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## ***A YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY*** **A member of the First Folio family**

In *UDGCB* I show two extra-canonical plays to belong to the First Folio family. *Mr. Arden of Feversham* was undoubtedly written by Shakespeare, as secreting the allegory, constructed from the interior point of view, that we have come to know so well. The style – mostly prose, of a lower key than the high style of the canonical plays – accords perfectly with this. This dual primary evidence of style and allegorical content is a powerful tool for determining the pen at work: the high style being always associated in FF with the exterior point of view of the clinician, and therefore an index to the hand of Bacon; while the intimate, painfully personal recollections – for example, the Gads Hill robbery episode in *IHV*, which portrays as allegory an act of adolescent auto-erotism, another chapter in the tormented youth of Will Shaksper, which was to lead to his fatal espousal of Puritanism aet.15 – are usually written in prose, and always at a lower pitch in terms of linguistic and metaphorical richness, philosophical insight, intensity of imagination, and so on. Yet these episodes are always closely wrought, and fine pieces of writing in their own way, as well as being often witty in the extreme: for Shakespeare’s intellect and imagination were of a superior order, and he had clearly done a lot of useful reading in early adolescence, as the histories make clear. In the prevailing Stratford *milieu* of rudeness and illiteracy he had shone; and now Bacon’s instruction had helped build on that solid base a metropolitan writer of considerable talent, as well as giving him a life worth living, after the devastation of his breakdown aet.23.

None of these qualities are present in *The Spanish Tragedy*, which also secretes the allegory written from the clinician’s point of view, as I show in *UDGCB*, yet whose mediocre writing was probably the cause of its omission from the First Folio: and I see no reason to dispute the usual attribution to Thomas Kyd. Fascinatingly, it was signed by Bacon in his usual flourishing, unmistakable way, with Hieronimo’s speech “Where shall I run to breathe abroad my woes...” in III, vii. Just so did he sign the largely Marlovian *Henry the Sixth* with Exeter’s little gem of a closing speech in *IHVI* III, i, and the Captain’s opening speech in *2HVI* IV, i. Such was the gulf that separated master from acolyte.

*A Yorkshire Tragedy* secretes also the Shakespearean allegory, written from the standpoint of the *milieu intérieur*, with which the style well accords: so that there is no reason to doubt the attribution to Shakespeare, as stated on the frontispiece to the First Quarto (1608). *AYT* is a short play, with a paucity of characters and a simple story: all of which militate against a sophisticated treatment of the allegorical theme. Yet the main lines are clear enough, and the discussion to follow may serve as an easy, accessible introduction to the general method of *UDGCB*. The Husband is the Puritan figure – a Lear, or Othello, or Leontes, or any one of their numerous kin in FF; while the abused Wife is the Queen of Hell-Grail Queen, whom he spurns (again, a constant scenario of FF). This is made clear by the mention of her “rings or jewels” (ii, 63): the reference being to the famous Ring and *Schamir* (precious jewel) of King Solomon, that central figure in the Davidic-Templar-Masonic tradition (Bacon was formally received into the Brotherhood by King James in 1603). The Ring and Grail

traditions are the same, precisely, as is shown in *All Is Well That Ends Well*, in which the Grail (Fisher King) theme dominates Act I, the Ring Quest the remainder. This is the point of the numerous rings in FF, as well as the diamonds in *2HVI* and *Cymbeline*. This Ring-Grail identity is also stated explicitly in Wolfram's early Grail romance *Parzival*, which I have shown to have been, as a Templar text, a colossal influence on Bacon and FF (see ). Sir Laurence Gardner demonstrates this identity in his recent *Realm of the Ring Lords* (Viking (Penguin), 2000).

*AYT* will end, however, in redemption, with the long dialogue of Husband and Wife in his gaol cell being cognate with that of Lear and Cordelia ("We two alone will sing like birds i'th' cage..."), which signifies that the unseen world (Cordelia is a Queen of Hell-Grail Queen) is beginning to speak to the ego-in-healing through the Gnostic written word. The Husband will be reborn, through the ministry of the written word as vector of the Gnostic tradition, as his infant son. Just so is the Puritan tragic figure redeemed in *Lear*, as Edgar: a point which Ted Hughes failed to realise.

One's eye is struck immediately by several instances of "I" for the expected "Ay" in the first scene. This technique is used repeatedly in FF, especially in *1-3HVI*, where "I" stands sometimes for the ithyphallic principle, more often for the broader libido or unseen world. First let us examine the character of Samuel. The horse or horse-and-rider represents always in FF the libido in action, as sourced by Bacon from Socrates' famous extended metaphor in Plato's *Phaedrus*; while drunkenness signifies always the state of dissolution in blind libido (e.g. Falstaff, Sir Toby Belch, Stephano-Trinculo, &c). Samuel has just dismounted from his horse, whose "skin sticks to his back with very heat"; and soon he will lead off his *copains* to get drunk. There can be no doubt at all that he bears the value of the libido. Ralph and Oliver bear the value of the ithyphallic principle: and Shakespeare employed, for the establishment of this, an allegorical *legerdemain* of the kind he had learnt so well from Bacon. "I" for "Ay" twice appears closely apposite to the name 'Ralph': '*Ralph* I, that's well sed...'; '*Ralph* I, that's true...'; then twice to 'Oliver'. Just before the latter, Samuel pulls from the front of his breeches two potting-sticks, to the huge merriment of the others. The point is clear: that the ithyphallic principle is dual, and is represented by both Ralph and Oliver. Their mistress, rejected by the Puritan figure (Husband), is therefore to be identified with the Goddess of Love, Who took the form, in the case of the adolescent Shaksper whom we have come to know so well in the histories, of the Goddess of the auto-erotist (Mistress Quickly and Doll Tearsheet in *1&2HIV*; and, remarkably, Ophelia in *Hamlet*).

We remember that Shaksper embraced the Protestant Puritan tyranny act.15 as his final defence mechanism against the troublesome libido, as cast in negative aspect by his constitutive Christian puritanism. (The psychic wound caused by the act of eros is represented throughout FF by the "charge of the Boar"). This is represented in *AYT* by the episode of the Husband's wounding by a Gentleman in a sword fight. The sword represents always in FF the ithyphallic principle (e.g. those of Hamlet and Laertes in *Hamlet* V); while the Gentleman is explicitly identified with the unseen world, or libido: '*Husband* I, you slave...'; '*Husband* ... I, twas that orethrew me'. Now the Puritan reaction begins: 'Revenge, I say, Ime mad to be revenged'. A broader point, made continually throughout FF, is that Puritanism is a response to the vulnerability to the underworld in catabolic mode caused by the brutal suppression by the Roman Catholic Church of the Gnostic tradition, lately as Renaissance Neoplatonism/Christian Cabalism (see the murders of Rutland and York in *3HVI* I, iii). However, it is the microcosmic aspect which is upstage here.

There now follows the crisis, which is ultimately a reference, like all the cognate episodes in FF, to the breakdown which befell Shaksper (as he still was then) aet.23. It is made clear in FF, especially in *MAN*, that the trigger for the *coup* was the Puritan Shaksper's surrender to auto-erotism after coming across an erotic episode in a book, almost certainly the graphically described seduction of Lucius by Fotis in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. This is represented in *AYT* at first in two ways: in the Husband's drawing of a dagger on the Wife, who is dressed in riding breeches; and his chastisement by the Master of the University. That these episodes are to be considered as a unity is shown by the framing of the latter by the former – the blade being drawn, but the blow being delayed until after his encounter with the Master. The Wife in riding breeches represents the Queen of Hell-Grail Queen, or Goddess of the Unseen World, invested in libido, first in the written word (Fotis), then in the imagination of the reader. The Queen of Hell is, of course, a constitutive aspect of the Goddess of Love: so that this is not at all inconsistent with scene i as discussed above. Apuleius' *TGA* is in truth an exemplary Hermetic text, if engaged as idea rather than will; and it would later be a central pillar of Bacon's therapeutic regime in his treatment of Shakespeare. The University represents the Gnostic or Hermetic tradition (cf. Padua in *The Taming of the Shrew*), specifically here *TGA*; the supping of wine by the Husband and Master, *TGA* being engaged as will by the resourceless Puritan Shaksper, to stimulate the libido. The Husband's wounding of his wife is cognate with, for example, the blade-suicide of Juliet: the meaning being that the libido is now invading the sham goddess of Puritanism, to transform her. The three sons are identical, on the plane of allegory. The youngest, the survivor, bears like his brothers the value of the ego reborn; while the blade-murders of the elder two signify that this ego will be informed by knowledge of the unseen world. This technique, of a blade-murder as signifying a psychic transformation, is used often in the FF family, most notably in *The Spanish Tragedy*.

The carrying away of the Puritan ego by the libido is further portrayed by the Husband's furious flight on horseback; the servant who tries in vain to restrain him, that ego's habitual suppression of libido. The inauguration of Shakespeare's healing in London, through the ministry of Sir Francis Bacon and the Gnostic tradition, is represented by the Husband's fall from his horse, and arrest. That the written word as vector of the Gnostic tradition will play a central role in his healing is shown by the continued involvement at this stage of the Master. The infant son as representing the ego reborn recalls the similar values of Aaron *filis* and Lucius *filis* in *Titus Andronicus*.

*AYT* can now join *Mr. Arden of Feversham* and *The Spanish Tragedy* as long-lost but unmistakable members of the First Folio family. I suspect it will not be the last of the apocryphal plays to do so. We shall see.

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