife
That wounds my body so dishonoured,
'Tis honour to deprive dishonour'd life;

The one will live, the other being dead:

So of shame's ashes shall my fame be bred;

For in my death I murder shameful scorn:

My shame so dead, mine honour is new-born.¹

(Lines 1184/1190)

The antithesis of life and death dominates Lucrece's discourse, and thus Gabriel Harvey could allude to the poem "Lucrece" as a "discourse of Life and Death". The date of composition of "Lucrece" can be determined from the dedication of "Venus and Adonis" to the Earl of Southampton, where the poet told his young friend that he had vowed "to take advantage of all idle hours" till "I have honoured you with some graver labour". The poem must therefore have been written after the dedication containing these words, and before its entry on the books of the Stationers' Company; i.e. between April 1593, and May 1594. (1) Gabriel Harvey surely must have known the poem from the manuscript either in its entirety or in part, before he wrote "A Letter of Notable Contents" on September 6, 1593.

There are, moreover, many more indications that by this "gentlewoman" Harvey meant the poet William Shakespeare. But it is impossible in this paper to discuss the question in its entirety. The esoteric network of mystifications and the peculiar language of Harvey would require lengthy explanations.

But one salient point I must stress here: Thomas Nash knew that this "gentlewoman" was a mystification and that a man was alluded to,

(1) Works of Shakespeare, edited by Gollancz, Edition de Luxe, Vol. 11. Preface to Rape of Lucrece, page 86

not a woman. In Nash's "Have with you to Saffron Walden", a reply to Gabriel Harvey's pamphlet, which appeared three years later, the mystification of this gentlewoman was largely discussed. In this lampoon, written in the form of a dialogue, *Impertuno*, one of the interlocutors, remarks: "There is no such woman, but 'tis only a fiction of his, like Menanders Fable or Comedie called Thessala of women that could pluck back the Moone when they listed or Ennius invention of Dido, who writing of the deedes of Scipio first gave life to that Legend." Nash, who figures as Respondent, thereupon replies: "Yea, Madam Gabriela, are you such an old ierker? Then Hey ding a dong, up with your petticoats, have at your plum-tree: but the style bewraies it, that no other is this good wife Megara but Gabriel himself." (1)

To disguise a man as a woman was a commonplace in Shakespeare's age, easily seen through. This "gentlewoman" did not fool Nash as to sex, though he did not know to what man Harvey alluded. He believed that Gabriel Harvey, whom he thought vainglorious, had praised himself.

It is my conviction that the science of literary history is bound to enter upon a new path of investigation. The written word, often the disguise of ironic, ^{human} wit, has frequently been mistaken by historians of literature for a sincere object of nature. It is well known that the greatest minds of the human race used the word as a medium of irony. The acceptedly greatest poet of world literature,

(1) Works of Thomas Nash, edited by McKerrow, Vol. 111, page 113

William Shakespeare, has long ago been recognized as the poet of irony par excellence. The characterization of the substance of irony which Mr. H. W. Fowler gives in his Dictionary of Modern English Usage (1) is as follows: "Motive or aim: exclusiveness; province: statement of facts; method or means: mystification; audience, an inner circle." Mr. Fowler's excellently logical deduction agrees perfectly with those empirical facts which lie hidden in Elizabethan literature.

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