"O WORD OF FEAR":

IMAGINARY CUCKOLDRY IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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ABSTRACT

"O WORD OF FEAR": IMAGINARY CUCKOLDRY IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS
Doctor of Philosophy, 1998
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The spectre of cuckoldry is invoked in many of Shakespeare's plays, yet few actually contain unfaithful wives. This suggests that the author attributed sexual mistrust to masculine insecurity rather than to feminine infidelity. The "cuckoldry anxiety" inculcated by Renaissance cultural practices produced men who were quarrelsome, self-obsessed, and reliant on approbation from lovers and peers--traits similar to symptoms of what self psychologist Heinz Kohut calls the "narcissistic personality disorder": a hypersensitivity to slights, a solipsistic view of the environment, and a heavy reliance on others to function as selfobjects ("objects" [i.e., people] who are experienced as part of the subject's self). If an afflicted individual perceives his lover to be unfaithful and his peers to be unsympathetic, then the loss of these sustaining selfobjects precipitates an extreme responses akin to what Kohut calls "narcissistic rage"--an anger prompted by injured pride and fuelled by the hope of revenge. In Chapter One, I outline current critical thinking about Shakespearean cuckoldry anxiety. In Chapter Two, I outline basic tenets of self psychology and inroads it has made into literary criticism. In Chapter Three, I discuss Jaques's Seven Ages of Man speech in the context of social history, paying particular attention to the foundational stages of life, infancy and childhood. In Chapters Four through Six, I examine the cuckoldry anxiety of young, unmarried lovers in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Comedy of Errors, and Love's
Labour's Lost. In Chapters Seven through Nine, I chart the experiences of jealous soldiers in Much Ado About Nothing, Troilus and Cressida and Cymbeline. In Chapters Ten through Twelve, I will investigate older, more established characters for whom private jealousy hampers the administration of public justice in Othello, The Merry Wives of Windsor and The Winter's Tale. And in my Conclusion, I compare the related anxieties of the very old and the very young as depicted in the baiting of Falstaff by the children of Windsor. These plays present striking analogues to self-psychology, as they map out complex worlds of interdependent identities, the insecure foundations of which are shaken by sudden isolation from selfobjects.
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Introduction

The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,
Cuckoo;
Cuckoo, cuckoo: O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!

(LLl 5.2.890-94)

The prevalence of allusions to cuckoldry in William Shakespeare's plays suggests that the author and his audience were keenly interested in--perhaps even obsessed with--sexual infidelity. Cuckoldry anxiety "pervades the drama of the English Renaissance" (Maus, "Horns" 561), but Shakespeare dramatized this problem more often, and probed its root causes more seriously, than did many of his peers. In fact, one contemporary illustration suggests his name may have become synonymous with cuckoldry (see Taylor t.p.). Defined as "[a] derisive name for the husband of an unfaithful wife" (OED sb.1.1.), a "cuckold" is betrayed by a loved one and mocked by his peers. In this thesis, I shall argue that underlying his discomfiture is an innate fear of separation from an evolving network of "security and nurturance providers" (Stevens and Gardner 2). The fact that the epigraph above is taken from a comedy that, notoriously, does not end in marriage suggests that unmarried men also fear the cuckoo's "word of fear"--a word that imperils as many fledgling love relationships as marriages in Shakespeare's plays.1

1 The association of cuckolds and cuckoos stems from this bird's tendency to lay its eggs in the nests of other birds (e.g., sparrows) who unwittingly raise baby cuckoos, and from aural resemblances between the terms "cuckoo"/"cuckold" in English and between "coucou"/"cocu" in French (Partridge 89; Trienens 169-70; G. Williams 1:345-47). Etymologically, these words can be traced back to the Old French word for cuckoo, "cucault"
The past two decades have seen the appearance of numerous studies of cuckoldry which, despite disparate views and approaches, share a common concern with the vicissitudes of masculine identity. In attempting to define what constitutes the Renaissance masculine self, the studies examine the phenomenon that seems to threaten it most. The perception that a man has been cuckolded radically undermines his reputation and his relationships. The resulting changes to his interpersonal networks can threaten or even destroy his sense of self. Most recent accounts of cuckoldry are concerned with its effects on gender; namely, the way being cuckolded impugns a man's masculinity, renders him passive and "effeminate."

However, this focus on gender paints only a partial picture of the wide-ranging effects of real or imagined cuckoldry on the individual, the family, and the wider community.

In his introduction to English drama's most famous depiction of cuckoldry anxiety, Othello, E. A. J. Honigmann observes, "[a]lthough criticism has been slow to recognize it, Shakespeare observed the dynamics of relationships as penetratingly as the development of character" (47). I believe that these areas cannot be separated; that it is only within the dynamics of relationships that characters develop; and that drama resides primarily in the depiction of character development. But how do we account for these "dynamics"? Feminist critic Linda Bamber proposes that Shakespeare's tragedies depict situations from a masculine perspective: a dominant male character is a "Self" who is defined in relation or opposition to an "Other" who is usually female. Certain comedies entail a more feminine outlook, in which a female "Self" is defined by a male "Other" (Bamber 1-43 and passim). This model is (Partridge 89). Besides associations with adultery and illegitimate offspring, the cuckoo was also noted for its proverbial stupidity (Ross 60). For detailed surveys of the language and symbols of cuckoldry, jealousy and infidelity, see Sinclair 30-49; and Trienens 128-74.
limited by its gender dichotomy. For example, a newlywed man could consider a cuckolded husband to be "Other"--a model of emasculation and dishonour to be avoided at all costs--while forming a psychological attachment with a powerful woman. However, Bamber's underlying insight into the dynamics of selfhood is extremely useful: namely that plays can be read through the controlling perspective of dominant protagonists for whom other characters are important only inasmuch as they help or hinder the achievement of personal goals. W. Thomas MacCary echoes Bamber's insight in his discussion of the "narcissistic" point of view in Shakespeare's comedies: "In most of them we are encouraged to see the action from the point of view of one character, a young man, who must learn to love" (3). Such a narrowing of perspective is the essence of psychoanalytic inquiry; this approach studies how a subject perceives the world, and is thus a "subjective" hermeneutics as opposed to an "objective" science (Atwood and Stolorow 1-40). I propose to examine the interpersonal worlds of protagonists from their narcissistic vantage point; in particular, to interpret plays through the eyes of men who, in learning how to love, come to feel betrayed instead.

The self psychology of Heinz Kohut (outlined in Chapter Two, below) provides an invaluable tool for investigating Bamber's self-other dynamic: the "selfobject." In brief, a selfobject is an "object" (i.e., a person) who is experienced as part of the structure of a subject's self. There are a variety of selfobject experiences, ranging from affectionate support to exploitative abuse. This concept entails both an interpersonal dynamic (a conscious give-and-take between two individual selves) and an intrapsychic dynamic (an unconscious appropriation of--or "merger" with--another [Moore and Fine 179]). The selfobject is
especially suited to an investigation of cuckoldry anxiety because in Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies and romances certain characters seem unhealthily attached to others and have distorted perspectives on depicted events. Men afflicted with cuckoldry anxiety are quarrelsome, self-obsessed and reliant on approbation from lovers and peers. These traits are similar to symptoms of what Kohut calls the "narcissistic personality disorder": a hypersensitivity to slights, a solipsistic view of the environment, and a heavy reliance on others who function as selfobjects. If an afflicted individual perceives his lover to be unfaithful and his peers to be unsympathetic, then the loss of these sustaining relationships precipitates an extreme response akin to what Kohut calls "narcissistic rage," an anger prompted by injured pride and fuelled by the hope of revenge. In comedies, such a condition is laughed at as "cuckold-mad[ness]" or "horn-mad[ness]" (Com. 2.1.57-58). Whether in a comic or tragic setting, however, horn-madness can be painfully un-funny, resulting in violence directed at innocent victims, especially women.

In Chapter One, I survey existing critical studies of Shakespearean cuckoldry anxiety. In Chapter Two, I outline the basic tenets of self psychology and the inroads it has made into literary criticism. In Chapter Three, I discuss Jaques's famous Seven Ages of Man speech in the context of social history, paying particular attention to the foundational stages of a Renaissance male's life, infancy and childhood. The Seven Ages form a framework for the remaining chapters of the thesis, as I present a series of short chapters in thematically related clusters according to the stages of protagonists: lovers, soldiers and justices. In Chapters

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2 Eric Partridge defines "horn-mad" as being "[p]assionately angry at having been cuckolded" (123). H. J. Oliver describes a horn-mad character as being "beside himself with anger, like a horned beast in the breeding season, ready to attack anything" (31 note).
Four through Six, I examine the cuckoldry anxiety of young unmarried male lovers in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Comedy of Errors,* and *Love's Labour's Lost.* In Chapters Seven through Nine, I chart the experiences of jealous soldiers in *Much Ado About Nothing, Troilus and Cressida* and *Cymbeline.* In Chapters Ten through Twelve, I investigate older, more established characters for whom private jealousy hampers the administration of public justice in *Othello, The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Winter's Tale.* And finally, in my Conclusion I bring the thesis full circle by comparing the experiences of the very old and the very young as depicted in the baiting of a would-be cuckolder and unpopular elder, Falstaff, by the children of Windsor.

Before I begin, a word or two on some key terms. Because in the plays under consideration, a number of males (married and otherwise) mistakenly consider their romantic partners unfaithful, the term "cuckold" must be qualified. I have found a number of creative alternatives. For example, the unknown author of *The Cobler of Caunterburie* (1600) includes among the "eight orders of Cuckolds" the "Cuckold Hereticke," defined as "he that hauing a faire wife and honest, is so blinded with Jealousie and suspition, as he thinkes hir to be as dishonest as the best . . . and therefore consumes himselfe in an heresie" (33, italics in original). Dorothea Kehler uses the term "pre-marital cuckold" to describe Shakespeare's Armado because his partner has been unfaithful during their courtship but he wishes to marry her anyway (52). In William Congreve's *The Way of the World* (1700), Fainall adopts the term, "anticipated cuckold," and the more fatalistic sounding "cuckold in embryo" to describe himself in a similarly embarrassing situation (3.555-56). Lemuel N. Norrell borrows the term "cocu imaginaire" from Molière to describe those who are married but mistakenly jealous
Finally, Russ McDonald adopts a translation of this term, "imaginary cuckold," to describe the stock ridiculous husband, blinded by irrational jealousy (51). I propose that this last term is the most appropriate and inclusive one to describe both married and unmarried men who imagine, anticipate or misperceive betrayal by a loved one. For example, in Othello even the most ingenious "double time scheme" (see Honigmann 68-72) cannot afford Desdemona opportunities to commit "the act of shame/ A thousand times" with another man, as Othello insists she has (5.2.209-10). Such a situation entails "imaginary" cuckoldry because it does not exist actually in depicted events, and because it does exist significantly in the overactive imagination of the dominant protagonist.

Related to my adoption of "imaginary cuckold" is my use of the term "cuckoldry anxiety." Anxiety denotes "[a]n unpleasurable affect or emotional state characterized by feelings of unpleasant anticipation—a sense of imminent danger" (Moore and Fine 24). Anxiety is differentiated from fear in that "fear is a response to a known and external danger, anxiety to an internal and unknown one" (Brown 32). Now it may be objected that Shakespearean males know precisely what they fear: the external threat of being cuckolded (see Cuckold’s 151). But in many cases they do not know why they fear this (it is an irrational response); there is no basis for fearing this (their female companions are virtuous); sometimes there is not even a plausible sexual rival. Their cuckoldry anxiety seems to appear, ex nihilo, from within. Cuckoldry anxiety is a vague yet insistent foreboding that one may be deprived of a loved-one who is considered a part of the self. According to what J. A. C. Brown describes as "a hierarchy of sources of anxiety," the loss of the nurturing mother is the "prototype" for subsequent anxieties that include separation from society in general (32).
Using self psychology, I propose to examine cuckoldry anxiety as the unpleasant anticipation of separations from significant others—parents, caregivers, role-models, friends—beginning in infancy and continuing right through seven ages of the life-span. Shakespeare's plays present striking analogues to self-psychology as they map out complex worlds of interdependent identities, the insecure foundations of which are shaken by isolation from selfobjects.
Part I:

The Approach
Chapter One

Critical Responses to Shakespearean Cuckoldry

The phenomenon of cuckoldry has not gone unnoticed in Shakespeare criticism. It has been treated in several doctoral theses and in numerous book chapters and journal articles.¹ Such abundance may stem from the fact that dramatic depictions of characters suffering from cuckoldry anxiety invite a variety of modern interpretive strategies. Character-based, social-historical, feminist, psychoanalytic, political, economic, generic and other critical approaches have all been enlisted to interpret a subject that has not always occasioned serious consideration. For half a century now, editors of Shakespeare's plays have diligently glossed references to horns, cattle, cuckoos, quarter-moons and mythological figures such as Menelaus and Actaeon. Modern unfamiliarity with the myriad literary associations and social underpinnings of cuckold-lore has made it into a kind of palimpsest onto which current methodological and critical vogues have been written. This chapter entails an overview of existing cuckoldry criticism, and sets the stage for my own synthesis of self psychology, social history, and close textual analysis.

Early critics do not discuss cuckoldry anxiety per se, but subsume the topic within

¹ The theses by Ronald Leo St. Pierre and Anne Carroll Parten ("Cuckoldry") have proven invaluable bases for my understanding of cuckoldry in general, and I will refer the them throughout my thesis. Roger John Trienens' 1951 thesis provides useful background materials on physiological and moral conceptions of jealousy (55-127), but his chapter on "Sexual Jealousy in the Drama" (242-98) is a disappointment in that it consists mainly of plot synopses and includes only five plays by Shakespeare (Com., MWW, Oth., Cym., WT).
(what they consider) the larger issue of sexual jealousy. In her study of *Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes*, Lily B. Campbell cites Renaissance medical treatises to illustrate views of how passions, such as jealousy, "enslaved" Shakespearean heroes like Othello (148-74). Campbell's discussion seems, like her sources on humoural psychology, to get bogged down in the details—whether describing chemical mixtures in the body (*passim*), or splitting hairs about whether jealousy is a sub-species of envy, a sub-species of hatred, and so on (148-53).

Ruth Leila Anderson's study of *Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare's Plays* presents conflicting physiological explanations for psychological phenomena (e.g., 29-45), and cites Renaissance treatises showing jealousy to be an infection of the soul transmitted through the eyes (108-10). Using a similar methodology, John W. Draper's study of *The Humors and Shakespeare's Characters* categorizes jealousy as endemic to the "choleric type": hot and dry people dominated by yellow bile were strong, quick-tempered and especially prone to "ambitious pride and professional or sexual jealousy" (44-61, 54). On the other hand, in his thesis on "The Green-Eyed Monster," Roger John Trienens uncovers evidence that jealousy was also attributed to the cold and dry melancholic type, especially in old age (66-127, *passim*). As a reaction against this sort of approach (which she calls "erudite nonsense"), Louise C. Turner Forest issues her "Caveat for Critics against Invoking Elizabethan Psychology," namely, that such materials form an incoherent "pseudo-science" and that "an Elizabethan psychology never existed" (651-53).

Forest's reservations have been echoed by Richard Levin's survey of *New Readings vs. Old Plays* in which he complains of critics who selectively cobble together historical materials, then derive meaning from these "external source[s]" instead of from "the play
itself" (146-59, 156). Some critics have gone too far the other way, seeming to abandon historical psychology altogether. In his survey of "Shakespeare et la jalousie," F. Grelon cites non-literary sources on jealousy only to reject these in favour of poetic techniques: "Le clivage de la personnalité est donc un trait commun à tous les jaloux [mais] . . . [c]e n'est peut-être qu'un moyen d'expression poétique" (Grelon 396).² In other words, jealousy is merely a pretext for magnificent poetry. In a study of the "yellow malady," A. Bronson Feldman concludes that the misogyny expressed in Renaissance plays merely reflects innate and timeless "primitive passions" suffered by dramatists such as Shakespeare (52). D. R. Godfrey dismisses sexual jealousy as an inexplicable, motiveless form of "insanity" (208-212).

At the same time, historians and glossarists recognize that humour provides a rich source of information about how Shakespeare's audiences lived, thought, felt, and, by extension, how they likely understood the plays themselves. According to Keith Thomas,

> the historical study of laughter brings us right up against the fundamental values of past societies. For when we laugh we betray our innermost assumptions . . . . Jokes are a pointer to joking situations, areas of structural ambiguity in society itself; and their subject-matter can be a revealing guide to past tensions and anxieties. ("Place" 77)

Because as E. A. M. Colman points out, "cuckoldry has lost much of the mirth-provoking force which it clearly possessed four centuries ago," what once provoked widespread guffaws and rage is now largely confined to scholarly footnotes and the knowing smiles of academics attending performances (5). To combat this modern unfamililiarity, many scholars have

² The split personality is therefore a trait common to all jealous men [but] . . . [i]t may only be a means of poetic expression (my translation).
produced invaluable glossaries of Renaissance bawdy in which cuckold-lore figures prominently. In his glossary of *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, Eric Partridge observes that Shakespeare treats the subject with seriousness and "objectivity" in his plays (33-34). In an era when a "harshly intolerant popular culture" commonly ridiculed cuckolds (Thomas, "Place" 77), Shakespeare transcends those dramatists who merely exploit the subject as stock comic fodder: "the psychological and spiritual aspects [of jealousy and cuckoldry] are treated by Shakespeare with deep understanding and unfailing sympathy" (Partridge 34). Yet his characters tell plenty of jokes as well. Linda Woodbridge argues that antifeminist humour served social and personal functions in Renaissance England. On a personal level, by laughing at anxiety-provoking situations, teller and audience gained control. On a societal level, jokes served as a powerful corrective to unsanctioned forms of behaviour, and a powerful "tool for asserting and maintaining superiority" in the social hierarchy (Woodbridge, Women 32; cf. Cook 187-89). In his survey of philosophical explorations of humour, Paul E. McGhee points out that it is commonly understood to arise out of the perception of an incongruity (6-10). McGhee's survey complements Thomas's observation that in Shakespeare's conformist society, humour was based primarily on deriding "anomalies" that included foreigners, the physically and mentally infirm, and uppity wives and downtrodden husbands, especially cuckolds (Thomas, "Place" 77-78). Woodbridge adds that cuckold jokes served to correct the (perceived and greatly exaggerated) incongruities of

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3 See Colman; Henke; Partridge; Rubinstein; and G. Williams. For an illustration of how the knowledge of cuckold-lore has diminished in North America, see Handelsman 68.
women: their faithlessness, insubordination, lust, and so forth.4

This thesis will explore how and why, in plays notably lacking unfaithful women, Shakespeare shifts the emphasis to the faults of men—whether sexual aggressors or victims. His dramatic explorations seem both corrective (to discourage cuckolding) and reparative (to reassure men that suspicions about female infidelity are unfounded). In a chapter-length survey of sexual behaviour in Renaissance drama, Alfred Harbage determines that Shakespeare advocates a higher "standard of sexual morality" than do most of his contemporaries (Shakespeare 186-221, 192). By Harbage's count, thirty-two out of thirty-eight plays depict "no act of fornication or adultery" (207), yet for some reason "[a]llusions to cuckoldry" are present in most: "The 'horns' joke can scarcely be considered a joke at all; it is a cliché, a symptom perhaps of the Elizabethan preoccupation with family and legitimacy. It seems to come to the lips of characters inadvertently" (217). Indeed, by my count, allusions to sexual infidelity can be found in every comedy, almost every romance, and over half the tragedies—a numerical discrepancy that provokes two related questions: Why is cuckoldry such a preoccupation, brought up "inadvertently" by a wide range of characters, if feminine infidelity is not a social problem in the plays? What are the psychological causes of, and societal processes that perpetuate, the imagined sexual transgressions that so preoccupy Shakespeare's characters and audiences?

In an article inaugurating a kind of "new wave" of cuckoldry criticism, Joel Fineman produces a provocative psychological framework for understanding this complex issue (70-109). Basing his account on the writings of Melanie Klein, Jacques Lacan and René Girard,
Fineman argues that the urge to cuckold others stems from the maturational process by which masculine identity is formed. During the pre-Oedipal stage, a male infant conceives of himself as being merged with his mother (Klein's concern)—an identity that he must abandon as he assimilates rules expressed, and examples set, by his father (Lacan's concern). Before long, the child is in relentless competition with peers in an attempt to consolidate his emerging, masculine self (Girard's concern). Attaining masculine selfhood thus entails a process of anxious differentiations (infant from mother, child from siblings, youth from rivals) and conformities (child to father, adolescent to peers, adult to social norms). Because the originary relation with the mother must be suppressed, "male sexual differentiation" arises out of a learned "contempt for maternal femininity" (Fineman 102). Misogynous attitudes expressed in plays represent "a recapitulation in dramatic terms of the psychological transformations from which masculine gender derives" (102). A jealous husband abusing his wife is, deep down, a little boy asserting that he is not like his mother. By acculturating children to recognize hierarchy, rules, and prohibitions against incest and fratricide, society ensures that the most interchangeable of people, siblings (such as the twins in The Comedy of Errors), do not disrupt the patriarchal order with undifferentiated, undisciplined behaviour. There is a slight wrinkle, however. A "double standard" that tolerated male extramarital sex but insisted on female chastity presented a way for husbands to assert their independence from their wives (Thomas, "Double" 446-67). Thus conflicting codes—patriarchal marriage (creating order) and the double standard (creating disorder)—simultaneously enforced and undermined differences between men. Englishmen were officially admonished to monitor their wives' chastity, yet unofficially allowed to substitute themselves for other wives'
husbands.

Some aspects of Fineman's argument need qualification. First, not all sexual competition occurs between indistinguishable fraternal rivals such as the "twinn'd lambs," Leontes and Polixenes (*WT* 1.2.67). Who could be more different than Ford and Falstaff, Cassio and Othello? Second, not all women are as terrible as those cited by Fineman (e.g., Lady Macbeth, Cressida) as representations that re-assure men of "the distance between men and their mothers" (103-04). In fact, many plays where cuckoldry is a concern contain seemingly irreproachable women. In Fineman's pessimistic reading, mutual heterosexual love cannot thrive. Misogyny, suspicion and rivalry are the norm, rather than spectacular aberrations.

In the introduction to his study of *Adultery and the Novel*, Tony Tanner argues that Shakespeare's depictions of imaginary cuckolds must be read as part of a long literary tradition depicting sexual transgressions committed by guests in other men's homes. The archetypal pattern begins with Paris's abduction of Helen from Menelaus, and continues through Tristan's siege of the castle housing Mark's bride Iseult and through the destruction of the Round Table through Launcelot's love for Arthur's wife Guinevere. The pattern culminates in Shakespeare's three great jealousy plays--*Othello, Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*--which in turn set the stage for the psychological novels of the eighteenth-century and beyond (Tanner 24-52). Tanner's discussion uses anthropological research to assess the shattering effect of adultery on marriage contracts and hospitality codes, "customs that ensure the stability and continuity of society" (47). Though Tanner focuses on the social rather than personal effects of perceived infidelity, his multidisciplinary approach anticipates subsequent
studies of adultery as a transgression of physical and psychological boundaries (e.g., 
Stallybrass; Woodbridge, "Palisading").

The most frequently cited study of the subject is Coppélia Kahn's chapter-length 
"anatomy of Shakespearean cuckoldry" found in her book, Man's Estate (119-50, 147). Kahn 
begins with an axiom: "Cuckoldry is something that happens to husbands, not wives, and it 
happens to them because they are husbands. A man whose mistress is unfaithful does not 
become a cuckold" (120). Cuckoldry is considered inevitable because of three social 
phenomena: misogyny, the double standard, and patriarchal marriage in which "a husband's 
honor depend[s] on his wife's chastity" (121). Male honour depends on female chastity, but 
men are acculturated to display virility through sexual conquests; male honour destabilizes 
itself, as men victimize one another and then blame their wives: "[c]uckoldry, like rape, is 
thus an affair between men, rather than between men and women or husbands and wives" 
(150). To Kahn, bonds between men are more powerful than those between men and women, 
even married couples. She calls cuckoldry a "masculine fantasy of feminine betrayal" (120), 
suggesting that men unconsciously wish to be cuckolded.5 Women become mere tokens of 
exchange, property without intrinsic value aside from their ability to transfer more important 
property (land) to their husbands' legitimate children. Though jealously guarded, wives are 
not loved by their husbands--a view supported by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's influential 
anatomy of "male homosocial desire" in Restoration comedy (49-66). Sedgwick also asserts 

5 In psychology, fantasy denotes "a form of wish fulfillment enacted in the imagination" 
(Moore and Fine 74). That Kahn considers "fantasy" to denote a wish is suggested by her 
support for a popular psychoanalytic view of Othello in which Iago and Othello secretly want 
their wives to betray them in order to strengthen their public homosocial (or private 
homosexual) bonds (Man's 140-46; cf. Holland 248-53).
that cuckoldry reduces women to mere "objects of symbolic exchange" between men (49-50).

In her description of a cuckold's humiliation, Kahn brings together the interrelated spheres of public reputation and private affection: "His dishonor and the scorn he endures are for him a loss of status in the community . . . that matters, in most cases, as much as the loss of his trust and her affection" (Man's 122). Reputation and affection need not be placed in opposition: they are aspects of the whole masculine self. In fact, I would add that spousal relations form a complex spectrum ranging from passionate love, mutual trust and mature interdependence to anger, mistrust, exploitative dependence. In All's Well That Ends Well, Helena's inventory of a wife's roles illustrates this tremendous variety:

There shall your master have a thousand loves,
A mother, and a mistress, and a friend,
A phoenix, captain, and an enemy,
A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,
A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear . . . .

(1.1.162-66)⁶

To Othello, Desdemona, runs such a gamut from passionate mistress to courageous captain to scolding mother to sexual traitress (see Chapter Ten, below).

Kahn also argues (citing Gohlke, "Wooed" 150-70) that sexual betrayal renders a cuckold "psychologically like a castrated man, and thus womanish"; it cuts to the core of his gender identity: "To be betrayed by a woman thus threatens a man's very masculinity--his identity as a man" (Man's 132). While I agree that the perception of betrayal alters a man's identity and undermines his confidence, it does not cause such a radical gender switch. Time

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⁶ Jonas A. Barish glosses her lines as "a series of epithets, similar to those in much Elizabethan love poetry, used to characterize the beloved" (371), though a textual corruption leaves the context of this passage ambiguous; Helena may also be referring to people Bertram will meet in the French court (Price 143-44).
and again, Shakespeare questions the facile causal equations, "marriage = cuckoldry" and 
"cuckoldry = emasculation," by depicting faithful wives of mistakenly suspicious husbands 
and pre-marital love-relationships jeopardized by cuckoldry anxiety. In many cases, the 
afflicted men are soldiers, larger-than-life caricatures of masculinity who are not castrated by 
the experience but rendered more ferocious and abusive. Cuckoldry may be a "powerful male 
fantasy" (Kahn, Man's 120 note), but it represents man's worst nightmare, not his most secret 
desire. Furthermore, following Jeanne Addison Roberts's suggestion that "the themes of 
courtship and cuckoldry" are "very closely intertwined" in the author's mind (Shakespeare's 
128), I will argue that cuckoldry "happens" to unmarried men when they imagine their future 
brides to be unfaithful and react with the same vehemence as a cuckolded husband. In some 
cases, perceived female infidelity acts as a catalyst to their coming-of-age as manly men.

In the first of two theses on Shakespearean cuckoldry that antedate my own, Ronald 
Leo St. Pierre argues that Shakespeare departs from conventional depictions of lusty wives 
and foolish husbands to develop "his own alternative brand of cuckoldry" (2). St. Pierre lays 
important groundwork by tracing a genealogy of cuckoldry and its myriad symbols to folk 
customs and mythical figures such as Actaeon, Jupiter and Vulcan. Influenced by medieval 
fabliaux and continental prose writings on jealousy, Shakespeare joins a long literary 
continuum featuring such authors as Chaucer, Boccaccio and John Heywood. St. Pierre 
delineates this literary and cultural "cuckold tradition" (15), outlines plot conventions from 
cuckold stories, and describes traits of their character types; namely, suspicion and jealousy 
in the male, and lustiness and fickleness in the female (8-26). St. Pierre argues that a shift in 
cuckold literature parallels a major change in English marriage customs (27-36), from the
loveless, arranged marriages of the Middle Ages (as described by C. S. Lewis [1-43]) to the more affectionate, closed nuclear families of the late Renaissance (a process outlined by Lawrence Stone [Family passim]). St. Pierre accepts the notion that Medieval men and women were sensitive about their honour, but tolerated extramarital relations if these were engaged in with discretion. The period's cuckold stories were primarily comic, involving blissfully ignorant husbands and their lusty wives such as those in Chaucer's "The Miller's Tale" (St. Pierre 27-36). In the Renaissance, a greater emphasis on "personal attachment in marriage" took hold (33). Related to this change was "an increased emphasis on patriarchal [sic] power" which exacerbated men's largely irrational desire to control female sexuality (34). Cuckoldry thus became a serious subject: "By Shakespeare's time, stories of cuckoldry were less funny, and less tolerant of wifely adultery" (37).

St. Pierre also questions Kahn's assertion that cuckoldry is a "powerful male fantasy" (Man's 120 note) substituting as his key term, "chimera," because "it conjures more vividly the vision of a monster," more nightmarish than real (St. Pierre 38). Much of his thesis identifies husbands' errors and vindicates wives in Shakespeare's plays: "jealousy is unjustified, the language of cuckoldry seems misapplied, wives are faithful, and would-be paramours are either foolish or they are liars" (42). Thus St. Pierre reads the plays in light of their literary predecessors, leaving him little room to examine theoretical aspects of jealous suspicion. It is not enough to argue that Ford in The Merry Wives of Windsor is suspicious because his literary forerunners were, or that he is mistakenly so because Shakespeare was attempting to prove those forerunners wrong. To St. Pierre, Shakespearean cuckoldry is simply "a figment of the male psyche" (39). End of story. I will build on St. Pierre's generic
and formal observations, but search elsewhere for material on the historical and psychological causes of cuckoldry anxiety.

In her thesis, Anne Carroll Parten argues that masculine jealousy is based on an irrational fear of female political ascendancy. She finds evidence of this fear in documents ranging from jest-books and printed sermons to comedies in which marriage is undermined by the marginal status of the cuckolded husband. A provocative aspect of Parten's argument is her separation of jealousy (an emotional, psychological issue) from cuckoldry (a political, social issue). She cites instances of Renaissance misogyny in order to redirect the attention of unnamed "[m]odern critics" who erroneously "equate the anxiety the Elizabethans called 'jealousy' exclusively with a fear of losing love," back toward more important issues of property and politics ("Cuckoldry" 59). Indeed, she issues this caveat: "one must not leap to the conclusion that the husband's very real suffering is in any significant sense a response to the perceived loss of his wife's affection" (84, emphasis added). I do not dispute the fact that wives were viewed as property or that they were feared as independent agents. But I will argue that wives were needed, guarded, exploited, as a kind of emotional property as well; hence, wifely unresponsiveness was interpreted as sexual betrayal, and responded to with panic, anger and violence. This may seem a far cry from the romantic love most commonly associated with jealousy. Indeed, to many Shakespearean husbands, conjugal love consists entirely of wifely attentiveness to their every need (obedience) and exclusivity of affection (chaste constancy). Cuckoldry elicits jealousy because of the real or apparent withdrawal of such wifely ministrations.

Parten's thesis is otherwise indispensable because of its extensive erudition: she
interprets dozens of period documents from a feminist perspective. She also issues some sensible cautions about existing psychoanalytic interpretations of Shakespeare's plays, interpretations which she considers to be a-historical and sexist:

These treatments . . . have tended to deal with the phenomenon of cuckoldry as a problem in an almost timeless masculine psychology. I have approached the topic, rather, with the aim of placing the concept of cuckoldry that Shakespeare employed in a specific cultural context . . . (iv)

Duly warned, I propose to revisit the issue of masculine psychology using a less sexist psychoanalytic paradigm and without positing anything "timeless." With regards to my decision to focus on male responses, I would echo Lawrence Danson: "Since my attention to the suffering of men may seem perverse, let me begin by acknowledging the infinitely greater impositions of that [marital economy of masculine possessiveness] on women" (69, emphasis in original). Parten and St. Pierre thoroughly exonerate Shakespearean wives and mistresses, and justly excoriate the suspicious husbands and lovers who bring such grief to their relationships. Rather than repeat their findings, I will examine why the men are wrongly suspicious from a non-judgemental standpoint that should, I hope, not be misinterpreted as a defense or rationalization of their violence or vitriol. These theses form the base of ground-breaking research onto which my investigation may build.

Marilyn L. Williamson's study of The Patriarchy of Shakespeare's Comedies presents an unsympathetic account of male insecurities. To Williamson, comic suitors are adolescent males who seek empowerment and social prestige through marriage to mature and powerful women (25-27). In marrying, the women relinquish their power over these "somewhat childish or errant males" but they regain the upper hand through their ability to cuckold their...
husbands (27)--a crime for which, in the conventions of jokes, stage-comedies and jest-books, women are rather praised for their cleverness than blamed for their promiscuity (41-53; cf. Harbage, *Shakespeare* 190). Thus according to Williamson's mechanical "topsy-turvy" model of power relations (45) in courtship men seek "advancement," women anticipate "subordination" (36), and marriage entails a constant struggle in which a husband's patriarchal bombast is countered by a wife's threats of cuckoldry. The best that couples can hope for is an uneasy truce; failing that, men can retreat to the "kinship" of cuckolds (46).

Like Parten, Katharine Eisaman Maus sets out to transcend what she sees as the limitations of psychological approaches ("Horns" 561-83). Cuckoldry anxiety is so prevalent, she argues, that "even ingenious and satisfying psychological accounts of individual characters . . . cannot explain why this particular pathology should turn up in so many different sorts of plays" (561). No psychological approach has succeeded, therefore none can possibly succeed. I disagree. Maus argues that playgoers experience feelings similar to those of cuckolded males because of "structural analogies" by which both groups desire to see that which is forbidden: the jealous husband his wife's infidelity, the playgoer sexuality on stage (574). Because playgoers and cuckolds cannot influence the scenes being enacted before them, they feel helpless, marginalized, even voyeuristic. At the same time, however, both groups are empowered by the "ocular proof" they attain: "The jealous male's distance from what he sees casts him as both traumatized, impotent child and as omniscient father-judge" (571). As with jokes, stage depictions of cuckoldry enable spectators to master their anxieties at a safe distance. Although I disagree with Maus's psychoanalysis--she also holds that the "jealous onlooker participates vicariously in his own betrayal, indulging heterosexual
and homosexual fantasies" (570)—her comments about the reception of plays are suggestive:

In a theater that insists so self-consciously upon its own representational limitations, the spectator is obliged to evaluate symptoms, behavior the cause of which may be hidden or withheld. The art of spectatorship is an art of diagnosis. (576, emphasis in original)

Because censorship prevents the dramatic depiction of wifely infidelity, audiences are "provided less with a story than with the synecdoche of a story" which they interpret using "an inductive method" (576-77). This will be my method too. I also agree with Maus that Shakespeare "connect[s] sexual jealousy with a flaw in masculine self-knowledge or with its loss" (570). Concomitant to this loss is a depletion of self-esteem for which a jealous male compensates by acquiring what Maus calls an "antithetical associate" (571)—and then, encouraged by this associate, punishing "the beloved by visiting upon her his own painful self-fragmentation" (572).

In an article exploring "Shakespeare and the Bonds of Brotherhood," Marianne Novy builds on Fineman's suggestion that adult sexual rivalry stems from childhood sibling rivalry (107-09). Novy illustrates her argument using Shakespeare's Sonnet 143, in which an unrequited lover compares his anguish to that experienced by an infant left behind by a housewife in pursuit of a runaway chicken:

So run'st thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I, thy babe, chase thee afar behind,
But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind.

(143.9-12)

From this sonnet and from Dorothy Dinnerstein's feminist classic, The Mermaid and the Minotaur, Novy deduces that "the intensity of masculine anxiety about cuckoldry comes from
the infant's anxiety about losing the mother, who is his whole world" ("Shakespeare" 107). Novy also cites C. L. Barber's and Richard P. Wheeler's suggestion that Shakespeare experienced such a painful separation at age two-and-a-half when his brother Gilbert was born; to a lesser extent at age ten when his brother Richard was born; and finally at sixteen when his brother Edmund was born (Barber and Wheeler 43-47; Novy, "Shakespeare" 107). By then, Shakespeare was old enough to examine the irrational feelings of jealousy linked to underlying "fears of abandonment" that recur at the birth of siblings. From these experiences in his childhood and youth, Shakespeare acquired a fascination with plots depicting adult sexual rivalry which is at base "brothers competing for a mother's affection" (Novy, "Shakespeare" 107). Novy's argument is crucial to my own understanding of cuckoldry anxiety. If her article has a limitation, it is that in it she does not describe the effects Shakespeare's father's sudden decline in the community may have had on William when he was twelve, even though this loss of a role-model was a "second, much more striking" event than having to share his mother (Barber and Wheeler 47; cf. Schoenbaum 38-44). I will argue that imaginary cuckolds follow a similar pattern: they feel abandoned by a cherished female figure, and as a result become dependent on a male figure for guidance--a male figure who (because of competitive rivalry) will likewise let them down. In many cases, the establishment of male-male relationships is less attributable to homosocial bonding than to a reactivation of earlier forms of dependency behaviour.7

In her article, "Male Bonding and the Myth of Women's Deception in Shakespeare's

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7 For a provocative reading of sexual rivalry and jealousy in Shakespeare's Sonnets, including number 143, see Pequigney (especially 102-43).
Plays," Shirley Nelson Garner argues that even in instances where heroines are "appallingly virtuous," male jealousy follows a predictable pattern (135). The male's suspicion of his partner is aroused, he expresses pain through anger, and then he finds solace by imagining himself a "member of a community of cuckolds," by plotting revenge on her, and by rupturing their relationship (135). The heroine dies or faints, prompting repentance and expressions of love by her partner to whom she is then magically restored (135-36). Garner concludes that the speed with which jealousy arises proves that Shakespeare's afflicted men "need the women who love them to betray them" because of their "pent-up misogyny and fear of women" (136-138, emphasis in original). However accurately Garner describes the progress of these men's anxiety, her proposed etiology seems polemical: "Their bonds with women must be frail indeed if all of these men distrust women so quickly, seem so determined to believe that they have been betrayed, and react with such extreme harshness" (139). By this logic, the patient who succumbs quickly to an illness must have wanted to get sick.

I believe that the intensity of male jealousy represents an intense yet fragile bond, and that the rapid onset of jealousy is caused by perceived threats to the relationship and to the male self. Certainly, Shakespeare represents societies in which suspicions of women are rife among the male population. But contrary to Garner's suggestion that there is "greater security in bonds with men" (149), the male population is plagued by actual deception whereas the female population's proclivity to such behaviour is largely imaginary. Men do not furnish one another with a welcoming "community," but rather a competitive environment. They disrupt heterosexual bonds but offer no safe alternative. Garner is correct that frequently "the
moment of doubt occurs just before or just after their marriages" (139), but this does not prove men's reluctance to enter long-term heterosexual relationships; rather, new situations require social and emotional adjustments during which men become vulnerable and insecure. In this thesis, I will refute Garner's conclusion that Renaissance man's greatest fear is "union with a woman" (149): his greatest fear is the disruption of this union. Shakespeare's imaginary cuckolds are misogynous, misguided and mean, but they do not wish to be so.

In a socio-economic exploration of the popularity of cuckoldry on the London stage, Douglas Bruster argues that early fabliau versions of cuckoldry, in which a hard-working rural labourer is cuckolded by a "picaroque opportunist," were adapted to an urban setting, in which a prosperous merchant is cuckolded by a lord or gentleman (195-215, 199). In the country, "methodical labor" was viewed as "effeminate" (204), as suggested by the yoke that symbolizes husbands' animal-like "drudgery" (201). Like sterile horned oxen, country husbands could not satisfy their wives. This prejudice was easily translated into an urban analogue because handling money was also considered to cause impotence (204-05). Thus was born the urban legend of insatiable citizen wives, bored with lacklustre sex with their money-grubbing husbands. As citizens laboured to provide for their families, wives laboured to bear aristocratic bastard children; though as Linda Woodbridge points out, a popular narrative motif does not prove a widespread social practice: "It is unlikely that young aristocrats cuckolded prosperous merchants with such regularity in real life" (Women 174). Nonetheless, to Bruster cuckoldry evinces the real-life transition from Medieval rural barter economy to Renaissance urban monetary exchange; cuckoldry becomes a metaphor for "nascent capitalism" ("Horn" 210).
Alison Sinclair's study of *The Deceived Husband* includes a brief discussion of *Othello* in its survey of six centuries of European literature (161-72). Sinclair uses Kleinian object relations theory, according to which "formative emotional dramas" (3) recur in adult life according to complex variations on two basic stages: the initial "paranoid-schizoid" period, during which the infant splits off distressing emotions such as anger, and projects these onto the mother (or her breast) in order to safeguard the vulnerable self; and the subsequent "depressive" period, during which the infant accepts that the mother is an independent entity and feels guilt for projecting bad feelings onto her. During the former period, the infant is amoral and lives in a fantasy world: during the latter, the infant emerges from this protective emotional cocoon and learns to distinguish fantasy from reality (Sinclair 1-29). Sinclair categorizes deceived husbands according to these two positions.

Paradoxically, the comic cuckold found in tales by Chaucer and Boccaccio displays behaviour symptomatic of the more developmentally sophisticated depressive position. By laughing at the ridiculous excesses of an angry cuckold, or scoffing at the complacency of a wittol, societies express "the ability to contemplate and accommodate failure . . . a collective experience of the depressive position" (Sinclair 50-96, 54). On the other hand, the man of honour typically found in Spanish jealousy plays of the seventeenth century (alongside which Sinclair places *Othello*) displays symptoms of the paranoid-schizoid position, "the earliest, most primitive emotional state, and as such the most intense. In this position, unwelcome experience is projected out into others, is disowned, but then feared" (Sinclair 108). This position explains the suspicion about chastity, the touchiness about reputation, and the explosive violence associated with wronged husbands in "wife-murder" drama (97-172).
Othello, in particular, cannot tolerate the taint of adulterous pollution—even though his associate, Iago, recommends he adopt what Sinclair characterizes as a depressive position: "where's that palace whereinto foul things/ Sometimes intrude not?" (Oth. 3.3.140-41; see Chapter Ten, below).

Though Sinclair's Kleinian approach differs from the self-psychological one I shall employ, we share several fundamental assumptions. I agree with her observation that jealous husbands display behaviour "outwardly determined by the social norms of the circumstances in which these men are found, but inwardly determined by fundamental psychological mechanisms for dealing with threat, anxiety, and fear" (2). I also agree that Shakespeare's imaginary cuckolds share characteristics of Sinclair's paranoid-schizoid man of honour who is "so dependent for a sense of esteem on the opinion of the world that an attack on the integrity of his spouse . . . is an attack upon himself" (25). Only very rarely do Shakespeare's characters manage to attain the depressive position and reconcile themselves to doubts.8 Finally, I admire Sinclair's workable compromise between what Jonathan Dollimore refers to as the "materialist" view that behaviour is shaped by historical environmental factors, and as the "essentialist" view that timeless universal developmental processes shape the individual (153). This sort of compromise should alleviate the concerns of scholars who argue that the individual "self" is a bourgeois, liberal myth, anachronistic when applied to the Renaissance.9

8 For example, Posthumus overcomes his horn-madness and forgives his wife "[f]or wryng but a little" (Cym. 5.1.5; see Chapter Nine, below).

9 For example, Belsey (Subject 33-42), Dollimore (29-50) and Greenblatt ("Psychoanalysis" 131-45) are all scholars whose writings have shaped what Jean E. Howard refers to as "the post-humanist epoch in which essentialist notions of selfhood are no longer viable" ("New" 16).
Williamson is particularly intent on historicizing psychoanalytic approaches in order to "free us from the assumption that "twas ever thus,' that there is such a thing as the human condition" (20, emphasis in original). The work of object-relations theorists and self-psychologists alike suggests that the fully autonomous self is a myth in any culture; according to Köhut, "a move from dependence (symbiosis) to independence (autonomy) is an impossibility" (How 52). Although the variables of human behaviour have changed since the Renaissance, some basic structural parameters remain constant. A person's identity is a balance of relative autonomy and relative contingency. According to Skura's eloquent defence, "psychoanalysis does not need to posit an asocial autonomous subject just because it explores interiority" ("Understanding" 84). As with other forms of literary criticism, modern psychoanalytic approaches can (and must) be tailored to fit distant cultural situations (77-89; cf. Hume 69-100).

Most recently, Mark Breitenberg has argued that sexual jealousy was less an individual malady than "constitutive and symptomatic of the normative operations of patriarchy" ("Anxious" 377-98, 377). Using illustrations from Renaissance texts extolling female chastity, Breitenberg suggests that jealousy arose from the contingency of masculinity upon "the coercive and symbolic regulation of women's sexuality" (377). Breitenberg agrees with Maus (cited above) that the jealous husband interprets his wife like a psychoanalyst or a literary critic: "male sexual jealousy in the Renaissance is largely a problem in reading and interpretation of female 'texts'" (Breitenberg, "Anxious" 379). By objectifying women and studying them at a safe distance, men consolidated and differentiated their masculine gender identity. Interpretive manuals on female chastity were thus, paradoxically, "intended to
alleviate an anxiety that [was] itself a 'necessary' construction that enable[d] masculine identity in the first place" (384). I will argue the contrary, that anxiety did not "enable" masculine identity but was a product of its breakdown--a breakdown caused by maturational failures and adjustment problems. According to the self psychology which I will outline in the next chapter, individual subjectivity is contingent upon the availability of significant others; first as responsive mirrors, then as constitutive parts of the self, then as trusted companions. Renaissance cultural misogyny was largely produced by common male responses to separation from women: angry reactions to the failure of interpersonal relationships, and desperate attempts to shore up depleted self-esteem by displaying bravura in front of male peers. Self psychology does not contradict Breitenberg's observation that England's most disturbing criterion for manliness was female-bashing. However, men's conformity to misogynous imperatives concealed deep-seated fears of abandonment, exclusion, or separation. Breitenberg repeatedly emphasizes "the profound dependence of masculine identity on the chastity of women" ("Anxious" 390)--a fact I will not dispute. But where he emphasizes the abstract concept of chastity, I will focus on actual or perceived female responses in plays. I will also dispute the exclusivity of this dependence. Human relationships--whether with parents, children, friends, servants, peers, or neighbours--are fraught with uncertainty and instability. Because characters cannot know for certain, they must place trust in others (380)--a fact that reminds them of the contingency of their own identities.

The contention that masculinity is contingent on the denigration of femininity discounts the possibility of spousal friendship. I will argue that patriarchal marriage does not
necessarily produce jealousy in the plays, but that marriage frequently entails affection, trust, and reciprocity. Perceived infidelity undermines a man's gender identity and masculine pride, so he saves face by participating in the misogynous culture which assures him that, after all, he hated that which he seems to have lost. The fact that affection and friendship can be attained in spousal relationships intensifies the experience of sexual betrayal. By creating dramatic situations where cuckoldry also represents a breach of spousal friendship, Shakespeare "ups the emotional ante" and adds layers of complexity to an already complicated issue. An imaginary cuckold thinks he has lost "[a] counsellor, a traitress, and a dear" (AWW 1.1.166).

Many approaches to this wide field of inquiry fail, I believe, because they narrow their discussions to the purely individual responses of given characters isolated from their historical and intellectual contexts. Parten separates "jealousy" (a psychological response to separation from a loved-one) from the larger issues of "cuckoldry" (a social phenomenon by which a man his humiliated and his gender identity impugned) and "adultery" (a legal concept that ensures social stability by making extra-marital sex a transgression). I will argue that these three are inseparable phenomena. To Parten, cuckoldry represents an age-old "farcical struggle for the breeches" whereas adultery represents cuckoldry treated in a tragic setting that evokes "images of a more general collapse of coherence and order" (Parten, "Cuckoldry" 408-13); both situations are about power rather than about love. I will examine how personal psychology intersects with social reality, and how the derision of cuckolds elicits that monstrous (but not inexplicable) rage that many find inappropriately serious in a comedy, inappropriately ridiculous in a tragedy.
The last two decades of criticism have thus seen a resurgence of interest in historical materials, and a new willingness to enlist post-Freudian psychoanalytic approaches, in order to explore the depiction of jealousy, cuckoldry and adultery in Shakespeare's plays. The studies outlined above have recommended situating plays in historical contexts, paying close attention to the text itself, considering political and social dynamics played out between the sexes, and examining the pressures exerted upon Renaissance subjects during the consolidation of their gender identities. In her survey of the state of "Renaissance/Early Modern Studies," Leah S. Marcus applauds the fact that psychoanalytic criticism has largely abandoned the anachronistic interpretation of "an author or text in isolation," and she recommends Kohut's self psychology as a particularly useful tool for examining "the culturally specific aspects of psychic functioning" ("Renaissance" 57-58). Practising analyst Hyman L. Muslin is even more optimistic about this relatively new approach:

The marriage of self psychology to Shakespeare is, I should say, a marriage, or perhaps a merger, made in heaven. Shakespeare's heroes and heroines are all involved with self-realization, self-aggrandizement, self-deficits, and the need for a responsive surround to assist in their unfolding development or during crises of self-cohesion. ("Shakespeare" 215)

In the next two chapters, I will outline self psychology and examine common "crises of self-cohesion" experienced in the Renaissance as illustrated by the rapidly expanding field of social history. Then I will turn to Shakespeare's dramatic corpus, where, by dramatizing scenarios in which increasingly flimsy evidence and oblique innuendo convince husbands of wifely infidelity, the author seems to be conducting a kind of sociological experiment on stage. By administering ever-decreasing doses of suspicion to subjects, he demonstrates that,
because of endemic poor emotional health, very little is required to destroy a marriage. Even less can animate a play.
Chapter Two

Why Self Psychology?

The literary interpretation of character has long been an unfashionable enterprise, vilified by critics who emphasize language and form over thematic content (Hochman 13-27). The psychoanalytic interpretation of character has fared even worse, prompting one of its more creative practitioners to call it "something of an embarrassment" (Brooks 334).¹

Psychoanalytic literary criticism has traditionally lagged behind advances made in clinical practice, such that, despite a proliferation of new approaches, "for the humanist in the academy, psychoanalysis is Freud, Lacan, and little else" (Pigman 302). Although Kohutian

¹ Two main methodological objections to psychoanalytic criticism have been raised: that its practitioners "confuse literature and life," naively treating literary characters as real people (Hochman 17; cf. Hogan 135), and that critics use outmoded models to diagnose characters "as if the identification and labeling [sic] of human relations in a psychoanalytic vocabulary were the task of criticism" (Brooks 335). These pitfalls can be avoided by making a distinction between a character's psychology, and the represented psychology of a character. The former term does not exist: the latter affects all aspects of a dramatic work—plot, form, language, etc. Without this dynamic element—represented psychology—drama becomes merely poetry read aloud, a five-act "essay on man." I am not interested in, say, Othello as some real historical individual, but rather in how Shakespeare renders this character's behaviour plausible and meaningful to his audience. Therefore, of the three possible objects of psychoanalytic criticism, "the author of a work, the reader of a work, or the work itself" (Hogan 135; cf. Holland 8), mine is a reader-centred approach inasmuch as (I hope) it stimulates readers to re-examine aspects of the plays in a new light, and surprises readers with a few modest discoveries; an author-centred approach in its appreciation of Shakespeare's careful observations of contemporary behaviour, and his genius in transmitting plausible scenarios to the stage; but primarily a work-centred approach, an interpretation of thematic content using a modern psychoanalytic paradigm adapted to examine represented motives and behaviour as these might have been understood in Shakespeare's day. For a thoughtful analysis of psychoanalytic methodologies, see Skura, Literary (e.g., her chapter on character analysis, 29-57).
self psychology is arguably the most influential, controversial, even "revolutionary" approach to emerge in the past three decades,² with some notable exceptions (listed below) it has not yet made significant inroads into literary studies. The relevance and efficacy of this approach will become apparent, I hope, in this chapter outlining its basic tenets.

My decision to examine character stems from evidence that this is what most interested Shakespeare's contemporaries about drama, and from my own conviction that character accounts for his continued appeal among university students, general readers, and playgoers. To Baruch Hochman,

there is no question but that readers in past times—ancient, medieval, and early modern—tended to understand texts in terms of character, among other things, and that when character was read, it was read in terms of motivation. (29)

Hochman cites numerous early authors as having expressed interest in character (29-30), and I propose the following passage, written by one of Shakespeare's fellow dramatists, as a representative view. In his 1640 Timber: or, Discoveries, Ben Jonson exhorted would-be orators to attend the theatre to see depictions of character:

There shall the Spectator see some, insulting with Joy; others, fretting with Melancholy; raging with Anger; mad with Love; boiling with Avarice; undone with Riot; tortur'd with expectation; consum'd with feare: no perturbation in common life, but the Orator findes an example of it in the Scene. (640-41)

Although language, plot and dramatic form were important, drama was at base about character and passion—in other words, about represented psychology. As I shall demonstrate, many such "perturbations" are exhibited by jealous characters in Shakespeare's plays. It is

² See Baker and Baker 1; Berman 33; Fine 589; Klein 42.
Jonson's observations about real-life, however, that seem to recommend self psychology as a particularly relevant interpretive approach to the drama in this early period.

In a discussion of the contemporary practice of sending out children to a variety of locations for finishing, Jonson expressed ideas that have become central concerns of self psychology:

I like no private breeding. I would send them where their industry should be daily increas'd by praise; and that kindled by emulation. It is a good thing to inflame the mind . . . . Give me that wit, whom praise excites, glory puts on, or disgrace grieves: hee is to bee nourish'd with Ambition, prick'd forward with honour; check'd with Reprehension; and never to bee suspected of sloath. (615)

Jonson's emphasis on "praise" and "emulation" anticipates Kohut's description of psychological processes in which individuals are "nourish'd" by the affirmation provided, and "prick'd forward" by models of behaviour set, by significant others. Renaissance England's obsessions with personal honour and conformity anticipate the crucial importance of self-esteem in the modern world. Most important, however, is Jonson's understanding that external models of behaviour and providers of emotional support are gradually internalized by a growing individual: "They [students] heare what is commanded to others, as well as themselves, much approv'd, much corrected; all which they bring to their owne store, and use" (614, emphasis added). Approval, correction, internalization: these are as critical developmental processes in our time as they were widely thought to be in Shakespeare's. As Curtis Brown Watson points out, Jonson's observations were "commonplace" (123 note).

Self psychology differs from orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis in its abandonment of unconscious drives and defences in favour of a more holistic conception of the self and a
view that aggressive behaviour arises out of the breakdown of this self. Kohut defines the self as "a unit, cohesive in space and enduring in time, which is a center of initiative and a recipient of impressions" (Restoration 99). No concept is more vexed in the history of psychoanalytic theory (Kirshner 157-82), yet more readily understandable to the lay person. In their indispensable glossary of Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts, Burness E. Moore and Bernard D. Fine define "self" as "[t]he total person of an individual in reality, including one's body and psychic organization" (174). Kohut's characterization of the self as a continually evolving structure, both physical and psychical, is a useful working model because of its adaptability and its eschewal of absolute normative criteria of independent, mature selfhood.

How do these compare to Renaissance conceptions of the self? According to Marjorie Garber, "in Shakespeare's time 'self' meant not only the individual, or that individual's consciousness of his own identity, but also, in an adjectival form, 'same' or 'identical'" (49). The Oxford English Dictionary points out that Shakespeare generally uses "self" as a prefix. At the same time, the concept of self as "a person whom one loves as oneself or is a counterpart of oneself" (OED sb.C.I.2.) was popular in love poetry in which his contemporaries described the fusion of selves and elimination of personal boundaries. Spenser's 1595 Amoretti distinguish between the outward appearance of separate beings, and an inward reality that blurs their identities:

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3 Introductory overviews of self psychology and its departures from orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis include Bacal, "Heinz" 225-73; Baker and Baker 1-9; Berman 1-55; Bouson 11-29; Eagle, "Theoretical" 175-85; Eagle, Recent 35-74; Gill 197-211; Layton and Schapiro, Introduction 1-27; Mitchell and Black 149-69; Siegel; and Sussman 63-81.

4 See, for example, Hamlet's famous complaint: "[O] that the Everlasting had not fix'd/ His canon 'gainst self-slaughter" (Ham. 1.2.131-32).
Leaue lady in your glasse of christall clene,
Your goodly selfe for euemore to vew:
and in my selfe, my inward selfe I meane,
most liuely lyke behold your semblant trew.

(45.1-4, emphasis added)

The OED cites the Amoretti as containing the first instances of "self" denoting "[a]n assemblage of characteristics and dispositions which may be conceived as constituting one of various conflicting personalities within a human being" (sb.C.I.4.b.), such as when unrequited love induces in the speaker of another sonnet "ciuill warre,/ the which my selfe against my selfe doe make" (44.5-6). These shifts support Lawrence Stone's contention that the Renaissance witnessed "a new interest in the self" as a paradox of difference and sameness, a compromise between a socially determined subject and an individual striving for autonomy (Family 225-29, 225). Spenser's sonnets also mention the beloved's healthy "selfe assurance"--"Thrise happie she, that is so well assured/ Vnto her selfe and setled so in hart" (59.9, 1-2). These usages suggest that such modern psychological concepts as self-esteem, the fragmented self, mergers and the selfobject (to be discussed below) are not anachronistic impositions onto Renaissance literature. Indeed, "self" may have been as prevalent a concept then as it has become in modern pop-psychology; in The First Part of Hieronimo (attributed to Thomas Kyd, 1605), Alcario mocks Don Andrea's doting on Bel-imperia by greeting her as "my self of self" (7.49).

According to Kohut, the nucleus of the self is like the foundations of a building that is constructed during infancy and childhood. Besides being physically dependent on his or her

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5 On the excesses of popularized versions of self psychology, such as the current North American vogue for improving self-esteem, see Lasch 29-34.
parents, an infant is also psychologically dependent on them. The infant cannot differentiate fully between self and other; "objects" (i.e., other people) are experienced as part of the child's self, in other words as "self-objects" (Kohut, Analysis xiv and passim). Initially selfobjects function as external providers of emotional regulation for the child "whose maintenance of self-cohesiveness and self-esteem . . . [depends] on their presence" (Analysis 21). Selfobjects are not loved and respected as individuals, but are subjectively experienced by another: "Objects can be perceived as having motives of their own, as different from the self . . . Selfobjects, by contrast, have no separate reality, motives, or boundaries" (Seiden 68). There are several kinds of selfobject roles. Initially, an infant experiences a primitive sort of "merger" ("the experience of being totally one") with the primary caregiver who holds, cuddles, feeds, and changes the baby. This "blissful" state of oneness lays the "bedrock" of the developing self (Wolf, "Selfobject" 73). After a few months, however, the infant gradually realizes that he or she is a separate entity and abandons this primitive merger in favour of four selfobject relations that persist through life: mirroring selfobjects, idealized selfobjects, alter-ego selfobjects, and adversarial selfobjects (72-73).

The first is the "mirroring selfobject."7 A developing child craves affirmative responses, such as verbal praise, smiling, cuddling or "other forms of maternal participation . . . [that] confirm the child's self-esteem" (Kohut, Analysis 116). The primary caregiver

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6 To emphasize the fact that the "object is not experienced as separate from the self," Kohut eventually dropped the hyphen and the word became "selfobject" (Siegel 72).

7 Kohut's terminology fluctuated considerably throughout his career. For instance, he also referred to the "approving-mirroring selfobject" ("Thoughts" 645), the "admiring selfobject" (Elson 77-94), even the "empathically responding merging-mirroring-approving self-object" (Restoration 185). For brevity's sake, I will use "mirroring selfobject."
mirrors the child when he or she smiles, talks and takes his or her first steps, thus encouraging him or her to take more risks, to develop, to grow. Mirroring is not confined to literally reflective responses, nor does it cease to be important after childhood: mirroring entails a lifelong form of emotional support which in adults can range from a compliment to a pat on the back, from a promotion at work to a favourable review in a scholarly journal. Mirroring is a prevalent concern in Elizabethan love poetry, such as in Spenser's sonnet, "Fayre eyes, the myrrour of my mazed hart":

For when ye mildly looke with louely hew,
then is my soule with life and loue inspired
but when ye lowre, or looke on me askew,
then doe I die, as one with lightning fyred.

(Amoretti 7.5-8)

In Kohutian parlance, Spenser is describing empathic ("louely") and unempathic ("lowr[ing]") mirroring responses. As Germaine Warkentin observes, Spenser’s sonnets are highly conventional in their depictions of the "metamorphosis of cruelty into constancy" (34); I will argue that it is precisely the constancy of women when they function as selfobjects that so obsesses Shakespeare’s imaginary cuckolds.

Productive selfobject responses do not merely entail indiscriminate praise, but rather selective responses to actions that instill a balanced feeling of self worth. For example, parents who applaud their child's first steps should, over time, reduce praise and encourage

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8 Kohut's concept differs from Lacan's "mirror-stage" which destroys the child's feelings of omnipotence and forever alienates him or her from an originary state of narcissistic perfection (Lacan 1-7; cf. Lemaire 78-81, 176-79). Lacan's mirror-stage inflicts a sudden and irreparable loss (Belsey, "Desire's" 84-102; Grosz 31-35), whereas Kohutian mirroring transforms feelings of entitlement and narcissistic omnipotence into realistic demands on others and healthy self-esteem. For a detailed comparison of Lacan's and Kohut's theories, see Muller 363-94.
new challenges—a withdrawal of mirroring that is not alienating if it occurs gradually: "For development to proceed and psychic structure to build, the availability of caretakers has to be optimum, neither too gratifying nor too frustrating" (Harwood 61). Illustrations of this dynamic can be found in Linda Pollock's anthology of historical documents, A Lasting Relationship. One seventeenth-century diarist recalls how her parents encouraged her from an early age:

My father and mother fancying me then beautiful . . . applied all their cares, and spared no cost to improve me in my education, which procured me the admiration of those that flattered my parents. By the time I was four years old I read English perfectly, and having a great memory, was carried to sermons, and while I was very young could remember and repeat them exactly, and being caressed, the love of praise tickled me, and made me attend more heedfully. (Pollock, Lasting 222)

This child received verbal and non-verbal forms of mirroring, and as a result she felt beautiful, smart, loved, and she brimmed with self-esteem. Her parents existed primarily for her benefit, applying "all their cares, and spare[ing] no cost." They functioned like selfobjects.

Because a child's feelings of narcissistic omnipotence are undermined by the discovery of how much bigger, stronger and smarter everyone else seems to be, he or she compensates by merging with a powerful "idealized selfobject" (Kohut, Analysis 37-56). Howard A. Bacal describes the idealized selfobject relation as "the experience of feeling linked to the admired other: the self, in effect, walking proudly in the shadow of his admired object" ("Heinz" 232). In cultures with rigidly delineated gender roles (such as Renaissance England), for a male child it is usually the father, for a female child the mother, who become this role model "gazed at in awe, admired, looked up to, and like which one wants to
become" (Kohut, "Forms" 436). Idealized and mirroring selfobjects operate in concert to engender a child—not by threatening Freudian castration during the Oedipal period—but by providing examples of behaviour which, if imitated successfully by the child, are rewarded with mirroring praise. By transmitting expectations and rewarding behaviours "concerning the gender of the child," parental selfobjects create the "critical mass for the child's evolving nuclear self system" (Lothstein 231). Thus self psychology envisions development to be primarily a process of imitation and reward, and only secondarily one of anxious differentiation and punishment (Lothstein 213-35; Brems 145-60; Gardiner, "Self" 775-80); and it is therefore a less antagonistic model than that favoured by literary critics such as Fineman and Breitenberg (discussed in my previous chapter).

Of the remaining two main selfobject types, the "alter-ego selfobject," through his or her "essential alikeness" to the subject, confirms the subject's sense of self and place in the social order: "This forms the basis for many important peer relationships that, via imitation, lead to learning" (Wolf, "Selfobject" 73). As we will see, Shakespeare's plays depict highly conformist and tightly knit homosocial cultures in which this alter-ego dynamic is quite common. Related to this kind of peer relationship is the "adversarial selfobject," a "benignly opposing other" who encourages the self "to be in active opposition and thus confirming an at least partial autonomy" (73). These two selfobject types enable individual development by being, at times exactly like, at times diametrically opposed to, the subject who experiences them. Much of this selfobject interaction occurs unconsciously: it is "intrapsychic," rather than "interpersonal" (70). Despite being separated physically, individuals are fused psychologically. A selfobject is less a person than a dynamic formed by one subject's
perception of another; as Kohut phrases it, "the 'I's' experience of the 'You'" (How 52).

Because selfobjects cannot always respond to the subject's needs, they are introjected, or "interwoven," into the subject's self-structure, alleviating fears of abandonment and generating a sense of relative self-sufficiency. Interwoven selfobjects are gradually depersonalized; for example, mirroring ones become self-esteem, idealized ones the child's conscience and values (Kohut, Analysis 39-44). Thus according to Kohut each selfobject is gradually transformed "into [a] psychological structure" (Restoration 138), one which "performs the functions which the object used to perform for the child . . . [but] divested of the personality features of the object" (Analysis 50). Bacal likens selfobjects to "the glue necessary to keep the parts of a broken vase together [which] becomes part of the vase itself" ("Heinz" 232). During this developmental process, the self is consolidated by integrating selfobjects within its maturing personality. When threatened, the self relies on internalized others, or, if these have not been sufficiently ensconced, on external providers of psychological support. Spenser illustrates this process in Sonnet 78 of his Amoretti where the speaker, distressed by the absence of his beloved, likens himself to a fawn separated from its mother: "Lackyng my loue I go from place to place,/ lyke a young fawne that late hath lost the hynd" (78.1-2). After much frantic searching, the poet is comforted by an introjected image of the lost mother: "Ceasse then myne eyes, to seeke her selfe to see,/ and let my thoughts behold her selfe in mee" (78.13-14).

This process of merger and internalization is reactivated during transitional periods that precipitate what Kohut calls a "reshuffling of the self": "its change, and its rebuilding, constitute emotional situations that reactivate the period of the formation of the self"
Such transitions include developmental changes (e.g., puberty or menopause), changes in social status (e.g., marriage or divorce), or even life changes (e.g., moving to a new town or retiring after a long career) which plunge a person into an unfamiliar environment or force him or her to re-establish an identity with new acquaintances. During such changes, the person temporarily re-experiences others as selfobjects in order to restore depleted self-esteem:

Throughout his life a person will experience himself as a cohesive harmonious firm unit in time and space . . . [but] only as long as, at each stage in his life, he experiences certain representatives of his human surroundings as joyfully responding to him, as available to him as sources of idealized strength and calmness, as being silently present but in essence like him . . . (Kohut, How 52, interpolation in original)

Inadequate mergers during the initial structuring phase, or during subsequent restructuring phases, cause a person to remain excessively dependent on others. Reshuffling is a crucial concept to which I will return throughout this thesis. Shakespeare never dramatizes an initial structuring phase (infants are scarce in his plays), but he repeatedly depicts restructuring phases experienced by youths and adults.

Kohut introduced the term "narcissistic personality disturbance" to describe the condition that results when one fails to internalize selfobjects into a cohesive "nuclear self" ("Thoughts" 626 note). If such a disturbance represents "long-term functioning since early adulthood," it is termed a "disorder" (American 335). Because of a heightened dependence on others to regulate self functions, an individual with a temporary disturbance or a chronic disorder is hypersensitive to "narcissistic injuries"—personal setbacks, insults or unempathic responses—and suffers from massive insecurity, low self-esteem and wild fluctuations
between shame and rage (Analysis 8-20; "Thoughts" 637-38). In the 1980s, the American Psychiatric Association codified symptoms of this particular disorder:

1. reacts to criticism with feelings of rage, shame, or humiliation . . .
2. is interpersonally exploitative: takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends
3. has a grandiose sense of self-importance . . .
4. believes that his or her problems are unique and can be understood only by other special people
5. is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love
6. has a sense of entitlement: unreasonable expectation of especially favorable treatment . . .
7. requires constant attention and admiration . . .
8. lack of empathy: inability to recognize and experience how others feel . . .
9. is preoccupied with feelings of envy

Much of this behaviour is compensatory, to avoid "fragmentation" or the breakup of the self (Kohut, Restoration 137-38). To forestall disintegration, a narcissistically imbalanced person attempts to coerce selfobject responses or to destroy those who are persistently unresponsive.9

This form of rage is "narcissistic" because the individual displays a "total lack of empathy toward the offender" who is not perceived as an autonomous individual with whom one is at odds "but as a flaw in a narcissistically perceived reality . . . a recalcitrant part of an expanded self over which the narcissistically vulnerable person had expected to exercise full control" (Kohut, "Thoughts" 644-45, emphasis in original). Rage is often disproportionate to

9 Here self psychology makes a radical break with orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis: "fundamental to the self are not biological drives but rather the desire for a sense of relationship with and responsiveness from others" (Bouson 13). A person in a narcissistic rage has not regressed to primitive behaviour, relaxing defenses and unleashing violent id urges from the unconscious. Instead, this rage entails a calculated and compulsive pursuit of revenge in order to restore cohesion and vitality to an enfeebled self (Kohut, "Thoughts" 636-40).
the slight incurred because narcissistic injuries expose the "psychological 'bedrock'" of the self (Kohut, Restoration 116-17). Of course, rage occurs in balanced individuals as well, but there it is not as volatile, irrational or inexhaustible as when it arises out of "the matrix of narcissistic imbalance" (Kohut, "Thoughts" 616):

Elaborate revenges, lengthy grudges, egotistical attempts at self-repair whatever the cost to others, such are the dangers inherent in this form of aggression that "enslaves the ego and allows it to function only as its tool and rationalizer" (646).

It is my general contention that instances of violent jealousy depicted in Shakespeare's plays resemble bouts of this disturbance brought on by transitional events. While the criteria listed above were devised to diagnose a mental illness that qualifies for insurable treatment in the United States, they also provide cogent "ordering principles" (Elson 3) for literary critics examining the depiction of dramatic character. Because so many of Shakespeare's imaginary cuckolds exploit others and are abusive toward women, critics have cited his plays as evidence that in the Renaissance jealousy did not exist, that these men suffered from something else (e.g., pent-up misogyny, repressed homosexual urges); they couldn't possibly have been in love. Yet in light of one of Kohut's ordering principles, that "there is no mature love in which the love object is not also a self-object . . . there is no love relationship without mutual (self-esteem enhancing) mirroring and idealization" (Restoration 122 note), immature love or recently established relationships must be even more exploitative
in nature. Shakespeare frequently depicts immature dependence using alimentary imagery, such as Troilus's reaction to Cressida's assignation with Diomedes: "My love with words and errors still she feeds, / But edifies another with her deeds" (Tro. 5.3.111-12). Kohut likewise describes selfobject transferences in terms of feeding, building, or edifying another's self. People in need of selfobjects "are not hungry for objects; they are filling the void of something that they themselves do not have" (Elson 41-42). Selfobjects fill this "void," but separation from them during a crisis period can be as damaging to one's identity as starvation is to the physical body. However, many plays depict events which initiate a cure: the transformation of selfobjects into internal structures through the selective (and corrective) responses to unreasonable demands. In other words, more fortunate characters are weaned of their unhealthy dependence on other people.

It is also my contention that the uncannily consistent reactions of characters to imputations of cuckoldry—whether in a comedy, tragedy or romance—suggest that Shakespeare based his dramatic characterization more on real-life observation than on adherence to generic conventions.11 The Epistle attached to copies of the Quarto of Troilus and Cressida extols "this authors Commedies, that are so fram'd to the life, that they serue for the most common Commentaries, of all the actions of our liues" (cited in Palmer 95). Thus even in a play where the subject frequently descends to the level of scurrility—"[a]ll the argument is a whore and a cuckold" (Tro. 2.3.74-75)—Shakespeare is praised as much for his

10 In one lecture, Kohut referred to mirroring responses as "narcissistic food" (Tolpin and Tolpin 38).

11 This confirms St. Pierre's general thesis that Shakespeare's depictions of jealousy don't seem to fit the plot motifs or character types presented in the literary cuckold tradition.
accurate observations of contemporary behaviour as for his wit. In the next chapter I will present historical evidence that Renaissance individuals typically underwent numerous reshufflings of the self during their lifetime. For example, the perilous transition from youth to adulthood initiates wide-ranging changes in social status and interpersonal relationships.

Many of Shakespeare's young males fall in love during this phase and are mocked by their peers—especially with threats of impending cuckoldry. Such a lover attempts to avoid humiliation by employing a "preventive attack": "the active (often anticipatory) inflicting on others of those narcissistic injuries which he is most afraid of suffering himself" (Kohut, "Thoughts" 638-39). Shakespeare's men induce cuckoldry anxiety in others to avoid incurring such scorn themselves.

In answer to the question posed in the title of this chapter, I propose to examine Shakespeare's depictions of cuckoldry anxiety using self psychology for several reasons. First, self psychology developed in response to modern patients who exhibited the same narcissistic preoccupations, aggressive propensities, and tendencies toward "fragmentation and anomie" as Shakespeare's imaginary cuckolds (Marcus, "Renaissance" 57-58). When Kohut writes that "[m]an of our time is the man of the precariously cohesive self, the man who craves the presence, the interest, the availability of the self-cohesion-maintaining selfobject" (How 61), this description aptly conveys the possessive jealousy of characters created nearly four centuries ago. Second, the application of self psychology to literary character began with Kohut's own writings on world literature, was more firmly established by his frequent collaborator Ernest S. Wolf, and has been further refined in recent literary
studies. The research into cuckoldry summarized in the previous chapter does not acknowledge the major shifts in psychoanalytic thought occasioned by Kohut's writings. Third, self psychology is a malleable approach that has been combined with other psychological schools, as well as with a wide range of critical approaches to literature. The inroads the approach has made into studies of spousal interaction and "marital disharmony" are also relevant to studies of Shakespearean cuckoldry anxiety. Fourth, the malleability of this approach means that it can be modified to fit different historical situations. Metaphoric and culturally specific concepts are notably absent from Kohut's model of human interaction which contains no Oedipus, Cinderella, or Iron John; even Kohut's Narcissus is stripped of his original mythological associations.

Fifth, although self psychology interprets behaviour that stems from childhood

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12 Kohut's writings include discussions of Shakespeare, Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka, Marcel Proust, Herman Melville, and Heinrich von Kleist. Wolf's pioneering articles on literature are equally wide-ranging (e.g., "Disconnected" and "Psychoanalytic"). Literary applications of self psychology to the novel include Joseph Adamson; Berman; Bouson; Johnstone; and Sussman. Applications of self psychology to Renaissance drama include Donaldson's study of Tamburlaine; Gardiner's study of Cynthia's Revels ("Wither'd"); Hays's comments on Much Ado About Nothing; Hehl's article on Love's Labour's Lost; Muslin's readings of Hamlet ("Hamlet") and Othello ("Shakespeare"); Russell's book on Hamlet; Simon's reading of King Lear (103-39); Sussman's comments on Othello (19-26); and Joseph Westlund's articles on The Tempest ("Omnipotence") and Cymbeline ("Self"), and his book on six comedies (Shakespeare's).

13 On dialogues between self psychology and other clinical approaches, see Bacal, "British" and "Winnicott"; Eagle, "Theoretical"; Harwood; and Muller. In literary studies, Marshall W. Alcorn combines self psychology with rhetorical approaches; Barbara Ann Schapiro combines it with feminist, linguistic and gender theories; and Joseph Westlund incorporates it within a reader-response criticism based on Kleinian object relations (Shakespeare's).

14 Berkowitz, "Selfobject" 229; see also Berkowitz, "Overview"; Lachkar; Maltas; and Solomon, Narcissism and "Treatment".
processes, its primary focus is on adult experience. It views the individual, not as exclusively determined by childhood experiences, but as evolving over a lifetime of interpersonal relationships and intrapsychic mergers (Gardiner, "Self" 770). Kohut writes that "when the adult experiences the self-sustaining effects of a maturely chosen selfobject, the selfobject experiences of all the preceding stages of his life reverberate unconsciously" (How 49-50). The stages of a Renaissance man's life are particularly relevant to cuckoldry anxiety (see my next chapter), but my thesis need not invent "boyhoods of Shakespeare's men" (cf. Kay 265).

Sixth, despite some admittedly clumsy terminology, self psychology is straightforward in its basic tenets and can account for both verbal and non-verbal modes of human interaction--an important consideration when investigating a medium (drama) which depicts visual, aural and physical interaction. Finally, although many of Kohut's writings reflect the two-parent nuclear family of modern middle-class America, his relegation of certain interpersonal roles to women and others to men is descriptive, not prescriptive. Self psychology has been called a non-sexist approach and is readily adaptable to feminist approaches to both the masculine and feminine self (see Gardiner, "Self" 761-80; Brems 145-60). Kohut developed his theory by observing Chicago-area patients from the 1960s until his death in 1981, and though the details contained in his case histories are culturally specific, the underlying

\[\text{\textsuperscript{15} For discussions of selfobject relations during various life stages, see Gilbert 31-51; Wolf, "Selfobject" 74-79.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{16} For example, when Kohut speaks of a mirroring selfobject, he "do[es] not mean necessarily the biological mother, but whoever the mothering adult may be. This may be a man, for maternal feelings are common to both" (Elson 34). His concepts of "mothering adults" and "maternal environments" (34) are relevant to the Renaissance where a variety of child-rearing practices flourished.}\]
parameters he derived therefrom are not limited to one particular cultural or historical setting. Social historians describe people of the Renaissance as having lived much more public and social existences than do their modern counterparts. As Jonathan Goldberg explains, "the individual derived a sense of self largely from external matrices among which the family and its place in society was paramount" (7-8). Self psychology seems well attuned to a society that placed a heavy emphasis on the roles played by external forces in shaping the individual. In the words of one historian, "children in every generation were cajoled, bribed, browbeaten and thrashed into conformity with the expectations of their family and society" (Abbott 30). At a more abstract level, people were encouraged to fashion their behaviour after virtuous examples found in devotional and didactic literatures. Those literary critics (cited in the previous chapter) who discount the applicability of modern psychoanalysis to the Renaissance because there was no autonomous self are merely using the wrong kind of psychoanalysis. The idea that the self comprises matrices of internalized relationships would not have surprised people accustomed to conceiving of themselves in terms prescribed by name, family, class, environment and other external factors. It is we moderns who are disturbed by Kohut's scheme: "To be confronted with man's lifelong need for selfobjects, to be told that autonomy is impossible, may well be experienced as a narcissistic injury by many" (How 63).

Shakespeare's husbands and lovers frequently display symptoms of chronic dependence on selfobjects and are especially insecure about the sacrifice of male friendship in favour of marriage (e.g., Claudio, Benedick), their newlywed status and the faithfulness of their brides (e.g., Othello, Cymbeline), or their ability to maintain their wife's constancy
during changes to a long-term relationship (e.g., Ford, Leontes). Rarely, however, are the men truly cuckolded: with the exception of Cressida and Helen (in *Troilus and Cressida* and possibly also the French court ladies (in *Love's Labour's Lost*), Shakespeare's accused women are faithful to their partners. I will demonstrate that an imaginary cuckold's horn-madness is actually a narcissistic rage, induced by a solipsistic misinterpretation of events. He cannot withstand the perception that she loves another or the anticipated jeering of his peers--unempathic responses that represent failures to comply with his "grandiose self [which] expects absolute control over a narcissistically experienced archaic environment" (Kohut, "Thoughts" 656). Feeling deprived of his partner's mirroring, his self fragments--resulting in a crisis of identity and narcissistic rage. A self psychological examination of Shakespearean cuckoldry anxiety reveals a dramatic universe of selfishness and interpersonal exploitation.

Rather than mitigate the antisocial and abusive behaviour of characters such as Claudio, Ford or Posthumus, I suggest that their abuse of women stems from psychic weakness and imbalances. The jealous rage that many dismiss as just another aspect of patriarchal misogyny is actually motivated by unconscious attachments to female selfobjects.
Chapter Three

The Seven Ages of Man

I propose to use Jaques's set-speech on the Seven Ages of Man (AYL 2.7.139-66) to outline transitional stages through which a Renaissance male would typically pass from cradle to grave.¹ Features of Jaques's ages can be verified by using histories of childhood and the family, which in turn can be used to contextualize modern self psychology. Renaissance life entailed a series of personal transitions--"reshufflings of the self" as Kohut calls them--which rendered even well-balanced males susceptible to self-doubts, mistrust and fears of abandonment. Of course, every character does not experience the same situations, for this would erase those idiosyncrasies that, as Tolstoy observed, make every unhappy family unhappy in its own way. However, characters do exhibit reactions to transitional situations familiar to Renaissance playgoers who, though they may not have experienced all the stages, must have experienced some of them.

Jaques begins by describing "the infant/ Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms" (2.7.143-44). Because infancy is the foundational period of life, frequently alluded to in Shakespeare's plays, I will deal with it in some detail. Whether an infant was nursed by its

¹ Robert J. Havighurst credits Jaques's speech with inaugurating a branch of social sciences, life-span studies (3-24, 6), yet as historical studies show, Shakespeare came late to a centuries-old tradition of dividing human life into stages (see Burrow; Chew 144-73; Sears). The most enduring modern life-span model is Erik H. Erikson's "eight ages of man" (247-74). Marjorie Garber uses Jaques's model in her book examining stages of character development according to criteria of linguistic competence (1-5 and passim).
mother or by a wet nurse, this primary caregiver was invariably a woman.\(^2\) Lower and middle class mothers generally nursed their own; upper class mothers generally fostered out to wet nurses (McLaren 26-33; Crawford, ""Sucking"" 32-33). Wealthy parents saw little of their children, making "the relation to the wet-nurse . . . the closest affinity in the child's life" (Stone, Family 106). Stone cites Juliet's affectionate bond with her nurse (and emotional distance from her mother) in Romeo and Juliet as evidence of this affinity (Family 100, 106). Indeed, Mary Abbott describes wealthy mothers as "jewelled apparitions wafting through their children's lives" (63). Because half his plays contain references to wet-nurses, and because his protagonists generally come from the upper middle classes or higher, I will assume this to be the infant feeding practice commonly envisioned by Shakespeare.\(^3\) Successful nursing arrangements could be a positive experience for babies who fed on demand, slept in the same bed as their nurse, and were not weaned until at least one year of age, often later (Crawford, ""Sucking"" 31; McLaren 26-27). Samuel X. Radbill describes, in rather fanciful terms, the perceived benefits of a good wet-nurse:

She customarily assumed complete charge over the infant's care, even when it was sick. She quieted the baby with her crooning lullabies, knew charms, magic, and the physics of simples to heal its ailments . . .

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\(^2\) Dorothy Dinnerstein refers to female care-giving as a "monolithic fact of human childhood" (28), an assertion supported by Patricia Crawford's study of the relegation of infant care to women in the seventeenth century (""Sucking""41-42).

\(^3\) All of the Romances contain references to wet-nurses, and two are mentioned by name: Lychorida (Per.) and Euriphe (Cym.). When Leontes doubts the legitimacy of his son he tells his wife, "I am glad you did not nurse him" (WT 2.1.56). In The Tempest, Miranda cannot remember her mother, but recalls that before age three, "[f]our or five women" tended her; Prospero says there were more (1.2.47-48). See also the watchmen's discussion of nurses and crying babies in Much Ado About Nothing (3.3.64-70).
This inventory suggests that the wet-nurse also functioned in the modern sense of "nurse" as a person who cares for the sick. One of the earliest recorded instances of this usage is Adriana's offer in *The Comedy of Errors*, "I will attend my husband, be his nurse,/ Diet his sickness, for it is my office" (5.1.98-99; *OED* sb.1.3), a passage underlining Shakespeare's artistic associations of primary caregivers with women who foster the emotional health and physical well-being of adult male characters.

Close bonds would frequently form between a nurse and her charge, and some adults fondly remembered their nurses—rewarding them with gifts or provisions their wills (Fildes, *Breasts* 159-63). Nurses were an infant's first love, a toddler's first playmate, and often a child's first teacher. Thus in *Richard II*, when Mowbray and Bolingbroke are unexpectedly banished by the King, they express apprehensions about leaving England using images of nurses. Mowbray dreads learning a foreign tongue, "I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,/ Too far in years to be a pupil now"; and Bolingbroke is nostalgic, "England's ground, farewell; sweet soil, adieu,/ My mother and my nurse that bears me yet!" (1.3.170-71, 306-07). Rather than speculate about whether specific Shakespearean characters experienced maternal or external primary care, I merely wish to emphasize that powerful bonds formed between infants and female caregivers, that these bonds were often ruptured, and that these early experiences contributed to the dramatic depiction, and audience reception, of represented adult behaviour. As Gail Kern Paster points out, "problematic early nurturing experiences . . . must be regarded as a significant factor in cultural hermeneutics" (218).

Recent historical work suggests that—horror stories about wet-nursing notwithstanding—parents cherished their children and grieved at their deaths; that mothers
increasingly nursed their own, but when they did foster out, took great care in selecting a wet-nurse; and that harsh discipline did not necessarily produce "emotionally crippled adults, who in turn wreaked havoc on their own children" (Wrightson 104-18, 107). In fact, the family provided an important safe haven where individuals "found security and identity and the satisfaction of both physical and emotional needs not catered for by other social institutions" (66). Patricia Crawford points out that powerful parent-child bonds were common, and cites the following account of a mother and son from 1655:

Hee playes a number of apish trickes about her, he kisseth her, strokes her haire, nose and eares; . . . and as he groweth bigger, hee finds other sports with her, which causeth that they beare one another such an affection, as cannot be expressed; & makes that they can never be parted. ("Sucking" 32, ellipsis in original)

Therefore, sweeping statements about family history must be qualified because of many variables (e.g., of class, region, religion, personality). However, one generalization can be made: whether children were raised affectionately or deprived emotionally, social practices consistently interrupted interpersonal and intrapsychic relations. For instance, in the case of weaning, little was done to alleviate the "shock" of this first "major change in the child's life" (Crawford, "Sucking" 34-36): often children were simply denied the mother's breast, or, if they were fostered out, returned to their parents' home, never to see their nurse again.4

In sum, during this formative period and despite the best of intentions many babies experienced "a significantly high incidence of inconsistent, difficult, or ruptured nurture"

4 Gail Kern Paster describes how social practices exacerbated innate fears of separation by denying newborns colostrum and keeping them away from the birth chamber for weeks following birth. Transported to "a second, and also temporary site of nurture," they were fed the rich milk of a temporary nurse which caused "extended gastrointestinal trauma"—hence the mewling and puking of Jaques's infant (Paster 217-18)
(Paster 217). Pollock cites an account of one infant who died within a fortnight of birth, after failing to nurse from three different wet-nurses (Lasting 63). Such changes could adversely affect a child's long-term emotional health as well:

> Psychological problems must have been associated with a close emotional and physical attachment to a wet nurse, initiated and sustained by breast feeding, which was broken, sometimes for ever, when the child was weaned and returned home. (Fildes, *Breasts* 202, note omitted)

Especially damaging could be the confusion created by the child's nurturance in two (or more) locations, by two (or more) sets of parental figures (Paster 221). Recipients of such care literally might not know who their parents were. For instance, in *Cymbeline* Belarius remembers how, after he and the royal wet-nurse kidnapped the King's young sons, "they took [her] for their mother" (3.3.104).

In their monograph on men's "dread of abandonment," Gwendolyn Stevens and Sheldon Gardner acknowledge the fact that separation "from security and nurturance providers is inevitable and necessary for the establishment of a mature personality" (2). However, painful separations experienced during transitional periods exacerbate adjustment problems in men for three reasons: 1) they are pushed away from female caregivers before they are biologically ready; 2) they are encouraged to flourish outside the home; 3) they are discouraged from expressing emotional needs (Stevens and Gardner 31-44). In modern men, the dread of abandonment is most often re-activated by divorce: "being 'abandoned' is far more debilitating psychologically than being the initiator of marital disruption" (123). In the absence of legal divorce, the Renaissance equivalent of this debilitating event was the disruption caused by (perceived) wifely infidelity, although angry reactions do not reveal a
deep-seated hatred of women. Instead, just as infants resent dependence on their mother or nurse but also fear separation, men who are unable to express their love for women react with anger to imputations of cuckoldry. Such behaviour should not be interpreted as a secret wish for the split.

Henry Smith's 1591 sermon, *A Preparative to Mariage*, confirms that wet-nursing and cuckoldry were linked in Renaissance thought. Smith exhorts mothers to nurse their own:

> The fountaines of the earth are made to giue water, & the breasts of women are made to giue suck. Evry beast, and evry foule, is bred of the same that did beare it, onely women loue to be mothers, but not nurces . . . committing [children] foorth like a Cuckowe to bee hatched in the Sparowes nest. (99-100)

Thus wet-nursing is unnatural, a form of maternal infidelity akin to the cuckoo's abandonment of its young. Infants fostered out were thought to suck "euill from the [nurse's] dugge" (H. Smith 100). Nurses may have in theory transferred various "infirmitie[s]" to infants (100), but it was the practice of inconsistent nurture that laid the unstable psychological bedrock for cuckoldry anxiety. In fact, abrupt weaning methods by natural mothers also set a precedent for males as womanly "treachery" (Paster 222-23). To Dinnerstein, the most disturbing traces of modern female-dominated child-care include "the infant's imperious, monolithic rage at maternal infidelity . . . [and] sharp impulses of self assertion" (43)--behaviour typical of Shakespeare's imaginary cuckolds, angry at their partners' perceived infidelity.

Jaques's second age describes "the whining school-boy with his satchel/ And shining morning face, creeping like snail/ Unwillingly to school" (*A.Y.L.* 2.7.145-47). Many children began their formal education around age four or five at a local petty school where they
attained basic literacy skills and were subjected to a long and rigidly organized daily routine. Concomitant with this educational change was an important change in dress for boys: "the ceremony of breeching marked promotion from neuter infancy to masculine superiority" (Abbott 49). They emerged, unwillingly as Jaques suggests, from the relative protection of the home to schools that consolidated their gender identity. After children had mastered their ABCs, parents had several options. Those who could afford tuition sent their male children on to board at grammar and preparatory schools until around age 10-12, and from there to universities.⁵ A second possibility—popular with upper class families or middle class families with social aspirations—was the sending out of children to serve in neighbouring households. A third arrangement saw lower middle class children entering into apprenticeship. All these options involved living away from home for a minimum of one year, frequently much longer. As Wrightson points out, "service, like apprenticeship, was part of the child's preparation for an independent existence in the adult world" (113). Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos demonstrates that service was a period of coming-of-age for children: they were expected to mature emotionally, morally, and socially while away from home (43-44). In many cases, they left home during puberty (age 12-14) so that sexual maturation also occurred away from home. Those in charge of supervising and disciplining children—guides, teachers, heads of households, master apprentices—were discouraged from displaying affection toward their charges. Their relation was merely one of contractual obligations: "Service was a bond which submitted a young man to the will of his master" (Ben-Amos 42-43). Children found

⁵ Formal education for girls did not proceed any further: "Education drove a cultural wedge between men and women . . . . While boys' horizons expanded, girls remained enclosed in the household" (Abbott 53).
in these situations rather aloof role models--idealized selfobjects, to use Kohut's term. These seemingly omnipotent, distant and disciplinarian superiors instilled similar traits in their impressionable charges. Just as the prevailing paedagogical methodology stressed rote learning over individual inquiry (Grafton 59), so too the emphasis on character building emphasized imitation of and conformity to existing models of behaviour.

Upper class youths were frequently encouraged to travel and or study abroad (Pinchbeck and Hewitt 34), a situation depicted in The Two Gentlemen of Verona when Panthino criticizes his friend Antonio for sheltering his son Proteus:

[Your brother] wonder'd that your lordship
Would suffer him to spend his youth at home,
While other men, of slender reputation,
Put forth their sons, to seek preferment out:
Some to the wars, to try their fortune there;
Some, to discover islands far away;
Some, to the studious universities.

(1.3.4-10)

Antonio agrees that Proteus "cannot be a perfect man;/ Not being tried and tutor'd in the world" (20-21), and resolves to send him away. Thus a social custom imposes on Proteus an unexpected separation from his family and from his first love, Julia (more on this in Chapter Four, below).

Ben-Amos paints a rosy picture of the economic and social benefits of service, but ignores its emotional ramifications. While she asserts that entering service was a carefully planned event involving all parties (including children) (49-51), she concedes only that sometimes "negotiations and discussions on the eve of departure from home were less calm

\footnote{Compare these comments to Ben Jonson's view, cited in Chapter Two (above).}
and co-operative" (51). A schoolboy who creeps unwillingly to petty school might not relish the idea of leaving home for a lengthy engagement in a strict environment where "social pressures" would force him to behave like an adult (52). Also, service meant separation from loved ones, as suggested by Launce's description of his departure from family to accompany Proteus into service at court in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

> my mother weeping; my father wailing; my sister crying; our maid howling; our cat wringing her hands, and all our house in a great perplexity . . . . Why, my grandam, having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my parting.

(2.3.6-13)

Away from home in Milan, Launce falls in love with a kind of nurturing substitute for the family he left behind. Included in his catalogue of his love's virtues is, "Item, she can milk" (3.1.272-75)—"milk" punning on adult relations (to entice sexually), homy activities (to milk cattle) and childish dependency (to suckle) (Leech 70 note; cf. Colman 203).

Launce's painful separation from family, compensated for by his "crush" on the milk-maid whose virtues he itemizes, brings us to Jaques's next stage, "the lover,/ Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad/ Made to his mistress' eyebrow" (AYL 2.7.147-49). During these early absences from home, many young men and women experienced first love.

Pinchbeck and Hewitt describe adolescent service as an especially useful preparation for marriage, the only vocation open to young women (28). Stone agrees that one of the benefits of such arrangements was that they encouraged the formation of exogamous love-relationships (Family 108). However, due to the relatively late average age for marriage--
usually a full decade after this period of service – we may surmise that many first-loves were broken up, such as Helena's "crush" on Bertram in the early scenes of *All's Well That Ends Well*. As we shall see in the next chapter, two youthful infatuations nearly end in disaster, as Proteus and Valentine adopt outmoded courtly-love conventions (sighing like furnaces and composing courtly poetry) while betraying one another and the women who love them.

Military service could also be an important rite of passage for youths, and a critical one for Shakespearean characters such as Bertram (in *AWW*) or Claudio (in *Ado*) (Friedman 231-49). To Jaques, the typical soldier is

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Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden, and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth.
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(*AYL* 2.7.150-53)

We have come a long way from whining schoolboys and mooning lovers. A young man attempting to earn respect through military service had to radically alter his identity, adopting wholesale the code of honour that rendered him "sudden and quick in quarrel." Upon his return home, however, he had to transfer his adaptiveness to military codes to conformity to civilian social attitudes, especially toward women. His soldierly sensitivity to slights and inexperience in love combined with his adoption of hyper-masculine codes of behaviour (in war-time, courage; in peace-time, suspicion of women) to create a potentially lethal combination of physical prowess and emotional mistrust. It is at precisely this precarious stage of life that many Shakespearean males marry. Thus after a potentially bewildering

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7 The average age of first marriage in 5 parishes between 1600-47 varied between 26.7 to 29.2 years for men, 24.8 and 27.3 for women (Wrightson 68).
series of separations—from mother, nurse(s), family, first love and the powerful male-male bonds formed during wartime—a soldier enters into the closest and first truly permanent bond of his life. With all these precedents of relationships formed then ruptured, it is not surprising that he should experience considerable anxiety and trepidation during this time.

Social customs ensured that "from just before puberty until they married some ten years later, about two out of every three boys and three out of every four girls were living away from home" (Stone, Family 107). Even the more optimistic Wrightson admits that the whole system of child-rearing was directed towards . . . the 'putting forth' of children all too soon, into a highly individualistic and competitive social environment in which they would have to stand on their own feet. (118)

Although parents likely had their children's best interests in mind, children must have occasionally felt disoriented and unwanted by caregivers who shuffled them around.8 Wrightson argues that the family home provided an important safe haven (66). Yet as Beatrice Gottlieb points out, even this haven was characterized by endemic "[i]mpermanence and discontinuity," as household members came and went, "the result of constant erosion from death and accretion from remarriage" (22). Pinchbeck and Hewitt also state that high mortality rates created a basic state of insecurity in children, as the death of one or both parents would precipitate a host of interpersonal changes such as "[s]ubsequent re-marriages, the realignment of family relationships and the birth of a second or third family" (12).

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8 Stone cites the example of Simonds D'Ewes, whose experiences were "far from unusual": "Almost all his childhood and adolescence was spent away from home, at the house of his wet-nurse, with his grandparents, at five different boarding-schools, and finally at university. It was a fragmented and peripatetic existence, lacking any stable geographical or affective base" (Family 111).
The repeated process of merger then separation that characterize the first quarter-century of an Englishman's life must have left emotional scars, a residual mistrust, and a feeling that further betrayals (especially by family members) would not be unprecedented. In particular, the spectre of maternal abandonment underlies adult fears of infidelity. Besides worrying about the legitimacy of his progeny and the chastity of his wife, an imaginary cuckold radically questions his own identity. Deprived of a consistent, affectionate maternal environment, he has grown up with low self-esteem. Shuffled around to a series of character-building environments with heavy disciplinarian codes, he has learned to merge readily with seemingly omnipotent role-models. His conformity buttresses his self, builds his confidence, and protects him from punishment. The net result is a man who is starved for affection, yet who anticipates separation from providers of emotional nurturance based on a lifetime of unhappy precedents. The very masculine codes of thought and behaviour which previously ensured his survival and emotional well-being suddenly jeopardize his marriage. Confronted with the prospect of being cuckolded, he merges with any seemingly powerful figure who can help repair the situation. However, when this advising figure abuses this trust, the results range from comic misunderstandings to tragic murders.

Of course, Jaques does not stop at the quarrelsome soldier. His account goes on to describe middle age:

And then, the justice,
In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws, and modern instances,
And so he plays his part.

(AYL 2.7.153-57)
From this emerges a picture of the *père de famille*, concerned with his personal appearance and place in the community as a representative of authority and order. Yet I also detect in Jaques's portrait a hint of pomposity: this middle-aged man likely attempts to rule his community and his household like a justice or king. His "severe" eyes also suggest an unforgiving streak. Such a man is aware of the "modern instances" of female infidelity in circulation in his misogynous culture. Several of Shakespeare's jealous husbands appear during this phase of life, with all of its related responsibilities and insecurities (e.g., Ford in *MWW* and Leontes in *WT*).

The remaining two stages of Jaques's speech describe old age and physical decline: the "lean and slippered pantaloon," and then "second childishness" as he approaches death (*AYL* 2.7.157-66). As Sinclair points out, "the clear-cut figure of the cuckold carries a spectrum of fears about ageing, loss of potency, loss of status" (25). Abandonment is a terrifying prospect during this period of heightened physical dependence on others. As I shall demonstrate in my later chapters and Conclusion, men such as Iago, Othello, and Falstaff are disturbed by the impending sexual and social obsolescence associated with old age, and try to counteract this through misguided, self-destructive behaviour.

In spite of many differences, historical accounts of the period generally agree that people passed through discernible stages of development. As J. A. Burrow has documented, by the Renaissance there were several competing models of life-stages: biological ones dividing life into stages of growth, stasis and death; physiological ones proposing cycles of

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9 Modern historians, psychoanalysts and literary critics do the same. For example, Abbott divides sections of her history of the family into infancy, childhood, youth, marriage, parenthood and widowhood (48-68; cf. Erikson and Garber, cited above).
humoural attributes (childhood was moist and hot, youth was hot and dry, etc.); astrological ones wherein planets exert influence according to one's life-stage (the Moon accounts for the changeable nature of infants, Mercury the energies of childhood, Venus the love-pangs of adolescence, etc.); and finally temporal schemes combining abstract mathematical formulae with real-life observations (5-94, passim).10 Burrow takes Jaques to task for allowing his melancholy invective to distort what is essentially an astrological paradigm (52-54); and similar complaints are voiced by Alan Taylor Bradford (171-76) and Samuel C. Chew (144-45). However, neither the proliferation of models nor Jaques's departures therefrom should obscure the general facts that men and women conceived of life as being divided into distinct phases, that social customs periodically imposed tumultuous life changes on them, and that in each new phase they had to renegotiate interpersonal and intrapsychic relationships. In fact, the only point on which all modern life-span theories agree is that transitions from one stage to another are "stressful and disruptive of customary behavior patterns" (Hultsch and Plemons 2). So, too, in the Renaissance. Just as an infant, child or youth settled in with one group of caregivers or playmates, he or she was shuffled off to another situation. At the same time, he or she was denied emotional support to help adjust during the transition; "in every case the purpose of sending the children away from home was the same: to ensure for them a quality of supervision and training unalloyed by the sentiment of family" (Pinchbeck and Hewitt 26, emphasis added). The transitions imposed on children, in particular, exposed innate anxieties and exacerbated socially induced ones.

10 Elizabeth Sears documents with iconographic evidence schemes ranging from 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 12 ages of man. For an illustration of the Ages of Man with characters strikingly similar to those introduced in Jaques's speech, see Sears plate 65.
To translate this historical outline into Kohutian terms, without adequate or reliable mirroring responses to their accomplishments, many children passed into youth and adulthood with low self-esteem and a chronic dependence on selfobjects to perform functions not internalized during the foundational period. If Renaissance adults were "cold, suspicious, distrustful and cruel, unable to form close emotional relationships with others, and liable to sudden outbursts of aggressive hostility" (Family 194-95) it was because the frequent separations of infancy and childhood had laid the unstable foundations of their selves.

Because few of Shakespeare's dramatic situations depict childhood or dramatize cuckoldry anxiety in old age, the remainder of the thesis is organized into clusters of chapters exploring the three middle ages of man: the lover, the warrior, and the justice. Grouping the plays thematically makes for some unexpected juxtapositions frequently overlooked in studies which group plays chronologically or by genre. In some cases, Shakespeare presents a cross-section of males experiencing different stages of development in an individual play (e.g., in Troilus and Cressida). By grouping men by phase, I can better investigate the general applicability of self psychology to Shakespeare's representations of a man's life, and test the consistency of his characterization. If the experiences of, say, Ford, Othello and Leontes are similar, does this collapse or erase generic distinctions between comedy, tragedy and romance? Is form contingent upon character, do the two develop independently, or are they occasionally at cross purposes? Does Shakespeare attempt to reconcile verisimilitude in individual psychology with the demands of plot? The sacrifice of character to plot (such as in the imperative that comedies end in marriage) has been an topic of ongoing concern in Shakespeare studies. In the comic plots that make up the cuckold tradition surveyed by St.
Pierre, or in the heroic plots surveyed by Sinclair, consistent three-dimensional characterization is only a very minor concern. Shakespeare's explorations of the interplay between societal and individual attitudes toward sexual betrayal suggest as great an interest in human motives as in plot, humour, pathos, spectacle and the exigencies of mounting successful stage productions.

Bearing in mind Skura's caveat about not using historical or psychoanalytic paradigms to determine Renaissance behaviour ("Understanding" 77-89), the remainder of my thesis will combine these disciplines in order to interpret Shakespearean situations and characters. As Skura explains in her conclusion,

> The psychoanalyst's question, like the historian's, is precisely what past subjects were like. The way to collect material for an answer is not simply to look at everything that helped produce them--individual childhood experience along with pervasive social constructions--but to listen to patterns of repetition and inconsistency in their talk. ("Understanding" 89)

I too will pay close attention to the repetitions and inconsistencies voiced by characters crafted by an author who sought to reconcile "verisimilitude" with the exigencies of dramatic form and the well-known stories of his source materials (Doran 216-18). I would argue that it is precisely the inconsistency of certain characters (e.g., Leontes's seemingly unmotivated jealousy in The Winter's Tale) that made them appear plausible to Shakespeare's contemporaries. In the chapters that follow, I will practice a form of Paster's "cultural hermeneutics" by reading the cuckoldry anxiety in individual plays in a variety of different contexts. This is not a rigid application of self psychology to Shakespeare's plays, and at times Kohut's approach may appear to recede from view. However, situated within
Renaissance cultural practices, self psychology provides an important ordering principle of this thesis on Shakespeare's dramatic explorations of the evolving masculine self.
Part II:

The Lover
Chapter Four

"Were man but constant, he were perfect": 

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

The Two Gentlemen of Verona is one of Shakespeare's "earliest and least admired" plays (R. Levin, New 127), frequently dismissed as an apprentice piece crowded with inconsistencies, implausible events and cartoonish characters (Leech xv-xxi; Holmberg 33). However, it is also an invaluable work in that it serves as a "store-house for dramatic devices and motifs to which the dramatist later returned" (Schlueter 4). For the purposes of this thesis, the play illustrates the psychological and historical processes outlined in my previous chapters and is an excellent place to begin my textual analyses. The play's explicit thematic concern—"were man/ But constant, he were perfect" (5.4.109-10)—has too long overshadowed its implicit concern: the needs of young men for female constancy. Valentine and Proteus depend on others, especially women, to perform selfobject functions for them during the consolidation of their maturing identities. Their transitions are complicated by an apparent scarcity of such psychic resources (e.g., throngs of suitors compete for each single woman).

The primary goal of the two young men in this courtship comedy is less the establishment of permanent heterosexual bonds than the attainment of personal perfection derived from "the remedial and beneficent power of the ladies' love" (Nevo 57). The young

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1 Neither Parten ("Cuckoldry") nor St. Pierre discusses the play in detail. On male inconstancy, see Ewbank 31-57.
men become quite desperate when rejected by or separated from Silvia, suggesting that they have not completed fundamental aspects of maturation. According to W. Thomas MacCary, in the sexual rivalry of Valentine and Proteus for Silvia there is a "suggestion of sibling rivalry for the mother" (97). Certainly, rivalry underlies the play's dominant thematic tropes—the courtly love code and the friendship cult—as well as the play's most controversial incident, Valentine's gift of Silvia to Proteus. Both young men are dogged by an adolescent form of narcissism that renders their actions selfish, shortsighted, even silly, but always plausible within a historically contextualized self psychology.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona is a kind of coming-of-age play about two young gentlemen, a "Bildungsroman as well as a sentimental education" (Holmberg 41). The play demonstrates how a wealthy Renaissance family—to borrow Edmund Spenser's phrase—would fashion their son into "a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline" (Faerie 15, italics in original). Proteus and Valentine begin the play poised between two periods of adolescence, life at home and finishing abroad. These former "whining schoolboy[s]" metamorphose into lovers composing ballads to their "mistress' eyebrow" (AYL 2.7.145-49). William E. Stephenson reminds us that "no other work by Shakespeare shows us protagonists quite so immature," so dogged by erratic mood swings, naivété and submissiveness to elders (165). Schlueter likens these emotional powder-kegs to "sophomores," about sixteen years old (5); they are emotionally immature, sexually insecure, socially inept protagonists away from home for the first time.

The play quickly introduces the issue of separation, as it opens with Valentine saying farewell to his "Home-keeping" friend, Proteus (TGV 1.1.2). Their emotional leave-taking
barely conceals the fact that these former childhood friends (2.4.57-58) have recently become alienated from one another by Proteus's infatuation: "I leave myself, my friends, and all, for love:/ Thou, Julia, thou hast metamorphos'd me" (1.1.65-66). The disruption of homosocial friendships by heterosexual love was a real-life phenomenon. John R. Gillis explains that because of sexual segregation at play and at school, "throughout youth the strongest bonds were with persons of the same gender" (For 11). When youths began to take an interest in the opposite sex, this strained existing relationships; ultimately, marriage necessitated "giving up one way of life to take on an entirely new existence" (11). Such reshufflings of the self required changes in behaviour, as experienced first by Proteus and later by Valentine too:

SPEED. . . . you have learned (like Sir Proteus) to wreathe your arms like a malcontent; to relish a love-song, like a robin-redbreast; to walk alone, like one that had the pestilence; to sigh, like a schoolboy that had lost his ABC . . . . you are metamorphosed with a mistress, that when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master.

(TGV 2.1.17-31)

In his departure from the homosocial world of youth, Proteus becomes particularly vulnerable and volatile, in part because of emotional immaturity fostered by his (by Renaissance standards) overprotective home.3

Because of his attachment to Julia, Proteus does not welcome the prospect of a trip abroad, even to a city as exciting as Milan. In spite of the personal sacrifices he has made for love—losing a friend, missing a trip—Proteus's relationship with Julia is not entirely secure. She is beset with other suitors, "the fair Sir Eglamour" and "the rich Mercatio" (1.2.9-12);

3 Proteus has been living in an environment considered unconducive to maturation. Valentine mocks him for "living dully sluggardis'd at home" (1.1.7), and his father agrees with Panthino that to let Proteus remain in Verona "would be [a] great impeachment to his age" (1.3.15). For details on fostering out and finishing abroad, see my previous chapter.
and after she seemingly rejects one of Proteus's letters, Speed informs him, "I think you'll hardly win her" (1.1.128). When she finally accepts Proteus, their relationship lacks parental approval (1.3.48-49). Just as Proteus successfully gains "her oath for love, her honour's pawn" (1.3.47), parental authority separates the two. Proteus compares his impending trip to a kind of romantic eclipse:

O, how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day,
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
And by and by a cloud takes all away.

(1.3.84-87)

The image of the cloud suggests that Proteus fears that in his absence a rival suitor will come between him and his "uncertain glory," Julia. Shortly before Valentine's departure, Proteus did quibble with Speed in a passage containing the play's only explicit reference to cuckoldry: "my horns are his horns," says Speed (1.1.79). If even the currently unattached Valentine risks being cuckolded "in posse" (Leech 7 note), what fate awaits Proteus when Julia--whom Speed calls "a laced mutton" (i.e., a courtesan)--is left alone (1.1.96; Leech 8 note)? The seeds of suspicion have been sown.

Proteus's leave-taking of Julia, complete with exchanged rings and her concern that he "turn not" (2.2.4), suggests that the play's major concern will be with his constancy, not hers. Yet Proteus may suspect her resolve too, and the scene seems a prototype for the more famous leave-taking of "true" Troilus and "false" Cressida (Tro. 4.4.11-104). In both cases, Shakespeare raises audience expectations about which lover will "turn" first. In the comedy, it is Proteus who proves inconstant, abandoning Julia in favour of Silvia once he arrives in Milan (for a discussion of Cressida's infidelity, see Chapter Eight, below). There is no
critical consensus about Proteus's motives for the switch, and his three convoluted soliloquies do little to clarify the situation (2.4.188-210, 2.6.1-43, 4.2.1-15). To MacCary, Proteus's behaviour typifies adolescent sexuality "characterized by self-centered erotism and a lack of sexual differentiation in objects" (96). Yet Proteus's preoccupation with himself is no simple regression to infantile masturbatory narcissism: he desires Silvia, not himself, sexually—as suggested by his attempt to rape her in the forest (5.4.55-59). Furthermore, to Proteus Julia and Silvia are not indistinguishable; present Silvia is superior to absent Julia: "At first I did adore a twinkling star,/ But now I worship a celestial sun" (2.6.9-10). Abandoned by Valentine who "dote[s]" upon [his] love" for Silvia (2.4.169), and separated from Julia by distance, Proteus must seek elsewhere for selfobject responses. Not surprisingly, he too lights on Silvia.

Meanwhile back home, in an ironic fulfilment of Antonio's earlier order that Proteus depart without packing—"Look what thou want'st shall be sent after thee" (1.3.74)—Julia disguises herself as a page and pursues her lover to Milan. Proteus may not "want" (i.e., desire) Julia, but he certainly "wants" (i.e., needs) the selfobject mergers women can provide. Julia arrives in Milan, and her disguise as Sebastian fools Proteus who engages her as his go-between: "I have need of such a youth,/ That can with some discretion do my business" (4.4.63-64). That "business" is to carry a love-token from him to Silvia. Julia's ingenuity nearly backfires, however, when in the final scene Proteus discovers, not Silvia wearing his ring, but Sebastian wearing Julia's ring (5.4.90-99). This discovery confirms what he earlier suspected, Julia's inconstancy: "How! let me see./ Why this is the ring I gave to Julia" (5.4.91-92). For a brief but suggestive moment, Proteus fears that Sebastian—engaged "with
some discretion [to] do [his] business" (4.4.63-64)—has in Proteus's absence engaged in "business" (i.e., coitus) with Julia (G. Williams 1:179-80). Here Proteus illustrates the double standard; he is betrothed to Julia—a fact known widely enough to have reached Silvia's ears in neighbouring Milan—yet he attempts to seduce other women (4.2.95). That he expects constancy from a woman whom he describes as "dead" (4.2.103) suggests that female inconstancy obsesses even the most callow and callous of lovers.

Female inconstancy also worries Valentine, who, though unmarried, behaves like a proud but suspicious husband. Valentine boasts of Silvia's virtues to Proteus and even requests that she welcome him with "some special favour" and "entertain him for [her] servant" (2.4.96, 105), yet at the same time Valentine is consumed with "jealousy" and would keep rivals away (2.4.173). According to René Girard's theory of "mimetic desire," that Silvia is desired by others confirms her intrinsic worth; yet because of Valentine's praise, Proteus woos her as well (Theater 8-20). Self psychology exposes a related contradiction: that a worthy person desires Valentine confirms his intrinsic worth, yet if she loves another it reflects badly on Valentine. For this reason, Valentine constantly worries about whether Silvia has "forsworn" him in favour of a persistent suitor, Thurio (3.1.209-14). Even though Valentine and Silvia are secretly betrothed, he watches her every move: "Love hath twenty pairs of eyes," he explains (2.4.90; cf. 2.4.170-73). Among Speed's inventory of his master's love-symptoms is that he watches "like one that fears robbing" (2.1.24).

The Milan of The Two Gentlemen of Verona resembles the polite societies

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3 Valentine's conflicting urges to share Silvia and to guard her jealously anticipate Leontes's disastrous admonition that Hermione persuade Polixenes to stay at court in The Winter's Tale (see Chapter Twelve, below).
envisioned in the Medieval courtly love code, a kind of anachronistic enclave ideally suited to the finishing of young men. According to Panthino, in Milan Proteus can "practise tilts and tournaments./ Hear sweet discourse [and] converse with noblemen" (1.3.30-31). C. S. Lewis describes the courtly castle as "a little island of comparative leisure and luxury . . . in a barbarous country-side" (12). The courtly lady has a civilizing effect on "unattached" knights (Lewis 11-12) who might otherwise become as lawless as those outlaws who roam the woods outside Shakespeare's Milan. In Milan, one speaks the rarefied language of courtly love (e.g., 2.4.82-89) and young men serve Silvia who is imprisoned by night in her father's tower and whose beauty seems to have become a local legend (see the song at 4.2.38-52). In keeping with tenets of courtly love, Valentine worships Silvia as an object, rather than as an individual. He calls her "a heavenly saint" and "[s]overeign to all the creatures on the earth" (2.4.140-48). He swears to be her servant and performs demeaning tasks for her such as composing love letters to a supposed rival. Soon after, Proteus volunteers for service too. Their willing submission suggests a kind of idealized self-object merger with a narcissistically perceived Silvia. In their courtly pursuit of her, by definition they seek personal self-improvement rather than mutually satisfying romantic attachment: "Courtly love . . . refer[s] to the ritualistic courtship by which a man and woman proceed to achieve their desire to satisfy a clandestine permanent monogamous lust informing mental and spiritual ennoblement" (Meader 3).

In a provocative article on "The Meaning of Courtly Love," Herbert Moller outlines a situation strongly resembling the self-selfobject dynamic. The exalted lady is often largely a product of the courtly poet's imagination, making courtly love "far removed from love of an
individual person as such" (Moller 41). Instead, like an idealized selfobject, this lady is "venerated as an exalted personage" who transmits to her worshippers "an assuring, exhilarating, and uplifting effect" (41). The primary goal of a courtly lover is to be accorded the approval of this beautiful "moral authority"; by internalizing her values, "[t]he lady [becomes] his conscience" (46-47). In the language of courtly love, this exalted state of fusion is called "joy" (47); in the language of self psychology, it suggests a selfobject merger which, if ruptured or withheld, would devastate the lover's fragile self: "The child's fear of loss of love, if he does not comply with maternal demands, has become the adult's anxiety over rejection by the lady who is the guardian of the cultural demands of noble society" (Moller 46).

In courtly love, the traditional gender hierarchy is inverted, making woman the master and man the servant. However, this inversion is short-lived. The male participant's goal is, in many cases, the glory of sexual conquest.4 Despite his admiration of women in the abstract, Valentine's recommendations to the Duke regarding the latter's unresponsive mistress reveal a fundamental disrespect towards women in real life: "Dumb jewels often in their silent kind,/ More than quick words, do move a woman's mind" (3.1.90-91). Also disturbing is Valentine's recommendation that the Duke steal away this hypothetical lover even though she is "promis'd by her friends/ Unto a youthful gentleman of worth" (3.1.106-07). Although this scene is primarily designed to exploit situational irony, Valentine's presumptuous recommendations convey a violent undercurrent that anticipates Proteus's desperate attempt to rape Silvia in the forest in the last act. As Mary Beth Rose points

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4 Or, as Meader phrases it, "the eventual capitulation of the woman being courted" (2)
out, "where idealization of women occurred, misogyny was rarely far behind" (Expense 21).

For both Valentine and Proteus, gaining the exclusive admiration and affection of Silvia serves a larger purpose, proving their "potential" to others. The key to understanding this exploitative streak is Valentine's declaration: "That man that hath a tongue, I say is no man./ If with his tongue he cannot win a woman" (3.1.104-05). Success in love is a crucial stepping stone to gentlemanly perfection. Valentine gains a superior social standing to Proteus through the attention bestowed on him by Silvia. Her mirroring of Valentine's narcissistic displays bolsters his confidence, while her inattention destroys that of his rivals.

Valentine receives subtle tokens of encouragement from Silvia, some which he perceives (such as a glove she seems to have left for him at 2.1.1-6) and some which he does not (such as her request that he write a love-letter "to one she loves" [i.e., himself] at 2.1.82-83). When Proteus arrives in Milan, Valentine has established himself as a real court "insider," and his condescension toward his childhood friend (e.g., 2.4.153-58) implies that Valentine feels dignified by the exalted lady's agreement to marry him.

When Valentine boasts to his friend that he can "break [his] fast, dine, sup, and sleep/Upon the very naked name of Love," this is an admission of dependence rather than of self-sufficiency (2.4.136-37). Just as a mother or wet-nurse smiles at the infant she feeds, thus confirming the infant's identity (Kohut, Analysis 116; Winnicott, "Mirror-role" 130-34), Silvia's attention sustains Valentine. When the Duke banishes Valentine, it is not only Silvia but her emotional support that he will miss:

To die is to be banish'd from myself,
And Silvia is myself: banish'd from her
Is self from self. A deadly banishment.
She is my essence, and I leave to be,  
If I be not by her fair influence  
Foster'd, illumin'd, cherish'd, kept alive.

(3.1.171-84)

Valentine's fusion with Silvia recalls D. W. Winnicott's description of a primary caregiver as "lending her own self to her infant" (Family 15), and Kohut and Wolf argue that adult "mirror-hungry" personalities rely on external providers of psychological sustenance: they "thirst for selfobjects whose confirming and admiring responses will nourish their famished self" (378, italics in original). Shakespeare's Duke of Milan seems to mock this sort of hankering in Valentine when he observes that "[l]ove is like a child/ That longs for every thing that he can come by" (3.1.124-25).

Valentine's panic at the prospect of losing Silvia (and hence losing himself) stems from his psychological merger with her; as she is his empathic mirror, he does not perceive her to be entirely separate from him. He acknowledges his dependence on her in this evocative passage:

O thou that dost inhabit in my breast,  
Leave not the mansion so long tenantless,  
Lest growing ruinous, the building fall,  
And leave no memory of what it was.  
Repair me, with thy presence, Silvia . . .

(5.4.7-11)

Ruth Nevo calls Valentine's dependence on Sylvia an "alter ego" merger; "[h]e has lost

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5 For a different interpretation of mirroring, see Jeanne Addison Roberts who examines their relationship from a Lacanian perspective: "The eyes of mistresses are much celebrated, not as parts of other living beings but as Lacanian mirrors, like those of a mother, which reflect flattering images of narcissistic male viewers" (Roberts, Shakespearean 42). Roberts supports her assertion by compiling images of women as reflective surfaces--"glass, tears, water, ice"--behind which the women themselves "are hardly present to the males" (42-43).
himself in her" (60, emphasis in original). However, at every turn the play suggests that Silvia is less his alter-ego (implying sameness [see Kohut and Wolf 379]) than his superior in eloquence, confidence, beauty, virtue, and above all, maturity. Yet weak materials gain strength when interwoven with strong ones, as in the common image of knitting that is used to describe the interconnection of Renaissance spouses. For example, Silvia's other suitor, Thurio, uses the image of "knitting" in his request that Proteus "unwind" Silvia from Valentine: "Lest it should ravel, and be good to none./ You must provide to bottom it on me" (3.2.51-53).

In his 1591 sermon on marriage, likely read to congregations around the time of Shakespeare's play, Henry Smith also employs images of knitting and houses in his definition of conjugal love:

> Marriage is called Coniugium, which signifieth a knitting or joining together: shewing, that unless there be a uniting of harts, and knitting of affectio[n]s together, it is not Mariage indeed, but in shew & name, and they shall dwell in a house like two poysons in a stomack, & one shall euuer be sicke of the other. (56, italics in original).

Smith uses "house" both in the literal sense of a building in which spouses co-habit and in the psychological sense of merged identities. Punning on the term "couple" (which denotes the joint of beams that support a roof [OED sb.II.8]), Smith observes that "as one parte of the building dooth meete and fit with another; so the wife should meete and fit with the husband, that as they are called couples, so they may be called paires" (33). Psychologically, a wife "is another selfe" to her husband; she must "neuer forsake him" or the structure will collapse (26). This concept of "knitting" anticipates what Marion F. Solomon refers to as "enmeshment" in her study of *Narcissism and Intimacy*; enmeshed lovers acquire a kind of
"joint personality" (26-27).

Unfortunately, in Shakespeare's Milan, relationships in which a female performs a selfobject role for an insecure male tend to be much more one-sided affairs. Valentine's own emotional state is of utmost importance, as suggested by his bragging to Proteus: "Why, man, she is mine own./ And I as rich in having such a jewel/ As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl" (2.4.164-66). Valentine describes their betrothal in similar terms: "all the means [are]/ Plotted, and 'greed on for my happiness" (2.4.178-79, emphasis added). When Proteus refuses to flatter Silvia, Valentine tellingly responds, "O flatter me; for love delights in praises" (2.4.143). Silvia is not valued as an independent centre of volition, but merely as a pretty object that adorns, and a selfobject that adores, Valentine. This sort of exploitative dynamic is condoned in Smith's sermon, which exhorts women to play quiet and acquiescent "Eccho" to men's Narcissus (H. Smith 38).

Silvia's rejection of Proteus's amorous advances is as devastating to his self-esteem as her acceptance of Valentine's is beneficial to his. Proteus complains that she "twits" him for leaving Julia and "spurns [his] love" (4.2.8-14), reducing his self-esteem to a low ebb. Abashed, he admits, "Silvia is too fair, too true, too holy,/ To be corrupted with my worthless gifts" (4.2.5-6). Like his gifts of a "false" (i.e., out of tune) song (4.2.57) and a comically incontinent dog (4.4.1-57), Proteus himself is also esteemed worthless by her. Most devastating is her ridicule of his speech: "Thou subtle, perjur'd, false, disloyal man,/ Think'st thou I am so shallow, so conceitless,/ To be seduced by thy flattery" (4.2.92-94). In light of Valentine's pronouncement that a man is no man "[i]f with his tongue he cannot win a woman" (3.1.105), Proteus is a colossal failure.
Demeaned and humiliated, Proteus acts out of desperation in the play's final scene. When Proteus "rescues" Silvia from the outlaws, he asks for mirroring praise: "Vouchsafe me for my meed but one fair look" (5.4.23). Her refusal to grant him even this small "boon" demonstrates her loyalty to Valentine at the expense of Proteus (5.4.24). The final blow to Proteus's self-esteem comes, not when he is foiled in his attempted rape of Silvia or when he is rebuked for it by his incredulous friend (5.4.62-72), but when Valentine makes a gesture of self-aggrandizing largesse that further humiliates Proteus: "that my love may appear plain and free,/ All that was mine in Silvia I give thee" (5.4.82-83). This gift is a stinging reminder that Proteus has failed to woo Silvia with his own words. He is only rescued from utter annihilation by Julia who earlier in the play foresaw her reparative function when reassembling the parts of his torn love letter:

And here is writ 'love-wounded Proteus'.
Poor wounded name: my bosom, as a bed,
Shall lodge thee till thy wound be throughly heal'd;
And thus I search it with a sovereign kiss.

(1.2.114-17)

In the end she searches and repairs Proteus's wounded self-esteem, and he at last rediscovers a reliable source of affectionate nourishment: "What is in Silvia's face but I may spy/ More fresh in Julia's, with a constant eye?" (4.4.113-14).⁶

Critical opinion regarding Valentine's gift to Proteus is divided, but I believe that the most common explanations—that Valentine is testing Proteus's loyalty or educating him about magnanimity with Silvia and Julia acting as accomplices (Lindenbaum 238-41)—accord more generosity to Valentine than the scene bears out. Brimming with confidence, Valentine

⁶ That is, after his momentary panic over the misplaced ring has passed (see above).
thinks that he no longer needs Silvia as a selfobject. His successes (and, more importantly, her validation of these successes) have enabled him to create the missing internal "self structure" (Kohut and Wolf 380) for which she previously functioned as an external provider. Yet his exhibitionistic gesture suggests that the process is by no means complete, only that his reliance has become more diffuse as he attempts to gain affirmation from a wider audience. While the real-life restoration of a healthy self through progressively diminishing selfobject transferences is a gradual process, Shakespeare must condense this process into just a few lines because of the "exigencies" of narrative condensation in the theatre (Doran 252). In this, as in other Shakespearean comedies, psychological insights are obscured by what appear to be mere "Fairy-tale solutions" (252).7

I believe that Valentine's gift serves a more obvious function: it is a test of Silvia's constancy. She has spent much of his absence surrounded by would-be suitors and untrustworthy men, Thurio, Proteus and Eglamour: will she accept Valentine's bestowing of her upon another? We never find out, for the test is interrupted by Julia's swoon and Silvia has no lines to indicate her reaction to Valentine's gesture. However, Valentine is in a win-win situation: if she accepts the terms, then she is inconstant and not worth having; if Proteus refuses (as he does), Valentine's willingness to sacrifice his love proves him to be an adherent to the friendship cult (Leech liv-lvi). With one self-aggrandizing gesture, "Valentine is no longer the almost hopelessly aspiring lover but is the dispenser of magnanimity" (lxviii). Stephenson also sees this gift as an act of one-up-manship: "Valentine can rise above

7 Madeleine Doran's assertion that in this play "character analysis is beside the point" (252) is frequently echoed by critics. Clifford Leech writes that "The Two Gentlemen of Verona is not a play where detailed comment on the characters is a worth-while occupation" (lxxiii).
[Proteus] again by an even greater display of nobility, a towering act of self-sacrifice" (167).

Valentine would discard Silvia in order to secure praise from his defeated, contrite, ingratiated friend. Valentine nearly dispenses with her like a jewel, portrait, ring or other prized object. Yet there is one final plot twist.

In a turn of events frequently overshadowed by the controversial gift episode, Thurio bursts onto the scene and declares, "Silvia's mine" (5.4.123). In a flash, Valentine's magnanimity disappears and he issues this terrible warning:

Thurio, give back; or else embrace thy death;  
Come not within the measure of my wrath; 
Do not name Silvia thine. If once again, 
Verona shall not hold thee. Here she stands, 
Take but possession of her with a touch: 
I dare thee but to breathe upon my love.

(5.4.124-29, emphasis added)

Sounding like a jealous husband, Valentine frightens his cowardly rival into abandoning all claim to Silvia. This speech is a prototype of Petruchio's bold pronouncement at the abortive wedding feast in The Taming of the Shrew:

I will be master of what is mine own. 
She is my goods, my chattels, she is my house, 
My household stuff, my field, my barn, 
My horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing, 
And here she stands. Touch her whoever dare.

(Shr. 3.2.227-31, emphasis added)

Petruchio's warning echoes the Tenth Commandment, "thou shalt not couet thy neighbours house, neither shalt thou couet thy neighbors wife . . . nor his oxe, nor his asse nor any thing that is thy neighbours" (Exod. 20:17). Valentine is also warning would-be seducers not to

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8 Unless otherwise stated, Biblical references (including ones from the Apocrypha) are taken from the Bishops' Bible of 1595. Petruchio's allusion is noted by Brian Morris (237 note).
covet his future wife, and, in his monstrous narcissism, he adopts the grand style of Exodus too (cf. Exod. 20:18). Silvia's almost complete silence, combined with the outlaws', Proteus's, and Thurio's submission to Valentine, suggests that this is a dream-come-true for Valentine (Stephenson 167-68). Having won Silvia's love, the balance of courtly power shifts from old goddess to a new idol, Valentine.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona occupies a prototypical—indeed, "seminal" (Leech lxxi)—position in Shakespeare's corpus of plays, especially those exploring cuckoldry anxiety. In addition to those anticipatory aspects mentioned above, Proteus's motive-searching soliloquies anticipate one of drama's most famous deceivers, Iago. Like Iago, Proteus ingratiates himself into people's trust (e.g., Valentine's, Thurio's, the Duke's) by posing—not as a blunt soldier—but as "Love's firm votary" ("we dare trust you in this kind," confides the Duke [3.2.56-58]). In this role, Proteus dispenses advice to the hopeless Thurio, whose gullible adoption of Proteus as "[his] direction-giver" (3.2.89) anticipates Othello's desperate idealized selfobject merger with Iago (see Chapter Ten, below). Both Proteus's and Valentine's overestimation of Silvia anticipates that of Navarre and his fellow academicians for the French ladies in Love's Labour's Lost—a play that, unlike the more forgiving comedy set in Milan, punishes the men for their immature behaviour (see Chapter Six, below). The confusion surrounding Julia's ring anticipates the final scene of The Merchant of Venice, where Portia's discovery that her husband has given her love token to a stranger leads to her angry warning:

> Lie not a night from home. Watch me like Argus,—
> If you do not, if I be left alone,
> Now by mine honour (which is yet mine own),
I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow.

(MV 5.1.230-33)

Because Bassanio's gift suggests that he might be unfaithful to her, Portia threatens to fight back "with the only weapon at a wife's command: the threat of infidelity" (Kahn, "Cuckoo's" 109; cf. Parten, "Re-establishing" 149). This ring episode does little to alleviate men's fear that "once they are married, their wives will betray them" (Kahn, "Cuckoo's" 106, emphasis in original); as newlywed Gratiano exclaims, "What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserv'd it?" (MV 5.1.265). Portia's warning is playful. Nonetheless it perpetuates a misogynous commonplace challenged elsewhere in Shakespeare's plays; that women cannot be trusted when left alone.

Proteus's discomfiture at being duped by Sebastian/Julia also anticipates Twelfth Night in which the reclusive Duke Orsino courts Olivia via a go-between, Cesario/Viola. Orsino's relationship with Olivia is largely narcissistic in nature, as suggested by Joseph Westlund's insightful chapter on the play (Shakespeare's 93-119). Orsino acknowledges the unsettling effects love-at-first-sight wrought in him: "That instant was I turn'd into a hart,/And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,/E'er since pursue me" (TN 1.1.21-23). Many critics dismiss this allusion to Actaeon as mere shorthand for the pangs of unrequited love: "his hunting image . . . threatens to overbalance into an Actaeon/cuckold joke which the speaker certainly does not intend" (Barton, Introduction 405; cf. L. Anderson 112). Yet if, as

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9 A popular analogue can be found in Jane Anger her Protection for Women: "Deceitful men with guile must be repaid,/ And blows for blows who renders not again?/ The man that is of Cuckold's lot afraid,/ From Lechery he ought for to refrain" (Anger 176). See also Emilia's condemnation of the double standard, "it is their husbands' faults/ If wives do fall" (Oth. 4.3.85-102).
Jonathan Bate points out, "constancy and inconstancy in love shape both the twists of the plot and the preoccupations of the characters" in *Twelfth Night* (145), then the Duke's invocation of this horned fixture of cuckold-lore reveals a fear of marrying an unfaithful woman. It is no coincidence that Orsino falls for a woman whose self-imposed mourning over a dead brother suggests an inimitable constancy (1.1.33-39). Totally smitten, Orsino expresses a kind of psychological dependence on Olivia:

\[
\text{... such as I am, all true lovers are,} \\
\text{Unstaid and skittish in all motions else,} \\
\text{Save in the constant image of the creature} \\
\text{That is beloved . . . .} \\
\]

(2.4.17-20)

Orsino's admiration for her is intellectual, not physical; he relishes the idea of her constancy more than actual interaction with her. As an idealized selfobject, she provides a "constant" anchor for his "giddy and unfirm" identity (2.4.33-35). When Olivia marries Sebastian (Cesario/Viola's twin) this apparent selfobject betrayal sets off a narcissistic rage in Orsino assuaged only by his marriage to Viola. *Twelfth Night* is another of Shakespeare's "sentimental education" plays, though ultimately it is Cesario/Viola--not Olivia--who teaches Orsino "the fidelity and patience of woman's love" (Ranald, *Shakespeare* 102).

The behaviour of such comic lovers reveals the objectification of women in courtly love, and the exploitation of selfobjects during processes of maturation. Particularly in adolescents, the overestimation of a love-object "is not due to the heightened investment of object love or object libido . . . [but] rather, to the narcissistic element in the love" (Elson 29)--an element revealed in Proteus's rationalization of his unfaithfulness to Julia: "I to myself am dearer than a friend./ For love is still most precious in itself" (*TGV* 2.6.23-24).
The ladies who perform selfobject mergers are never properly thanked for their efforts, though comic conventions "reward" them with marriage. In spite of MacCary's assertion that *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* "values friendship between men over the love of men for women that leads to marriage" (94), both Valentine and Proteus do not retreat to the safety of homosocial friendships but enter into heterosexual marriage—even though love's "twenty pair of eyes" will likely remain on guard (2.4.90). If, as MacCary observes, "[c]onstancy lies not in the object, but in the lover's view of that object" (107), then the reverse is also true.

Inconstancy is largely a figment of the overactive imaginations of narcissistic males who, during the rocky transition from adolescence to adulthood, behave like two children of Verona. As we shall see in *The Comedy of Errors*, suspicion of women is a culturally accepted response taught to children and adults alike.
Chapter Five

"Self-harming jealousy!"

The Comedy of Errors and Sexual Paranoia

The Comedy of Errors is another play afforded only cursory attention in existing studies of Shakespearean cuckoldry, despite a central scene (3.1) based on Plautus's comedy Amphitruo in which a merchant is locked out of his home while his wife entertains a mysterious guest within (Foakes, Introduction xxvii-xxviii). St. Pierre argues that here Shakespeare avoids "utilizing the language of cuckoldry in situations where wifely adultery occurs" (170). St. Pierre is only half right. No adultery occurs, but the language of cuckoldry is invoked precisely when potential wifely adultery becomes a concern. In this chapter, I will examine the contrasting experiences of two brothers—one unhappily married, the other unhappily single—who are afflicted by sexual anxieties commonly fostered by Renaissance educational curricula. Echoing Leo Salingar's assertion that comedy presented an "unfaithful mirror" that entertained while correcting, reflected while distorting, the society that produced it (1-8), I propose that The Comedy of Errors presents a "mirror of unfaithfulness." The play entertains through farcical improbabilities and reinforces cultural stereotypes about lusty women, yet at the same time it explores real-life psychological processes and exposes the shallow underpinnings of these stereotypes in order to alleviate the sexual anxieties of its male audience members.

In a seemingly incongruous opening, the play begins with the sombre trial and death-sentence of Egeon, whose punishment for being a foreign interloper introduces the play's
thematic concern with intruders, and whose narrative provides a thumbnail sketch of an ideal marriage:

In Syracusa was I born, and wed
Unto a woman happy but for me,
And by me,—had not our hap been bad.
With her I lived in joy . . . .

(Err. 1.1.36-39)

Despite a protracted absence from the "kind embraces of [his] spouse" (1.1.43), Egeon never wonders whether the twins born while he was away are his own. His marriage is based on trust and a quid pro quo that contradicts the widely held belief that households in the Renaissance were ruled by tyrannical husbands.\(^1\) Separated for thirty years, Egeon never remarries and Emilia passes the time in a priory--less out of religious convictions than a desire to preserve her marital chastity.\(^2\) The play's romance frame thus illustrates an exemplary marriage based on love, trust and fidelity. In contrast, the marriage of Adriana and Antipholus of Ephesus (hereafter Antipholus E) reaches a crisis one afternoon when he is late for lunch. At the same time, his visiting twin Antipholus of Syracuse (hereafter Antipholus S) acquires a grounding in sexual paranoia from members of this same household: Adriana, Luciana and the kitchen wench.

As many commentators have noted, Shakespeare's decision to set the play in Ephesus

\(^1\) For example, although Egeon is resigned to die during the stormy sea-journey back to Epidamnum, Emilia persuades him to adopt her scheme of tying one another to the masts of their ship. The ship subsequently split in two, an evocative image of the "unjust divorce" that severs him from his "bliss" (1.1.104, 118). For discussions of the Renaissance patriarchal family, see Amussen, Ordered 34-66; Newman, Fashioning 15-31; and Shuger 218-49.

\(^2\) When she is finally reunited with her husband and sons at play's end, they enter the priory, not to pray, but to celebrate "a gossips' feast" (5.1.405). In other words, Emilia renounces the family of God within the priory walls in order to rejoin her earthly family without.
was likely prompted by its associations with magic (as suggested in Acts 19) and by the "great secrete" (i.e., mystery) of marriage discussed in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:22-33; Foakes, Introduction xxix, 113-15). Images of bodily incorporation found in Ephesians, such as "men [ought] to loue their wiues, as their owne bodies" and "ioyned vn to his wife . . . two shall be made one flesh" (Eph. 5:28-31), helped fuel a Protestant revolution in domestic relations (Ozment 54-55). The new view of marriage was promulgated by the Church of England in its "Homily of the State of Matrimony." Read annually from pulpit beginning in the 1560s, this Homily had an enormous impact on a wide audience (Stone, "Rise" 52). Although it is a prescriptive document, it reflects widely held beliefs and common marital dynamics (Hennings 96-104).

The Homily begins by stating "that man and woman should live lawfully in a perpetual friendship" ("Homily" 446), though it expresses a disproportionate concern for the well-being of husbands:

For this surely doth nourish concord very much, when the wife is ready at hand at her husband's commandment, when she will apply herself to his will, when she endeavoureth herself to seek his contentation, and to do him pleasure, when she will eschew all things that might offend him . . . . (450)

Any unwillingness to perform such functions was perceived as open rebellion, "turn[ing] all things upside down" (450), though marriage helps temper, if not exactly cure, the egocentric behaviour of men:

For this folly is ever from our tender age grown up with us, to have a desire to rule, to think highly of ourself, so that none thinketh it meet to give place to another. That wicked vice of stubborn will and self-love is more meet to break and to dissever the love of heart, than to preserve concord. Wherefore married persons must apply their minds
in most earnest wise to concord, and must crave continually of God the help of his holy Spirit, so to rule their hearts and to knit their minds together . . . (447, note omitted)

In psychoanalytic parlance, marriage helps individuals move from narcissism to more mutually satisfying and mature object love.

In an article on "The Dynamics of Narcissism in Marriage," Carolynn Maltas argues that this intermingling of identities often serves one partner more than the other who "is neither perceived nor treated as a separate person, but as a part of the [partner's] self" (568). As in the play's frequently discussed image of the "drop of water" seeking another drop (Err. 1.2.35-40), spouses "often represent to each other lost potential parts of themselves" (Maltas 571). To Maltas, marriage entails a lifelong give-and-take of "reciprocal and interlocking" narcissistic "ties":

Needs for affirmation, mirroring, and idealization are not limited to preoedipal periods, nor do they necessarily represent regression or pathology. Rather, these early relationships establish life-long patterns both of using others to stabilize one's own sense of self and of self-worth and of being so used by others. (568-69)

I propose that the popular image of woman being "the weaker vessel" (1 Pet. 3:7) reassured men that women alone occupied this position of psychological dependency. The Comedy of Errors perpetuates this view by dwelling on Adriana's possessiveness while treating her husband's jealousy in a more cursory manner (more on this below). Yet her apparent shrewishness and his blithe independence should not distract us from subtle, reciprocal, spousal dynamics discernable even in the most farcical of situations.

The average Renaissance husband existed in a state of power tempered by great psychological vulnerability. Society, in the form of religious education, encouraged him to
exploit his spouse to service his needs. Yet at the same time he was taught that women are untrustworthy and sexually insatiable. His public identity depended on his wife's reputation for chastity, and his private self depended on her presence as a selfobject. Or, as Henry Smith put it,

> God hath prouided one comforter for him, like Jonathans armour-bearer, that shall never forsake him, that is another selfe, which is the only commoditie as I may tearme it, wherein the poore doe match the rich, without which, some persons should have no helper, no comforter, no friend at all. (25-26, italics in original)

As I mentioned in my brief discussion of The Merchant of Venice, foreknowledge of the eventuality of female infidelity was a powerful "weapon" to counter female ascendancy (cf. Parten, "Cuckoldry" 181-201). This weapon was first conferred upon boys in the grammar schools where they were taught weekly translation exercises using The Book of Proverbs and The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach (also known as Ecclesiasticus). Sirach was a popular choice with educators because it was doctrinally neutral, consisting mainly of commonsense wisdom (T. Baldwin, Small 207-08, 683-85). In his study of Treason in Tudor England, Lacey Baldwin Smith stresses the centrality of these two books:

along with Proverbs it [Sirach] was the most important literary influence that shaped a child's psychological development as he moved from the protective environment of the home into the larger and more dangerous world of the petty and grammar schools. (101-02)

Smith's general thesis is that lessons from these books formed what he calls an "education in paranoia." ³ Alongside classics, rhetoric, and mathematics, educators inculcated three

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³ Paranoia is generally understood to denote a mental disorder involving systematized "delusions of persecution or of grandeur" (Funk s.v.), though Moore and Fine describe a milder form of this, the "paranoid personality," whose "maladaptive patterns of perceiving, relating, and thinking" are prompted by traits that were also common, I believe, in the
essential precepts into their impressionable charges: "appearances are not to be trusted, the enemy is close at hand, and conspiracy and evil fill the world" (L. Smith 101). The "paranoid approach" was encouraged in both public and private affairs in an era thought to be beset with sedition and popery. Youths were taught to be suspicious of appearances and to search for hidden or inscrutable meanings (L. Smith 36-37). The English school curriculum is perhaps best summarized in the Countess of Rossillion's advice to her son, "Love all, trust a few" (*AWW* 1.1.60).4

The typical graduate of this curriculum was "extremely touchy," always on his guard: "Everything [became] a clue, for he assume[d] that nothing, not even the most trifling occurrence, [could] be an accident or a matter of chance" (L. Smith 37). In this conspiratorial environment, students were exhorted to take great care selecting friends: "Depart from thine enemies, yea, and beware of thy friends" (Sir. 6:13; cf. L. Smith 39). Youths were also warned to guard their future wives and homes against interlopers: "If thou takest an aliant vnto thee, hee shall destroy thee in vnquietnesse, & driue thee from thine owne wayes" (Sir. 11:34). In particular, strangers bring the "perpetuall shame" of wifely infidelity (Sir. 11:33; cf. T. Baldwin, "Three" 144-46). Indeed, in Renaissance England it was proverbial that

Renaissance: "hypersensitivity to slights and blame, suspiciousness, mistrust, pathological jealousy, and vengeful feelings" (138)

4 Charles G Smith also argues that Renaissance Englishmen were "steeped in proverbs" (3) that were inculcated by the education system and which saturated their oral culture (12). Of the numerous paranoiac proverbs, I will cite only a few from Smith's book: no. 102, "By constant fear a wise man escapes harm"; no. 110, "There is flattery (falsehood) in friendship"; no. 286, "They that think no ill are soonest beguiled"; no. 302, "Trust no man"; no. 306, "Try your friend before you trust him"; and no. 337, "A woman is always wavering and inconstant" (C. Smith *passim*).
"company makes cuckolds" (G. Williams 1:340; cf. Tilley C565). Smith speculates that the significance of such warnings "was presumably lost upon 10- and 11-year-olds, [but] may have been remembered in later life" (L. Smith 106). The high incidence of analogous situations in Shakespeare's plays suggest that audiences did indeed remember.5

This moral curriculum created high expectations of marriage and extreme suspicion. Students were encouraged to acquire the "goodly possession" of a wife, but also to watch these assiduously: "Where no hedge is, there the goods are spoiled: and where no huswife is, there the friendlesse mourneth" (Sir. 36:24-25). Aspects of these proverbs are played out in The Comedy of Errors. The scene in which Antipholus E is locked out of his own house illustrates a Renaissance husband's fear that precautions taken against sexual interlopers may prove ineffectual. Sirach points out that even the most careful precautions are not foolproof: "marueile not if she doe against thee" (26:11). Proud women, in particular, will run rampant if unguarded: "As a wayfaring man that is thirstie, when he hath found a well, drinketh of euery next water: so will shee sit downe by euery hedge, and make her selfe common to euery man that passeth by" (Sir. 26:12). It is hardly surprising that schoolboys raised on this curriculum should, as adults, blow the slightest suspicion out of proportion. Members of Shakespeare's audience likely sympathized with Antipholus E's anger at Adriana's lunchtime entertainment. She is not only perceived to have a lover within, but according to her husband's later testimony before the Duke of Ephesus, she is entertaining "harlots" (i.e., men of loose morals [5.1.204-05; Foakes, Introduction 98 note]). Antipholus E's escalating

5 See, for example, Polixenes's "home-invasion" in The Winter's Tale (discussed in Chapter Twelve, below), or Antipholus E's anger at his wife's apparent infidelity in The Comedy of Errors (discussed in this chapter, below).
accusation recalls Sirach's "common" woman and anticipates Othello's wish that "the general camp./ Pioneers and all, had tasted [Desdemona's] sweet body" rather than that he should discover her infidelity with one man (Oth. 3.3.348-49).

With such imputations pervading the religious, educational and dramatic cultures of the period, it is not surprising that men should be suspicious of women. Adriana speaks out against the double standard, yet at the same time she justifies spousal abuse in cases of female infidelity. Should Antipholus E "but hear I were licentious," she observes, he would "tear the stain'd skin off my harlot brow" (2.2.131-36). Indeed, Antipholus E later purchases "a rope's end" for precisely this purpose (4.1.16-17). His violent streak makes Adriana's early exchange with the recently beaten Dromio of Ephesus (hereafter Dromio E) seem more like dreadful foreshadowing than comic quibbling. The servant's statement that his master is "horn-mad" incenses Adriana (as it implies she has been unfaithful), so he qualifies his description: "I mean not cuckold-mad,/ But sure he is stark mad" (2.1.57-59). When her husband does arrive home and finds himself locked out, however, his anger does indeed become horn-madness, as suggested by Dromio E's teasing observation that he should be "mad as a buck to be so bought and sold" (3.1.72; Foakes, Introduction 46 note). Balthazar attempts to calm his friend by pointing out that, whether Adriana is chaste or not, his anger will suggest horn-madness on his part and guilt on hers to all the neighbours: "Herein you war against your reputation,/ And draw within the compass of suspect/ Th'unviolated honour of your wife" (3.1.86-88). Antipholus E's decision to visit a courtesan to "spite" this injury through some sexual indiscretion of his own confirms that at least he has assumed the worst about his wife (3.1.118-21).
Shakespeare's comic lunch-time sequence contains numerous plot conventions of the cuckold tradition (as outlined by St. Pierre 1-42): 1) an apparently loveless marriage between a suspicious husband and a shrewish wife who confirms antifeminist stereotypes of sexual insatiability; 2) acute sensitivity on the part of spouses towards public slander; 3) public (and audience) mirth at a jealous husband's expense; 4) the possibility that the wife is actually unfaithful (albeit unknowingly, in this instance, with her husband's twin); and 5) an ironic situation in which a jealous husband imprisons his wife only to be locked outside while she enjoys herself within. Adriana angrily describes her husband using language that recalls the stereotypical cuckold who deserves his fate: "He is deformed, crooked, old and sere./ Ill-fac'd, worse bodied, shapeless everywhere" (4.2.19-20). Indeed, Antipholus E displays traits of the cuckold stereotype (as outlined by Norrell 15-16): 1) he is negligent of his wife; 2) he is hypocritical (i.e., he has a mistress but is infuriated by his wife's seeming infidelity); 3) he is a man of business for whom commerce takes precedence over domestic concerns; and 4) he may be sexually impotent (their marriage has produced no children). Shakespeare must have been acquainted with such conventions, especially one in which "the cuckold tradition depicts husbands as participating in one way or other . . . in their cuckoldling" (St. Pierre 15). Because the interloper (Antipholus S) looks exactly like the husband (Antipholus E), to audiences the husband appears to be cuckoldling himself.

This "dysfunctional" family plays an important role in the initiation of Antipholus S into the world of love and marriage. The newly arrived twin's first afternoon in Ephesus begins with an expression of melancholia brought on by feelings of radical incompleteness:

I to the world am like a drop of water
That in the ocean seeks another drop,  
Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,  
(Unseen, inquisitive) confounds himself.  
So I, to find a mother and a brother,  
In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.  

(1.2.35-40)

Separated from his mother and twin brother by the tempest described by Egeon (see above),  
then separated from his father during an ill-fated quest for reunion, Antipholus S seeks to  
reassemble the family "without whom he feels psychologically incomplete" (Barton,  
Introduction 81). His melancholy is exacerbated by his total immersion in a hostile and  
seemingly magical city: "in the more extreme situation of the traveller, [he is] especially  
vulnerable" (81). This vulnerability intensifies when Dromio of Syracuse (hereafter Dromio  
S) exits and Antipholus S loses the only "almanac of [his] true date" (1.2.41), his only  
bearings in a bewildering city. As the play heaps confusion on this deracinated traveller, he  
responds by lashing out in comic anger, striking the uncomprehending Dromio E repeatedly.  
As Edward Berry points out, in Shakespeare's comedies "the experience of love often begins  
with a profound sense of loss--of self, family, community" (49); Antipholus S loses all three.  

Stripped of his identity, Antipholus S expresses a sense of vulnerability akin to being  
a newborn child: "In Ephesus I am but two hours old,/ As strange unto your town as to your  
talk" (2.2.148-49). Kahn describes Antipholus S's experience as a regression "to the earliest  
stage of identity formation" in which he desires a reparative merger with another (Man's 200).  
In self psychological terms, he experiences a reshuffling of the self during which he relies on  
selfobjects to regulate his self functions. Kahn argues that his twin brother is the only person  
who can perform such mergers: "the action focuses exclusively on his relationship to his
brother . . . he wants to make a mirroring mother of his brother" (Kahn, Man's 201). This is only partially correct. Although Antipholus S is initially searching for his twin, he is quickly sidetracked by Luciana whom he comes to desire as both a mirroring and an idealized selfobject. Furthermore, the drop of water image is used in heterosexual love relationships that encompass selfobject mergers, as suggested in Adriana's poignant description of her unhappy marriage:

How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,
That thou art then estranged from thyself?—
Thyself I call it, being strange to me,
That undividable, incorporate,
Am better than thy dear self's better part.
Ah, do not tear away thyself from me;
For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall
A drop of water in the breaking gulf,
And take unmingled thence that drop again
Without addition or diminishing,
As take from me thyself, and not me too.

(2.2.19-29)

Adriana's passage suggests that spouses perform selfobject functions for one another (or at least, that they should be doing this). They are interconnected, but they are not twins.

When a case of mistaken identity plunges Antipholus S into this unhappy household, he learns first-hand about the dangers of infidelity. He finds solace in the beautiful sister of his hostess, Luciana, whom he invites to teach him "how to think and speak" (3.2.33) and to whom he attributes the omnipotence that an infant experiences in a caregiver: "Are you a god? would you create me new?/ Transform me then, and to your power I'll yield" (3.2.39-40). Transcending mere youthful infatuation, his need is for her to provide narcissistic mirroring and to merge with his radically shaken self in a reparative capacity: "It is thyself,
mine own self's better part./ Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart,/ My food, my fortune, and my sweet hope's aim" (3.2.61-63). Antipholus S's dependence is as absolute as it is sudden. As Anne Barton explains, "his self-confidence has been so badly shaken that he is asking Luciana to give him a new identity through the transforming power of romantic love" (Introduction 81).

Instead of finding romantic attachment, however, Antipholus S is initiated by Luciana into the Renaissance culture of paranoia. As the voice of conventional patriarchal morality in the play (Hennings 95), Luciana exhorts her (apparent) brother-in-law to be more discreet in his extramarital dealings:

... if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth,
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness.
Let not my sister read it in your eye;
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator;
Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty;
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger;
Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted;
Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint,
Be secret false; what needs she be acquainted?
What simple thief brags of his own attain?

(3.2.7-16)

This litany of advice on sexual subterfuge creates an unnerving spectacle of a virtuous woman offering up cynical adages. Luciana's "divine" pronouncements make a strong impression on her pupil: "Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not/ Than our earth's wonder," he says (3.2.31-32). If Luciana's lessons are true, then the reverse must also be true: female initiates into the culture of suspicion are equally (if not especially) capable of sexual deception. Luciana's unexplained rejection of Antipholus S's romantic advances prompts him to complain that her "enchanting presence and discourse,/ Hath almost made me
traitor to myself" (3.2.160-61). The vocabulary of treason suggests that what is true in politics, is also true in sexual politics: "first, trust no one; second, watch out for the enemy; and third, beware of appearances" (L. Smith 42-43).

Luciana provides her charge with a condensed primer in paranoia that may someday render him a suspicious husband, ever-watchful for the "simple thief" that will doubtless attempt to infiltrate his own family. Luciana's continued resistance to Antipholus S's persistent sexual advances also creates a farcical misunderstanding that conceals a profound psychological dynamic. As his selfobject, her own needs and wishes are a secondary concern to Antipholus S who feels entitled to her responses; he won't take "no" for an answer. When out of desperation he finally grabs her (as Proteus does to Silvia in TGV 5.4.55-59), Luciana flees her attacker and narrowly escapes discovery by a household servant (Err. 3.2.68-70). This rejection is followed by Dromio S's flight from a lusty kitchen wench who nearly "transform'd [him] to a curtal dog" (3.2.145). Dromio S's exaggerated account of his narrow escape confirms Antipholus S's discoveries that women in Ephesus are untrustworthy (e.g., Luciana), irascible (e.g., Adriana) and sexually insatiable (e.g., the kitchen wench). They are also quite frightening. Antipholus S's mistrust reaches a fever pitch when a courtesan mistakes him for his brother and demands her gold chain, prompting Dromio S's warning: "she is the devil's dam . . . in the habit of a light wench" (4.3.49-50). Both men run for their lives. These responses, however exaggerated by the conventions of farce, recall religious lessons inculcated into young men about prostitution: "Looke not vpon a woman that is desirous of many men, lest thou fall into her snares" (Sir. 9:3). Whores and witches are frequently associated in the drama of the period (Dusinberre 70-71, 135). It is initially a case
of mistaken identity that prompts Dromio E to describe Antipholus S as "horn-mad" (2.1.57), and he is given no cause to be horn-mad in the course of the play; however, the intellectual groundwork for such a reaction has been laid. Thus Shakespeare illustrates processes by which suspicion and jealousy are fostered in insecure males.

Antipholus S's immersion into sexual paranoia resembles a more familiar initiation, that of Orlando into love by Ganymede/Rosalind in As You Like It. The refrain of Amiens's song certainly echoes a common theme of the grammar-school education that Orlando was deprived of by his brother: "Most friendship is feigning" (AYL 2.7.181, italics in original). A quick study, however, Orlando is soon composing love poems in the Forest of Arden, lamenting "violated vows, / 'Twixt the souls of friend and friend" but reassuring himself of Rosalind's fidelity: she has "Helen's cheek, but not her heart" (3.2.128-29, 142, italics omitted). When he asks Ganymede/Rosalind to recount "the principal evils" of women (3.2.343-44), the youth responds with the following warning:

I, being but a moonish youth, [will] grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles, for every passion something and for no passion truly anything, as boys and women are for the most part cattle of this colour; would now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him . . . .

(3.2.397-405)

Her reference to "cattle" sounds proverbial, but it also conjures images of the cuckold's horns. Indeed, when Orlando arrives late for a subsequent appointment, she taunts him for being a "snail" and bringing "his destiny with him": "horns" (4.1.50-57). She warns him that she will take "twenty such" other lovers in his absence, and should one of these be foolish enough to wed her, become "more giddy in [her] desires than a monkey" (4.1.112, 144-45).
Of course, Rosalind's threats merely form part of an elaborate pose designed to test Orlando's resolve to wed her in spite of potential marital adversities. Her lessons serve to educate her suitor in the "varieties of female contrariness," and Orlando passes this test of devotion; "he does not falter even when taunted with the prospect of his being made a cuckold" (Parten, "Cuckoldry" 186, 192). Although I agree with Parten's assessment of Rosalind's words a "mischievous game," I'm not convinced that the play provides a thorough "comic catharsis" for cuckoldry anxiety by provoking laughter at horns or singing hunting songs (such as at 4.2.1-19) (Parten, "Cuckoldry" 191, 188). Rosalind doth protest too much about inconstancy. While in disguise, she discourages Phebe's amorous advances with a line that resonates doubly as swaggering masculine irresponsibility and terrible female inconstancy: "I am falser than vows made in wine" (3.5.73). The play does end with a return to social stability in the form of marriage, as Rosalind rewards Orlando's perseverance in love: "To you I give myself, for I am yours" (5.4.116). Edward Berry writes that her love "encompasses not only the whole of society but earth and heaven" (46). However, Rosalind's Epilogue sends the audience home with more ominous words ringing in their ears: "If I were a woman, I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me, and breaths that I defied not" (5.4.214-17). Of course, Shakespeare is having some fun with the gender-switching nature of a boy actor's part (Rackin 36-37); at the same time, however, the emphasis on Rosalind the character's essential femininity--"[i]t is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue" (5.4.198)--may have confirmed in the minds of audience
members that Orlando got precisely what she promised him in marriage, and more.6

Back in Ephesus, Adriana’s experiences in love parallel those of jealous men in many ways. Critics tend to adopt the position of the Abbess and impugn Adriana as shrewish, demanding and dependent; for example, Berry berates her as "a jealous wife, possessive to the point of absurdity" (7), and Mary C. Williams states that Adriana suffers from "a desire so strong that it must be labelled possessiveness . . . as distinguished from love and concern" (55). Berry attributes this behaviour to an idealization of her husband stemming from narcissistic needs for total merger: "she attempts to become him, possessing him so completely as to extinguish both his individuality and her own" (73). To Berry, this desire for the "dissolution of the self" is immature (73-75); yet if this kind of merger is symptomatic of "the generative confusion of self characteristic of the liminal phase" that precedes "mature, adult love" (75), what can we say about Adriana? Is her jealousy not a mature emotion? Is she undergoing a "liminal" rite of passage analogous to Antipholus S—an unmarried character at an earlier stage of development?

In answer to these questions, I would argue that Kohut’s concept of the reshuffling of the self is useful because it avoids restrictive notions of liminality or the view that people grow out of the tendency to experience periodic bouts of dependent behaviour. Fragmentation, such as that experienced by Adriana, occurs throughout life and afflicts a wide range of individuals when they are unexpectedly isolated from providers of psychological sustenance. The concept of liminality also ignores one important premise of

6 On this "saucy Epilogue" and the illicit "sexual transaction" it proposes (Rackin 36-37), Parten is strangely silent, perhaps because it serves less as comic catharsis than as reinforcing confirmation of those male suspicions she argues Shakespeare is trying to dispel.
the play: that although both twins are in their early thirties (Err. 5.1.400), developmentally they are poles apart. Antipholus E seems to have passed through important stages: he has served some sort of apprenticeship and learned a mercantile trade, he has served in the wars (5.1.161-63), he has been rewarded on his return with a wife, and he has settled into a comfortable and prosperous (if not always peaceable) life. Antipholus S, on the other hand, has led a more transitory existence, wandering the world for years, unattached, untutored and untested. Before his dealings with Luciana, he is insecure, credulous and immature.

Therefore, characters as different as Adriana and Antipholus S experience similar anxieties, for similar reasons, at different stages of their lives.

As it turns out, Adriana has not given her husband cause to be horn-mad; however, her innocence does not strip cuckoldry of its "meaning," or stereotypes of their "credibility" (St. Pierre 172). Adriana experiences the radical self-doubts and jealous fury normally associated with cuckolded husbands. In one moving passage, she also worries that she has lost her beauty and wit, but hopes that her "decayed fair/ A sunny look of his would soon repair" (2.1.98-99). Antipholus E's praise would restore her depleted self and end the scolding which seems symptomatic of her radical self-doubts and needs for attention. Indeed, her complaint that she "starve[s] for a merry look" (2.1.88) while her "too unruly deer . . . breaks the pale/ And feeds from home" (2.1.100-01) recalls Kohut's characterization of narcissistic imbalance as a "hunger . . . [a] need to hold onto the other person as if it were a

7 Adriana is seemingly separated from her husband by no fewer than three rivals: first, Antipholus E's "minion," the Courtesan (2.1.87); second, Luciana, who is suspected to have spoken Antipholus E "fair" (i.e., made a pass at him [4.2.16]); and finally, a rival "nurse," the Abbess, who refuses to release Antipholus E from of the priory (5.1.98, 110-11).
piece of herself" (Elson 119). Sirach suggests that one benefit of marriage is regular meals, real and psychological: "A louing wife reioyeth her husband, and feedeth his bones with her wisedome" (26:13). In the same vein, Proverbs warns men not to "eat out"; in their absence, their wives may also be tempted, metaphorically speaking, by extramarital "meals": "Such is the way also of a wife that breaketh wedlock, which wipeth her mouth like as when she hath eaten, and sayth, As for me, I haue done no wickednesse" (Prov. 30:20).

When Antipholus S courts Luciana as his "own self's better part," Luciana scolds him, "All this my sister is, or else should be" (3.2.61, 65). The play concludes with attempts to restore the marriage of Antipholus E by relegating Adriana to a position of deference and subjugation. Adriana responds to the Abbess's observation that "his meat was sauc'd with thy upbraidings" with a promise to "attend my husband, be his nurse, Diet his sickness, for it is my office" (5.1.73, 98-99). Paradoxically, a nurse is both in a position of servitude to, and of absolute power over, her charge—whether he be a helpless infant or a sick husband. She reveals her active agency within a marriage that subjugates her by declaring: "I made [him] lord of me and all I had" (5.1.137). She also has good reason to be angry. If husband and wife are "one flesh," then infidelity in one partner spreads "contagion" to the other—literally through sexually transmitted diseases, and socially through the damage done to family reputation.9 Psychologically, if a husband or wife experiences the other intrapsychically as an "undividable, incorporate" selfobject (2.2.122), then this merger is ruptured by one partner's attention elsewhere. Antipholus E's mistress "enjoys a partnership of the mind which should

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8 For a discussion of the role of meals in the play, see Candido 217-41.

9 For an anthropological perspective on adultery as "pollution," see Douglas 129-39.
belong to his wife" (Dusinberre 112), and Adriana knows it.

In spite of Adriana's suffering, the persistent double-standard of sexual morality appears to have discouraged critics from taking *The Comedy of Errors* seriously as a play about infidelity. Barton acknowledges only that Antipholus E is "careless of his wife's feelings" (Introduction 81), and Barber and Wheeler admit that when Antipholus E "decides to go elsewhere to dine . . . [h]is eye has strayed, to be sure" (*Whole* 70-71). "Straying" and "dining" seem especially euphemistic terms for what Adriana calls "ruffian lust" and "the poison of [the] flesh" (2.2.133, 143). Indeed, to say the play concludes without any "explicit reconciliation between husband and wife" is something of an understatement (Leggatt, *Shakespeare's* 9). The issue of adultery is left unresolved; instances of adultery are left unatoned for; future abstention from adultery is not guaranteed.

Furthermore, it is left unclear whether Luciana accepts Antipholus S's apparent proposal of marriage. "What I told you then," she says, "I hope I shall have leisure to make good" (5.1.374-75). Should she accept, what guarantee does Antipholus S have that she wouldn't "make good" the sexual threats that she "told [him] then"? Infidelity remains an ongoing concern in Ephesus. According to Barbara Freedman, arguing from a post-structuralist position reminiscent of the Renaissance culture of suspicion, all aspects of human interaction are mutable:

Our need to unify texts and selves is doomed to err, to travel, to wander, and to fail. Since experience in time creates further splits and fissures in the newly integrated self, how can we believe that Egeon, or the author, or the play, is ever whole? (101)

It is precisely this instability, this impossibility of cementing human relationships, which
fuels cuckoldry anxiety. Characters' attempts to ensure that their identities remain "a composite of internalized relationships with others which is fixed and irreversible" (102) are related to husbands' desire for absolute certainty about their wives' fidelity.

I have attempted to show that The Comedy of Errors transcends mere shallow farce and does not rely solely on situation and stereotype for its dramatic power. The play's psychological insights are consistently down-played by critics who seem to obey Luciana's directive, "Self-harming jealousy! fie, beat it hence" (2.1.102)—dismissing female jealousy as mere possessiveness, male jealousy as merely irrational, and Antipholus E's adultery as a mere peccadillo. I believe that the play demonstrates how characters establish a firm identity by merging with others. Both Antipholi identify themselves by their respective Dromios, and Egeon is finally rescued from prison when his "better half" Emilia reclaims him as her husband. By going behind the scenes of the Amphitruo situation of 3.1., and exploring the ways in which couples benefitted from each other's company and suffered from each other's absences, Shakespeare uncovers the origins of cuckoldry anxiety in fears that psychically constitutive or reparative mergers will be ruptured. In the next chapter, I will examine Shakespeare's most vivid comic rupture, the inconclusive ending of the courtship comedy, Love's Labour's Lost.
Chapter Six

"No, I'll not be your half": The Flying Squadron and Love's Labour's Lost

Love's Labour's Lost poses the question, "What happens when the fear of young men comes true, and lovers prove inconstant?" The answer is not very encouraging. The play depicts the "little academe" created by the King of Navarre and three courtiers, Berowne, Dumain, and Longaville (1.1.13). They enter into its seclusion in order to attain the sort of intellectual finishing sought by Proteus and Valentine in courtly Milan. However, when Navarre is unexpectedly visited by the Princess of France and her train, the men are forced to quit their abstract intellectual retreat and negotiate, both diplomatically and romantically, with real live women. As their romantic overtures are inexplicably rebuffed by the French ladies, the men acquire suspicions analogous to Antipholus S's initiation in Ephesus. Unresponsive lovers may prove unfaithful wives. When Longaville asks Katharine, "Will you give horns, chaste lady?" her response is not very reassuring: "die a calf, before your horns do grow" (5.2.252-53). The transition from youthful infatuation to adult commitment is thus shown to involve risking sexual betrayal. I will begin this chapter by examining the anxieties of the main plot courtiers; then I will suggest reasons why the idealized ladies seem so unresponsive; then I will demonstrate how the men compensate for feelings of inadequacy by scapegoating Armado; and finally I will discuss the play's closing song "When daisies pied" which adds a cynical touch to an already unhappy ending and furnishes the title of my

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1 To see a lady "giving horns," look in the upper window depicted in Wither 27.
thesis: "O word of fear."

The play opens with a discussion of an edict banning women from the court, and a promise that those who live and study with the King for three years will be memorialized with "fame" (1.1.1-23). The impractical nature of the King's statutes is revealed when we learn that the prohibition of sexual relations applies to those outside the academy as well as to those within. The assumption that all subjects should reflect his own abstinence suggests the degree to which the King suffers from a narcissistic disorder. Costard is charged with engaging in a sexual tryst with Jaquenetta in a remote corner of the King's "curious-knotted garden" (1.1.242). According to Armado, Costard was taken with "a child of our grandmother Eve, a female" (1.1.257)—a fanciful image suggesting that Jaquenetta typifies women descended from this "fearful" Biblical prototype of oath-breaking (Fraser 164). Yet in their much-touted abstinence, the goal of the young scholars is less devotional than self-promotional (Garber 132; cf. Asp 2-4). As Ursula Hehl points out, the King's promise of fame represents "grandiose fantasies" characteristic of narcissistic imbalance (55). They withdraw into an academic cocoon to recover "the child's experience of omnipotent control over its environment," an environment populated by selfobjects, not independent others (57). In an attempt to secure absolute control, for example, the King surrounds himself with yes-men who are "little more than mere extensions of his grandiose self" (58). This backfires too, as trouble appears in the form of Berowne's brief rebellion, Costard's contravention of the chastity law, and the arrival of the French ladies who lay "siege" to the academy (Montrose 21-23).

Berowne's reluctance to join the little academy recalls Jaques's "whining school-boy"
who creeps "like snail/ Unwillingly to school" (AYL 2.7.145-47). School was unpopular with its Renaissance charges because of its long hours, regimented routines and harsh discipline—but separation from cherished caregivers also played a part. For the men who enter Navarre's retreat, the three-year commitment requires analogous reshufflings of the self: they must endure a spartan regimen, live in relative isolation, and make new personal acquaintances such as outlandish Armado and unreliable Costard. In the men's radically transformative state, they demonstrate a heightened need for reassurance in the form of empathic mirroring. The little mirroring they receive from one another is contingent upon conformity to the group and adherence to their oaths. Any of them who converses with ladies, it is decided, will incur "such public shame as the rest of the court can possibly devise" (1.1.129-31). Given the academy's competitive homosocial atmosphere, empathic responses are not forthcoming from male peers. Not surprisingly, Berowne balks at the proposed segregation because it makes female responses unavailable too: "O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep./ Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep" (1.1.47-48, emphasis added).

Peter B. Erickson argues that the men join the academy out of a fear of female power; they prefer to idealize women in the abstract realm of poetry rather than deal with their "disruptive capacity" in real life ("Failure" 65-66). Yet they initially join to hone rhetorical skills used to woo women "in real life."

The Princess's train provides details about the academicians that highlight their current transformations. Longaville was "[w]ell fitted in arts, glorious in arms"; Dumain was "a well-accomplished youth" of "great worthiness"; and Berowne was "a merrier man" (2.1.43-76). Yet these soldiers, scholars and wits have lately become child-like in their
"extraordinary exhibition of masculine insecurity and helplessness" (Erickson, "Failure" 65). By rebuking Berowne for complaining "like an envious sneaping frost/ That bites the first-born infants of the spring" (1.1.100-01), the King implicates himself as one of these infants. Berowne and the others need reliable selfobject mirroring to help them re-assemble their radically unsettled identities. Kohut explains that insecurity displayed during transitional phases causes an increasing dependence on others and a lack of cohesiveness in one's self (Elson 12). The tendency towards "identity diffusion" in modern adolescents resembles the emotional "scattering" experienced by Renaissance Petrarchan lovers (Breitenberg, "Anatomy" 435). When Shakespeare's courtiers fall in love, the resulting emotional turmoil radically alters and disorganizes their selves along with their academy. Just as Armado finds he cannot be a soldier and a lover (1.2.167-75), so the young men cannot be hermetic devotees and lovers. They must break their oaths and interact with female outsiders, though secretly and from a safe distance.

Love's Labour's Lost is frequently described as Shakespeare's most playful, if somewhat verbose, courtship comedy. This sentiment likely stems from the poetic excesses of the play's male lovers, who speak and write poems and letters using Petrarchan conventions. Like Jaques's lover, the King and his courtiers each sigh "like furnace, with a woeful ballad/ Made to his mistress' eyebrow" (AYL 2.7.148-49). By worshipping the ladies in the abstract world of poetry, the men employ--from a safe distance--a kind of "divide-and-conquer" strategy: if they anatomize woman, she becomes less threatening, more comprehensible. Through their inventories of the female body, they seek to project their own "identity diffusion" onto others (Vickers, "Diana" 273-75). Instead, however, the men only
advertise their "identity diffusion" through their outlandish behaviour. Louis Adrian Montrose observes that the academicians are "obsessed with performances, with playing out roles before audiences" (67), and Leggatt also highlights the narcissistic quality of their "preening" (Shakespeare's 73). Boyet describes one such performance put on by Navarre before the Princess:

His heart, like an agate, with your print impress'd,
Proud with his form, in his eye pride express'd:
His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see,
Did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be;
All senses to that sense did make their repair,
To feel only looking on fairest of fair:
Methought all his senses were lock'd in his eye,
As jewels in crystal for some prince to buy;
Who, tend'ring their own worth from where they were glass'd,
Did point you to buy them, along as you passed . . . .

(LLL 2.1.235-44)

The King wishes her to admire or "buy" him (i.e., praise him, a mirroring selfobject function) and to "impress" him (i.e., provide him with a model of behaviour, an idealized selfobject function). His synaesthetic confusion suggests a disordered self in need of the structural cohesion brought about through selfobject responses. The emphasis on visual responses harkens back to formational levels of interaction: "the child's bodily display is responded to by the gleam in the mother's eye" and her response leads to "a basic equilibrium . . . [and] a cohesive body self" (Kohut, Analysis 117). Boyet's repetition of "eye" creates an aural pun on "I," emphasizing the self-centeredness of the King's display (Montrose 112-13).

In their various poems and speeches, the courtiers acknowledge the female capacity to perform or withhold responses that I believe function like selfobject mergers. The King compares the Princess's "eye-beams" to the life-giving sun (4.3.24-27); Longaville's
"goddess" Maria "on [his] earth do[th] shine" (4.3.62-66); and according to Berowne's poem, the ladies "nourish all the world" (4.3.349). The men's very existence seems contingent upon female responses: "by [them] we men are men./ Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves" (4.3.356-57). Hehl points out that this idealizing language has a psychological basis; for example, Berowne's identity is reaffirmed by Rosaline in the same way that a child "first recognizes its wholeness, the essence of its existence" in the responses of primary caregivers (60). Beneath the Petrarchan flourishes that disempower men while exalting women lies the recognition that men are inadequate and vulnerable and that women can set things right (Breitenberg, "Anatomy" 434-36).

The ladies, uniquely, seem to have the capacity to shore up men's self-esteem with "bedecking ornaments of praise" (2.1.79). However, right from their arrival the ladies bestow such ornaments on themselves only, withholding praise from the men. Boyet calls the academicians "[t]apers . . . with your sweet breaths puff'd out" (5.2.267), and there is never any doubt about who is superior at verbal negotiations: "While the veneer of male authority is brittle and precarious . . . female power is virtually absolute" (Erickson, "Failure" 65). Rather than allow the men to distinguish themselves, the ladies create internal confusion by ignoring their narcissistic displays. The ladies swap love-tokens, causing the men to humiliate themselves by wooing the wrong ladies and appearing inconstant; the ladies scoff at the men's secretly composed love poems; and the ladies refuse to dance with the Muscovites in a snub that has been called tantamount to "an international scandal" (Leggatt, *Shakespeare's* 69). During her exchange with Longaville, Katharine quips, "No, I'll not be your half," warning him that she is not prepared to marry him and become his "better-half" (5.2.249; David 141
note)—partly because he is wooing the wrong masked lady (Longaville is in love with Maria), but mostly because neither lady intends to wed her suitor. Katharine's line encapsulates the ladies' refusal to perform mirroring self-object functions for the men, to become even temporarily "half" their self-structures. Faced with discouraging responses from the outset, the men's schemes escalate in desperation—from poems, to clumsy masques, to outlandish pageants. As their frustration increases, so does their jealousy. As Berowne explains:

A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,
When the suspicious head of theft is stopp'd:
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
Than are the tender horns of cockled snails . . . .

(4.3.330-34)

No matter that none of them has secured a promise of marriage from his lady or has a rival for her love; Berowne's confession of jealousy and pun on "cockled"/"cuckold" (Ellis 122) suggest an underlying anxiety concerning sexual betrayal.

The independent volition of these women, especially when they are unresponsive to the men's desires for flattery, is met with resentment and characterized as promiscuity. In one scene, Berowne's banter with Rosaline—he wishes her "many lovers"—belies his fear that she might do just that. Her answer, "Amen, so you be none," seems to confirm this fear (2.1.125-26). In a soliloquy, Berowne expresses resentment toward the changes love has wrought in

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2 The ladies' unresponsiveness is motivated by several factors: first, revenge for being denied admittance to the court; second, sheer playful mischief; and third, a crucial misunderstanding. The Princess thinks that the men are wooing "but in mockery merriment" and she encourages her ladies to mock them in return (5.2.138-40). By outwitting the men, the ladies demonstrate expertise at the game of love, but fail to perceive their opponents' real motives for playing (Breitenberg, "Anatomy" 433).

3 For more details concerning snails and cuckolds, see my Conclusion below.
him. Once a nobleman, now he has become "corporal" to that "[d]read prince of plackets,"
Cupid--placket being equivalent to the modern slang expression for women, "skirts"

(3.1.172-83). Berowne also characterizes women as essentially unreliable:

What! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
A woman that is like a German clock,
Still a-repairing, ever out of frame,
And never going aright, being a watch,
But being watch'd that it may still go right!

(3.1.184-88)

His suspicion of woman's constancy is such that he feels he must "watch" Rosaline constantly
because she is "one that will do the deed/ Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard"

(3.1.193-95).

In a kind of vicious circle, the unrequited lovers in Love's Labour's Lost react by
falling back on one socially sanctioned compensatory strategy, misogyny--the same cultural
factor that occasions their anxiety in the first place. For example, Berowne's complaints that
Rosaline is as unreliable as a German clock and that her eyes attract men like "pitch that
defiles" (4.3.3), anticipate warnings found in Joseph Swetnam's popular anti-feminist

pamphlet, The Arraignement of Lewde, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women:

For women have a thousand ways to entice thee and ten thousand ways
to deceive thee . . . . They lay out the folds of their hair to entangle
men into their love; betwixt their breasts is the vale of destruction; and
in their beds there is hell, sorrow, and repentance . . . . They are
ungrateful, perjured, full of fraud, flouting and deceit, unconstant,
waspish, toyish, light, sullen, proud, discourteous, and cruel. (201, note
omitted)

Henderson and McManus argue that such stereotypes "are more accurately seen as a

reflection of the fears and frustrations of Renaissance Englishmen than as a description of the
Englishwomen of the time" (62). Yet from the perspective of Shakespeare's courtiers, the French ladies actually come to resemble such a portrait.

As we have seen so far, the play is structured around a series of events initiated by men to elicit praise, and foiled by women who feel no compulsion to play along. Although the sudden arrival of news that the King of France has died is usually cited as the cause of the ladies' hasty rupture of the courtship festivities, I believe that there is considerable evidence that, from the beginning, they have no intentions of staying longer than their diplomatic "embassy" to negotiate the return of Aquitaine requires (1.1.133). The ladies' itinerary is as follows. They arrive in Navarre early one morning (possibly a Thursday). The Princess is not initially welcome by the men but "must lie here on mere necessity" (1.1.147); nor does she wish to stay, as she sends Boyet to inform the King that her "serious business [craves] quick dispatch" (2.1.31). Terse negotiations between her and the King break down and Boyet must send for documents that will resolve the impasse (2.1.90-110, 128-78). The Princess's train is compelled to spend the night camped out in the King's garden. The next morning (possibly a Friday), the Princess is relieved to be leaving: "Well, lords, to-day we shall have our despatch; On Saturday we will return to France" (4.1.5-6). They pass the morning hunting while the men recite poems composed in their honour, and plan an entertainment for them "in the afternoon" as they rest in their tents (4.3.369-76). Even receiving love tokens from the men does not dissuade the ladies from their anticipated departure; the Princess begins the final scene saying, "Sweet hearts, we shall be rich ere we depart" (5.2.1). Indeed,

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4 Woodbridge describes Swetnam's popular book as "dismally stale" and largely "plagiarized" (Women 81)—in other words, distressingly typical of antifeminist literature of the period.
with the arrival of the documents they discretely regain the Princess's 100,000 crown dowry of Aquitaine. Thus the play creates a startling contrast: the women carry out a controversial political embassy, while the men devise an entertainment with locals who make the "rude mechanicals" of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* seem like accomplished Thespians.

The Princess and her train, although superior to the men in wit and experience, do not display the social graces that have often been attributed to them. To Dusinberre, they represent "the high-bred, well-educated women of the Humanist ideal" (160). However, in a play full of exquisite, if overwrought, love poetry, the ladies' only consciously poetic contribution is this ditty:

ROSALINE. Thou canst not hit it, hit it, hit it, 
   Thou canst not hit it my good man. 

BOYET. An I cannot, cannot, cannot, 
   An I cannot, another can. 

(LLL 4.1.126-29)

In direct contrast to the men's idealizing rhetoric, these "goddesses" tease one another about sex, or are teased by their pandering escort, the "old love-monger" Boyet (2.1.253). Rosaline taunts Katharine about her promiscuity, "you do it still i' the dark," to which the latter responds, "So do not you, for you are a light wench" (5.2.24-25). They repeatedly engage in what Herbert A. Ellis refers to as "lusty punning," highlighting the wide gap that separates their sexual sophistication from the awkward naiveté of the men. While the men write precious poems, the ladies "kill horns," quibble about cuckoldry, and argue over which of them is most "light" (i.e., promiscuous [Partridge 137]).

While in the comedies examined in the two previous chapters male fears of female
infidelity are shown to be unfounded, in Love's Labour's Lost the men are not afraid enough—not because antifeminist stereotypes are true, but because the Princess and her train present a unique case. They are based on the so-called Flying Squadron of ladies who attended the French Queen Catherine de Médici in the mid-sixteenth century, women who had acquired international notoriety by Shakespeare's day for their beauty and wit, their shrewdness in politics, and for their sexual precocity (David xxix, Richmond 200-03). These ladies made two trips to Navarre in the 1570s and 1580s; French historian Jean Héritier describes the first embassy: "In order to take the offensive against Navarre and Condé, Madame Catherine now again resorted to her Flying Squadron, for they surrendered more easily to pretty women than to hard-faced negotiators" (355). Shakespeare's idealistic academicians do not resemble the decadent society of real-life Navarre, but what about the Princess and her train? Some of the more famous escapades of the Flying Squadron included seducing political opponents using skills learned from "professional prostitutes," wearing provocative dresses and dancing topless in lewd masques, and capturing a "strategic fortress" by "fostering a slavish passion in its senile commander" (Richmond 200-01). Shakespeare's ladies succeed in a similar coup, breaching the "fortress" created by Navarre and recapturing the disputed province of Aquitaine through shrewdly applied flirtation. The Princess exclaims, "Excuse me so, coming too short of thanks/ For my great suit so easily obtain'd" (5.2.730-31). It was like taking candy from a baby.

If these sexually precocious ladies are based on the historical Flying Squadron of

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5 For further details regarding the play's French topicalities, see Lamb 49-59; Richmond 193-216; and Tricomi 25-33.
Catherine de Medici's French court, then many of their playful lines become more ominous. Compared with Shakespeare's "razor"-tongued ladies, the King and his fellows are ingenues, lambs to the slaughter; as Katharine mockingly puts it, "Bleat softly then; the butcher hears you cry" (5.2.255-57). Whether she is modelled after the notoriously promiscuous Marguerite de Valois or the renowned Machiavellian Catherine de Medici (or both), when Shakespeare's Princess of France swears by her "maiden honour, yet as pure/ As the unsullied lily" (5.2.351-52) her lines are dripping with irony. She cynically encourages the men's idealization of herself and her train, all the while winking to audience members "in-the-know" about Continental court gossip. That over the years most critics have echoed Berowne's disappointment that "[o]ur wooing doth not end like an old play;/ Jack hath not Jill" (5.2.866-67) suggests that they too do not perceive the "light condition in a beauty dark" (5.2.20). The ladies have no intentions of staying or marrying, but simply of acquiring Aquitaine before moving on to their next "mission," leaving considerable psychological devastation in their wake (Montrose 87-88). They fulfill Boyet's recommended use of sexuality to win at diplomacy: "I'll give you Aquitaine, and all that is his,/ An you give him for my sake but one loving kiss" (2.1.247-48).

In light of this historical subtext, the much-touted love-tests at the play's end seem more insulting than educational. Twelve months in a "forlorn and naked hermitage" for the King and a similar sojourn entertaining the "speechless sick" for Berowne (5.2.787, 843) merely fulfill the ladies' earlier plan to "mock" and "torture" the men "ere [they] go" (5.2.58-60). Indeed, the word "torture" is "a psychologically convincing description of the women's approach . . . . they are far from being benign, passive educators" (Erickson, "Failure" 75).
Katharine demands that Dumain grow a beard and then invites him to "Come when the king doth to my lady come" (5.2.820-21). Since she does not expect the King to fulfill his task, Katharine is saying "adieu." Maria is also disingenuous, promising that one year later she will "change [her] black gown for a faithful friend" without specifying who that friend will be (5.2.826).6

To many, the refusals on the part of the women are a positive development: they are asserting their intelligence, their independent volition, their greater maturity. Dusinberre praises their efforts to shatter male "idolatry" of women (159-172) and Parten extols their "feminine triumphs" in witty combat ("Cuckoldry" 253). As Montrose observes, the French ladies "have received uncritical enthusiasm from nearly all who have written on the play"; critics, like the courtiers, are dazzled by their "charming power politics" (85, 88). In fact, the ladies' ridicule of the men is celebrated by Breitenberg as a kind of "counter-patriarchal" insurgency ("Anatomy" 436). However, the ladies merely exacerbate those patriarchal attributes that critics such as Breitenberg argue they seek to eradicate. According to Parten, the fact that so many witty Shakespearean heroines end up submitting to husbands is designed to

reassure and placate that segment of an audience that could be expected to make the customary associations of feminine wit with wantonness, of autonomy with unchastity, of fluency with shrewishness, of resourcefulness with insubordination, and of a

6 Pace Anne Barton, who ignores the events leading up to the final scene, and cites these tests as a "definable handfast of the conditional de futuro kind"; if the men fulfill their part, then the women will return and marry them ("Wrying" 16). Yet Katharine's line "[t]hen, if I have much love, I'll give you some" hardly seems like a legally binding declaration of monogamous devotion (5.2.822). For details about Renaissance betrothal customs, see Ranald, "Marriage" 68-81; Stone, Road 51-95.
woman's superiority to one partner with the likelihood of her going in search of another. ("Cuckoldry" 167)

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the ladies' refusal to marry has the opposite effect: their wanton wit and unwillingness to submit to suitors confirm men's worst fears. Rather than alleviate fears of female infidelity, these French ladies actually reduce the men to the level of anxious children. As Berowne complains, "love is full of unbefitting strains:/ All wanton as a child, skipping and vain" (5.2.752-53), though such behaviour could have been tempered by more affirming responses: "Those heavenly eyes, that look into these faults,/ Suggested us to make [them]" (5.2.761-62). The ladies tease men for their immaturity (e.g., Maria teases Longaville, "few taller are so young" [5.2.828]) yet they decline to help the men move beyond such undesirable behaviour. The ladies are like doctors who refuse to treat patients because they are "sick" (2.1.183).

After failing to impress the ladies using letters, poems, jewels, and a masque, the men mount a pageant to divert attention away from their embarrassing failures: "'tis some policy/ To have one show worse than the king's and his company" (5.2.508-09). This display is also disrupted by mockery, although this time the source of derision is the men themselves who bait Armado for wanting to become a cuckold. As William C. Carroll points out, a pattern of ostentatious display followed by scornful rejection links the various plot levels of the play (*Great* 85-94). I would add that the experiences of the main-plot courtiers and those of the comic butt Armado are linked right from the start.

Armado is not often included in discussions of the main-plot lovers likely because of his role as braggart and buffoon (*Carroll, Great* 47-51); he is more clown than courtier.
However, like Berowne, Longaville and Dumain, Armado "promise[s] to study three years" with the King (1.2.34). Like the lovers, Armado is smitten with love for a woman who is inaccessible, though for different reasons (Jaquenetta is from a different social class and has been indicted for having sex with another man). Like the lovers, Armado idealizes his mistress in a manner seemingly at odds with her behaviour in the play. Like the lovers, Armado woos in secret and is transformed by his infatuation: "Adieu, valor! rust, rapier! be still, drum! for your manager is in love" (1.2.171-72). His sudden reshuffling of the self from soldier to lover entails a change in setting (from battlefield to court academy), activity (sonneteering instead of fighting) and status (from admired soldier to scorned suitor). These adjustments render him dependent upon the assistance and assurance of others such as Moth: "I am in love . . . . Comfort me boy" (1.2.53-60). Hehl argues that Armado uses Moth "as a kind of self-object in whom he openly confides and from whom he expects the unceasing satisfaction of his needs" (59). However, Moth is no more responsive to his master's needs than the French ladies are to those of the other academicians; Moth's merciless teasing provides a "caricature" of the thorny relations depicted in the main plot (Hehl 59).

In the Pageant of the Nine Worthies, all the participants are mocked for their inept performances, but Armado is singled out for particular scorn. Dumain begins by observing that Armado's "Hector" has skinny legs—"More calf, certain"—a pun that could be accompanied by the two-fingered gesture for horns (5.2.633; cf. 5.2.247-53). A subsequent quibble that Hector's gift of cloves is "cloven" also suggests forked objects, such as horns (5.2.642). Dumain follows this with a familiar line of attack on cuckolds, impugning Armado's virility:
ARMADO. I do adore thy sweet grace's slipper.

BOYET. Loves her by the foot.

DUMAIN. He may not by the yard.

(5.2.659-61)

As "yard" was Renaissance slang for penis, Armado stands accused of sexual impotence (Partridge 222-23), whereas his more potent rival is praised as "[g]reater than great, great, great, great Pompey! Pompey the Huge!" (5.2.677-78; Ellis 179-80). The last straw for Armado, who has withstood many jibes magnanimously, comes when Costard announces that Jaquenetta is with child: "Faith, unless you play the honest Troyan, the poor wench is cast away: she's quick; the child brags in her belly already: 'tis yours" (5.2.667-69). Costard's statement notwithstanding, there is evidence to suggest that Costard may be the biological father. His confessed indiscretion with Jaquenetta in the garden, combined with the absence of evidence that Armado spent time alone with her two months ago, suggests that Costard is the father (Granville-Barker 446-47). Armado the "honest Troyan" is as faithful as "true Troilus," and for his pains he is as publicly humiliated as cuckolded Menelaus. Like a sparrow hatching a cuckoo's egg, Armado will wed Jaquenetta and raise Costard's child as his own.7

Interrupting this humiliation, Marcade appears with news that the French king is dead. To most critics, the effect is "catastroph[ic]," leaving the comedy "fractured" and "radically unfinished" (Nevo 85-87). Richard David calls Marcade's entrance "a superb coup de théâtre . . . In a flash we are back to earth" (xvi). Yet the characters never left earth: their mundane

7 For further evidence that Costard is the biological father and Armado the "pre-marital cuckold" that will raise Jaquenetta's child, see Kehler 45-54, 52.
concerns about female chastity, male reputation, and the paternity of parish bastards reflect the real-life concerns of Shakespeare's audiences. Followers of the "catastrophe" school overlook textual evidence that the ladies were about to leave anyway and never intended to marry their suitors, and the play's historical subtext involving a notoriously promiscuous train of political operators. Furthermore, Marcele's entry comes not a moment too soon for poor Armado who functions as scapegoat for the main-plot lovers' anxieties; Armado experiences in public their private nightmares.

The ladies' departure in spite of the men's protestations seems to confirm their suspicion that women are unreliable--a suspicion at the heart of the play's closing musical dialogue. Critical opinion about the songs varies, but many propose antitheses between Spring and Winter, youth and age, the joy of courtship and the doldrums of married life (e.g., Barber, Shakespeare's 113-18). Spring's pastoral song reflects the intellectual view of love initially held by the play's male suitors; they are "shepherds," the women are "maidens," and all the meadows are painted "with delight" (5.2.886-903). Winter's reply presents a more down-to-earth version of married life, entailing chores, hardships and a less idealized cast of Tom, Dick, and Marian whose "nose looks red and raw" (5.2.904-21). The coldness of winter suggests age and death, yet many perceive a ray of hope: "the discomforts of winter are offset by the merry sound of the owl" (Foakes, "Owl" 129; cf. Leggatt, Shakespeare's 87). In each case, the dominant image of the season is countered by the song of a bird: spring's joy by the cuckoo's "word of fear," winter's hardships by the owl's "merry note." The result is harmonious balance.

A closer examination of Winter's song, however, reveals a bawdy subtext in which
cuckoldry is also a concern. As David Willbern points out, "Shakespeare's overdetermined language typically includes bawdy meanings" (245), and the song's seemingly innocent refrain "Tu-whit/ Tu-who, a merry note./ While greasy Joan doth keel the pot" is no exception. In Shakespeare's time, the owl symbolized bawdy night-time activities as its cry suggested puns on "to it" ("it" = sexual intercourse) and "to-who" (i.e., who will be your next sexual partner?) (Partridge 128). The following words were also common slang expressions: "note" = noting (sexual intercourse) and no-thing = female genitals (Willbern passim); "greasy" = bawdy as in Maria's complaint, "Come, come, you talk greasily; your lips grow foul" (4.1.138; Colman 196); and "pot" = vagina--which, when it boils over, doubles as figures of female sexual urgency and male premature ejaculation (G. Williams 2:1078-79).

Joan has already appeared in Berowne's complaint that "[s]ome men must love my lady, and some Joan" (3.1.200) which echoes the crude saying, "Joan is as good as my lady in the dark" (Hibbard 142 note; cf. Swetnam 197). Thus in text and subtext "greasy Joan" represents a conflation of men's desire for marital stability and fear that insatiable wives will offer themselves to more potent sexual rivals. As Shakespeare's Flying Squadron already pointed out in their musical contribution to the play, if one man cannot "hit it," "another can." The owl mocks married men too.

*Love's Labour's Lost* does not feature prominently in existing studies of Shakespearean cuckoldry, perhaps because its references to cuckoos and horned livestock seem confined to witty banter without thematic significance, or are placed in the mouths of
minor characters. Yet however safely these jokes are tucked away (or explained away), cuckoldry anxiety permeates every level of a play. In one exchange, Moth quibbles with Holofernes about the transfer of knowledge from pupil to teacher:

ARMADO. . . . it rejoiceth my intellect; true wit!

MOTH. Offered by a child to an old man; which is wit-old.

HOLOFERNES. What is the figure? what is the figure?

MOTH. Horns.

HOLOFERNES. Thou disputes like an infant: go, whip thy gig.

MOTH. Lend me your horn to make one, and I will whip about your infamy manu cita. A gig of a cuckold's horn.

(5.1.56-63)

The underlying pun on "wit-old"/"wittol" (i.e., complacent cuckold [Partridge 220]) recalls the popular comic motif in which a lusty youth cuckolds an elderly husband (Norrell 52-92). Moth's deflation of pedantry by turning a symbol of education (the horn-book) into a brand of infamy (the cuckold's horn) relates to the main plot in which pretentious courtiers seek self-improvement in an academy but end up looking foolish and being jilted by the women who distract them from their study. Moth's deflation also suggests a cultural atmosphere suffused with cuckold lore; even old bachelors are subjected to baseless allegations by school-boys inculcated with an awareness of cuckoldry (a point to which I will return in my Conclusion).

In the next group of chapters, I will examine the cuckoldry anxiety of newly-wed or nearly-wed soldiers who respond to the challenge, "you will lose your reputation," with narcissistic

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8 To Kahn, "[c]uckoldry is not central to the plot of any early or middle comedy, but insofar as these plays deal with courtship and marriage, it lurks in the wings, a potential threat to and mockery of marriage" (Man's 123).
rage that is not as easily contained as the anger of the braggart Spaniard who "will not combat in [his] shirt" (5.2.694-96).
Part III:

The Soldier
Chapter Seven

"Bearded like the pard":

Soldiers and Lovers in Much Ado About Nothing

This chapter examines the first in a cluster of thematically related plays in which Shakespeare portrays the way soldiers behave in peace-time and in love. When in his Seven Ages of Man speech Jaques shifts from the lover to the soldier, the passage is marked with an innocuous temporal indicator—"Then, a soldier . . ." (AYL 2.7.149)—that makes the transition seem deceptively simple and chronologically inevitable. The next plays illustrate the difficulties inherent in "then," the grey area between seemingly incompatible modes of existence. Transitions occur in either direction—soldier to lover, lover to soldier—but no character excels in both roles simultaneously. A soldier in love appears to have been an oxymoron to Renaissance audiences, as the phrase "military intelligence" is to modern ones; a soldier in love was more likely to be scorned for social awkwardness than admired for sexual prowess (witness the baiting of Armado in Love's Labour's Lost).¹ In Much Ado About Nothing, Shakespeare demonstrates how men with a particular cluster of psychological foibles (insecurity brought about by changing social roles, and dependence on mirroring and

¹ The most vocal opponent of blending roles is Parolles, who sends his young master Bertram "to th' wars," instead of to marry Helena, by invoking a common prejudice: "He wears his honour in a box unseen/ That hugs his kicky-wicky here at home./ Spending his manly marrow in her arms" (AWW 2.3.271-77). Thus soldierly companions "champion the male camaraderie of war over the domestic turbulence of married life" (Friedman 233). I omit All's Well that Ends Well from this study because anxiety about female betrayal does not concern Bertram as much as the fact that Helena is beneath him socially: "A poor physician's daughter my wife! Disdain/ Rather corrupt me ever!" (2.3.115-16).
idealized figures) are acted on by an endemic cluster of social forces (misogyny, hierarchical behaviour and the honour code) to produce explosive results. In Claudio, Shakespeare takes us step-by-step through the inception and progression of cuckoldry anxiety. Critical dissatisfaction with the play's "magical" resolution attests to the difficulty of alleviating this problem in drama and in society.

When Don Pedro and Benedick discover that their fellow soldier, Claudio, has fallen in love, they set out to initiate him into the civilian world of courtship and marriage. In the process, they transform a courageous soldier into a cautious suitor into a jealous spouse and finally into a social pariah. Although the play's sub-plot involving Benedick's courtship of Beatrice has overshadowed its main plot in criticism and performance (Neely, Broken 38), Benedick's concerns about female constancy have an enormous influence on the characterization of Claudio and the progress of his relationship with Hero. Under the tutelage of Benedick, Claudio evolves from being a social innocent who knows very little about women to a cynical husband who thinks he knows it all.

Janice Hays describes Claudio as a man "who aspire[s] for glory and honor as compensation for a deep lack of self-esteem" (81), citing his dependence on a father figure, Don Pedro, as evidence of a fragile identity (83-85). In what may be the earliest application of self psychology to Shakespearean drama, Hays employs Kohut's concept of "narcissistic rage" to describe Claudio's behaviour in the church repudiation scene (Hays 87 and note; more on this below). I propose to examine how adult concerns—marriage, war, slander, cuckoldry—rekindle a childish form of separation anxiety in Claudio. According to Hays, Claudio leaves "the traditionally male sphere of war, honors, and triumph" to enter the more
private, feminine world of Messina (79). However, Hays exaggerates differences between Messina and the front; love and war should be separate, but they are not. Although Claudio tries to establish a new identity as lover, Messina never lets him forget he is a soldier (Hartley 610-11). Cuckoldry (which would seem a very domestic concern) is linked to soldierly concerns about honour:

endless Elizabethan jokes about cuckoldry disclose a widespread fear of a betrayal that was perceived as dishonour, and suggest a world in which violence of feeling was endemic. It is no accident that Shakespeare has set his play in wartime . . . . (J. Turner 25)

Fears of betrayal and of losing honour dog soldiers wherever they go. And soldiers, unlike the mooning lovers or impotent merchants who populate other cuckoldry comedies, are potentially very dangerous.

The Claudio/ Hero plot of Much Ado About Nothing presents a familiar story for which, according to one estimate, seventeen different Renaissance versions preceded Shakespeare's: "[a] lover [is] deceived by a rival or enemy into believing his beloved false" (Humphreys 5). Leggatt also stresses the stock nature of much of the main plot: it features a "conventional story" in which characters "engaged in conventional roles" espouse "literary commonplaces" regarding the nature of women (Shakespeare's 151-58). Commonplaces are not to be dismissed, however; they recur because they struck a chord with Renaissance audiences. Claudio's suspicion of women is "typical . . . of the world in which he lives" (Westlund, Shakespeare's 52). That fictional world, Messina, is "anxious and insecure" (R. A. Levin, Love 115), though sexual slander resulting in litigation or violence was a real-life problem in Renaissance England as well (Amussen, Ordered 100-04; Ingram 163-66). Public
insults such as the following likely dazzled audiences with their witty allusions and inflammatory tone:

Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low,  
And some such strange bull leap'd your father's cow,  
And got a calf in that same noble feat,  
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.  

(Ado. 5.4.48-51)

As Susan Dwyer Amussen points out, a man who let such searing insults go unchallenged would incur an indelible stain to his own and to his family's reputation (Ordered 131).

Audiences and readers are introduced to Claudio in a written report and messenger's words of praise: "He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion: he hath indeed better bettered expectation" (1.1.12-15). This high praise is tempered by the image of the lamb pretending to be a lion--Claudio may have over-extended himself. His new status as war-hero is fragile, ephemeral, even slightly unreal. No-one is more aware of this precariousness than Claudio, who instead of swaggering is rather self-conscious upon his return. For example, whereas his friend Benedick boasts of being loved by all the ladies (1.1.114-15), Claudio is much more circumspect in his courtship of Hero: "lest my liking might too sudden seem, I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise" (1.1.294-95).

Claudio's arrival in Messina does not seem to live up to the hype that precedes him: "we expect to see a swashbuckling hero" but instead we are presented with a tongue-tied innocent (Hays 80). He is more comfortable in the company of men, preferring to talk about women with such hangers-on as Benedick than with women themselves. Beatrice quips about Benedick: "O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease . . . . God help the noble
Claudio! If he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere a be cured (1.1.78-82). As a matter of fact, Claudio does "catch the Benedick" in that he internalizes his friend's attitudes about women. For example, Claudio overhears Benedick quibble about Beatrice's legitimacy:

DON PEDRO. . . . I think this is your daughter.

LEONATO. Her mother hath many times told me so.

BENEDICK. Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

LEONATO. Signior Benedick, no, for then were you a child.

(1.1.95-99)

Although many Messinans perpetuate stereotypes about female inconstancy, Benedick in particular cracks such jokes at every opportunity (Leggatt, Shakespeare's 169). Beatrice is only partially correct when she snaps, "I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you" (1.1.107-08). In fact, Claudio listens closely and picks up prejudices from this inexhaustible source: "Benedick's warnings about cuckoldry inadvertently help to lay the foundation for Don John's disruption of Claudio's nuptials" (Friedman 237). Later, when composing a poem for Beatrice, Benedick can find no rhyme for "scorn" but "'horn'--a hard rhyme" (5.2.37), and Claudio subsequently reads this "halting sonnet" (5.4.85-88). Thus even Benedick's intimate correspondence contributes to Claudio's education in misogyny. Beatrice characterizes Benedick as an impressionable youth who "hath every month a new sworn brother" (1.1.66), but it is Claudio who displays this lack of personal autonomy.

Claudio and Benedick treat courtship as a military exercise, using language that
suggests the difficulties they experience in leaving their old identities behind: "in Messina
war and love are interchangeable, because war is the paradigm of love. Love of contention
gives way to love as contention" (Berger, "Against" 310, emphasis in original). Indeed, the
play's first mention of love captures this strange mixture of masculine self-display and
competitive aggression. Beatrice jokes that Benedick "set up his bills here in Messina and
challenged Cupid at the flight; and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for
Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt" (1.1.35-38). Her archery image introduces
important thematic elements, including masculine rivalry, the blurring of courtship and
fighting, and the use of stand-ins (Don Pedro woos for Claudio, Margaret impersonates
Hero). Paul A. Jorgensen attests to many Renaissance soldiers' inability to "abandon their
military carriage and reputation" when they returned to civilian life (Shakespeare's 221).
Benedick approaches courtship as a "merry war" (1.1.56), and Don Pedro approaches the
proxy wooing of Hero as a soldier who will "take her hearing prisoner with the force/ And
strong encounter of [his] amorous tale" (1.1.304-05).

Claudio, on the other hand, approaches love cautiously because of a newfound
mistrust of women fostered by his companions. As with Orsino in Twelfth Night, Claudio is
concerned with Hero's chastity: "Is she not a modest young lady?" (Ado 1.1.153). That he
asks this question in the negative form suggests he may already have doubts (R. A. Levin,
Love 115). Benedick responds with quibbles and abuse: "In faith, hath not the world one
man but he will wear his cap with suspicion?" (1.1.183-84). Thus Claudio learns (or is
reminded) that husbands wear caps to conceal their horns. When Don Pedro attempts to
alleviate Claudio's concerns, Claudio detects a growing conspiracy to dupe him: "You speak
this to fetch me in, my Lord" (1.1.206). Claudio is a quick study, and before long he too is spouting cuckold jokes back at his friend: "thou wouldst be horn-mad" (1.1.249-50). If to be married is to wear a literal "sign" of scorn--such as one alluded to throughout the play that reads, "Here you may see Benedick the married man" (1.1.247-48; cf. 5.1.180-81, 5.4.98)--then Claudio truly has caught the Benedick, a condition exacerbated by subsequent events.

Once alone with Don Pedro, Claudio plans his future marriage to Hero whom he first noticed before leaving for war:

I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,  
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand  
Than to drive liking to the name of love:  
But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts  
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms  
Come thronging soft and delicate desires . . . .  

(1.1.278-83)

Claudio's image of the self as a building with "vacant" rooms to be filled with internalized others suggests the kind of intrapsychic mergers Kohut argues one needs throughout life (How 49-53). Don Pedro functions as an idealized selfobject, a trusted mentor and model for Claudio to imitate.² That Don Pedro cannot permanently "occupy" Claudio's self is suggested by the former's announcement that he will leave for Arragon following the marriage, and that he will take Benedick, not Claudio, along as his companion (3.2.1-9). Claudio is about to

² J. Kerby Neill describes Don Pedro as "almost [Claudio's] alter ego" (105), and outlines numerous similarities between the two. In self psychology, however, alter-ego transferences involve "the sustaining experience of perceiving another as similar to oneself in some essential aspect" (Moore and Fine 178; cf. Kolut, How 194-96). Don Pedro's commitment to bachelorhood, and his superior social status and military rank distinguish him from Claudio. As a superior, Don Pedro can act as an idealized example; as a trusted mentor, he can provide his youthful charge with mirroring praise. But if there is any alter-ego transference in the play, it is with Benedick.
embark on a transitional period of "separation from the homosocial world" (Gillis 52). Now he must seek mirroring and idealizing support in the "thronging" affection and inimitable virtue of his Hero. He later admits to having idealized Hero, in the wedding scene--"[y]ou seem to me as Dian in her orb" (4.1.57)---and at her grave in his homage to the "virgin knight" (5.3.13, emphasis in original):

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'Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
   Gives her fame that never dies:
   So the life that died with shame
   Lives in death with glorious fame.'
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Claudio thus uses military metaphors to describe Hero's perfection---fame, glory and the avoidance of shame being ideals to which soldiers aspire. Although it is Beatrice who wishes herself a man (4.1.302), it is Hero who displays, at least symbolically, desirable "manly" attributes.

Claudio's idealization of men leads him to internalize their suspicion of women, and his idealization of Hero leads to an uncompromising insistence on her purity and perfection. This is a volatile mix. The mirroring of Claudio's battlefield aggression by men heightened his sense of honour; now the maintenance of his gender identity depends on displaying hyper-masculine attitudes: "With no battlefield to serve as a proving ground, misogyny . . . tends to replace valor as the trait that distinguishes masculinity from femininity" (Parten, "Cuckoldry" 204-05). Following Claudio's initial declaration of love, Don Pedro jokingly anticipates a change for the worse in his impressionable charge--"[t]hou wilt be like a lover presently" (1.1.286)---and before long Benedick has become alienated from his "converted" friend:

I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the
fife, and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe . . . . He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now is he turned orthography—his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes.

(2.3.12-21, emphasis added)

When masculinity is judged according to battlefield prowess and an aggressive attitudinal stance vis-à-vis women, to fall in love is to become effeminate—"one wears fine fashions, listens to refined music, composes love poems, and above all, one shaves one's beard.

If the distinguishing mark of Jaques's soldier is that he is "bearded like the pard" (AYL 2.7.150), then we may assume that Don Pedro, Benedick and Claudio all have facial hair at the play's outset. For instance, Beatrice initially refuses Benedick in part because she "could not endure a husband with a beard on his face," although she concedes that "he that hath no beard is less than a man" (Ado 2.1.26-33). Later Claudio mocks Benedick for shaving off his beard—"the barber's man hath been seen with him" (3.2.41-42)—effectively announcing the arrival of a "new" Benedick and recalling a popular comic trope in which a shaved soldier behaves as effeminately as cross-dressed Hercules enslaved by his love for Omphale (Crichton 619). Beatrice's contradictory assertions about beards exemplify mixed messages about what type of comportment best becomes young men in Messina. The play's most outspoken proponent of the patriarchal aggression of the soldier, Beatrice rails at Benedick for refusing to avenge the slandering of Hero: "manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too" (4.1.318-20). Beatrice's stinging remark suggests that unless he fights Claudio, Benedick is no man, and no man for her. Not surprisingly, when Benedick finally agrees to kill Claudio he goads his opponent with an epithet inspired by Beatrice: "Lord Lackbeard" (5.1.189).
The play's cycles of suspicion begin in earnest when Claudio becomes convinced that Don Pedro woos Hero for himself. Claudio overhears Don John remark that Don Pedro "is amorous on Hero" (2.1.145), and soon Benedick is mocking his friend for trusting an eligible bachelor with such a sensitive operation: Claudio must wear a garland (a symbol of forsaken love) "like a lieutenant's scarf... for the Prince hath got your Hero" (2.1.176-79; Humphreys 119 note). Claudio reacts to the affront like a jealous husband:

Let every eye negotiate for itself,  
And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch  
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.  
This is an accident of hourly proof...  
(2.1.166-69)

Soon after, Beatrice observes a change in his hue to orange, "that jealous complexion" (2.1.276-77), and Claudio will echo Beatrice's stinging epithet, "civil as an orange," in the repudiation scene (4.1.31). His suspicion of women confirmed, Claudio exits in a funk, and Benedick quips that he should be whipped for "the flat transgression of a schoolboy, who, being overjoyed with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it" (2.1.207-09). The images of nests and birds suggest that Claudio's nest has been invaded by a marauding cuckoo, Don Pedro. In his response to Benedick's imputation that he has stolen Claudio's bird's nest, Don Pedro sounds more like Etherege's Dorimant than a trustworthy go-between: "I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner" (2.1.216-17). "To sing" was Renaissance slang for having sexual relations (Partridge 183; cf. Tro. 5.2.9-11); in other words, Don Pedro will initiate Hero sexually and then return her to her unwitting "owner." Later Don Pedro proposes marriage to Beatrice (Ado 2.1.302-07), even though her "merry war" with Benedick is common knowledge. Such actions confirm Claudio's fear that
"Friendship is constant in all other things/ Save in the office and affairs of love" (2.1.163-64). Claudio errs in that he lets his guard down and ignores proverbial admonitions to be circumspect, perhaps even a little paranoid, in friendship and in love (see Chapter Five, above).

When Don Pedro restores Hero to Claudio and clears up the misunderstanding, Claudio's honour is restored to its former lustre because, according to the honour code, "by proclaiming it [i.e., an insult] to be unintentional the offender reduces the gravity of the affront" (Pitt-Rivers 26-27). All parties can "save face." Claudio is left speechless with joy, an awkward silence that also stems from one conventional attribute of the stage soldier, an inability to speak the language of love: "a soldier was not likely to be gifted in subtle language" (Jorgensen, Shakespeare's 228, 231). Following this resolution, however, Claudio witnesses Don Pedro's tactless proposal to Beatrice. Once bitten, twice shy: Claudio will more careful in future.

Trouble arises again for Claudio when his soldierly obsession with reputation and honour is inflamed by Don John's slander. Borachio instructs Don John to impugn the honour of both Claudio and his go-between: "tell him that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio . . . to a contaminated stale" (2.2.22-25). The trick succeeds because it impugns the soldiers' honour and "validates the conventional wisdom" about women's proclivity to deception, confirming "what they already suspect" (Berger, "Against" 307). When Don John confronts Claudio with news that "Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero" is disloyal, he completes the slander with this coup de grâce: "If you love her . . . wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind" (3.2.95-96, 103-05).
Everyone, it seems, knows about Hero's escalating promiscuity except Claudio; to wed her now would be to become a complacent cuckold. As Joseph Westlund argues, in Messina a prevalent anxiety concerns being duped, and to be cuckolded "makes the man feel intensely manipulated: by the spouse, by the lover, and by the public at large" (Shakespeare's 43).

To a soldier recently given a taste of winning battles and commanding respect, the passivity imposed by such a deception is intolerable. It is especially so because, in wooing Hero, Claudio does everything "by the book": he makes enquiries about her social status and family inheritance, then courts her with the aid of a go-between, then secures her father's permission, and finally weds her in a public church ceremony. Margaret Loftis Ranald cites these cautious spousal arrangements as evidence of Claudio's "self-centeredness" (Shakespeare's 11-18); he does everything right, therefore he feels entitled to a chaste and loving bride. Encouraged in his courtship of Hero by idealized figures, then admitting her into his self-structure, Claudio reacts to news of her inconstancy as if it were selfobject betrayal. Faced with the prospect of more scorn, he vows to dupe her in revenge: "in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her" (3.2.113-14).

Claudio's tirade during the abortive marriage ceremony encompasses four symptoms of narcissistic rage, as summarized by Meyer S. Gunther:

1) an expectation of absolute control over the object's behavior; (2) an

3 Critics have long debated whether or not Claudio loves Hero. Nadine Page argues that he is overly formal, interested primarily in finance, quick to suspect his bride, and willing to wed a total stranger shortly after her death; in other words, the epitome of "unromantic" love (742). To Carol Cook, his cautious courtship "betray[s] more propriety and sentiment than... passion" (192). J. Kerby Neill counters with evidence that Claudio loves Hero deeply, inquires about finances only after he is smitten, gets sick with jealousy of Don Pedro, and sheds real tears in the repudiation scene (98-101).
expectation of perfection of response from the object; (3) an utter incapacity for empathy with the object . . . ; (4) an incapacity to distinguish the issue or problem from the object as a separate entity. (178)

With respect to (1), Claudio expects complete control over Hero whom he does not respect as an individual but as a "precious gift" that has turned into a "rotten orange" (4.1.27-31); (2) he demands perfection in her responses to him (such as perfect constancy); (3) he is incapable of empathizing with her suffering, and does not allow her to defend herself adequately from his allegations; (4) he is unable to distinguish a problem (social slander) from the object accused (Hero)—her actions do not cause the problem, she herself is the problem. Claudio attempts to purge himself of any vestige of Hero as a selfobject, refusing "to knit [his] soul to an approved wanton" (4.1.43-44). In other words, she must vacate the "rooms" she briefly occupied in his self (1.1.282). Gunther adds that some experience this form of rage in a "chronic" form in which "no degree of restitution, and no apology by the offender can ever make up for the injury" (178-79). Indeed, Claudio vows to nurse a misogynous grudge, not just against Hero, but against all women:

For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.

(4.1.105-08)

Claudio's vow of eternal, angry celibacy is as short-lived as it is disproportionate to the slight he has incurred.

Gunther goes on to argue that narcissistic rage functions as a "compensatory compromise" between three conflicting goals—goals that Shakespeare depicts in the play's
final act and denouement. First, rage "signals helplessness and vulnerability together with a pretended denial of that vulnerability" (179). When the Watch inadvertently uncover the slander perpetrated by Borachio, Conrade and Don John, Claudio denies his responsibility for Hero's apparent death: "yet sinn'd I not/ But in mistaking" (5.1.268-69). In his monstrous narcissism, Claudio convinces himself that he is impervious, invulnerable, above reproach. Second, rage constitutes "a shrill demand that the offending object . . . be erased from its existence" (Gunther 179). Don Pedro's discussion with Claudio in which Hero is euphemistically referred to as "[t]he old man's daughter" (5.1.175) suggests that Claudio is indeed trying to "erase" any trace of her. Third, rage forms an "omnipotent, implicitly magical attempt" to destroy offenders and repair damage to the exposed self (Gunther 179). The play conspires with Claudio's own psychic needs to ensure such a magical solution. His honour is restored and "[a]nother Hero" is given to him as "the lady [he] must seize upon" as part of his penance (5.4.62, 53). Claudio's soldierly verb "seize," his continued concern for honour, and his mocking of the future husband Benedick (e.g., 5.4.43-47) all suggest that not much has changed in Claudio's character. He has not overcome his submissiveness to idealized men or his groundless suspicion of mirroring women. He will marry, but as Benedick suggests at the play's outset, he too will "wear his cap with suspicion" (1.1.184; cf. Cook 192-93).

Only insofar as environmental factors cooperate with his personal needs will Claudio prove a loving husband. After being assured that Hero was not wooed by Don Pedro, Claudio declares his love for a person whom he hated only moments earlier: "Lady, as you are mine, I am yours" (2.1.289-90, emphasis added). Kohut refers to individuals with "brittle
defensive structures" as living life according to an "all-or-nothing" plan; they are in total control, or they are totally out of control (Restoration 9). Claudio's uncompromising "if/then" approach to love suggests this type of emotional immaturity. Time and again, he paints himself into corners by making statements that don't allow for the inevitable complications and mitigating factors that attend the affairs of the heart. His need for predictability, his shallowness of feeling, and his replacement of commitment with contingency all suggest that at any moment his relationship with Hero could end. This "if/then" absolutism afflicts other soldiers. Othello's unforgiving binary, "[i]f [Desdemona] be false, O then heaven mocks itself," stems from his own mechanistic world view: "to be once in doubt/ Is once to be resolved" (Oth. 3.3.282, 182-83; see Chapter Ten, below). There are no exceptions to this rule; the environment either conforms to the narcissistic protagonist's needs (allowing for a comic resolution), or it doesn't (creating a tragic resolution).

Cuckoldry anxiety is only partially alleviated at the close of Much Ado About Nothing. Benedick's penultimate statement both invokes and dispels the spectre of cuckoldry: "There is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn" (Ado. 5.4.121-22). Although we have primarily been concerned with Claudio's acquisition of cuckoldry anxiety, the etiology of this condition in Benedick has also prompted critical speculation. Ruth Nevo proposes that his jokes "smack of the once bitten" (168), that Benedick's complaint that "I am loved of all ladies, only [her] excepted" suggests that Beatrice has rejected his advances before the play (1.1.114-15). Beatrice confirms this view when she admits that he once "lent" her his heart but that she subsequently "lost it" (2.1.261-64). Rejected, Benedick adopts the

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4 See, for example, passages at 1.1.202-03; 1.1.249-50; 3.2.112-14; 4.1.100-02.
pose of a stage misogynist and "de-idealize[s] love as an insurance against a recurrence of loss" (Nevo 168). His pose combines social conditioning with a personal defense mechanism against the pain of abandonment.

Here my argument diverges from the theses of St. Pierre and Parten. St. Pierre argues that cuckold lore in Messina is merely "a conventional pattern of jesting, unconnected to human feeling or impulse" (67). Cuckold jokes do not reveal unconscious anxieties but are used consciously by characters to conceal love from others. I have argued the reverse: expressions of cuckoldry anxiety reveal love to others while potentially impeding its progress. Benedick's and Beatrice's "merry war" and horn jokes don't fool anyone: they are in love. Parten argues that when women have proved their constancy, the spectre of cuckoldry disappears: "laughed at, it vanishes into thin air" ("Cuckoldry" 218). Yet I believe that merely turning a symbol of infamy into one of honour (as in Benedick's paradoxical "staff... tipped with horn" [5.4.121-22]) does not magically alleviate or eradicate underlying concerns. Benedick's quip is "the taunt of an insecure man" (R. A. Levin, Love 116). To Parten, Benedick confronts his fear and accepts the fact that he could be made cuckold. By this logic, if he were to lose Beatrice to another man it would not bother him. It would. He was prepared to "kill Claudio" for wronging Hero's honour (4.1.288, 331-32): what might Benedick do to a man who wrongs his own?

I believe that Benedick can laugh off the jokes of others because of his assurance of Beatrice's chaste constancy. Early on, he vows that "till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace" (2.3.28-30). This sounds like more "if/then" absolutism. When Benedick overhears Don Pedro assert that "]s]he's an excellent sweet lady, and, out of
all suspicion, she is virtuous" (2.3.156-57), his demanding criteria have been fulfilled. Like Claudio, Benedick marries not because of any relaxation of his own obsessive standards but because his bride-to-be is reputed "out of all suspicion." The spectre of cuckoldry disappears, not because it never existed, but simply because it has gone away—forever. As Kohut points out, an individual has overcome a narcissistic disorder when he or she no longer reacts to the loss (or anticipated loss) of a selfobject with fragmentation, enfeeblement or chronic rage (Restoration 138). There is nothing in the play's conclusion to suggest that either man wouldn't react with all three. Marriage represents, at best, a fragile peace.

Claudio's rage when he perceives himself, twice, to be deceived by a woman and scorned by his peers suggests a fundamental weakness in the organization of his self. His illogical and abusive behaviour is symptomatic of narcissistic rage, which, as I have argued, resembles the Renaissance understanding of horn-madness. In his 1661 treatise on cuckoldry, The Horn Exalted, George Rogers observed the heightened sensitivity and "brutall intellect" characteristic of a cuckold, "croaking, heaving, and setting or moving up and down, just as Bulls run to and fro, complaning and lowing for want of the milky mothers, when the loving rage doth sting them" (7). I don't suggest that Claudio thinks Hero is his "milky mother," but I do suggest that his perception that he has lost Hero reinflicts a deeply resonant narcissistic injury. As Kohut points out, "when the adult experiences the self-sustaining effects of a maturely chosen selfobject, the selfobject experiences of all the preceding stages of his life reverberate unconsciously" (How 49-50). The reverse is also true: the loss of a maturely chosen selfobject reverberates with all the preceding losses, resulting in a radically enfeebled self. It is no coincidence that Benedick, while composing an ode to his mistress's
eyebrow, "can find out no rhyme to 'lady' but 'baby'--an innocent rhyme; for 'scorn', 'horn'--a hard rhyme" (5.2.35-37). The chain of associations was that deeply ingrained in the Renaissance male imagination. In a discussion of crying babies and sleeping nurses, one comic watchman observes: "the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baas will never answer a calf when he bleats" (3.3.68-70). Were Claudio and Benedick, two more of Shakespeare's twinned lambs, also not answered as infants? If the child is father to the man, is the neglected calf father to the horn-mad husband?

_Much Ado About Nothing_ introduces dramatic elements that are of great significance in the next two chapters. Claudio's dependence on a go-between anticipates Troilus's need for Pandarus in _Troilus and Cressida_. Don John's role as slanderer anticipates Iachimo's influence on Posthumus in _Cymbeline_. Like Claudio, Troilus excels on the battlefield but flounders in domestic matters when he loses his (perceived) omnipotent control over the environment. Like the "virgin knight" of _Much Ado About Nothing_, Imogen is as quickly suspected, as vilely slandered, and as cruelly treated by Posthumus as Hero is by Claudio. Each soldier in love displays acute self-consciousness about his honour and about the chaste constancy of his mate. Each soldier is highly conformist, readily adaptable, and very impressionable--ripe ground for the malicious influences of evil men and misogynous societies. Each becomes familiar with cuckold-lore, and learns to dread the appellation "cuckold" more than death itself. Troilus and Posthumus have additional reasons to fear, as their couplings are not sanctioned by society; that Claudio ensures that his marriage is properly sanctioned and nevertheless thinks himself deceived does not bode well for matches built upon much shakier foundations. Each soldier seeks selfobject responses that are not
forthcoming, and as a result experiences fragmentation and rage. And finally, each soldier exhibits the strange oaths, concern for reputation and aggressive behaviour of Jaques's soldier.
Chapter Eight

"Gor'd with Menelaus' horn":

**Troilus and Cressida**

In the last act of *Much Ado About Nothing*, Benedick considers his tumultuous courtship of Beatrice to have surpassed difficulties faced by more famous lovers: "Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of pandars, and a whole bookful of these quondam carpet-mongers . . . were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love" (*Ado* 5.2.29-34). Benedick is not the only character to poke fun at Troilus. "No figure is more frequently cited by Shakespearean lovers" than him (Garber 176). Petruchio calls his faithful spaniel Troilus (*Shr*. 4.1.137); Viola's Clown scoffs that his love Cressida "was a beggar" (*TN* 3.1.56); Rosalind observes that Troilus had his "brains dashed out with a Grecian club" (*AYL* 4.1.92-94); and Lorenzo invokes him in one of Shakespeare's most "romantic" interludes:

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The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,  
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,  
And they did make no noise, in such a night  
Troilus methinks mounted the Trojan walls,  
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents  
Where Cressid lay that night.
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(*MV* 5.1.1-6)

These piecemeal portraits suggest a youth unlucky in love and ineffectual on the battlefield--a composite Troilus closer to Jaques's lover, "sighing like furnace," than to his soldier, "full of strange oaths." In *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare sets out to reconfigure the popular view of Troilus by creating a character who combines "the impetuous valor of Hotspur and the
romantic ardor of the inexperienced Romeo" (R. Ornstein 242). This play suggests that love can weaken a soldier's resolve, but the spectre of cuckoldry can restore his ferocity. Faced with the prospect of becoming a Trojan Menelaus, Troilus proves to be as "[m]anly as Hector, but more dangerous" instead (Tro. 4.5.104).

Troilus spends his play consolidating a maturing self through selfobject mergers with a supporting cast of men (his brothers, Aeneas, Pandarus) and one woman (Cressida). As with my Claudio-centred discussion of Much Ado About Nothing, I will argue that Troilus and Cressida revolves around the narcissistic perspective of Troilus who figures prominently as either participant or major topic of discussion in every scene on the Trojan side and in one scene in the Greek camp. Also, with the possible exception of Cressida, he is the play's most psychologically developed character (Jane Adamson, Troilus 140); as Janet Adelman explains, "at the deepest level, Troilus and Cressida enacts Troilus's fantasies" (Suffocating 46). One of Troilus's fantasies provides the play's dominant image pattern, an obsession with eating. For instance, he invites Cressida to test his sexual stamina: "Praise us as we are tasted, allow us as we prove" (3.2.89-90). Hunger symbolizes a hankering for praise endemic on both sides of the Trojan conflict. Because of its value as psychological sustenance, praise is treated as a kind of interpersonal currency--"[r]emuneration," as Ulysses puts it (3.3.170). Honourable men are rich and fat with praise, dishonourable men are impoverished and thin, yet no man's reputation is secure:

For Time is like a fashionable host  
That slightly shakes his parting guest by th' hand,  
And with his arms out-stretch'd, as he would fly,  
Grasps in the corner . . . .  

(3.3.165-68)
Just as modern currency rates fluctuate and fad diets come and go, in the competitive economy of Shakespeare's Trojan conflict honour is a valuable but volatile commodity: it rests on "slippery standers" (a pun on "standards" [3.3.84]).

No other play by Shakespeare explores in such detail the vagaries of honour as a constitutive component of masculine identity. Curtis Brown Watson divides the concept of honour into private and public aspects:

Honor, in one of its meanings, is an exclusively social virtue . . . .
[referring] to one's reputation in the community, to one's credit as a man of integrity, . . . to the glory and fame which one acquires as the result of exceptional or heroic accomplishments, or to the good name which is gained when one consistently behaves in a fashion which wins the respect and esteem of one's fellows. (11, emphasis in original)

Public honour is thus mirroring praise bestowed by a discerning audience of social peers. In his treatise, *Of Honour* (c. 1596), Robert Ashley defined it as "a certeine testimonie of vertue shining of yt self, geven of some man by the iudgement of good men" (34, notes omitted).

Troilus's problem is that he is surrounded by bad men in a play where the quid pro quo system of assessing and bestowing honour breaks down because of cynical manipulation (such as by Hector and Ulysses), scurrilous slander (such as by Pandarus and Thersites), and conceited apathy (such as that of Paris or Achilles). As Ulysses explains, it is not enough that virtue shine "of yt self":

... no man is the lord of anything,
Though in and of him there be much consisting,
Till he communicate his parts to others;
Nor doth he of himself know them for aught,
Till he behold them form'd in the applause
Where th'are extended . . . .

(3.3.115-20)
When characters define themselves entirely in relation to others, a breakdown of social order effectively prevents them from attaining a stable identity (G. Greene, "Shakespeare's" 135-37). No matter how heroically soldiers behave, inconsistent, distorting or apathetic responses prevent them from consolidating their honour.

There was also a more personal, internal quality inherent in Renaissance understandings of honour: "honor also refers to one's private and personal judgment of one's own actions, one's inner conviction of innate moral rectitude. Honor, in other words, relates to self-esteem as much as to public approbation" (Watson 12, emphasis in original). To speak of the importance of honour qua self-esteem in Shakespeare's time is therefore not anachronistic. Indeed, as Christopher Lasch points out, it is we moderns who have misunderstood both concepts, making feeling good about ourselves an end in itself: "self-esteem is held up as the cure for everything that ails us" (29). The problem is, Lasch contends, that codes of honour and shame have all but disappeared:

Disgrace implies a failure to live up to internalized codes of honor. Today it is widely believed that people come to grief when they adopt 'society's' standards as their own . . . . Formerly shame was the fate of those whose conduct fell short of cherished ideals. Now that ideals are suspect, it refers only to a loss of self-esteem. (29)

We live in a "shameless society" (Lasch 29): Shakespeare, his audience, and his fictional characters did not.¹ Problems arise in Shakespeare's Troy because there is no consensus on what constitutes honourable behaviour; the standards of sexual morality are particularly "slippery."

¹ Watson argues that Shakespeare's characterization of Greek and Roman honour makes Troilus and Cressida more closely resemble typical Renaissance views of the subject than Classical ones (385).
To men in the play it is considered honourable to seduce another man's wife (Paris is praised for this) but the epitome of disgrace to be cuckolded (Menelaus is scorned for this). During the course of the Trojan debate, Hector initially considers it morally correct to return Helen to her husband: "moral laws/ Of nature and of nations speak aloud/ To have her back return'd" (2.2.185-87). Social institutions such as marriage preserve order, an assertion echoed by Ashley's treatise: "by honour are Citties kept, families preserved, [and] the society of men quietly and peaceably continued" (30, note omitted). In a passage resembling Ulysses's exhaustive account of the perils of disorder (1.3.75-137), Ashley warned:

> Take honour out of vertuous accioums you take away all delight of the mind and easines of accion. Magnanimitie will perish, fortitude, moderacion, and decencie will decay, the observaunce of lawes and lawes themselves wilbe neglected, offyces of honour despised, magistrates conterned, discordes arise amongst Cittizens, and every one dare to do each foule and wicked deed. (30)

Honour is crucial because it encourages mutual respect and deference to authority; as Ulysses explains in his paeon to "degree," "untune that string,/ And hark what discord follows" (1.3.109-10).

However, male vanity prevents the Trojans from following Hector's recommended course of action, and returning Helen. Troilus opposes his brother: "Nay, if we talk of reason,/ Let's shut our gates and sleep: manhood and honour/ Should have hare hearts" (2.2.46-48). As I argued in Chapter Five, English schoolboys were taught that a man's honour depends upon his ability to preserve the integrity of his home, to "shut [his] gates" against sexual interlopers. Yet here young Troilus scorns defensive behaviour as passive and effeminate. Instead, Troilus argues that men generate honour by going out, conquering,
invading, and above all, seducing other men's wives (such as Helen):

She is a theme of honour and renown,
A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds,
Whose present courage may beat down our foes,
And fame in time to come canonize us . . . .

(2.2.200-03)

In effect, Troilus shames his companions into guarding Helen, regardless of the social costs. Honour is the glue that cements societies and individual selves together, yet in Troilus and Cressida, the misguided quest for honour creates quite the opposite effect: social and personal chaos. And Troilus is the most chaotic character of all.

During Troilus's perilous transition from youth to adulthood, this "youngest son of Priam . . . Not yet mature" (4.5.96-97) relies on selfobjects to construct and maintain a cohesive self. In the play's opening scene, Troilus disarms and complains that he "cannot fight upon this argument" (1.1.92); love is distracting him from his military duties. Yet when Aeneas arrives, Troilus suddenly changes his mind and follows the mighty warrior out to join in the other soldiers' "sport" (1.1.115). Kohut writes that individuals lacking cohesive self structures "continuously take on other people's personalities and shift from one person to another" (Elson 97). In a play which "emphasizes mirroring as the actual basis of identity" (Gaudet 142, emphasis in original), Troilus is one such chameleon: he experiences what Jane Adamson refers to as a succession of disjointed "momentary selves" (Troilus 139, emphasis in original). With Pandarus and Cressida in private, he plays a lover: with his brothers and Aeneas in public, he plays a warrior. Troilus has yet to establish a stable self, defined as a unit "cohesive in space and enduring in time," and as a result he lacks initiative and a consistent set of values (Kohut, Restoration 99).
Troilus's vacillation between courtship and combat stems from contradictory cultural attitudes similar to those absorbed by Claudio in Messina. Troilus has learned that male absences from the battlefield are considered "womanish" (1.1.107), a view also articulated by Patroclus: "A woman impudent and mannish grown/ Is not more loath'd than an effeminate man/ In time of action" (3.3.216-18). Achilles is kept from fighting by his love for Polyxena (5.1.36-43), and Hector also has trouble reconciling his roles as hero and husband-- quarrelling with Andromache on two separate occasions (1.2.4-11 and 5.3.1-78). On the other hand, Agamemnon says that lovers make the best soldiers: "may that soldier a mere recreant prove/ That means not, hath not, or is not in love" (1.3.285-87). Even better is a jealous soldier. Later Ulysses reports hearing that Troilus has become

Manly as Hector, but more dangerous;  
For Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes  
To tender objects, but he [i.e., Troilus] in heat of action  
Is more vindicative than jealous love.

(4.5.104-07)

While a doting lover is ineffectual, a jealous soldier is fearsome. Hector may subscribe (listen) to tender objects, but when Troilus loses his tender object he surpasses even his brother in ferocity. By the end of the play, Watson's description of the typical medieval knight, "as thirsty for fame and glory and just as keenly sensitive to public reproach and shame as his Renaissance counterpart" (38), resembles Shakespeare's "true knight," Troilus (4.5.96).

The most serious hindrance to Troilus's quest for selfhood is the fear of cuckoldry that is transmitted to him by his brothers and peers. Valerie Traub argues that one paranoia that gripped men in the Renaissance was the fear of "erotic mobility," epitomized by Helen's
"transfer of affection from Menelaus to Paris . . . the mobility of her person goes hand in hand with the mobility of her desire" (72). For example, Troilus overhears Pandarus scold Cressida that she "must be watched ere [she] be made tame," an image from falconry suggesting that only vigilant attention will prevent her from flying away (3.2.42-43; Palmer 194 note). Before long, Troilus sees Cressida demonstrate her "erotic mobility" when she submits to Diomedes: "Troilus, farewell! One eye yet looks on thee,/ But with my heart the other eye doth see" (5.2.106-07). In and around Troy, women are passed around like tokens in a "predatory sexual economy"; the play depicts "the objectification of Cressida as 'cake' to handled and consumed and as an exotic pearl to be possessed by the 'merchant' Troilus" (Gaudet 130-31). Not only does she succumb to sexist objectification, but she is exploited by Troilus in a kind of psychological "selfobjectification," to alter the Kohutian term. By possessing her, Troilus hopes to guarantee mirroring selfobject responses from a captive audience. He also idealizes soldiers who participate successfully in this economy; Paris, in particular, is a master sexual predator. In sum, Troilus must try to avoid losing the woman he needs to the type of man he most admires.

Troilus is acutely conscious of his inexperience and of the opinions of him held by his brothers and by Aeneas. Troilus has not yet proven his manhood in battle or in bed, so he imitates their aggressive behaviour and idealizes that of Troy's enemies as well: "The Greeks are strong, and skilful to their strength,/ Fierce to their skill, and to their fierceness valiant" (1.1.7-8). Because of a prevalent soldierly scorn for affairs of the heart, when Troilus sits

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2 For illustrations of "erotic mobility" and the social disruption associated with Helen's infidelity, see Figures 5-6.
"[a]t Priam's royal table" he conceals his lovesickness "[l]est Hector or my father should perceive me" (1.1.29-36). Kohut describes individuals in need of idealized selfobject mergers as feeling empty, listless, like nothing; they compensate for this by attaching themselves to "'something great and perfect outside [themselves]'" (Elson 79). Aeneas performs such a "carrier" role for Troilus by allowing him "to mimic, imitate, and follow him around" (Elson 79, 83). In Aeneas's presence, Troilus displays tremendous self-control to hide his insecurity and immaturity. For instance, when Aeneas brings him the bad news that Cressida is to be exchanged for Antenor, Troilus puts on a brave face: "Is it so concluded?" (4.2.60-75, 68). The process is repeated later when, after witnessing Diomedes's seduction of Cressida, Troilus loses his temper (5.2.65-180) until Aeneas arrives and Troilus regains his cool (5.2.181). Troilus plays "tough" in front of his idealized figures.

Troilus mainly fashions his military side after Hector, as suggested by Pandarus's blurring of their two identities during his commentary on the returning soldiers (1.2.56-80; cf. Jane Adamson, Troilus 23). As Garber explains, comparing oneself to, competing with, and ultimately surpassing idealized models is an important rite of passage for young men (178-79). Troilus's "volte face" at the end of the first scene ("I cannot fight" he says, then goes anyway) resembles Hector's flip-flop during the Trojan debate (he argues that it's "mad idolatry" to keep Helen, then agrees "to keep Helen still" [2.2.56, 190]). Troilus has acquired this trait after a lifetime of observing inconsistent behaviour in others (Jane Adamson, Troilus 20-21). Troilus also internalizes his brother's contradictory attitudes. Echoing Hector's lofty defense of marriage (2.2.174-90), Troilus reacts to desertion with the line "Cressid is mine, tied with the bonds of heaven" (5.2.153). Troilus has learned to live with
contradictions, such as simultaneously fighting to defend one sexual predator (Paris) and to punish another (Diomedes). Hector is both a family man with a devoted wife, and a fierce warrior with a solid reputation among other soldiers; as Leo Rockas puts it, "he represents the state of married love . . . as an uncuckolded Menelaus" (25). In light of the relatively ineffectual Priam, Troilus looks up to his brother in a "quasi-filial relation" (Stockholder 69), attempting to negotiate an identity by choosing between two extremes, valiant Hector and humiliated Menelaus. Before the play ends, Troilus will come to resemble them both.

While Hector and Aeneas serve as role-models in the realm of war, Paris is admired by Troilus for his "victory" over Menelaus in the realm of love. Many of Troilus's attitudes about sexual relations are learned from Paris. In a world where a man is either a "Paris" or a "Menelaus," Troilus would rather be an abductor than a cuckold. Indeed, Menelaus represents a rare instance in Shakespeare's plays: he is married to an undeniably unfaithful wife, and he is mocked as a "cuckold" throughout the play (St. Pierre 91-92). When Paris returns from the front slightly hurt, Troilus scoffs, "Let Paris bleed, 'tis but a scar to scorn:/ Paris is gor'd with Menelaus' horn" (1.1.111-12). To Troilus, Menelaus is the antithesis of an honourable lover/soldier; he is an "unidealized self-object," to reverse the Kohutian term. Here, Thersites may speak for Troilus: "To be a dog, a mule, a cat, a fitchook, a toad, a lizard, an owl, a puttock, or a herring without a roe, I would not care; but to be Menelaus I would conspire against destiny" (5.1.60-64). Troilus attempts to elicit praise from Paris by supporting his argument for the defense of Helen during the Trojan debate. Troilus flatters Paris for his sexual prowess, and attempts to partake in his older brother's glory: "O theft most base,/ That we have stol'n what we do fear to keep" (2.2.93-94, emphasis added).
Actually, Paris abducted Helen while Troilus was just a boy. When Paris echoes Troilus's lines, "[w]e turn not back the silks upon the merchant/ When we have soil'd them" (2.2.70-71), with his own lines, "I would have the soil of her fair rape/ Wip'd off in honorable keeping her" (2.2.149-50), he affirms Troilus—though Paris continues to speak in the first person singular. Troilus learns to boast from Paris, to fight from Hector, and learns the reasons for fighting from both brothers: to defend a woman's (and by extension, his own) honour from shame. Paris confirms Troilus's misgivings about the effects of losing one's female companion:

What treason were it to the ransack'd queen,
Disgrace to your great worths, and shame to me,
Now to deliver her possession up
On terms of base compulsion . . .

(2.2.151-54).

While neither Troilus or Paris are married to the women they would defend, Julian Pitt-Rivers points out that in Mediterranean societies, "[a] man's sexual honour is attained . . . through his commitment to any other woman in whom he has invested his pride. The infidelity of his mistress leaves him a cuckold also" (62-63).³

Troilus's first sexual experience is a rite of passage for him, as frightening as his first taste of combat. If, as Traub points out, "war equals sexuality" (73), then to Troilus the reverse is also true:

. . . what will it be
When that the wat'ry palate tastes indeed

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³ Ranald argues that the elaborate oath-taking of Cressida and Troilus would have been interpreted by audiences as "a witnessed exchange of vowed love," a binding pre-marital contract (Shakespeare 8). Whether she is his mistress, fiance or bride, Cressida has Troilus's pride invested in her.
Love's thrice-repured nectar? Death, I fear me,
Sounding destruction, or some joy too fine,
Too subtle-potent, tun'd too sharp in sweetness
For the capacity of my ruder powers.
I fear it much; and I do fear besides
That I shall lose distinction in my joys,
As doth a battle, when they charge on heaps
The enemy flying.

(3.2.18-27)

During the assignation scene, Troilus relies on Pandarus for guidance (an idealized selfobject function) and on Cressida for encouragement (a mirroring selfobject function) to help him overcome his fears. Pandarus reassures Troilus that "blushing" Cressida is just as nervous as he (3.2.99), and that she will be faithful: "our kindred, though they be long ere they be wooed, they are constant being won" (3.2.108-10). Pandarus gives practical advice too: "So, so; rub on and kiss the mistress" (3.2.48-49). Cressida is also direct in her encouragement that Troilus walk in with her, declaring her undying devotion: "Prince Troilus, I have lov'd you night and day/ For many weary months" (3.2.113-14). She only seemed hard to win.

Troilus finally gets up his nerve, and enters partly in the hopes that seducing Cressida will generate praise for him the same way that Paris gained "fame" by possessing Helen. In yet another Shakespearean "if/then" equation, Troilus states that if his "integrity" is matched with her "winnow'd purity in love--/ How were I then uplifted" (3.2.162-66).

Thus Cressida is treated as "the creature not of her own needs but of Troilus's"

(Adelman, Suffocating 56). When Diomedes takes Cressida in exchange for Antenor,

\footnote{I do not suggest that Cressida has no independent identity, only that she has none from Troilus's perspective. For an insightful discussion of Cressida's struggle to maintain a stable identity, see G. Greene, "Shakespeare's" 135-46. Although Greene argues that Cressida experiences a particularly feminine identity process—she "define[s] herself in 'relational' capacities [and] derive[s] self-esteem from the esteem of others" (136)—I suggest that such
Troilus expresses more concern about his loss than her future peril in the enemy camp when he complains, "Grecian, thou dost not use me courteously" (4.4.119, emphasis added). Cressida evokes Troilus's unhealthily narcissistic perception of her when she attempts to dissuade him from his dependent behaviour: "I have a kind of self resides with you./ But an unkind self, that itself will leave/ To be another's fool" (3.2.146-48). To Troilus, her worth is determined by her willingness to fill the "hollow" where his missing self-structures should be, a function seemingly understood by Cressida: "the strong base and building of my love/ Is as the very centre of the earth,/ Drawing all things to it" (4.2.106-08). This is not a very reassuring image, given the imminent fall of Troy. Cressida fortifies Troilus with her love, but she will fortify others as well. When she does, Troilus will collapse. As we have seen, Kohut employs spatial metaphors--"concrete terms in the language commonly used to describe the building of a house" (Hamilton 53)--to convey what is largely a metapsychological abstraction: the self. For instance, Kohut told his students that by internalizing selfobjects, they create "an absorbing structure so that you yourself absorb blows to your self-esteem without the aid of others" (Elson 75). This is not so much a "restoration" as a "fortification" of the self. Like a house or a castle, Troilus's is one such self under siege. Elsewhere, Kohut describes selfobject mergers as "the pillars of mental health" (Restoration 87), an image that finds a centuries-old analogue in the Bishops' Bible: "Hee that hath gotten a vertuous woman: hath a goodly possession: she is vnto him a helpe, and a pillar whereon he resteth" (Sir. 26:34). Unfortunately, to Troilus, Cressida is not so "vertuous" and he complains about the loss of her fortifying capacity when he tears her last letter: "My love relational difficulties beset men as well."
with words and errors still she feeds,/ But edifies another with her deeds" (5.3.111-12). Now Cressida "edifies" (i.e., builds) Diomedes's self-esteem with her "deeds" (i.e., sexual favours) (OED v.1-2; Partridge 95).

After she is exchanged for Antenor and transferred to the Greek camp, Cressida's infidelity tears a breach in Troilus's self and makes him feel like what he dreads most: "she becomes the new Helen . . . and renders Troilus the new Menelaus and Diomedes the new Paris" (Rockas 17). Like being honoured, being cuckolded is both a social (external) attribute and a psychological (internal) state. Socially, few understand Troilus's discomfiture; psychologically, it is real nonetheless. Self psychology enables us to discern, not an "objective" reality per se, but rather a character's "subjective" experience of reality (Kohut, Restoration 29-30). Menelaus suffers from external manifestations of cuckoldry, Troilus from internal ones. Troilus alludes to traditional symbols of cuckoldry when expressing the pain of separation, vowing that his love for Cressida "shall be divulged well/ In characters as red as Mars his heart/ Inflam'd with Venus" (5.2.162-64). The third member of this mythological cuckold triangle is Vulcan, the god of armour and archetype of "Olympian cuckoldry" found in Ovid's Metamorphoses, one of Shakespeare's favourite sources (Fineman 98; Bate 201-14). Vulcan traps Mars and Venus in a net to expose their treachery to the other gods, but his plan backfires:

A certaine God among the rest disposed for to sport
Did wish that he himselfe also were shamed in that sort.
The residue laught and so in heaven there was no talke a while,
But of the Pageant how the Smith the lovers did beguile.

(Ovid 4.225-28)

In an analogous manner, Diomedes's "theft" of Cressida threatens to expose Troilus to
derisive laughter; in particular, when Diomedes places Troilus's sleeve upon his helmet and steals his horse (a pun on "whore" [Tro. 5.6.7]). Hence Troilus's earlier concern for discretion when Aeneas interrupts their assignation with news of the impending trade: "my Lord Aeneas,/ We met by chance: you did not find me here" (4.2.72-73). Instead of boasting of his sexual conquest, Troilus must keep it secret to avoid being scorned: "How my achievements mock me!" (4.2.71). After he witnesses Cressida's seduction by Diomedes, Troilus again invokes the Olympian cuckold:

Hark, Greek: as much as I do Cressid love,  
So much by weight hate I her Diomed.  
That sleeve is mine that he'll bear on his helm;  
Were it a casque compos'd by Vulcan's skill  
My sword should bite it . . . .

(5.2.166-70)

His invocation of "weight" recalls Diomedes's scorn for Menelaus and Paris: "Both merits pois'd, each weighs nor less nor more,/ But he as thee, each heavier for a whore" (4.1.66-67). Since masculine honour depends on feminine constancy, neither man amounts to much. Troilus also recalls Menelaus's horn when he vows to recover his sleeve from Diomedes: "Wert thou the devil, and wor'st it on thy horn,/ It should be challeng'd" (5.2.95-96). Betrayed by his selfobject and afraid he will become a social pariah like Menelaus, Troilus takes "refuge in an omnipotently solipsistic madness" (Fineman 99); in other words, he succumbs to narcissistic rage.

The seduction scene and its aftermath provide a vivid illustration of narcissistic rage as "an isolated drivenness that takes over when the self is seriously injured and feels a sense of helpless disconnection from its selfobjects" (Bacal, "Heinz" 236). Cressida's betrayal
suggests a symbolic reversal of Act 1 Scene 2, in which she watches the returning soldiers. Now Troilus watches as she turns her mirroring gaze elsewhere: "Troilus, farewell! One eye yet looks on thee./ But with my heart the other eye doth see" (5.2.106-07). Troilus articulates feelings of disintegration as his narcissistically perceived world splits in two: "This she?—No, this is Diomed's Cressida," he observes, "[t]his is, and is not, Cressid" (5.2.136-45). The "rule in unity" that once held his self together is now holding Diomedes's self together: Troilus has lost his selfobject, "Troilus's Cressida," to another. That she functioned as part of Troilus's self-structure is suggested by the wording of Ulysses's question: "May worthy Troilus be half attach'd/ With that which here his passion doth express?" (5.2.160-61). Yes, he is half attached, but the link is being broken. Once, Cressida "belonged" to Troilus and their collective soul was "a thing inseparate": now it "[d]ivides more wider than the sky and earth" (5.2.147-48).

Troilus compensates for his inner fragmentation with outward aggression; he converts his shame (the flight-instinct) into rage (the fight-instinct). As Bacal explains, outward aggression that functions to "stave off further disintegration and to redress the hurt . . . may entail retaliation against and even destruction of the perpetrator of the injury" ("Heinz" 236). Hence Troilus's resolution to "bite" Diomedes's helmet as he cris-crosses the stage in pursuit of his rival. Lorenzo's suggestion (quoted above) that Troilus merely "sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents" leaves out one crucial detail depicted in *Troilus and Cressida*; namely, Troilus's furious reaction upon discovering Cressida with another man "[a]t Menelaus' tent" (4.5.278). To one concerned about female infidelity, Menelaus's tent becomes a kind of cuckold's hell where Cressida provides an "instance" of unfaithfulness as "strong as Pluto's
gates" (5.2.152). Ironically, it is only when he is beset with narcissistic rage—and the self he constructed with Cressida disintegrates like the "fragments, scraps [and] bits" of her faith (5.2.158)—that Troilus emerges with a socially sanctioned identity. Rejecting the lover he once was, he becomes the epitome of Jaques's soldier: "Jealous in honour, sudden, and quick in quarrel./ Seeking the bubble reputation/ Even in the cannon's mouth" (AYL 2.7.151-53).

The fear of being cuckolded, of losing external suppliers of self esteem, and of being shamed by peers motivates many of the rivalries in Troilus and Cressida: Paris vs. Menelaus, Troilus vs. Diomedes, indeed Troy vs. Greece. The war is largely a psychological struggle, exacerbated by socially ingrained attitudes and prolonged by the fragile selves of its participants. Shortly before witnessing Cressida's infidelity, Troilus sees Menelaus up close for the first time at a diplomatic embassy during which Hector mocks their guest: "Your quondam wife swears still by Venus' glove./ She's well, but bade me not commend her to you" (Tro. 4.5.178-79). Hector's extraordinary breach of decorum is just one more instance of the scorn heaped on cuckolds: "[Menelaus's] presence . . . is a constant reminder of the fate awaiting Troilus" (Rockas 22). Yet no man in Troilus and Cressida seems assured of immunity to such treatment, and even sexual aggressors experience insecurity. Having seen Cressida being kissed by the Greek generals, Diomedes repeatedly demands to know who gave her "the sleeve" (5.2.66-105) in an exchange anticipating Othello's jealous demands for the handkerchief. Similarly, in a comic variation on the proverbial soldier "bearded like the pard," when Helen asks which of Troilus's paltry two-and-fifty whiskers represents her new husband, Paris "chafes" at Troilus's response: "The forked one" (1.2.152-69).

Troilus and Cressida thus presents a detailed etiology of male aggression toward
military rivals as well as toward women. That in wartime, a jealous soldier is more effective than a secure one is only one of many cynical lessons to be learned from Troilus's experiences. Adelman argues (mistakenly in my view) that Troilus secretly wishes for Cressida to betray him in order to assist his transformation into a bloodthirsty warrior (Suffocating 56-59): "masculine identity requires sexual disappointment, requires the transformation of the lover's oral neediness . . . into his martial prowess" (62). On the other hand, Kohut suggests that "oral" or "anal" proclivities are merely compensatory strategies for dealing with selfobject failures:

The infantile drive in isolation is not the primary psychological configuration—whether on the oral, anal, urethral, or phallic level. The primary psychological configuration (of which the drive is only a constituent) is the experience of the relation between the self and the empathic self-object. (Restoration 122)

When this relation is disturbed, the imperiled self reacts with narcissistic rage. Thus aggression is not "an 'original sin' requiring expiation, [or] a bestial drive that has to be 'tamed'" (124). Rather, rage arises when external stimuli exacerbate internal structural deficiencies: "Destructive rage, in particular, is always motivated by an injury to the self" (116). That Menelaus, Achilles and Ajax are also at their most aggressive after being deprived of companions and mocked by peers confirms Kohut's view that aggression is,

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5 In orthodox psychoanalysis, an "oral" character is excessively needy and dependent on others whereas an "anal" character tends to be defiant, obstinate, aggressive, even sadistic (Moore and Fine 135-36, 14). These characteristics are outlined in Freud, Three and "Character" passim. In his Freudian reading of the play, Emil Roy sees its aggression as characteristic of "the anal stage of infancy" (107); as infants assert themselves by withholding faeces from parents, the Trojans refuse to give up Helen to the Greeks (107-08). Troilus's participation in this stubborn behaviour "is one way of establishing his own separate identity" (111).
"psychologically speaking, a disintegration product" (119) designed to replenish self-esteem; as Troilus phrases it, "[h]ope of revenge shall hide our inward woe" (5.10.31). Indeed, far from wishing for the split with Cressida, Troilus enlists aggression to win her back, illustrating what Silvan S. Tomkins argues is the essence of shame: "In shame the individual wishes . . . to reconnect with the other, to recapture the relationship that existed before the situation turned problematic" (144). In fact, most of the play's instances of aggression are perpetrated by disconnected and disintegrating characters. The play opens with reports of an off-stage skirmish between Menelaus and Paris (1.1.109-12), and its final on-stage duel is also between "[t]he cuckold and the cuckold-maker" (5.7.9-12). By framing the play thus, Shakespeare emphasizes Menelaus's desire to reconnect with Helen; as Diomedes ungraciously puts it: "He, like a puling cuckold, would drink up/ The lees and dregs of a flat tamed piece" (4.1.62-63).

Furthermore, Achilles and Ajax are also enraged by the loss of cherished companions. These two soldiers also withdraw from the front lines to spend time with jealously guarded partners whom they lose to male rivals. The death of his "sweet Patroclus" (3.3.233) rouses Achilles to rearm, and his premeditated ambush and desecration of Patroclus's killer, Hector (whose corpse is tied to a horse's tail), suggestively parallels Diomedes's theft of Troilus's horse/whore. Thersites's notorious comment, "[a]ll the argument is a whore and a cuckold: a good quarrel to draw emulous factions, and bleed to death upon" (2.3.74-76) may thus also refer to Patroclus and Achilles. Thersites calls Patroclus a "masculine whore" (5.1.16); an intense "quarrel" emerges between Achilles and Hector; and Hector and Patroclus both "bleed to death" as a result. Similarly, Ajax is enraged when Achilles steals his companion,
Thersites; according to Ulysses, "he is his argument, that has his argument, Achilles" (2.3.99-100). "Argument" is one of the play's many buzz-words for cuckoldry, such as when Patroclus taunts Menelaus: "thus popp'd Paris in his hardiment./ And parted thus you and your argument" (4.5.28-29). Ajax's loss is foreshadowed when Thersites calls him "Mars his idiot," a stupid soldier, but also suggestive of Vulcan (2.1.56). At the outset of the final battle sequences, "the snail-paced Ajax" remains in his tent with an unnamed new companion (5.5.17-18). Yet before long this companion, like Patroclus, is killed, prompting Ajax to emerge from his hiatus: "Ajax hath lost a friend./ And foams at mouth, and he is arm'd and at it./ Roaring for Troilus" (5.5.35-37). As none of Shakespeare's sources mentions any "friend" of Ajax who is killed (see Presson 69-73, 83-91; Tatlock, passim), this alteration is significant. It emphasizes the etiology of narcissistic rage in separation from cherished companions, male or female.6

A self psychological interpretation of Troilus and Cressida suggests that although Troilus treats Cressida as a selfobject, and not with the mutual love and respect due a "true object" (Kohut, Restoration 84), he does not secretly hope she will abandon him. The play's disintegration into six brief, chaotic battle scenes (5.4 to 5.10) reflects the breakdown in Troilus's self, as Shakespeare exposes the mundane psychological roots of epic battles. While separation from a selfobject causes rage in Troilus, it is unfair to blame Cressida for this. In fact, Shakespeare takes great pains to show that her defection to the Greek side is

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6 Rockas describes these two soldiers' experiences parodic or "degraded" versions of the more legitimate anger of heterosexual Troilus and Menelaus (27-30). For more sympathetic accounts of Patroclus and Achilles, see Bredbeck 33-48; and B. Smith 198-99. No one has much to say about Ajax and his friends.
involuntary. The scene in which she kisses the Greek generals is suggestive of a "gang rape," and her surrender to Diomedes merely indicative of "her need for protection in a predatory environment . . . if she is not one man's, she will be every man's" (Gaudet 138-39).

Rejection of femininity is no guarantee of masculinity, nor does sexual betrayal mark a youth's accession to manhood. Instead, separation from selfobjects induces in Troilus a kind of frenzied aggression, admittedly useful in pitched battle, but that should not be mistaken for mature selfhood or the successful consolidation of his gender identity. Right from the Prologue who comes on stage "arm'd, but not in confidence" (23) to the mysterious soldier slain by Hector near the play's end--"[m]ost putrefied core, so fair without" (5.8.1)--*Troilus and Cressida* is populated by radically incomplete and unstable selves. Thersites is not the only "fragment" (5.1.8) in this play which presents insights into human behaviour strikingly similar to the ordering principles of self-psychology. Both map complex worlds of inter-dependent identities the insecure foundations of which are shaken by separation from selfobjects. Depending on one's criteria of masculine selfhood, Troilus's emergence as a bloodthirsty warrior makes the play either heroic (he finally comes of age) or tragic (he loses his innocence and his love). Cuckoldry anxiety exacerbates mistrust in men, creating fodder for "comical!" laughs (Epistle, in Palmer 95) but also causing the senseless slaughter of champions. Although *Cymbeline* was written much later in Shakespeare's career, thematically it picks up where *Troilus and Cressida* leaves off--creating unity out of chaos and repairing the damage to characters' selves caused by cuckoldry anxiety.

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7 For a detailed examination of gender in the play, see Spear 409-22.
Chapter Nine

"This attempt I am soldier to":

Separation and Aggression in *Cymbeline*

Like *Troilus and Cressida*, *Cymbeline* charts the course of a young hero untested in battle, insecure in love, and acutely self-conscious about social status. The play begins shortly after the court of Britain discovers Posthumus's clandestine marriage to Princess Imogen, and depicts tumultuous changes imposed on this fledgling marital unit. Whereas *Troilus and Cressida* concludes with the fragmentation of its hero and the imminent destruction of Troy, *Cymbeline* culminates in the re-assembly of its various parts into a unified whole: a coherent individual self (Posthumus), reunited families (Posthumus with his wife, King Cymbeline with his sons), and an emergent nation (Britain, the New Troy).

Discussions of *Cymbeline* as romance or history tend to focus on the last two areas; psychoanalytic inquiry uncovers their close thematic link to the state of the hero Posthumus.¹ J. M. Nosworthy writes of Posthumus that, "[w]e see him mainly as a soldier, and only at the very end a lover" (lix). He spends most of the play mired in that no-man's land between lover and soldier that I explored in the previous two chapters. To complicate things, Posthumus experiences a plethora of other identities—educated courtier, banished outlaw, traveller, suspected cuckold, would-be murderer, traitor and hero—that makes it difficult for him to attain a stable core self, "to perceive himself as a coherent center of initiative persisting over

¹ Although some cite the titular Cymbeline as the play's controlling perspective (e.g., Stockholder 176-83), I will treat Posthumus as the psychological centre of the play (cf. Skura, "Interpreting" 203).
time" (Westlund, "Self" 201). The trials of Imogen, of his birth- and adoptive-families, and finally those of his country all reflect changes in Posthumus's self as it is torn apart by the perception that women are unfaithful and repaired by the discovery that for the most part they are not. Cymbeline thus provides an antidote to the cynicism of Troilus and Cressida. All need not be wars and lechery, all women are not false, and even if wives do wry "but a little" (Cym. 5.1.5), infidelity need not lead to murder or the sack of towns.

Cuckoldry anxiety is a major dramatic catalyst in Cymbeline, yet this play contains none of the quibbling of Much Ado About Nothing or scurrility of Troilus and Cressida. Instead, cuckoldry is serious business, as suggested by the high stakes of Iachimo's wager. He will "pawn the moiety of [his] estate" against a ring that he can seduce Imogen, and fight with Posthumus if he fails (Cym. 1.5.105). When Iachimo later lies to Posthumus and comes to collect on his bet, the word "cuckold" makes its one explosive appearance in the play:

POSTHUMUS... I will kill thee if thou dost deny
Thou'st made me cuckold.

IACHIMO. I'll deny nothing.

POSTHUMUS. O, that I had her here, to tear her limb-meal!

(2.4.145-47)

Significantly, it is Posthumus who calls himself "cuckold," suggesting that cuckoldry anxiety stems from internal weaknesses triggered by external stimuli; before long, "Posthumus outdoes Iago in tormenting himself" (St. Pierre 124).

2 In his self-psychological exploration of the play, Joseph Westlund contends that through a reunion with his lost family in a dream vision, Posthumus's "shaky" self is finally repaired ("Self" 200-16, 201). Westlund's approach anticipates my own, but I will argue that Posthumus's relationship with Imogen is the major basis of his identity. The most exhaustive psychoanalytic interpretation of the play is Schwartz, "Fantasy" 219-83.
Posthumus's belief in slander stems from a radical insecurity regarding who he really is. Because of his precarious status at court, he has grown up with a separation anxiety related to adult cuckoldry anxiety:

It is the possibility of loss of protection and security, the frustration of dependency needs, which is anxiety-arousing. Dependency needs arise as a consequence of the child's realizing his helplessness and his need for support by those who are more powerful. (Levitt 24, emphasis in original)

Following the death of his parents, Posthumus was adopted by the British royal family. He is first mentioned in the play as "poor but worthy" (1.1.7), suggesting that he has compensated for his obscure origins through virtuous actions and personal alliances. His marriage to the Princess, however, destroys what little security he had established in this foster home. His foster-brother Cloten taunts Imogen: "The contract you pretend with that base wretch,/ One bred of alms, and foster'd with cold dishes,/ With scraps o' th' court, it is no contract, none" (2.3.112-14). By comparing Posthumus to a stray dog begging for table-scrap, Cloten articulates a form of class-prejudice found in many quarters of the play. Surrounded by class superiors, Posthumus has developed an inferiority complex, as suggested by Imogen's observation that he "incline[d] to sadness, and oft-times/ Not knowing why" (1.7.62-63), and confirmed in his parting embrace: "I my poor self did exchange for you/ To your so infinite loss" (1.2.50-51). He is ennobled by their marriage: she is degraded. His low self-esteem is further blasted by the King who interrupts their embrace: "Thou basest thing, avoid hence,

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3 Anne Barton questions whether or not they are in fact legally married ("Wrying" 19-30); yet to my mind, the play's repeated use of words such as husband, wife, and marriage underscores the immorality of Cloten, Cymbeline and the Queen who would divorce the couple, rather than the tenuous nature of Imogen's bond to begin with: "She's wedded,/ Her husband banish'd; she imprison'd, all/ Is outward sorrow" (1.1.7-9).
from my sight!" (1.2.56). Cymbeline calls this upstart a pollution, a "poison to [the King's] blood" (1.2.59).

Meredith Skura argues that Posthumus's life story involves "a sequence of substitute-family adventures," beginning in Cymbeline's family, then in the Roman army, culminating in the dream vision ("Interpreting" 209-10). I will argue that Imogen is the only true family Posthumus ever really knows. Growing up in a house with an aloof father and spiteful stepmother, Posthumus receives only adequate care:

... The king he takes the babe
To his protection, calls him Posthumus Leonatus,
Breeds him, and makes him of his bed-chamber,
Puts to him all the learnings that his time
Could make him the receiver of ... 

(1.1.40-44)

This treatment never transcends that typically accorded children fostered out into service: he is bred, "put to" education, then put to work.4 In particular, Posthumus appears to have been deprived of crucial mirroring support from caregivers, and thus comes to rely on Imogen to perform this structural role. She is everything to him--his advocate, his mistress, "[his] queen, [his] life, [his] wife" (1.2.23, 5.5.226); "an all-supportive figure with no traits of her own ... a selfobject to validate his sense of worth" (Westlund, "Self" 209). She alone can

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4 Long ago, Cymbeline's own "slackly guarded" sons were kidnapped and no intensive search was undertaken, prompting observers to marvel at the "negligence" of this family (1.1.63-67). Although this kidnapping is a plot contrivance designed to prepare audiences for a play full of such improbabilities (Leggatt, "Island" 191), it is also plausible that busy monarchs would neglect a base-born foster child. Certainly, chronic neglect contributes to Posthumus's moral vacillations: "In psychological terms, the absence of real parents corresponds to the shaky status of Posthumus' internal parents, the superego" (Schwartz, "Fantasy" 233). He lacked idealizing mergers, but also mirroring ones: "Posthumus' self-esteem depends on large doses of external confirmation" (233).
"renew [him] with [her] eyes" (3.2.43).

Imogen also represents ideals aspired to by impressionable Posthumus: she is the "temple/ Of Virtue" at which he worships (5.5.220-21). His moral universe orbits around her absolute chastity, fidelity, and purity; as Iachimo explains, Posthumus "spoke of her, as Dian had hot dreams,/ And she alone were cold" (5.5.180-81). With her elevated social status and impeccable virtue, Imogen elevates and empowers her husband in the same way that Kohut argues an idealized selfobject assists a developing child:

'I am nothing [the child realizes], but at least there is something great and perfect outside myself that is the carrier of what I formerly experienced. All I can do now is try to attach myself to it, even though I am nothing, and then I will become as great as it is.' (Elson 79)

Posthumus's conception of marriage as an exchange of his "poor self" for Imogen's excellence (1.2.50-51), rather than as a mutually beneficial love relationship, underscores such an imbalance; he is "her adorer, not her friend" (1.5.65-66). Other characters emphasize the facts that Posthumus lacks intrinsic worth and that he derives his greatness by association:

"By her election may be truly read/ What kind of man he is" (1.1.53-54). Iachimo marvels that the princess married "a beggar" who "must be weighed rather by her value than his own" (1.5.13-21).

By boasting of Imogen's chastity, Posthumus asserts that he is worthy of others' admiration and respect. When Iachimo questions Posthumus's "opinion" of her, he retorts, "[s]he holds her virtue still, and I my mind" (1.5.62)—a reversion to the "if/then" absolutism I have outlined in previous chapters. According to this causal sequence, the reverse would also true: her infidelity would madden him. When one gentleman responds to another's account of
Posthumus by saying, "I honour him./ Even out of your report" (1.1.54-55), again the reverse would be true: gentlemen would not honour a man who receives a bad report. Posthumus experiences the devastation wrought by credible but false reports when he believes Iachimo's slander of Imogen, as we shall see. Considering the opprobrium heaped upon deceived husbands during the period, Posthumus is wise to be defensive about his and his wife's reputation. Should Imogen appear to bestow favour elsewhere, Posthumus has no intrinsic worth to fall back on—as suggested by the wicked Queen's comparison of him to a condemned building that "leans" and "cannot be new built, nor has no friends./ So much as but to prop him" (1.6.57-60).5

Leggatt points out that Posthumus's boasting abroad is not merely the posturing of a young traveller, but also a symbolic European conflict in which nations score "points" based on the chastity of their women ("Island" 194-95). Jodi Mikalachki expands this view, arguing that at the time of Cymbeline's composition, "respectable nationalism depend[ed] in part on respectable womanhood" (307). Like husbands, fledgling nations could be radically weakened by corrupt females (such as Cymbeline's Queen) who "threatened the establishment of a stable, masculine identity for the early modern nation" (Mikalachi 302-03). When confronted with Imogen's apparent infidelity, Posthumus is shaken right to the core:

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5 Shakespeare's repeated characterization of intrapsychic phenomena using architectural imagery recalls Kohut's conceptual formulation of the self as a building inhabited by others, as well as Psalm 128 (part of the standard Elizabethan marriage ceremony): "Thy wife shalbe as the fruitfull vine vpon the walles of thy house" (Prayer-Book 125). Imogen likewise employs such images following her discovery of her husband's plot to kill her: "The innocent mansion of my love, my heart:/ . . . [is] empty of all things, but grief:/ Thy master is not there" (3.4.69-71).
Is there no way for men to be, but women
Must be half-workers? We are all bastards,
And that most venerable man, which I
Did call my father, was I know not where
When I was stamp'd. Some coiner with his tools
Made me a counterfeit . . . .

(2.4.153-58)

Just as a debased or counterfeit currency threatens the economy of a state, female inconstancy undermines a man's identity: he is a bastard if his mother is unfaithful, a cuckold if his wife is unfaithful (M. Neill "Bastardy" 400-02). The link between Imogen and England is made explicit when she responds to Iachimo's imputation that Posthumus is frequenting brothels abroad: "My lord, I fear, / Has forgot Britain" (1.7.112-13).

Posthumus is devastated by the (false) news that Imogen has betrayed him, and he reacts with narcissistic rage. Iachimo's description of the mole under Imogen's breast that "gave [him] present hunger/ To feed again, though full" (2.4.137-38) symbolizes the capacity she has to nourish, strengthen, and confirm men's selves. By seeming to redirect this breast towards another man, Imogen withdraws support for Posthumus's self-esteem. To add insult to injury, although she restrained Posthumus "of [his] lawful pleasure" she apparently

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6 The trope of female chastity as town under siege creates analogues between the pursuit of Imogen by Iachimo, the siege of England by Rome, and the sack of Troy by Greece. Just before Iachimo's assault on her chamber, one Lord wishes her resolve in resisting persistent suitors: "The heavens hold firm/ The walls of thy dear honour" (2.1.61-62). Soon after, Imogen calls for her woman, the aptly named Helen (2.2.1). Next Iachimo emerges from the trunk of supposed gifts for the King—a visual allusion to Sinon emerging from the Trojan Horse. In Shakespeare's The Rape of Lucrece, a similar sexual intruder, Tarquin, is compared to Sinon (Luc. 1521-47), and his victim, Lucrece, with the city itself: "Her house is sack'd, her quiet interrupted./ Her mansion batter'd by the enemy" (Luc. 1170-71). Likewise, just as Imogen (the house) is besieged by Iachimo, Imogen (England) is attacked by Rome; her husband's and her nation's reputations depend upon her ability to resist. On parallels between Lucrece and Cymbeline, see Parker 132-40; Stimpson 56-64; and Vickers, "Blazon" 95-115).
surrenders to another man in no time at all: "Perchance he spoke not, but/ Like a full-acorn'd boar, a German one,/ Cried 'O!' and mounted" (2.4.161, 167-69). The imputation that she surrendered her chastity so easily undermines "the less fortified ego of Posthumus" (Schwartz, "Fantasy" 230). Posthumus's experience of Imogen as an idealized selfobject is shattered: "Let there be no honour/ Where there is beauty: truth, where semblance: love,/ Where there's another man" (2.4.108-10). His world view crumbles and he succumbs to incoherent rage "[q]uite besides/ The government of patience" (2.4.149-50).

Why does Posthumus enter the wager to begin with? Once he is banished from Britain, he acquires the attributes of Jaques's soldier: "Jealous in honour, sudden, and quick in quarrel" (AYL.2.7.151). Posthumus brawls with Cloten, quarrels with drinking companions in France, and feels compelled to prove his honour among peers in Italy by affirming that of his mistress back home. Far from home and deprived of Imogen's selfobject responses, Posthumus enters into the wager because it is a way to elicit affirmation from peers who cannot see past his obscure origins or status as a foreigner. He agrees to the strict terms of the wager to guarantee that, when Iachimo is proven wrong, Posthumus will enjoy a legally binding victory over him. Indeed, the scene's legalistic vocabulary of "articles," "covenant[s]" and "lawful counsel" (Cym. 1.5.153-54, 162-63) indicates that Posthumus has learned from the capricious distribution of kudos in an English court where honour "hath as oft a sland'rous epitaph/ As record of fair act" (3.3.52-53). Iachimo's loss will ensure Posthumus's gain, and no man will be able to withhold praise.7

7 Critical opinion on his motives for the wager is sharply divided. David M. Bergeron views the men's sexual boasting as mere "locker room bravado" (164), whereas Homer Swander sees it as a love-test: "for a courtly lover and a knight, his response to the offered wager
Posthumus's notorious "Woman's Part" speech articulates the kind of chaotic, infantile anger which, when combined with his adult capacity for reasoning and subterfuge, becomes narcissistic rage. If Imogen besmirches his reputation, then she must be destroyed. But Posthumus states that he must also

find out

The woman's part in me—for there's no motion
That tends to vice in man, but I affirm
It is the woman's part: be it lying, note it,
The woman's: flattering, hers; deceiving, hers:
Lust, and rank thoughts, hers, hers . . . .

(2.4.171-76)

Not only has Posthumus failed to transform Italian peers into mirroring selfobjects, now he must excise the "part" of himself that is occupied by Imogen. While this speech has been viewed as a wooden tirade—"vehement, doctrinaire, terrified misogyny" (Lenz, Greene and Neely, Introduction 14)—Posthumus is not a conventional stage misogynist who "opens his antifeminist remarks by affecting to hate himself because born of woman" (Woodbridge, Women 281). His pain and self-loathing are real, not affected. He lacks the psychological resources to withstand this apparent abandonment.

The speech represents the play's turning point as Posthumus enters a "liminal" period between an old identity as trusting husband and a new one of enraged cuckold. "Liminality" is characterized by great insecurity, as individuals are stripped of former status markers and undergo momentous changes facilitated by conformity to a group of other liminal

meets perfectly the demands of the chivalric code" (259). Certainly the narrator of The Rape of Lucrece disapproves of "unwise" boasting that pits husbands like Collatine against lusty class superiors: "why is Collatine the publisher/ Of that rich jewel he should keep unknown/ From thievish ears . . . ?" (Luc. 10, 33-35). As Nancy Vickers puts it, "Collatine becomes a foolish orator . . . blamed for not knowing when to stop" ("Blazon" 100).
"passengers" (V. Turner 94-95; cf. Berry 4). Shakespeare intuits modern anthropology's explanation of conformist transitional behaviour by reducing his character "to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endow[ing him] with additional powers to enable [him] to cope with [his] new station in life" (V. Turner 95). When Posthumus concludes his tirade by vowing to "write against" women (2.4.183), Shakespeare invokes the collective rage of liminal passengers—that imaginary "brotherhood of all married men as potential if not actual cuckolds" (Kahn, Man's 124)—and pokes fun at antifeminist pamphleteers of his day (Nosworthy 73 note). He also hints at Posthumus's plan to write a letter ordering Imogen's murder.

Posthumus's self is deeply imbedded in Imogen, whom Janet Adelman calls the play's "primary defining figure, defining herself, her husband, and the dramatic focus for the audience" (Suffocating 210). He does not love her as an independent other with intrinsic worth, nor does he view her as a mere ornament whose fidelity is her only virtue. His exploitative dependence on her as a selfobject contains the seeds of what could potentially blossom into a more mature form of object love. Posthumus is absent from the stage in Acts Three and Four, but he re-emerges in Act Five as a member of the invading Roman army which he quickly deserts to join the British defending armies. It is at this nadir as imaginary cuckold, murderer, traitor and unwelcome prodigal son returned home that Posthumus undergoes one of the most stunning changes in a Shakespearean character.

The repair of Posthumus's shattered self is dramatized in three stages, involving the de-idealization of Imogen (he has a change of heart), the repair of his own damaged self-esteem (through battlefield heroics), and the empathic mirroring of his family (seen in his
dream vision). The process begins when Posthumus is symbolically reunited with a
synecdoche of murdered Imogen, a "bloody cloth" (5.1.1). He forgives her even though he
still believes her to be guilty of adultery:

You married ones,
If each of you should take this course, how many
Must murder wives much better than themselves
For wrying but a little?

(5.1.2-5)

This instance of forgiveness is almost unique among Shakespeare's jealous husbands (Parten, "Cuckoldry" 364-66). Posthumus seems to be following recommendations for husbands found in the Elizabethan "Homily of the State of Matrimony": "[they] ought to wink at some things, and must gently expound all things, and to forbear" (448). With the passage of time has come remorse for murder, forgiveness of her (perceived) sins, and the realization that true love can withstand a single breach of fidelity—a change of heart similar to advice found in The Horn Exalted:

We create treacheries by suspecting them, and make others guilty by being by our fears our own executioners . . . . 'Tis a piece of humanity to be ignorant of some things, and 'tis among the virtues of a husband not to pry into all. The best faces may have a spot . . . . [yet] be without durt or mire and pollution. Think not we marry with Angels.

(G. Rogers 64)

Only when wives are idealized as angels, do single spots become pollution. Realizing this, Posthumus no longer needs to remove the tainted "woman's part" in him. Instead he will repair his shattered self-esteem (which is already on the mend) through individual heroism in honour of Imogen's memory.

In the next stage of his reparative process, Posthumus dons a Briton peasant's garb
and sets out to generate praise through heroic actions: "Let me make men know/ More valour in me than my habits show" (5.1.29-30). He will do heroic deeds in Imogen's honour, not gain status because of her honour. At the same time, he will compel mirroring responses ("make men know") from those predisposed to scorn him. Soldierly successes will compensate for his failures as a husband, and his heroic rescue of Cymbeline suggests that he is truly willing to seek "the bubble reputation/ Even in the cannon's mouth" (AYL 2.7.152-53). To begin with, in a disordered skirmish Posthumus bests Iachimo who attributes his defeat to Imogen's slander:

The heaviness and guilt within my bosom
Takes off my manhood: I have belied a lady,
The princess of this country; and the air on't
Revengingly enfeebles me, or could this carl,
A very drudge of Nature's, have subdued me
In my profession?

(Cym. 5.2.1-6)

It is not clear whether Posthumus recognizes his opponent, but under the terms of the wager they were to fight only if Imogen was proven innocent--and Posthumus has already accepted her guilt. Perhaps Shakespeare is merely satisfying audiences who wish to see a showdown between slanderous Roman and patriotic Briton, adulterous intruder and defender of hearth and home.

Posthumus describes his second major encounter with Rome in a remarkable speech that begins with the fragmentation and retreat of the "broken" British army (5.3.3-7), but ends with four novice soldiers led by Posthumus turning the tide of battle: "now our cowards/ Like fragments in hard voyages became/ The life o' th' need" (5.3.43-45). Thus a man who formerly begged scraps from the King's table now supplies the feast. Following the rescue,
however, Posthumus surrenders to the British—a suicidal act because no one will ransom an
unknown soldier. Because those he most needs to impress are all deceased—his parents,
brothers, and above all his wife ("O Imogen,/ I'll speak to thee in silence" [5.4.28-29])—
Posthumus anticipates a reward in the hereafter: "my ransom's death" (5.3.80).

While in custody awaiting execution, Posthumus has a dream vision that has elicited
much psychoanalytic speculation because it dramatizes, in a spectacular manner, the hero's
"inner world" (Westlund "Self" 203). Westlund argues that his abjection in custody suggests
a despair that "must stem in large part from losing Imogen, but it is more diffuse and global
than we might expect from such a loss" ("Self" 205). I believe that Posthumus's despair
stems primarily from the loss of Imogen because she functioned as a stand-in for parental
selfobjects denied him. Before the dream, Posthumus addresses the gods, retracting his
earlier analogy between Imogen's infidelity, his bastardy, and counterfeit coins:

For Imogen's dear life take mine, and though
'Tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life; you coin'd it:
'Tween man and man they weigh not every stamp;
Though light, take pieces for the figure's sake . . . .

(5.4.22-25)

In other words, a wife's "wrying but a little" is analogous to coins that are counterfeit ("light")
though artfully made. Such coins may still function as currency: "If you will take this audit,
take this life" (5.4.27). He has accepted the unreliable nature of human responses and the
intrinsic worth of other people, however imperfect. For this enormous perceptual maturation,
Posthumus is rewarded with the dream vision in which he receives unconditional love from
his family. In the dream, Sicilius reassures his son of his intrinsic worth and legitimacy: "he
deserved the praise o' th' world,/ as great Sicilius' heir" (5.4.50-51). Posthumus's brothers
praise his martial prowess. And, most importantly, he is informed that his jealousy is "needless" (5.4.63-68), thus clearing Imogen of all wrongdoing. Soon after, Jupiter descends and declares that Posthumus "shall be lord of lady Imogen./ And happier much by his affliction made" (5.4.107-08). This dream (though staged externally) emanates from within Posthumus. The dream symbolizes the imaginative, self-soothing function of internalized sources of confirmation and pride, "a family (and a deity) who mirror his worth and sustain him" (Westlund, "Self" 207). Marianne Novy calls the dream "an epiphany of continuing parental care" (Love's 170). Now he can reassure himself that his marital status and martial prowess are worthy of respect.

These two victories over chaos and fragmentation (of Posthumus, of the army) are the turning point of the play, the remainder of which concerns putting things back together: Posthumus's marriage, the royal family and the Roman Empire. When the identity of the poor soldier is revealed in the final scene, Iachimo kneels before his vanquisher--"I am down again" (5.5.413)--and Cymbeline pardons his noble son-in-law. Posthumus has "made men know" of his virtue. He has found a true calling, not as courtly hanger-on, imaginary cuckold or exiled traveller, but as national hero whose actions speak louder than slanderous words.

In Imogen, Shakespeare depicts a pattern of jealousy that confirms the etiology of her husband's anxiety and contributes to the characterization of both spouses. Shakespeare reiterates his general thesis about jealousy by exploring it from another angle. Without rewriting a "childhood of Shakespeare's heroine," we can infer that Imogen was as "slackly guarded" as the two stolen princes (1.1.64), especially by her wicked step-mother. Imogen compensates for isolation at court by merging with her spouse whose banishment likewise
throws her into a jealous panic. In fact, she articulates jealousy long before Posthumus does. Despite his vow to be the "loyal'st husband that did e'er plight troth" (1.2.27), she anticipates him "woo[ing] another wife" when she is dead (1.2.44). Soon after, she complains that their hurried leave-taking prevented her from exacting a promise that "[t]he shes of Italy should not betray/ Mine interest, and his honour" (1.4.29-30). Iachimo exacerbates her fear by insinuating that Posthumus is lavishing her coffers on hired "tomboys" abroad (1.7.122). When Iachimo's ruse is exposed, she is reassured of her husband's chastity. But then she does something decidedly strange.

Just as Posthumus wagers his ring against her chastity in Rome, Imogen offers collateral for Iachimo's trunk in England: she will "pawn [her] honour for their safety" (1.7.194). This generous offer--made to a stranger who has just tried to seduce her--is too significant to be explained away as merely one more plot contrivance. Her eagerness for acceptance and respect (e.g., she wants to prove that she can be trusted with gifts of state) is a misguided attempt to compensate for her precarious position in a court where she "abide[s] the hourly shot/ Of angry eyes" (1.2.20-21). Imogen lays her marriage on the line to elicit a mirroring response that will bolster her damaged self esteem. Ironically, in safeguarding a trunk of jewels, she loses Posthumus's bracelet. In effect, as with Posthumus, she both wins and loses her wager.

After making the trip to Wales and discovering that her husband suspects her, Imogen's self-esteem plummets further and she quickly assumes the worst: "Some jay of Italy/ (Whose mother was her painting) hath betray'd him:/ Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion" (3.4.50-52). In a seminal article about the transcultural features of jealousy,
Margaret Mead proposed that it arises out of threats to self-esteem: "However varied the social setting, it will be seen to be the threatened self-esteem . . . which reacts jealously" (38). She went on to argue that

Throughout history, with a few rare exceptions, women have been the insecure sex. Their status, their freedom of action, their very economic existence, their right over their own children, has been dependent upon their preservation of their personal relations with men . . . . The wife threatened with the loss of her husband's affection, fidelity, interest, or loyalty, whichever point her society has defined as the pivot of wifely tenure, sees the very roots of her social existence being cut from beneath her. (Mead 46, emphasis in original)

In this light, it is not surprising that the misperception that "[s]ome Roman courtezan" has stolen Posthumus induces suicidal despair in an otherwise courageous heroine (3.4.125). The injury to Imogen's self-esteem causes fragmentation: "I must be ripp'd:—to pieces with me!" (3.4.54). Fortunately, Imogen has a sensible companion, Pisanio, who recommends that she disguise herself and wait for the Roman ambassador to bring news of Posthumus. Pisanio's instructions echo Jaques's description of the soldier: she must exchange her fear for "waggish courage" and be "[r]eady in gibes, quick-answer'd, saucy, and/ As quarrelous as the weasel" (Cym. 3.4.159-61). As D. E. Landry points out, Imogen's "masculine disguise further identifies her with the absent Posthumus" (70). In particular, she changes from lover to soldier in order to repair the damage caused by her partner's perceived infidelity: "This attempt/ I am soldier to, and will abide it with/ A prince's courage" (3.4.184-86). While Imogen's transformation is largely symbolic, there is a brief episode of soldierly aggression in which she blusters her way into the cave of Belarius and the princes, sword drawn and swaggering like a man (3.6.24-26).
The final link between Imogen's cycle of separation-suspicion-restoration and that of her husband occurs during the famous dirge sung by her long-lost brothers at her apparent death: "Fear no more the heat o' th' sun" (4.2.258-81). This moving funeral ceremony and song anticipates (in its pageantry, as well as in its emotional impact) the dream vision in which Posthumus is reunited with his family. Just as Posthumus is assured of his wife's constancy, Imogen is assured of her status as faithful wife and her husband's fidelity: "Fear not slander, censure rash" (4.2.272). Furthermore, just as Posthumus wakes from his dream only to sink temporarily into further despair--"Gone! they went hence so soon as they were born" (5.4.126)--so too does Imogen when she finds headless corpse of Cloten whom she mistakes for her husband (4.2.296-332). The ensuing scene foreshadows the reunion of husband and wife as a single corporal "building"; when Lucius discovers a seemingly dead page (Imogen) sleeping on a headless trunk, he says, "[t]he ruin speaks that sometime/ It was a worthy building" (4.2.354-55). Although a gruesome joke at Cloten's expense, the scene also introduces an emblem of marriage that is completed when Imogen hangs from the figurative trunk of Posthumus "like fruit" on a tree in the play's closing scene (5.5.263-64).

The parallel jealousies of Imogen and Posthumus suggest that a Renaissance man's identity was as contingent as a Renaissance woman's.⁸ Without erasing systematic inequities imposed on women, I would argue that what Mikalachki says about Imogen--that she "derives her identity" from "a series of alliances with the male characters" (321)--is also true for Posthumus. His status depends upon his legitimacy, the chastity of his wife, and his

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⁸ Parten outlines numerous "points of correspondence" between Imogen and her husband, and concludes that the play presents the two in parallel in order to repudiate "misogynist versions of the idea of sexual imbalance" ("Cuckoldry" 353-64).
performance in war—all of which are misinterpreted by peer groups before the play's final resolution. Paula S. Berggren argues that Posthumus desires nothing more than superficial fidelity from Imogen:

In his colossal self-absorption, Posthumus typifies the tragic hero, who demands compliant fidelity from women and little more. An extension of her husband rather than an autonomous object of desire, Imogen has chosen her disguise name wisely—Fidele. ("Woman's" 28)

However, this view perpetuates a common misconception that those with narcissistic tendencies are self-absorbed, rather than acutely dependent on others. Posthumus demands "compliant fidelity" from Imogen and much more: the mirroring and idealized responses that prop up his radically enfeebled self during transitional periods. Shakespeare presents in Cymbeline a number of quests for absolute purity (chaste wives, legitimate children, non-counterfeited coins). Over the course of the play, these are tempered into searches for functional reliability, trust and forgiveness. Hence Posthumus's change of heart in Act 5: Imogen is not perfectly faithful, but she is more reliable than anyone else he has ever met.

Many accounts of the ending Cymbeline focus on the cure of individuals, the reunion of families, and the resumption of diplomatic ties with Rome, as evidence of the harmony that typically closes romance; a "preoccupation with unity" extends to all levels of the play (Nosworthy lxxx). Yet to some, the play fails to link its disparate plot elements. By Skura's count, there are "twenty separate strands of action" yoked by three main plots and the result is "confusing" ("Interpreting" 203). The play's Arden editor complains that "[t]emporal and spatial cohesion are not achieved" (Nosworthy xxxii). Yet a reading of Cymbeline in which Posthumus's self is the play's centripetal centre, offers a more optimistic conclusion.
Remembering Kohut's definition of the self as a unit "cohesive" in space and "enduring" in time (Restoration 99), the restoration of cohesion to individual selves is closely related to other elements of the play; "[b]y a series of analogies, the experience of Posthumus and Imogen comes to represent that of the whole community of Cymbeline's kingdom" (Landry 69). By banishing the spectre of cuckoldry, forgiving opponents (Iachimo and Rome), and eradicating the real pollution in the royal family (the Queen and Cloten) the play ends with a supportive family environment which guarantees selfobject responses to those who need to establish more mature interpersonal relations.⁹ "Hang there like fruit, my soul,/ Till the tree die" is how Posthumus expresses his delight at this newfound stability (5.5.263-64), and the Soothsayer's interpretation of the oracle's riddle confirms his wish: "mulier I divine/ Is this most constant wife" (5.5.449-50).

Cymbeline depicts characters forced to reshuffle their selves--"shift [their] being" (1.6.54)--without adequate selfobject support. Isolated from the person who, as selfobject, sustains their fledgling self structures and who, as faithful spouse, demarcates their social identity, both Imogen and Posthumus prove themselves "soldier to" trials that culminate in their fighting on either side of a national conflict--one as page to the Roman commander, the other as heroic defender of his King (3.4.185). In a unifying structural parallel, Imogen's perceived unruly behaviour (her infidelity) is forgiven by Posthumus and then it is shown not to have existed--just as England's unruly behaviour (its refusal to pay tribute) is defended before this rebellion vanishes into air: "Although the victor, we submit to Cæsar" (5.5.461).

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⁹ On the "strange unity" of Cymbeline, see Landry 68-79. St. Pierre concludes that cuckoldry "threatens the entire fabric of English society" but that "the lore of cuckoldry [is] defeated by chastity, patience and [a] willingness to pardon" (134-35).
Moral and military victories are set aside in favour of unity, compromise and a peace acceptable to all. In the next chapter, I will explore a play which likewise presents jealousy in a man who undergoes many transitions: warrior to husband to imaginary cuckold to justice. However, in Othello there are no magical visions, family reunions, or wishful vindications of chastity to mitigate a tragic outcome. Where Cymbeline presents Shakespeare's most optimistic account of cuckoldry anxiety overcome, Othello presents his most bleak account of its devastating effects.
Part IV:

The Justice
Chapter Ten

"Fear not my government":

Cuckoldry and Justice in Othello

In a 1978 collaboration, Heinz Kohut and Ernest S. Wolf argue that whereas orthodox psychoanalysts seek to uncover "grossly traumatic events" experienced during childhood, self psychologists should consider such events to be "no more than clues that point to the truly pathogenic factors, the unwholesome atmosphere to which the child was exposed during the years when his self was established" (369). Because the construction of a self is an ongoing process, adults are also shaped by the "the chronic ambience created by the deep-rooted attitudes of the selfobjects" (Kohut and Wolf 369)--in particular during reshufflings of the self caused by, among other things, "moves from one culture to another; from private life into the army" (Kohut, "Thoughts" 623). Othello is a play suffused with such transitions, and its settings in Venice and Cyprus present "unwholesome atmospheres" of instability for the reshuffling of Iago's, Cassio's and Othello's selves. There is an instability of military rank that sees soldiers promoted and demoted in the blink of an eye. There is an instability of occupation and locale that sees warriors spend a hiatus in Venetian society, then be thrust into the breach by a Turkish naval attack, only to end up guarding a dull military outpost. Above all, there is an interpersonal instability that sees men negotiate love-relationships in a misogynous culture that values the false camaraderie of soldiers over marriage. Life changes and culture shock are the stuff of Othello, prompting Michael Neill to call it "a tragedy of displacement" ("Changing" 115).
Iago, Cassio, and Othello all experience "grossly traumatic events" that seem to determine their characters: Iago's and Othello's marriages are shaken by imputations of infidelity, and Cassio's career is compromised by a drunken brawl. Such problems could be overcome by personal trust, but instead are made worse by pressures exerted by a civilian culture that encourages the misogynous suspicion of women, and by a military code that raises honour to a cult-like state. In sum, single traumata are less deterministic of character than are chronic psychological and environmental problems. I begin this chapter by examining Iago's perception of himself as a wronged soldier and a cuckolded husband, two insecurities that prompt him to adopt a defensive posture as military and social expert dispensing career advice to Cassio and marital tips to Othello. Then I turn to Cassio who exemplifies Venetian military culture's contradictory impulse to idealize and degrade women: the "right kind" of woman can inspire soldiers to greatness, but association with the "wrong kind" proves a liability to one's career. Once married, soldiers cannot abandon the postures illustrated by Cassio, ones inimical to conjugal trust and happiness. Iago and Cassio set the stage for my interpretation of Othello, a man faced with transitions from bachelorhood to married life, and from warring general to peacetime governor. Personal weaknesses aggravated by selfobject betrayals and a poisonous atmosphere destroy a hero who hitherto survived "hair-breadth scapes i'th' imminent deadly breach" (Oth. 1.3.137).

Othello opens and closes with the narcissistic rage of old, not young, soldiers. Initially, it is Iago who lashes out after receiving massive personal affronts, and by play's end his condition is transferred to Othello. Recently passed over for promotion, Iago is a career soldier whose career is going nowhere. Twenty-eight years old and nearing the end of his
fighting prime,¹ Iago has become an anachronism in the Venetian army where battle-hardened soldiers are valued less than "bookish theoretic[s]" (1.1.23). Compared to Iago's achievements, Cassio's are "[m]ere prattle without practice" (1.1.25). In belittling the new lieutenant, Iago reveals an underlying anxiety about his own future in the military:

Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave  
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,  
Wears out his time much like his master's ass  
For nought but provender, and, when he's old, cashiered.

(1.1.44-47)

Iago denies that he is such an "ass," instead pretending loyalty to the general like those who throw "shows of service" at superiors, "and, when they have lined their coats,/ Do themselves homage" (1.1.51-53). "Lining a coat" connotes filling one's pockets with money (OED v.1.3); in Iago's case, saving for retirement in an era without pensions (Draper, Othello 141-46).

Iago's current rank, "ancient," punningly emphasizes this impending obsolescence (1.3.284). Though Iago repeatedly mentions his battlefield experience (e.g., 1.2.1; 3.4.135-40), his fellow soldiers praise his honesty, not his courage; Iago is simply "not acceptable as 'officer material'" (Honigmann 37). When preparing for sea-battle with the Turks, Othello

¹ Iago is "four time seven years" old (1.3.313), a curious method of counting that prompts the play's most recent Arden editor, E. A. J. Honigmann to ask "Why does Shakespeare make such a point of Iago's precise age?" (155 note). If each of Jaques's ages lasts roughly seven years, then Iago has been an infant, a schoolboy, a lover, and is now a soldier nearing the end of this particular phase (age 21-28). In more conventional "seven-year" lifespan models, it is the fifth age that comprises soldierly aggression under the influence of the planet Mars (McLerran and McKee 136-38; Sears 38-53).

² Iago is still a decade away from the average retirement age, but "unless he can advance himself . . . he [will] be dismissed to declining years of want" (Draper, Othello 145-46). This was true of many occupations; in As You Like It, old Adam has saved up "five hundred crowns" for his retirement because he anticipates that after a lifetime of household service has rendered him "lame" he will end up like "unregarded age in corners thrown" (2.3.38-42).
assigns him duties unbecoming one who "in the trade of war . . . [has] slain men" (1.2.1): "To his conveyance I assign my wife./ With what else needful your good grace shall think/ To be sent after me" (1.3.286-88). Iago is to sail at the rear with the women and supplies—an important responsibility, to be sure, but hardly a glorious one.

Iago's complaint about Prattling superiors underscores the fact that military service is gauged by reputation, eye-witness reports and personal testimony. Good report, like modern academic peer-review, is crucial for advancement in the Venetian army. To accuse a soldier of the adult rhetorical crime of prating, or the childish one of Prattling, is to question his abilities, his accomplishments, his rank. Iago complains that Othello is a prater, "[h]orribly stuffed with epithets of war" (1.1.13). Cassio, on the other hand, prattles like a child.

Neither deserves his position. Othello starts the play supremely confident—braving Brabantio's charges of abduction (1.2.18-19)—and is thus promoted to military governor (more on this promotion below). Iago has failed to impress his achievements upon his superiors, and is thus passed over for promotion.

Iago has a second reason to despise Cassio: he never misses an opportunity to rub salt in Iago's wounded pride. In particular, Cassio "gall[s]" Iago's patience by greeting Emilia with a kiss before the garrison in Cyprus, mocking her husband in the process: '"tis my breeding/ That gives me this bold show of courtesy" (2.1.97-99). Time and again, Cassio is

3 After Iago exchanges bawdy witticisms with Desdemona in Cyprus, Cassio declares, "you may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar" (2.1.165-66)—thus reminding Iago of Cassio's superior breeding and education. Later Cassio pulls rank when quibbling over who is to be saved on doomsday: "not before me," he jokes, "[t]he lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient" (2.3.105-06). Cassio also questions Iago's ability to supervise the watch: "Iago hath direction what to do,/ But notwithstanding with my personal eye/ Will I look to't" (2.3.4-6). For a suggestive interpretation of Iago's various humiliations, see Zender 323-39.
courteous where Iago is merely crude, prompting the latter to complain: "He hath a daily beauty in his life/ That makes me ugly" (5.1.19-20). Emilia's kiss confirms Iago's suspicion that she has cuckolded him with other soldiers. Before departing for Cyprus, Iago explains:

I hate the Moor
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets
He's done my office. I know not if't be true,
But I for mere suspicion in that kind
Will do as if for surety.

(1.3.385-89)

No other Shakespearean character states so succinctly the essence of what Russ McDonald refers to as "imaginary" cuckoldry (51-67). It does not matter whether allegations are true or false; what matters is the man's (mis)perception and response: "[in] the introspective soliloquy . . . the imaginary cuckold sounds the depths of his misery or contemplates the most brutal forms of revenge" (McDonald 55). Once abroad, Iago repeats the allegation concerning Othello and Emilia (2.1.289-97), and confesses that he "fear[s] Cassio with [his] night-cap too" (2.1.305). Humiliated professionally and personally by both men, Iago plans his revenge.

Iago's suspicion may have been fostered by a sequence of events suggestively described by Emilia. At some point before the events of the play, a companion insinuated himself into Iago's trust and then betrayed him by slandering Emilia: "some such squire he was/ That turned your wit the seamy side without/ And made you to suspect me with the Moor" (4.2.147-49). Like so many narratives in Othello, Emilia's tale is unverifiable; however, it is plausible in that it accounts for what Karl F. Zender describes as the "essential dynamic of Iago's character": a "recognition of inadequacy, followed by anger" (331). In the
play itself, Iago repeats the cycle with the roles reversed, gaining others' trust, exposing their inadequacies, inciting them to anger, then directing their responses. Though of lower military rank and inferior educational background, Iago performs idealized selfobject functions (convincing others of his expertise) and mirroring selfobject functions (reassuring others that he loves them). Iago ministers to impressionable charges who "will as tenderly be led by th' nose/ As asses are" (1.3.400-01). Iago thus transforms himself from a military man taken for granted, and a family man taken advantage of, by his superiors into an indispensable selfobject for them.

Perhaps Iago's greatest professional liability is his marriage to Emilia, a woman who by her own admission is not averse to the idea of infidelity (e.g., to secure professional advancement, she wonders, "who would not make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for't" [4.3.74-76]). In the military, cuckoldry has the opposite effect, damaging a man's reputation and hence his ability to command soldiers. In an era when even chaste wives were considered a hindrance to their husbands' careers, men such as Francis Bacon articulated ambivalence about married life:

He that hath Wife and Children, hath given Hostages to Fortune; for they are Impediments, to great Enterprises, either of Vertue, or Mischiefe. Certainly, the best workes, and of greatest Merit for the Publike, have proceeded from the unmarried, or Childlesse Men:

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4 Iago also practises these roles on the impressionable Roderigo, though space limitations prevent me from exploring this exploitative relationship. Iago's motives and jealousy have been as carefully documented as Othello's. See, for example, Jane Adamson, Othello 64-106; Adelman, "Iago's" 125-44; Draper, Othello 136-65; Heilman 25-98; Muir 65-83; and Parten, "Cuckoldry" 291-337. Carol Thomas Neely argues that Othello is premised upon the fact that Renaissance ideals of male friendship are undermined by reigning vanity, rivalry and "preoccupation with rank and reputation" ("Women" 223-24). This atmosphere of mistrust renders men incapable of true friendship.
which, both in Affection, and Meanes, have married and endowed the Publicke. (24-25, italics in original)

This prejudice stems from the notion that sexual activity depletes a soldier's fighting spirit, an attitude which may have contributed to Othello's long delay in entering what he calls the "circumscription and confine" of marriage (1.2.27). Othello was married to his work and thrived: Iago married Emilia and his career is in a rut.

In this context, ambitious Cassio is particularly reluctant to marry. He greets Desdemona with effusive courtesy in public--"O, behold,/ The riches of the ship is come ashore!" (2.1.82-83)--and idealizes her privately as "exquisite," "delicate," and "perfection" itself (2.3.18-25). On the other side of Cassio's Madonna/whore divide lies Bianca, whom he avoids in public--"[I] think it no addition, nor my wish./ To have [Othello] see me womaned" (3.4.194-95)--and berates in private. When confronted by a rumour that she wishes to marry him, Cassio scoffs, "I marry! What, a customer! prithee, bear some charity to my wit" (4.1.120-21). Whereas Desdemona's ministrations promise to get Cassio reinstated, Bianca's doting seems more likely to get him further demoted. When he is later wounded by an unknown assailant and Iago blames Bianca as "a party in this injury" (5.1.86), Cassio says nothing in her defense. She is hauled off to prison and her life may be at stake, but Cassio's

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5 On Renaissance views of the depletion of martial strength caused by sexual activity, see Vaughan 36-37; and Calderwood 76-77. According to Freud, the fear of "being weakened by the woman, infected with her femininity" was a taboo characteristic of "primitive man" who practised sexual abstinence before and during military campaigns ("Taboo" 270-71).

6 Bianca embarrasses Cassio in front of his peers and interferes with his military duties: "she haunts me in every place. I was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians, and thither comes this bauble and, by this hand, falls me thus about my neck" (4.1.133-35). He must accompany her home to prevent her from "rail[ing] in the streets" (4.1.160).
career comes first.

Cassio's public disdain for Bianca stems from his adherence to an exacting military code in which a single mistake can ruin a man's reputation, even his career. Prattling, prating and appearing "womaned" are to be avoided; so is getting drunk. Othello asserts that a soldier who shirks his duties for love should incur public humiliation: "Let housewives make a skillet of [his] helm" (1.3.273). He also warns soldiers not to "outsport discretion" by drinking on duty (2.3.3)—a view confirmed by Montano who vows not to consume more than a pint "as [he] is a soldier" (2.3.62-63). Montano later warns Iago that if he speaks untruthfully, "[t]hou art no soldier" (2.3.216), and Desdemona's clown points out that "to say a soldier lies, 'tis stabbing" (3.4.5-6). Because rank is so tenuous, reputation is not to be trifled with. This code transforms battle-hardened soldiers into fearful conformists behind the lines. During the night-watch scene, Cassio submits to peer pressure, drinks, and ends up attacking Roderigo for "prat[ing]" and wounding Montano for calling him "drunk" (2.3.146, 151-52). Consequently demoted and humiliated before the garrison by an angry Othello, Cassio prattles about his lost "[r]eputation, reputation, reputation!" (2.3.258). At this point, Iago assumes the selfobject mantle to soothe and guide his new charge.

Iago's performance of selfobject functions during Cassio's reshuffling of the self serves as a dry run for Iago's manipulation of Othello (to be examined shortly). Iago reassures Cassio that he is being "too severe a moraler" (2.3.294), encourages him to sue for reinstatement ("[y]ou are in the right" [2.3.328]), and promises to help him "in the sincerity of love and honest kindness" (2.3.322-23). Iago also professes an insider's understanding of the general's motives, explaining that the way to command Othello is through Desdemona:
"Our general's wife is now the general" (2.3.309-10). Cassio gains confidence from Iago's mirroring, and idealizes this plain-speaking soldier ("[y]ou advise me well" [2.3.321]) because he voices familiar truisms about misplaced authority and the perils of marriage. As mentioned earlier, a single traumatic event has less influence on an individual's self-structure than the surrounding self-object environment. Desdemona points out that Cassio could overcome his demotion by waiting until the scandal subsides and Othello calms down (3.2.10-13), but Cassio sues for immediate reinstatement because he fears "[t]hat I being absent and my place supplied/ My general will forget my love and service" (3.2.17-18).

Influenced by Iago, the garrison's archetypal cuckold-soldier, Cassio behaves like a jealous husband who, because of an enforced absence, fears that Othello will turn his attention elsewhere.7

Having honed his technique on Cassio, Iago turns his attention to Othello, another soldier "[j]ealous in honour" who stumbles during his transition to peace-time lover (AYL 2.7.151). Othello's anxieties in love are exacerbated by the fact that he as old as his new bride's father (Vaughan 76; Kirsch 724); "Brabantio invited the Moor to his house as a

7 As suggested by Cassio's fear that Othello will "forget [his] love," periodic absences are a common feature of certain occupations. According to one self-help manual popular in Shakespeare's day, The French Academie, all men should take care: "A Wife without her husband is exposed to many ambushes and assaults that are hardly sustained" (La Primoudaye 209). Soldiers and sailors figure prominently in cuckold lore because they routinely leave their wives at home unsupervised. The cuckoldy fate of absent soldiers informs the popular Amphytrion myth dramatized by Plautus, Molière, Dryden and others. As for sailors, in the sub-plot of John Webster's and William Rowley's 1625 comedy, A Cure for a Cuckold, Compass returns home after three years lost at sea to find his wife Urse has given birth in his absence. The sailor adopts the child as his own because, as he puts it, cuckoldry is an occupational hazard: "our chil[dr]en [sic] come uncertainly, as the winde serves: sometimes here we are supposed to be away three or four year together" (2.3.54-56).
respected contemporary, not as a potential suitor for his daughter's hand" (Stavropoulos 129). Rather than disguise this disparity, however, at every turn Othello emphasizes his infirmities, suggesting that advancing age is as critical to his psychological make-up as his race. He is a once-great hero on the verge of decline, and he employs selfobjects to restore cohesion to his fragile self. When events conspire to wrest him from the affectionate ministrations of Desdemona, the once confident Othello becomes a self-conscious student of Iago's "contaminating commonplaces" (Poisson 387; cf. St. Pierre 95-111).

Numerous passages attest to Othello's advancing age and self-consciousness about physical decline. In the play's opening scene, Iago wakes Brabantio in a passage that is usually cited for its use of bestial imagery to decry miscegenation: "an old black ram/ Is tupping your white ewe!" (1.1.87-88; Adelman, "Iago's" 129-30). By making Othello an "old" ram, however, Iago also articulates a Renaissance prejudice against January-May marriages (Stavropoulos 125-28). As Shakespeare writes in The Passionate Pilgrim, "[c]rabbed age and youth cannot live together" largely because of their disparity in (sexual) stamina: "Youth is full of sport, age's breath is short" (12.1-5). Iago lewdly suggests that

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8 For a detailed examination of Othello's age, see Stavropoulos 125-41. On Othello's racial difference, see the seminal discussions found in Fiedler 117-64 and Hunter 139-63; more recent studies include M. Neill, "Unproper" 117-45; Newman, "'Wash'" 143-62; and Honigmann's updated introduction to the Arden Shakespeare edition of Othello, 27-31.

9 The Passionate Pilgrim is also cited in Minois 282-83. The proverbial shortness of breath displays itself in the final scene of Othello where the exhausted warrior is disarmed by Montano: "I am not valiant neither./ But every puny whipster gets my sword" (5.2.241-42). Honigmann identifies numerous passages, such as Brabantio's scornful "[l]ook to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:/ She has deceived her father, and may thee" (1.3.293-94), to suggest yet another "infirmity"; namely, that Othello is "an ageing Moor with failing vision" (Honigmann 17-19). For a seminal survey of elderly characters in Shakespeare's plays, see Draper, "Shakespeare's" 118-26. Discussions of old age in Renaissance culture include
Desdemona is "sport for Jove" (Oth. 2.3.17; cf. Partridge 188). Yet she is not lusty, and he is no Jove—as he candidly admits in his request to take her with him to Cyprus:

Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not
To please the palate of my appetite,
Nor to comply with heat, the young affects
In me defunct, and proper satisfaction,
But to be free and bounteous to her mind.

(1.3.262-66)\(^{10}\)

Othello is caught in conflicting stereotypes: if his "affects" (sexual urges) are "defunct," then this impotent husband may be an easy target for cuckoldry; but if he is sexually active, then society may scorn him as lascivious. Iago plays this both ways, portraying Othello as a "lascivious" old man whose "gross[ly] clasps" his wife (1.1.124), and as an impotent dotard:

When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be,
again to inflame it, and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in
favour, sympathy in years, manners and beauties, all which the Moor is
defective in.

(2.1.224-28)

There is an undeniable lack of "sympathy in years" between Othello and his bride. At times, they seem at cross-purposes, such as during their reunion in Cyprus. Othello states he could happily "die" now because "not another comfort like to this/ Succeeds in unknown fate" (2.1.187-91). Desdemona disagrees: "our loves and comforts should increase/ Even as our
days do grow" (2.1.192-93). This reunion is the culmination of his joys, but merely the beginning of hers. Thus an old husband who reminisces about past glories is confronted by a

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Bromley 46-50; Minois 249-302; S. Smith 125-41; and Thomas, "Age" 205-48. See also my Conclusion, below.

\(^{10}\) The 1622 Quarto and 1623 First Folio editions are corrupted to read "my distinct" instead of "me defunct," thus obscuring Othello's anxiety about ageing. For details concerning this textual crux, see Honigmann 152 note; N. Sanders 79, 189 notes.
young wife eager for new adventures—adventures that do not materialize in Cyprus.

Othello has married a young bride who, he hopes, will rejuvenate him. Just as Shakespeare's Jaques asserts that "one man in his time plays many parts" (AYL 2.7.142), Bacon wrote of the changing nature of a real-life wife's role over time: "Wives are young Mens Mistresses; Companions for middle Age; and old Mens Nurses" (26, italics in original).

In Desdemona, Othello seeks this combination of passion, friendship and palliative care. Indeed, his wooing of Desdemona suggests a narcissistically imbalanced warrior who needs to be admired for his feats, but also to be pitied for his suffering:

... often [I] did beguile her of her tears
When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffered. My story being done
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs . . . .

(1.3.157-60)

His infelicitous choice of verb, "beguile," both recalls Brabantio's charges of witchcraft and suggests that Othello is embellishing his tales, that he is prating. Jane Adamson contrasts Othello's loquaciousness with Coriolanus's reticence about his military feats (Othello 124 and note). Othello is a Coriolanus who enthusiastically shows his wounds. Paradoxically, then, Othello creates an "unreal and uncertain fictional public self" to conceal feelings of insecurity (Cohen, "Patriarchy" 211). For a conquering general, Othello describes an inordinate number of lost battles and narrow escapes:

... I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth escapes i'th' imminent deadly breach,
Of being taken by the insolent foe
And sold to slavery . . . .

(1.3.135-39)
The play's only eye-witness account of Othello in battle describes his calm when a cannon shot blew "his ranks into the air" (3.4.135-40). Is Iago merely damning the commander of this Venetian Light Brigade with faint praise? This persistent emphasis on defeat does not bode well for a commander about to embark on a crucial mission. The Venetians are so impressed by Othello's verbal potence (how he speaks) that they ignore what he describes (a checkered military career). His stories mainly portray a battle-weary victim, a scrappy survivor who needs Bacon's proverbial "nurse" to repair a lifetime of emotional deprivation. However, Othello finds little comfort in his unconventional marriage to Desdemona, and subsequent events prevent him from proving his military heroism to her.

Many critics of Othello have commented on the narcissistic element in Othello's love for Desdemona. Hyman L. Muslin, in particular, confirms my view that Othello uses her to replace "an archaic selfobject during a time of crisis" ("Shakespeare" 216). As a mirroring selfobject, she praises his narrative performances: as an idealized selfobject, she represents an

11 Othello's peace-time activities are also suspect: he has spent months secretly courting Desdemona, he promotes inexperienced Cassio to second in command, and his elopement absents him from a critical strategy session in the Senate (Webb 45-50). In sum, "the Elizabethan audience would feel that [these factors] portended disaster of some sort . . . . Whatever Othello has been in the past, he appears . . . as a man who has begun to disintegrate as an officer" (50). For a dissenting response to Webb, see Moore 189-94.

12 G. R. Elliot speaks of the "self-centeredness of his love" for Desdemona (63); Robert B. Heilman of his "unconsciously exhibited egocentricity" (175); T. H. Adamowski describes Othello as a self-conscious actor, more interested in his performance than in his bride (73-74). Edward A. Snow argues that Othello "lives his life as a story, seeing himself as he appears in the eyes of an audience" (398). F. R. Leavis excoriates his tendency towards extroversion and exaggeration: "The self-idealization [in his narratives] is shown as blindness . . . the disguise of an obtuse and brutal egotism" (146). On Othello's "narrative self-fashioning," see Calderwood 63-67; Cohen, Shakespearean 88-103; and especially Greenblatt, Renaissance 232-54.
exemplar of courtly grace, chaste constancy, and courage under fire. R. N. Hallstead describes Othello's view of her as unrealistic, even "idolatrous" (107). That this god-like beauty "had eyes and chose [him]" affirms Othello's worth (3.3.192). Othello tries unsuccessfully to gain entry into Venetian society by marrying the perfect wife, "an idealized figure, not only a Caucasian but a Senator's daughter" (Muslin, "Shakespeare" 226; cf. 3.3.187-88 and 4.1.184-87). Though during their courtship he "did thrive in this fair lady's love," further mirroring responses from her depend upon his performance of glorious feats (1.3.127). His "story being done," he must invent another (1.3.159).

The destruction of the Turkish fleet is fortunate for Cyprus, but disastrous for Othello. His admissions of infirmity and hiatus from battle necessitate at least one more glorious encounter to prove his abilities (and verify his stories) for a wife who begs to see him in action:

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\begin{align*}
\text{... to his honours and his valiant parts} \\
\text{Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate,} \\
\text{So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,} \\
\text{A moth of peace, and he go to the war,} \\
\text{The rites for which I love him are bereft me ... .} \\
\text{(1.3.254-58)}
\end{align*}
\]

The "rites" to which she alludes are usually interpreted as the sexual consummation of their

\[13\text{ In spite of different approaches, most psychoanalytic critics agree that Othello looks at Desdemona and sees only himself. For example, Joan M. Byles argues, from a Freudian perspective, that Othello needs "a love-object who increases his own self-esteem, and who provides him with an aggrandized sense of himself" (83). Carol McGinnis Kay, using a generic post-Freudian approach, also observes that Othello displays a "peremptory" need for "emotional mirroring" from which he derives his identity (262-66). James H. Lake uses D. W. Winnicott's child psychology to show that Othello sees in Desdemona "aspects of strength and nurture" that he once received from his parents: she becomes for him "two images of Warrior and Nurturing Mother" (329-30).}\]
marriage (e.g., N. Sanders 79 note), yet her emphasis on his "honours" and "valiant parts" suggest that these rites include the practice of storytelling. She goes to hear more, indeed, to attain her own form of "ocular proof" (3.3.363) that he is as heroic as he says. Iago insinuates that "she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies" (2.1.220-21). Othello does not hear this particular slight, but as a soldier he knows that he must prove himself or be accused of prating. This is why he agrees to take her, not "[t]o please the palate of [his] appetite" but "to be free and bounteous to her mind" (1.3.263-66).

Othello's reputation for heroism has preceded him to Cyprus, but neither Desdemona nor the locals will see evidence of this. Instead, she (and they) must cope with an increasingly irascible and inept governor. According to Iago's bawdy song, she has the discretion to "[s]ee suitors following, and not look behind" and the patience to "suckle fools, and chronicle small beer" (2.1.157, 160). His words are partly prophetic. In Cyprus, she is importuned by Cassio (whom Othello interprets to be a suitor), but she refuses to "suckle" Othello's needy self while watching him perform—not feats of heroism—but mundane tasks akin to the keeping of "trivial" household accounts (Honigmann 173 note). To make matters worse, each of Othello's attempts at civil administration backfires. He issues a celebratory

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14 Adamowski hints at this when he suggests that the "rites for which she loves him pertain to that of which Othello is most proud, the image he has of himself as warrior-adventurer" (74).

15 Othello the military governor of Cyprus is largely a creation of public opinion and bad timing. The Cypriot garrison is awed by the carefully crafted image of "the warlike Moor" (2.1.27). Venice, on the other hand, is not so impressed. When the Turks set sail for Cyprus, the Duke informs Othello that "though we have there a substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you" (1.3.224-26). In fact, one "Marcus Luccicos" is initially called for, but he is detained in Florence (1.3.45-47).
proclamation (2.2.1-12), but the ensuing celebration ends in a "barbarous brawl" which he must quell in his night-shirt (2.3.140-254).\textsuperscript{16} He inspects the fortifications (3.2.1-6), but is distracted (perhaps even interrupted) by Desdemona's persistent suit on behalf of Cassio (3.3.41-89). Othello throws a public-relations dinner for the "generous islanders" (3.3.284), to which he arrives late and in a foul mood. In his very first diplomatic embassy, Othello receives a letter "command[ing] him home./ Deputing Cassio in his government" and vents his professional frustration on his wife by striking her in front of Lodovico (4.1.234-36).

The Venetian ambassador is baffled by this outburst, but to Othello Desdemona's behaviour in Cyprus runs counter to his expressed wishes and unconscious psychological needs. She interferes with affairs of state despite his plea to "grant me this,/ To leave me but a little to myself" (3.3.84-85). She mocks him for his "mamm'ring" and cajoles him with elliptical threats: "By'r lady, I could do much! -" (3.3.70, 74). Rather than mirror Othello, she smothers him with admonitions: "'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,/ Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm" (3.3.77-78). He needs much psychological care, but not in public and especially not while on duty; "[f]rom Othello's point of view her behaviour must be intolerable, quite apart from Iago's lies about her" (Honigmann 48).

To make matters still worse, in Cyprus Desdemona becomes a "fair warrior"

\textsuperscript{16} In the brawl scene, he lacks the requisite coolness under fire, losing his temper (2.3.200-05), and then cashiering his lieutenant without a proper trial. In justifying his actions, Othello claims that Cyprus is still "a town of war" (2.3.209). This is wishful thinking, for the war is over. Cassio is punished to protect Othello's reputation, not the garrison: "Look if my gentle love be not raised up!/ I'll make thee an example" (2.3.246-47). As the couple returns to bed, Othello transforms a minor street brawl into yet another war story: "Come, Desdemona: 'tis the soldier's life/ To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife" (2.3.253-54); as Stephen Greenblatt observes, "Othello characteristically responds to his experience by shaping it as a story" (Renaissance 243).
(2.1.180), seeming to eclipse her husband at his own occupation. Cassio calls her "our great captain's captain" (2.1.74), and Othello admits that "she might lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks" (4.1.181-82). According to Iago, Othello is derelict in his duties, having "given up himself to the contemplation, mark and denotement of her parts and graces" (2.3.311-13). The reverse is also true: Othello tries to impress her, but because the war is over, he is unable to show his military "parts and graces" to her. Iago marvels at Othello's submission to Desdemona:

> His soul is so enfettered to her love  
> That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
> Even as her appetite shall play the god  
> With his weak function.

(2.3.340-43)

Though Iago is a notoriously unreliable source, Othello does display a high degree of passivity when in Desdemona's company. He confesses to "pratt[ling]" before the garrison (2.1.205), and later describes her body as the "fountain, from the which my current runs" (4.2.60). This alludes to an evocative passage in Proverbs which conflates fountains, marital fidelity, eroticism and breast-feeding:

> Drinke of the water of thine owne well, and of the riuers that runne out of thine owne spring . . . . Let thy wel be blessed, and be glad with the wife of thy youth. Let her bee as the louing Hinde and pleasant Roe: let her breastes alway satisfie thee, and holde thee euer content with her loue. (Prov. 5:15-19).

Othello's anxious demands on Desdemona resembles those of an infant whose alternation "between limitless anxiety and total bliss depends on outside succor" (Dinnerstein 30). It is no coincidence that two childhood memories of Othello and Desdemona concern anxieties
about infidelity.¹⁷

Just as Kohut argues that people are "nourished" by mirroring responses and "enlivened by the enthusiasm" felt for idealized models (How 77), Iago diagnoses Othello's dependence upon Desdemona in terms of an alimentary addiction: "The food that to him now is as luscious as locusts shall be to him shortly as acerb as coloquintida" (1.3.348-50). Iago proceeds to pollute, or "adulterate" (M. Neill, "Unproper" 139-40), their marriage by creating an imaginary sexual rival. Stripped of the chance to perform heroic deeds with which to impress her, and alienated by her behaviour, Othello comes to rely on Iago for mirroring praise and as an idealized model. Though militarily Iago is Othello's subordinate, socially Iago plays his superior and proceeds to generate insecurities in him: that the more handsome Cassio may be a "foul thing" intruding into the "palace" of Othello's marriage, damaging his "good name" (3.3.140-41, 162); and that if he ignores the situation he will become a complacent cuckold, possibly even raising another's child (3.3.169-72).¹⁸

¹⁷ The allusion to Proverbs is noted by Honigmann 339 note; N. Sanders 155 note; and Wayne, "Historical" 169. The use of breasts to exhort marital fidelity bodes ill in the context of Renaissance mothers and wet nurses who set a precedent of "betrayal" through discontinuous nurture, both physical and psychological. Regarding childhood memories, Othello repeats a tale in which the handkerchief was an "antique token/ My father gave my mother" (5.2.214-15), transforming it into "a masculine talisman to ward off cuckoldry" (Calderwood 102). Desdemona's poignant Willow Song, once sung by her mother's maid, likewise conjures up images of unfaithful women: "If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men" (4.3.56). Freud quotes this passage in his seminal article on jealousy ("Some" 224 note). On the many associations of Othello's handkerchief, see Boose 362-67; Neely, "Women" 228-31; and Snow 403-05.

¹⁸ Othello refuses to "follow still the changes of the moon/ With fresh suspicions" (3.3.181-82)—a passage usually glossed as a refusal to behave like a "lunatic" (e.g., by Honigmann 219 note)—but which I take to suggest that Othello will not follow his wife's menstrual cycle to see whether she has conceived another's child (cf. Crawford, "Attitudes" 70; G. Williams 2:907-08). On the moon as a symbol of inconstancy, see Juliet's admonition that Romeo
speaking, Iago drives Desdemona out of Othello's self and promises to perform "self-repair" in her place (Muslin, "Shakespeare" 227). As did Cassio, Othello submits to his new idealized mentor: "This fellow's of exceeding honesty/ And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit" (3.3.262-63).

Iago takes over Desdemona's role as idealized selfobject by turning her former virtues into "pitch" (2.3.355), and her actions inadvertently confirm Iago's new version of her. Contradicting Iago's song in which she could "[s]ee suitors following, and not look behind" (cited above) she calls Cassio a "suitor" (3.3.42), lies about losing the handkerchief (3.4.85-88), and promises to plead his case to Othello: "My lord shall never rest,/ I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience,/ His bed shall seem a school" (3.3.22-24). Just as Renaissance schools sought to produce docile, polite and obedient citizens (Grafton 59), Desdemona sets out to tame her increasingly intractable husband. Charming hyperbole becomes tragic miscalculation, however, for the last person with whom a Renaissance man would wish to sleep would be his schoolmaster. Desdemona is no longer the empathic auditor of war stories Othello married, and Iago successfully interposes himself as selfobject because of her untimely withdrawal of psychic services. Iago also sets out to "tame" the Moor, but he uses a more circumspect and flattering approach. Iago presents an irresistible combination of affection and expertise, devoting his "wit, hands, heart,/ To wronged Othello's service"

"swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon" (Rom. 2.2.109). For a discussion of the Renaissance associations of horns, cuckold and the moon, see Triensens 166-67.

According to one contemporary account, "Schoolmasters [are] armed daily with whips and scourges, with such sour and bitter visages, with thundering and threatening words . . . by terror to enforce their untoward and unwilling Youth to overcome the difficulty they find in learning" (Wright 301-02).
(3.3.469-70). It was precisely these things that Desdemona gave to her husband in Venice, and for the same reason: she pitied his heroic sacrifices and suffering. Now it is Iago who loves Othello for the dangers he had passed: "I humbly do beseech you of your pardon/ For too much loving you" (3.3.215-16). Their subsequent exchange of vows prompts Michael Neill to call their relation the only "act of adultery in the play" ("Changing" 130).

In one of his more memorable declarations of love for Desdemona, Othello states that "when I love thee not/ Chaos is come again" (3.3.91-92). She is the "glue" holding his fragile self together: "the complex architecture of his self-esteem as husband, lover and soldier . . . depends upon her steadfast love and obedience" (Stavropoulos 129). Without her, he breaks apart, but Iago is standing by to reassemble the pieces. By accusing Desdemona of infidelity, Iago effects a radical shift in Othello, from feared and respected warrior to duped and scorned husband. As we have seen, a warrior in love already occupied a tenuous position in men's estimation because of prejudices against bringing women into camp. In Othello's case, it is too late: everyone has seen him "womaned." News of his doting, combined with reports of Desdemona's advocacy of a handsome lieutenant (with whom she has spent time unchaperoned), would spread like wildfire through the "enclosed world" of the garrison town (M. Neill, "Changing" 115; cf. Ranald, "Indiscretions" 134-35).

The opprobrium heaped on cuckolds would drastically undermine Othello's abilities to command respect in his soldiers and to instill confidence in the Cypriot populace; he has lost his honour in both military and civilian circles (Poisson 393). Othello claims that it is the loss of Desdemona's affection, not the loss of his reputation, that afflicts him most; that he could bear becoming a "fixed figure for the time of scorn/ To point his slow and moving
fingers at" (4.2.55-57). But it is precisely the prospect that fingers should make horns at him that prompts his escalating aggression in order to counteract an "identity-shattering-catastrophe" (Parten, "Cuckoldry" 332).\footnote{For an illustration of men fighting to erase the stigma of cuckoldry, see Wither 27.} Anticipating scorn from fellow soldiers (and a diminished capacity to command), Othello resigns from his position: "Farewell the plumed troops and the big wars/ That makes ambition virtue!" (3.3.352-53). Othello will no longer be able to excel at his warlike "occupation" or credibly perform the related rites of telling tales of heroism. In their place, Iago offers Othello several new occupations: cuckold, revenger and justice. He should attempt to regain heroic stature by suffering as a cuckold, avenge himself by murdering his wife, and vindicate himself using incontrovertible "ocular proof" of her guilt. Although Othello came to rid Cyprus of the Turks, he now has a new mission, to clean up the streets by eradicating the source of promiscuity. With Iago's help, Othello transforms personal revenge into public service.

Iago introduces Othello to "the sophist-cuckold's traditional and ingenious strategy of self-consolation" (Parten, "Cuckoldry" 336); namely, that being cuckolded is a socially accepted, indeed honourable, form of suffering. Othello can excel at being a cuckold and recapture the glory he earned when his military services were in demand. Iago begins by consoling him that "[i]n Venice they [i.e., wives] do let God see the pranks/ They dare not show their husbands" (3.3.205-06). Desdemona would have fooled even a husband of her own "country disposition" (3.3.204). Iago also assures Othello that even (or perhaps especially) as a cuckold, he will be able to prove his mettle: "There's millions now alive/ That nightly lie in those unproper beds/ Which they dare swear peculiar: your case is better"
(4.1.67-69, emphasis added). Iago appears to be invoking the chimerical "brotherhood" of married men as cuckolds (Kahn, Man's 124), but this is just a kind of cruel joke at Othello's expense and not a valid social observation (e.g., were there really "millions" of living cuckolds?). In Iago's twisted vision, being cuckolded will give Othello a chance to prove his courage, to "bear [his] fortune like a man!" (4.1.61). Iago's messages strike a chord with status-conscious Othello, who consoles himself that cuckoldom is "the plague of great ones,/ Prerogatived are they less than the base" (3.3.277-78). The damage done to his reputation actually confirms an aristocratic lineage, since "members of nobility suffer more from the problem of reputation than do the base" (Klene 144). All husbands are stricken, but Othello will turn his suffering into an exquisite art, a courageous battle, a moral crusade.

Thus Iago induces a form of jealousy that degenerates into a catatonic fury (Othello's "epilepsy" [4.1.35-59]) before being channelled into the narcissistic rage that seeks to obliterate enemies and restore social prominence to Othello.21 As we have already seen, Troilus conceals his inner fragmentation with outward aggression directed at Diomedes--"[h]ope of revenge shall hide our inward woe" (Tro. 5.10.31)--and Othello also chooses this course of action: "She's gone, I am abused, and my relief/ Must be to loathe her" (Oth. 3.3.271-72). Following Kohut, Stephen A. Mitchell argues that aggression is not an innate drive but arises out of a massive narcissistic injuries: "under extreme, pathological self-object failures . . . healthy assertiveness break[s] down into hostile destructiveness" ("Aggression" 357). In part, such aggression is a "bolstering device" to replenish depleted self-esteem

21 Pace Kay, who asserts that "his reassurance that as a cuckold he is in good company makes Othello feel a little better" (267). What makes Othello feel better is the promise of transcending others, the prospect that "[his] case is better" (4.1.69)
(378). At one time, Othello might have taken a more confident, direct approach with Desdemona and Cassio, as he claims he once did with a prating Turk in Aleppo (to be discussed below). Now Othello is so "abused," his confidence so shaken, his self so fragmented, that his response is equally chaotic, "I'll tear her all to pieces!"—that is, until he succumbs to Iago's exhortations to "be wise" instead (3.3.434-35). Iago channels this inchoate anger into a more deliberate form of narcissistic rage that will bolster Othello's self.

Under Iago's tutelage Othello adopts a triple role of intriguing Italianate revenger, wronged husband, and civil justice. As intriguing revenger, this once heroic warrior is reduced to lurking in shadows and brooding about mutilating Cassio's nose (4.1.141-42). Othello also spies on his wife and briefly considers poisoning her, before Iago convinces him to "strangle her in her bed" (4.1.204). As wronged husband, Othello exploits the lost handkerchief as a loyalty test, strikes Desdemona in public, then as revenge for her perceived transgressions treats her room like a brothel which he visits to further degrade the "cunning whore of Venice" (4.2.91). Thus Othello vacillates between the impotent fury of a cuckold and the murderous subterfuge of a villain. "My lord is not my lord," marvels Desdemona at his many transformations (3.4.125). Above all, Iago teaches Othello that, despite previous administrative failures, he can with good conscience carry out revenge as justice: "Good, good, the justice of it pleases; very good!" (4.1.206-07).

In his brief tenure as official justice in Cyprus, Othello adheres to a model presented to him by Iago, and to a lesser extent that of the Venetian Duke and senators (Kay 266-67). To contemporary audiences, Venice represented a model of civic government, ruled by men considered "ideal philosopher-rulers" (Vaughan 19; cf. Matheson 123-24). When Othello
does imitate their behaviour, it is by half-measures only. For example, when charges of abduction are brought before the Senate by Brabantio, the Duke announces:

*Whoe'er he be, that in this foul proceeding
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself,
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read, in the bitter letter,
After its own sense, yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.*

(1.3.66-71, emphasis added)

The revelation that Othello is the man accused forces the Duke to retract his ultimatum. He places political expediency and the safety of the state above personal pride. Othello absorbs the ultimatum but not the ensuing flexibility, so that when he quells the drunken brawl in Cyprus, he sounds just like the Duke promising swift and terrible justice:

*Give me to know
How this foul rout began, who set it on,
And he that is approved in this offence,
Though he had twinned with me, both at birth,
Shall lose me.*

(2.3.205-09, emphasis added)

The news that Cassio is responsible for Montano's injuries does not induce a corresponding compromise or retraction. Instead, Othello stakes his tenuous command on this minor incident and reads "the bloody book of law/ . . . in the bitter letter" against Cassio. Unlike Jaques's pompous justice "[f]ull of wise saws, and modern instances" (LA 2.7.156), Othello only knows war-stories. Publicly, he adheres to the letter of the law: privately, he submits to Iago's perversion of justice.

Relieved of his official post via Lodovico's letter, Othello is unexpectedly forced to resort to vigilante justice in the play's final scene. However much Othello couches killing in
the language of public service, his extra-legal status and closeness to the case become impediments to the meting out of lawful justice. Both judge and plaintiff in one, Othello kisses the sleeping defendant and is bathed in a "balmy breath, that dost almost persuade/Justice to break her sword!" (5.2.16-17). When Desdemona wakes, Othello continues in the judicial vein—"O perjured woman, thou dost stone [thy] heart" (5.2.63)—an allusion to the parable of the Woman Taken in Adultery (John 8.1-11) that underscores his lack of fairness or mercy. However unjust, the murder of Desdemona is no "regression to the primitive and animal-like" on Othello's part, but rather a calculated response to a massive personal injury (Kohut, "Thoughts" 635). Jane Adamson observes:

Othello's most violent and brutal declarations of his power to hurt come at precisely those moments when he feels most helpless, impotent in the face of his own wounded feelings. His lack of 'government' over himself is compensated for by an increase in his bullying . . . . (Othello 203)

Bacon likewise attributed anger to insecurity and fragile self-esteem: "no Man is Angry, that Feeles not himselfe Hurt: And therefore Tender and Delicate Persons, must needs be oft Angry" (170, italics in original). Despite his rugged exterior, Othello is perhaps Shakespeare's most delicate hero: "How many of the other tragic heroes weep as copiously as the Moor?" (Honigmann 20-21). Nowhere is Kohut's definition of narcissistic rage as a spectrum of responses ranging from "fleeting annoyances . . . [to] the furor of the catatonic

22 I have opted for the Quarto reading of "thy" heart, but the Folio reading of "my" heart underscores the pain Othello experiences while administering his form of "justice" (Honigmann 310 note). Whereas Jesus invites that man who is "without sinne" to "cast the stone at her" and the woman's accusers slink away (John 8.7), Othello proceeds to mete out punishment in spite of contestable evidence of her guilt and his own moral failings. On Othello's failings as a justice, see Nowotny 330-44.
and the grudges of the paranoiac" more relevant to a Shakespearean character ("Thoughts" 636). Othello experiences this spectrum in a dramatic crescendo from annoyance (Act 2), to grudge (Act 3), to catatonia (Act 4), to cold-blooded murder (Act 5).

Therefore, despite the judicial vocabulary of the play's final scene, Desdemona dies because she has offended her husband, not because she has committed a legal offence: "she must die, else she'll betray more men" (5.2.6). Othello thinks she has betrayed (i.e., deceived) him, and that as the "cunning whore of Venice" she will betray (i.e., seduce) other men (OED v.1-4). He would rather destroy her than share her, a possessiveness that belies his earlier empty declaration that he "had been happy if the general camp,/ Pioneers and all, had tasted her sweet body,/ So [he] had nothing known" (3.3.348-50). Othello's unwillingness to share is at the root of sexual jealousy, which Pierre de La Primaudaye defined as "a feare which a man hath, that that thing is communicated to another, which hee would not haue common but priuate to himselfe" (207). Such a feeling also prompts Iago's anger that Emilia should share her "common thing" (i.e., her vagina) with other men (3.3.306; Partridge 199). Beneath Othello's public service and Iago's service to the Moor are revenges prompted by injured masculine pride.

Othello adapts to constantly shifting social situations by discarding old selfobjects in favour of newer and seemingly more reliable providers of psychological sustenance. Lodovico's surprise at Othello's transformation underscores the extent to which he has concealed his dependency from others: "Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate/ Call all in all sufficient? This the nature/ Whom passion could not shake?" (4.1.264-66). Lodovico sounds as if he's parroting slogans, like "Tamburlaine the Great" the "Scourge of God" (Jump
As I have argued, Othello may never have been "all in all sufficient," and passion does shake him to the floor twice in the play (at 4.1.35-59 and 5.2.195-98). Even his suicide is a narcissistic bolstering device couched in the language of public service. Massively humiliated by Emilia's exposure of his errors (in trusting Iago, in mistrusting Desdemona), Othello is made to feel like a "murderous coxcomb" (5.2.231). To salvage some dignity, Othello resorts to narratives that emphasize his past victories. He describes his magical "sword of Spain" with which he "made [his] way through more impediments/ Than twenty times" those facing him now (5.2.251, 261-62). "O vain boast," he stops in mid-story; he can neither prove his tale to others nor prove his sword against others (5.2.262). Or can he? His final act is to describe how

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in Aleppo once,  
Where a malignant and a turbanned Turk  
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,  
I took by th' throat the circumcised dog  
And smote him - thus!
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[He stabs himself.  
(5.2.350-54)]

Othello's "thus!" is terribly significant: it proves the sharpness of his sword, the courage and resolve of its bearer. Symbolically, Othello is finally defeating the Turkish foe denied him by the storm. Desdemona is present (though dead) to witness and reward his performance of one last supreme act of sacrifice, "[k]illing [himself], to die upon a kiss" (5.2.357).

In his final moments, Othello shows less contrition for Desdemona's murder than regret for his lost reputation (Jeffrey and Grant 197) and for failing to prove his heroism to her in life. Significantly, he kills himself in public after Lodovico informs him that "the

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23 For a comparison of Othello and Tamburlaine, see Rose, Expense 131-55.
nature of your fault [shall] be known/ To the Venetian state" (5.2.334-35). The fault that will be recounted is not that Othello thought himself a cuckold, but that he failed to govern the island, his household, and himself. Administratively, domestically, and personally, Othello is a failure. Even his final military victory over the "Turk" is a fiasco to be related back in Venice as a "heavy act," not a heroic one (5.2.369).

Othello lays bare a central contradiction that I have argued throughout: that men can be jealous of women whom they love as objects, exploit as selfobjects, and objectify as inanimate possessions. Desdemona is simultaneously Othello's esteemed love object, his exploited selfobject, and his most prized possession (his "pearl" [5.2.345]). Thomas Wright alluded to relationships in which people—whom he referred to as "things"—are exploited in the service of another's self: "Those things we love as profitable we love not absolutely, but rather in them ourselves, for whose use they serve; and therefore when commodity faileth, love quaileth" (237). From a modern moral perspective, too, relationships form a hierarchy with ideal love at the top and that "crass possessiveness which lies at the root of all jealousy" at the bottom (M. Neill, "Changing" 116). In self psychology, relationships shift back and forth along a spectrum with healthy object love at one end and unhealthy dependence on selfobjects at the other. Shakespeare demonstrates the perils of one-sided relationships, as psychologically speaking, Othello places all his eggs in one basket (first Desdemona, then Iago, and then Desdemona again) only to have the basket taken away. Though Desdemona is treated as the "external property" that reflects Othello's "internal worth" (Calderwood 26), she does more than reflect her husband, she constitutes "the very foundation of his conscious selfhood, the 'place' or citadel of his vulnerable identity" (M. Neill, "Changing" 127). To
paraphrase Wright, when Desdemona "faileth" Othello's self "quaileth." Othello the warrior
fails to recapture military glory by performing feats for her, and Othello the administrator has
his authority undermined by her suit on behalf of Cassio. La Primaudaye warns that "No man
. . . ought to chide or to fawne upon his wife before others" (208). Othello does both.

Much recent criticism has focused on Othello as a dramatization of crises of
interpretation: How can men be sure their wives are faithful? Where can husbands attain
"ocular proof" of wifely fidelity? I have instead investigated difficulties arising when men
cannot provide "ocular proof" of their worth to loved ones or peers: unappreciated Iago is
relegated to rear-guard duties, demoted Cassio's suit for reinstatement is largely ignored, and
Othello's desire for military glory is thwarted by peacetime administrative hassles and
domestic strife. All three are unable to maintain loving trust within a military cult of
reputation and a civilian culture of suspicion. And all three try to repair tarnished reputations
by merging with untrustworthy selfobjects and taking out frustrations on loved ones; as Iago
puts it, "men in rage strike those that wish them best" (2.3.239). Therefore, Emilia's
frequently cited observation, that men "are not ever jealous for the cause,/ But jealous for
they're jealous. It is a monster/ Begot upon itself, born on itself" (3.4.160-62), is actually
quite misleading. As I shall demonstrate in the next two chapters examining The Merry
Wives of Windsor and The Winter's Tale, even in cases of seemingly motiveless or irrational
jealousy there are many causes, too many in fact.

24 See Breitenberg, Anxious 175-201; and Maus, Inwardness 104-27.
Chapter Eleven

"Take heed . . . for thieves do foot by night":  

Cuckoldry, Justice and Social Order in The Merry Wives of Windsor

In The Merry Wives of Windsor, our familiar cast of lovers and warriors are outnumbered by older, more mature characters: two long-married couples; an established doctor, parson, and tavern host; and a doddering justice of the peace. There are schoolchildren and a witty page, but the play seems far removed from the youthful hi-jinks of Shakespeare's romantic comedies, or the exotic Mediterranean locales of his most brutal wife-murder play. Cuckoldry, according to many stereotypes, afflicts doting elderly husbands of lusty young wives. Both Ford and Page are old enough to be such husbands, but they feel safe because their wives are no longer "in the holiday time of [their] beauty" (MWW 2.1.1-2). Upon learning that Falstaff plots to seduce his wife, Frank Ford scoffs: "Why, sir, my wife is not young" (2.1.109). To heighten the comic effect, Falstaff is hardly a youthful seducer, but rather "too old to make other men cuckolds" (Bryant 299; cf. Carroll, "'Received'" 188; St. Pierre 60). With age and experience also come a reputation to uphold and frustration with an ineffectual system of local justice. As ridiculous as Falstaff's propositions may seem, Ford and the two wives treat them seriously, taking the law into their own hands and punishing the would-be besmircher of their reputations. Ford's actions in particular suggest that older husbands are susceptible to cuckoldry anxiety because of years spent establishing a household, a network of acquaintances and respectability--all of which would be destroyed by the "odious" name, cuckold (2.1.117). Thus the prevailing obsessions of Windsor's
inhabitants are with reputation and property, law and order, peace and quiet.

Right from the play's opening in which citizens discuss how to deal with the "riot" perpetrated by Falstaff and his lawless companions, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* depicts a town rife with turmoil (1.1.32-38). Where Othello, a warrior in decline, still seems able to raise his sword and part a fray (*Oth*, 2.3.160-74), Windsor's Justice Shallow can only reminisce about his former glory-days: "if I were young again, the sword should end it" (*MWW* 1.1.37-38). In Shallow, Shakespeare creates an unforgettable inversion of the type whom Jaques refers to as the justice, "[i]n fair round belly, with good capon lin'd./ With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,/ Full of wise saws, and modern instances" (*AYL* 2.7.154-56). Shakespeare's Shallow is traditionally cast as a skinny, foolish old man with a scraggily beard.¹ Unlike Jaques's justice, Shallow responds to lawlessness by threatening violence, not by citing legal precedents (e.g., *MWW* 2.3.41-43). His incompetence contributes to his fellow citizens' concerns with law and order, with propriety and tradition, with property and social status. As Rosemary Kegl suggests, the "elaborate legal machinery" of Windsor's local justice system is "ludicrously ineffective" (261). In the power vacuum created by Shallow's inept policing, characters jostle for power by insulting one another; when Falstaff arrives, "sexual slander becomes Windsor's most prevalent form of insult" (257).

Beneath its staid middle-class exterior, Shakespeare's Windsor seems as anarchic and lawless as the legendary American wild-west. Mervyn James characterizes Renaissance England as an "honour society" in which a thin veneer of civility failed to cover the violence

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¹ In *The Second Part of Henry IV*, Shallow is both intellectually shallow—"foolish" (5.1.64)—and physically slight. Falstaff quips: "If I were sawed into quantities, I should make four dozen of such bearded hermits' staves as Master Shallow" (*2H4* 5.1.59-61).
that was "a way of life," especially when reputation was at stake (313-14). At the same time, the honour code provided a useful form of social control because individual concerns for reputation ensured widespread conformity and deference to authority, useful qualities in areas where local law-enforcement bureaucracy was still in a fledgling state (James 342-43, 358). A. J. Fletcher likewise characterizes England as a decentralized state simultaneously ordered and destabilized by "social deference" and the honour code (113-14). In particular, "extreme sensitivity" about reputation created much disorder: "Disrespect and defamation by countrymen were constant threats to the effective exercise of local government" (Fletcher, "Honour" 92, 110). Those who administered justice were as dependent upon reputation as regular civilians: "His [the justice's] standing among the people could sink if gossip about his conduct, whether malicious or well-founded, was allowed to spread unchecked" (92). Once maligned, a justice's already limited ability to maintain order was further diminished. The Merry Wives of Windsor demonstrates how such a system breaks down when insults escalate into acts of retribution beyond the capacities of local justice to contain.

Both the merry wives and their husbands are confronted with sexual slander, and with the exception of Master Page, they bypass the legal justice system in favour of practical jokes that result in violence on three separate occasions: when Falstaff is dumped in a river, when he is beaten senseless, and when he is pinched and burned in the play's final scene. Peter Erickson characterizes Shakespeare's Windsor as a quarrelsome society with a disturbing "pattern of problem solving"; namely, the "substitution of a diversionary plot for [an] original difficulty" which only leads to escalating cycles of contention ("Order" 120). For example, when Mrs. Page first receives Falstaff's love letter, she jokingly considers a form of public
justice disproportionate to the crime committed—"I'll exhibit a bill in the parliament for the putting down of men"—but decides instead to pursue a more personal form of plotting: "How shall I be revenged on him? For revenged I will be" (2.1.28-30). Mrs. Ford also exhibits a knee-jerk reaction, suggesting that they encourage Falstaff then rebuff his advances (2.1.63-66). Instead of confiding in their husbands and exposing Falstaff's intent using the signed letters as evidence, the wives risk their reputations to punish this sexual interloper. Edmund Tilney's *Flower of Friendship* advocated caution when a woman's reputation is at stake:

> The maryed woman, must be also verye carefull, and circumspect of hir good name. For a good name is the flower of estimation, and the pearle of credit, which is so delicate a thing in a woman, that she must not onely be good, but likewise must apeere so. (135-36, emphasis added)

The merry wives are unassailably chaste, but choose unwisely to encourage scurrilous gossip to the contrary.

To compensate for the absence of a justice who can cite "wise saws and modern instances," the civilian populace of Windsor are moralistic and old-fashioned in their speech, especially Evans, Mistress Quickly, Slender and Ford. H. J. Oliver observes in the play a middle-class tendency to speak "in homely proverbs" and to allude to scriptures; the play contains more than sixty proverbs contained in Tilley's *Dictionary of the Proverbs in England* (Oliver lxxvii and notes passim). Most proverbs are characterized by moral probity and conservative politics. "Proverb" is commonly understood to denote a "pithy saying, especially one condensing the wisdom of experience" (Funk s.v.; cf. OED sb.1.a). However, in Shakespeare's time, "proverb" also referred to a "common word or phrase of contempt or reproach" (OED sb.2.a), as in the King James Bible's description of the shaming of an...
ungodly man: "thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee" (Deut. 28:37). Such notoriety attended

Renaissance sexual transgressors, especially adulterers and adulteresses. Oliver identifies the following lines as containing embedded proverbial expressions:

QUICKLY. I am glad he [i.e., Caius] went not in himself: if he had found the young man, he would have been horn-mad.

(FWW 1.4.43-45; cf. Tilley H628)

FORD [disguised as Brook]. Like a fair house built on another man's ground.
. . . I have lost my edifice by mistaking the place where I erected it.

(2.2.209-11; cf. Tilley G470)

FALSTAFF. I quaked for fear lest the lunatic knave [i.e., Ford] would have searched it [i.e., the buckbasket]; but fate, ordaining he should be a cuckold, held his hand.

(3.5.94-96; cf. Tilley C889)

The first and third proverbs reproach a cuckold's behaviour, the second the adulterer's folly.

As I shall demonstrate, the merry wives pursue a course of action that seems to validate a particular sub-genre of misogynous proverbs that fostered social disorder and mistrust.

Chapter Twelve of Giovanni Florio's English/Italian phrase-book Florios Second Frytes—"wherein prouerbially and pleasantly discourse is held of loue, and of women" (165)—is an illuminating repository of such destabilizing saws. The proverbial insatiability of women conveyed in the lines, "Although one cock serue many a hen,/ One woman asketh many men" (Florio 185), convinces Falstaff that Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page leered invitations to him (1.3.40-70). Indeed, Falstaff does try to "serve" both wives simultaneously in the

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2 The earlier Bishops' translation tellingly reads, "And thou shalt be wondred at, spoken of, and iested at, among all nations whither the Lord shall carry thee" (Deut. 28:37, emphasis added).
play's final scene: "Divide me like a bribed buck, each a haunch" (5.5.24). Another of Florio's saws, "Wretched is he and most accurst, that in a woman puts his trust./ And none but fooles will beleeeue them without triall" (179), sheds light on Ford's very public investigation of his wife's chastity. When Mrs. Ford receives Falstaff's proposition, she suggests that this evidence would exacerbate her husband's jealousy: "O that my husband saw this letter; it would give eternal food to his jealousy" (2.1.97-98). Seeds of jealousy were embedded in a man's mind by child-rearing practices and acculturated attitudes, but these seeds had to be "nourished" by evidence. As suggested by Tilney (quoted above), wives were exhorted to cater to their husbands' every whim; if not, their culture, at least proverbially, condoned wife-beating: "Wiues, Asses, nuttes, the more they beaten bee./ More good and profite they will yeeld to thee" (Florio 175). One final proverb found elsewhere in Florio's dictionary encapsulates the perils that permissive husbands were thought to have faced:

Who lets his wife goe to euerie feaste,  
And lets his horse drinke at euerie puddle,  
Shall haue of his horse, a starke iadish beast  
And of his best wife, a twang with a huddle.

(Florio 41)

The obscure bawdry of the noun "twang with a huddle" is clarified by the Italian equivalent found on the facing page, "vna puttana" (Florio 40). In light of such saws and instances, the merry wives should indeed be cautious for, as even one of their most staunch defenders concedes, they are "unquestionably given to gadding about, contradicting their husbands, and speaking when and to whom they please . . . clear cause for dire assumptions about the women's chastity" (Parten, "Cuckoldry" 225).

Florio's book is not always serious in intent, and chapters take the form of dialogues
between characters with disparate views; in other words, the saws do not represent a consensual view of marital relations. However, the fact that Florio's book is designed to teach cultured Englishmen useful phrases for their trips abroad suggests that its views of women were widely known. As such, its proverbs highlight two seldom-commented aspects of character in The Merry Wives of Windsor: the extreme recklessness of the wives, and the relative restraint of Ford who—though he blusters a lot—does not beat his wife when she appears to become "vna puttana." Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page foolishly encourage Falstaff in direct violation of one basic tenet of wifely common sense: "[be] carefull what is done at home . . . not to sit ydely, nor to permit any one suspitiously to come unto hir, speciallye hir husband being not at home" (Tilney 137).

In the context of Falstaff's actions and the wives' apparent reciprocation, Ford's reaction seems more plausible than ridiculous. According to Mistress Quickly, Ford is already "a very jealousy man" by nature (2.2.85). As such, he shows great restraint when confronted with the prospect of being mocked "like Sir Actæon" (2.1.115). Ford proceeds methodically in his investigation, first desiring to "seek out Falstaff" and learn the truth (2.1.136), explaining to Page: "I do not misdoubt my wife; but I would be loath to turn them together; a man may be too confident; I would have nothing lie on my head" (2.1.177-79). Disguised as Master Brook, Ford discovers that Falstaff has indeed propositioned his wife and "shall be with her . . . by her own appointment" (2.2.250-51). Falstaff even boasts to

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3 That Florio's expressions were current in Shakespeare's time is suggested by the resemblance of one witticism, "[w]omen are in churches, Saints: abroad, Angels: at home, deuills: at windowes Syrens: at doores, pyes: and in gardens, Goates" (Florio 175), to Iago's formulation: "you are pictures out of doors,/ Bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens . . ." (Oth. 2.1.109-13).
Brook that he will humiliate Ford before the entire community: "I will awe him with my cudgel: it shall hang like a meteor o'er the cuckold's horns . . . . and thou shalt lie with his wife" (2.2.268-72). Ford is understandably distraught by the prospect of this impending devastation of his home, his marriage and his reputation.

Ford's soliloquy following this discovery is a masterpiece of comic characterization that doubles as a succinct primer in mens' anxieties about cuckoldry (2.2.276-302). His jealousy is not fuelled by misogyny but by a sudden betrayal of trust by the woman he loves: "My heart is ready to crack with impatience. Who says this is improvident jealousy? My wife hath sent to him, the hour is fixed, the match is made. Would any man have thought this?" (2.2.276-80, emphasis added). In Ford's case, cuckoldry is not an inevitable result of marriage, but an unexpected twist. He conveys his surprise in a revealing aside: "there's a hole made in your best coat, Master Ford" (3.5.131). Oliver traces this line to a proverbial phrase, "to pick a hole in a man's coat," which means "to find a fault in somebody who was thought of . . . as impeccable" (101 note; cf. Tilley H522). Whether the "coat" symbolizes Ford's or his wife's reputation, Mrs. Ford's inexplicable behaviour, as Falstaff warns, will reduce the status of a prominent citizen to that of a humiliated "peasant" (2.2.271). With this decline in status, Ford can also expect to lose his possessions: "See the hell of having a false woman: my bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked [and] my reputation gnawn at" (2.2.280-82). Like Othello, Ford responds in an extra-legal fashion, setting out to be "revenged" on Falstaff (2.2.299). Unlike Othello, however, Ford plans to rescue, not murder, his wife: "I will prevent this . . . better three hours too soon than a minute too late" (2.2.299-301). Despite his escalating frenzy during two ambushes of the lovers' assignations, Ford
never lays a hand on her.

Ford alludes to his dependence on his wife by characterizing her infidelity as the theft of butter, cheese and aqua-vitae (2.2.290-94), food and drink that symbolize the person who has sustained him over the years.4 Pistol may have suggested the thief image in his initial warning: "Take heed; have open eye; for thieves do foot by night: Take heed, ere summer comes, or cuckoo-birds do sing" (2.1.120-21). However, the food image seems to have more widespread psychological underpinnings. Women throughout the play function primarily as providers of sustenance, both literal and psychological. Mrs. Page spends much of the play serving food or beseeching her husband to come in for a meal (e.g., 1.1.170-78, 2.1.143-55, 3.3.213-16). Her ministrations go largely unnoticed, as we shall see. Mistress Quickly appears to be more than Doctor Caius's landlady, for according to Evans she is "the manner of his nurse; or his dry nurse; or his cook" (1.2.3-4). Like a primary caregiver ministering to an infantile charge, Mistress Quickly looks after all of Doctor Caius's needs (e.g., 1.4.89-92).

Understandably, he is loath to be separated from her, as seen when he becomes "horn-mad" upon discovering another man in his closet (1.4.40-120). By making a Doctor who is wooing Anne Page behave like a cuckolded husband, Shakespeare exploits a stock comic situation to generate laughs. Yet at the same time, there are suggestive psychological overtones. Caius

4 Such passages are often cited as evidence of the lamentable commodification of wives in Renaissance England (e.g., see Kegl 253), yet the writings of Anne Bradstreet suggest a degree of mutuality in the use of such tropes. Sounding like Troilus or Othello, in a poem "To my Dear and loving Husband" (1678) she writes: "I prize thy love more then whole Mines of gold./ Or all the riches that the East doth hold" (ll. 5-6, in Greer et al. 136). In a letter to her absent husband (also from 1678), Bradstreet takes an inventory that would make Ford or Petruchio proud: "My head, my heart, mine Eyes, my life, nay more,/ My joy, my Magazine of earthly store,/ If two be one, as surely thou and I/ How stayest thou there, whilst I at Ipswich lye?" (ll. 1-4, in Greer et al. 137).
does not acknowledge his close relationship with Quickly, but at the same time, like Ford, he panics at the prospect of another ransacking his stores: "Dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet" (1.4.67-68).

One of the ironies of The Merry Wives of Windsor is that although horned Falstaff of the play's final scene is often compared to Actæon by modern critics (e.g., Steadman 231-44; Parten, "Falstaff's" 194-98), the Actæon myth provides a thematic structure to earlier scenes involving Ford as well. In trying to avoid becoming an Actæon (i.e., a cuckold), Ford is transformed into a kind of baying hound who hunts a would-be seducer into private female space. For the first ambush of Falstaff and Mrs. Ford, Ford invites along a posse of local men whom he entices with a promise, "you shall have sport: I will show you a monster" (3.2.73-74). When he bursts into his home in the next scene, however, it is Ford who appears monstrous, "sweating and blowing, and looking wildly" (3.3.80-81). Unable to locate Falstaff (who has been ferried out in the buck-basket), Ford has led his posse, like a pack of hounds, on the wrong scent. Undaunted, he persists in the chase: "search, seek, find out . . . we'll un kennel the fox" (3.3.151-52). In the second ambush, Ford likewise assembles "a rabble of his companions" (3.5.69)—this time reportedly armed with pistols—and bursts into his house. Desperate to prevent the adultery and prove that he is not crazy, Ford acknowledges that his reputation may suffer: "If I find not what I seek . . . let me for ever be your table-sport; let them say of me, 'As jealous as Ford, that searched a hollow walnut for his wife's leman'" (4.2.147-51). Like Troilus's vow to be "true as Troilus" and subsequent loss of Cressida, Ford's repeated promise and failure to catch his "monster" nearly turns him into the stuff of local legend. When again Falstaff is nowhere to be found, the hound persists
in the chase: "I beseech you, follow . . . if I cry out thus upon no trail, never trust me when I open again" (4.2.182-85). As ridiculous as his behaviour seems, Ford has not been barking up the wrong tree; he has merely been thrown off the scent by a malodorous basket of laundry and a clever disguise.

The Actaeon story is particularly apt as this play's informing myth in light of Falstaff's proclivity to boast of sexual conquests, real or imagined. In Ovid's version of the myth, Diana is outraged that a man should witness her bathing naked, but more so that he should in future boast of this fact to others (3.178-309). Her reputation for chastity at stake, Diana transforms Actaeon into a stag in order to deprive him of speech: "Now make thy vaunt among thy Mates, thou sawste Diana bare" (3.227). Unable to inform his fellow huntsmen of his identity, Actaeon is torn apart by his hounds. The episode concludes with a moral debate typical of those that amused Renaissance readers: did Diana's "cruell . . . wrath" represent justice or revenge? "Some thought there was extended/ A great deale more extremitie than neded" whereas others argued that her actions were "but worthie [performed]/ For safegarde of hir womanhod" (3.303-08). What the play's characters ignore, significantly, is this very debate: justice versus revenge. In a town whose inhabitants are concerned with punishing a "predatory intruder" (Barton, "Falstaff" 132), there is no discussion of the concept of justice itself. Indeed, in The Merry Wives of Windsor the only time "justice" is mentioned is to name Justice Shallow. The concept merely degenerates, unexamined, into personal revenge.

Which brings us back to the Fords and the Pages. Ford's jealous rage stems from his dread of being singled out for ridicule in a highly conformist community (Parten,
"Cuckoldry" 235-36). All aspects of life in Windsor seem regulated by community standards, as Slender discovers when he is scolded by Page for refusing to come in for lunch: "By cock and pie, you shall not choose, sir: come, come" (1.1.279-81). Throughout the play and in typical Renaissance fashion, characters are ridiculed for their incongruity or eccentricity; for being different, fat, or for speaking with a foreign accent (Kegl 269-70; Thomas, "Place" 77). The Host's own reputation is imperilled when Falstaff is perceived to be entertaining a woman alone in his rented room: "let her descend; my chambers are honourable. Fie! Privacy? Fie!" (4.5.19-21). The Host is right: there is no privacy in a town where men do everything in groups and punish those who don't play along. Indeed, the play's most common imperative is "come, sirs, follow me!"

In such an environment, Ford's over-reaction is caused by the prospect of being separated from a wife of many years and by the equally dreadful prospect of being ridiculed by his peers. In light of Ford's widely-known predisposition to jealousy, his initial reluctance to believe the slander of Mrs. Ford is quite remarkable. Without proof, he will persist in trusting his wife: "I will look further into 't . . . . If I find her honest, I lose not my labour; if she be otherwise, 'tis labour well bestowed" (2.1.225-29). In fact, Ford's disguise as Master Brook provides him with an opportunity to voice his true feelings about his wife. Instead of pretending merely to lust after her, Master Brook/Ford declares that his motives are more pure:

I have long loved her and, I protest to you, bestowed much on her; followed her with a doting observance; engrossed opportunities to meet her . . . briefly, I have pursued her as love hath pursued me; which hath been on the wing of all occasions.

(2.2.188-96)
In his assumed character, such a declaration is superfluous, especially in light of Falstaff's crude proposal to enjoy Mrs. Ford and pass the "leftovers" on to Master Brook. I suggest that Ford is declaring before this would-be cuckolder what he quite possibly has never said to his own wife, that he loves and esteems her deeply: "she dwells so securely on the excellency of her honour that the folly of my soul dares not present itself; she is too bright to be looked against" (2.2.233-36). Master Brook/Ford goes on to extol her many virtues, including her "purity," her "reputation" and the "thousand other . . . defences" that protect the integrity of her marital chastity (2.2.238-42). Externally, his self-esteem depends on her reputation for faithfulness. Internally, his self-esteem is bound up in her personal responses to him in the sense that, as David A. Berkowitz points out, healthy marriages depend on "the provision by each of the partners of the reasonable and limited gratification of some idealizing and mirroring needs for the other" ("Selfobject" 230).

Berkowitz's statement finds a Renaissance analogue in The Horn Exalted, a work that, like Shakespeare's play, embedded profound psychological insights in its comic treatment of cuckoldry. Rogers outlined the benefits of companionate marriage for men, such as the way wives rejuvenate their spouses:

That women have a great influence upon men, 'Tis certain, Their Beauty cheereth the co[u]ntenance, and a man loveth nothing better. He gazeth and gapeth upon her, and desires her more than gold. Those beams and circulations of light, with the powerful graces they have about them, tie us unto them in chains both of Love and Wonder. (G. Rogers 37-38, italics in original)

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5 In his Preface, Rogers described his work as a "piece of drollery" (G. Rogers n.p.), though there are many serious insights to be found in this charming book. In a similar vein, Leggatt argues that, in spite of much silliness, thematically The Merry Wives of Windsor is as "fundamentally serious" as other dramatic treatments of adultery (Citizen 148-49).
"Love and Wonder" transcend the mere covetousness that Rogers's gold imagery might suggest; instead, marriage provides a forum in which a man's needs may be expressed and satisfied: "Now man and wife being one flesh . . . mutually work and react one upon another, as the woman upon the cloyster'd infant" (63-64). Like an infant, a husband benefits from his wife's ministrations:

Marriage rather frees men from care, since the wives take all upon them. No sweetness or tranquillity in the World like it, in which, as in the golden age, there's no hearing of Meum and Tuum, but every thing, even to body and mind, is in common. (G. Rogers 41, italics in original)

Ford is one husband who benefits from what Berkowitz describes as "the feeling of intactness that comes from attachment to an idealized other" ("Selfobject" 231). Before Falstaff's interruption, from Ford's perspective there was no "Meum and Tuum," only himself and the wifely extension who mirrored and enlivened him. Ironically, this sort of symbiotic relationship, in which marriage partners are treated as an extension of the other's self, is enormously fragile. If the couple is separated, feelings of security and intactness become ones of insecurity and incompleteness: "since the object is external to the self, even its possession can no more than temporarily repair the internal sense of emptiness" (Berkowitz, "Selfobject" 232). Hence, Ford's images of feeling like an empty larder, stripped of his butter, cheese and aqua-vitae.

Separation from Mrs. Ford because of cuckoldry would also separate Ford from his

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6 Robert Baldwin has demonstrated that self-constituting, mutual "amorous gazing" was a popular motif in Renaissance paintings depicting both hetero- and homosexual love (23-48). Increasingly, this motif was replacing an outmoded courtly trope in which gazing was "for the most part one way . . . a dart-like glance from the beloved which penetrates the lover's eyes and wounds his heart" (23).
friends, thus disconnecting him from two self-sustaining networks at once. It is significant that the onset of doubts about Mrs. Ford's chastity coincide with an increasing separation from his friends as well. For instance, Ford is not invited along by Shallow and Page to see the "sport" involving the duel between Caius and Evans (2.1.188-93). Later, many of his former friends decline an invitation to dine at Ford's house, and only accompany him when he promises to show them a "monster" (3.2.46-84). His goals are not only the humiliation of Falstaff and the rescue of Mrs. Ford but also the generation of praise from his fellow citizens: "to these violent proceedings all my neighbours shall cry aim" (3.2.39-40). Oliver points out that "crying aim" denoted spectators "applauding the archer's skill" (77 note). If Ford can "hit" Falstaff, then Ford will no longer be the target of derision himself: "I shall be rather praised for this than mocked" (3.2.42-43). However, both times that his peers follow him home, he is humiliated--increasing his isolation and desperation.

The collapse of Ford's network of sustaining relationships leaves his self-esteem in great peril. He displays early symptoms of paranoia: formerly trusted friends become "pandarily rascals" and he perceives "a knot, a ging, a pack, a conspiracy against [him]" (4.2.108-09; cf. Carroll, "'Received'" 191-92). Fortunately, Ford is informed of his wife's innocence before any permanent damage to his own psyche can be done, or before he can inflict lasting injuries on others. However, once he is admitted back into the fold of family and neighbours, his behaviour is as rigidly monitored and regulated as before. For instance, in a moment of delighted relief he apologizes to his beloved: "Pardon me, wife. Henceforth do what thou wilt:/ I rather will suspect the sun with cold/ Than thee with wantonness" (4.4.6-8). Here he has returned to his former idealization of her, granting her the freedom
critics usually ascribe to the Pages. However, no sooner has he articulated his "faith," than he is rebuked as a doting husband by that arbiter of community standards, Page: "Be not as extreme in submission/ As in offence" (4.4.11-12). Page's next line is of the "come, sirs, follow me" variety, as he proposes that the community single out a new target for "public sport": Falstaff (4.4.14). Despite the feeling that the community is finally banding together in a common cause, the participants cooperate in the shaming ritual to divert attention from individual plans to wed Anne Page to a chosen suitor. Justice is merely a pretext for forwarding a personal agenda.

What is most curious about criticism of The Merry Wives of Windsor is the tendency to contrast the two married couples: the Fords are a dysfunctional family in crisis, whereas the Pages represent the ideal of companionate marriage. Richard Horwich, for example, extols the freedom Page accords his wife as "[t]he most striking feature" of the play's depiction of companionate marriage; Ford, on the other hand, imprisons his wife out of conviction that women are "weak and prone to sin" (35-37). R. S. White compounds the error by describing the Pages' marriage as "serenely exemplary . . . . based on firm companionship and trust" (33). But do the Pages really, as Horwich asserts, exemplify "the principles of trust and equality" (37)? Why is Ford so uptight about his wife's chastity, whereas Page seems so nonchalant?

In Ford's case, I have identified four contributing factors to his jealousy: (1) his love for his wife (which includes intrapsychic mergers that Kohut terms self-selfobject); (2) his need to fit in with male peers in a community quick to mock and exclude cuckolds; (3) evidence that Falstaff is home alone with Mrs. Ford on two occasions; (4) cultural attitudes
that contribute to his fears about "the hell of having a false woman" (2.2.280-81). In Page's case, the two most common explanations are (1) that Mrs. Page is impeccably chaste; (2) that her husband knows this and, not surprisingly, trusts her. However, in light of the play's emphasis of a wide gulf separating the two, I propose a third explanation.

Page is not jealous of his wife because he is indifferent towards her. Right from the first scene, he spends more time hunting with companions and currying favour with the local power elite than with his wife. When Shallow inquires, "[h]ow doth good Mistress Page?" Page does not answer but rather gets caught up in a discussion of greyhounds (1.1.76-89). A typical interaction between husband and wife involves him ordering a meal for his hunting cronies: "Wife, bid these gentlemen welcome. Come, we have a hot venison pasty to dinner" (1.1.176-77). Otherwise, Page tends to ignore her, perhaps because, as Mrs. Page points out, "[h]e's as far from jealousy as I am from giving him cause" (2.1.100-01). This line is frequently cited as evidence of Page's exemplary trust, but when placed alongside other textual clues it suggests that he rather takes her for granted. Upon learning of Falstaff's designs on his wife, Page ignores the threat and exits with his companions (2.1.143-51, 187-221). Later, in spite of mounting evidence that Falstaff indeed has designs on his wife, Page is preoccupied with planning a "birding" expedition at which he can show off a new hawk to

7 When Mrs. Page asks her husband two questions--"[w]hither go you, George? Hark you" and "[h]ave with you. You'll come to dinner, George?" (2.1.143, 150-51)--her familiar tone and use of his Christian name could be cited as evidence of closeness. Lawrence Stone cites the decline of such "formal seventeenth-century modes of address between husband and wife [as] 'Sir' and 'Madam', and the adoption of first names" as evidence of the rise of the companionate marriage (Family 329). However, the fact that Page answers neither query but simply exits to witness a duel (a potentially dangerous activity) without informing her of his whereabouts suggests indifference, not closeness. Once he addresses her simply as "Wife" (1.1.176)--hardly one of Stone's "terms of endearment" (Family 329).
his companions (3.3.212-16). For a brief moment, like Posthumus, Page considers Falstaff's challenge as an opportunity to prove his wife's worth to companions: "I would turn her loose to him, and what he gets more of her than sharp words, let it lie on my head" (2.1.174-76). Unlike Posthumus, however, he does not carry through with this plan.

The only scene of extended interaction between the Pages involves the planning of Falstaff's punishment, and here the appearance of harmony conceals the double deception planned by husband and wife. Regarding their secret manoeuvres to marry Anne Page to their chosen suitor, Horwich observes: "The Pages, who have constructed a loving and companionate marriage for themselves, seem not at all interested in securing a similar blessing for Anne" (40). I suggest that the Pages' is a marriage in name only, and no "blessing" at all. They have drifted apart in a manner that resembles Slender's description of deteriorating marriages: "if there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance" (1.1.225-27). That there was, in fact, "no great love in the beginning" is suggested by Mrs. Page's wistful reaction to Falstaff's note: "What, have I scaped love-letters in the holiday-time of my beauty, and am I now a subject for them?" (2.1.1-3). Even when she was young and beautiful, Page was not very "romantic" in his courtship of her. Not surprisingly, when Ford teases Mrs. Page that the wives would remarry after their "husbands were dead," she quips, "[b]e sure of that--two other husbands" (3.2.112-14). Absentee husbands are interchangeable, easily replaced. Mistress Quickly underscores the strain Page's outings places on their marriage when she relays Mrs. Page's invitation to Falstaff: "she bade me tell your worship that her husband is seldom from home, but she hopes there will come a time" (2.2.95-97). Windsor locals would recognize this as the exact reverse
of their domestic life, that Page is too often away from home. Falstaff does not. Mistress Quickly describes Mrs. Page's marriage as a paradise for women: "Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does; do what she will, say what she will . . . all is as she will" (2.2.111-14). Mrs. Page leads a double life. When her husband is home, she is at his beck and call. When he is absent, she is left to her own devices. Mrs. Ford marvels, "[y]ou are the happier woman" (2.1.103), though the course of the play suggests that the reverse may also be true.

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare (perhaps cynically) suggests that those unaffected by cuckoldry anxiety may no longer care, or have never loved their partners to begin with. The play does represent the victory of companionate marriage over the forces of suspicion, gossip and cuckoldry anxiety, but that companionate marriage is the childless, quarrelling, passionate Fords. I have attempted to show that Ford is not simply a "comic type--the jealous husband" as is commonly asserted (L. Anderson 73-74), but a subtly drawn and psychologically plausible portrait of a flawed but decent husband (cf. Oliver lxiii-lxiv).

In comparing the two marriages, I have scrutinized lines spoken in jest as if they had serious intent. Yet as Parten points out, laughter is serious in that it serves to "punish and correct" behaviour ("Cuckoldry" 236). Jokes at a cuckold's expense often relieve the anxieties of the teller, a dynamic described by Kohut as consolidating the self by "taki[ing] other people apart": "Self-esteem is heightened by mutual confirmation of the lowness of others" (Elson 36-37). In Mrs. Page's case, her jokes are all of one colour, diverting attention away from her unhappy marriage by creating what psychologists refer to as a "joke facade" (McGhee 34-35).

Throughout, I have cited accounts by the notoriously unreliable Mistress Quickly of
marital relations in Windsor. The humour of her passages hinges on audiences' knowledge that when she says something, generally the reverse is true. She says Mrs. Page is happy, but she is not. She says Mr. Page is seldom from home, but he is. She says Ford is predisposed to irrational jealousy, but he is quite rational in his pursuit of evidence: "my intelligence is true, my jealousy is reasonable" (4.2.136-37). She tries to cheer up Falstaff—who has just been beaten by Ford—by saying that the horn-mad husband also beat his wife "black and blue" (4.5.106-08), but we have just witnessed the peaceful reconciliation of husband and wife. Indeed, the only one beaten "into all the colours of the rainbow" is the would-be sexual interloper, Falstaff (4.5.110). This final narrative, however inaccurate, encapsulates the ever-present threat of spousal abuse when cuckoldry is at issue. Just as Leslie A. Fiedler characterizes Othello as a tragedy that veers painfully close to bloody farce (122-27), I suggest that The Merry Wives of Windsor is a lighthearted farce containing seeds of personal tragedy. Indeed, when this comedy is described as a farce, the term is generally used disparagingly—implying shallow characterization, slapstick humour, and superficial thematic content. According to The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, "farce" denotes "a form of popular comedy in which laughter is raised by horseplay and bodily assault in contrived and highly improbable situations" (Hartnoll 272). The Merry Wives of Windsor does contain improbable episodes, a host of stock comic characters and three of Shakespeare's most memorable instances of bodily assault: the dunking, beating and burning of Falstaff (this last one to be discussed in my Conclusion, below). However, the play also explores the speed with which suspicion of cuckoldry is aroused in the husband of a faithful wife, the difficulty of administering justice fairly in the case of social outsiders, and the way mistrust of women
undermines a social order founded on precarious notions of honour, hierarchy and personal property. Therefore, a second, more modern usage of "farce" is perhaps more applicable to Shakespeare's comedy: "a full-length play dealing with some absurd situation, generally based on extra-marital adventures" (Hartnoll 272; cf. Roberts, Shakespeare's 66). What is most "absurd" in The Merry Wives of Windsor is Falstaff's notion that, in spite of advancing age and physical decline, he could seduce the wives of two upstanding citizens; what is less absurd is that one husband should fear Falstaff's success.
Chapter Twelve

"I am a feather for each wind that blows": "Jealousy, Tyranny and Self-Repair in The Winter's Tale"

In moving from The Merry Wives of Windsor to The Winter's Tale, we shift our attention from marital strains on two middle-class marriages to the near destruction of the Sicilian royal family. With the elevation of the protagonists' social class come wide-ranging political ramifications of imaginary cuckoldry. The play's accused seducer, Polixenes, outlines the gravity of the king's perception that another man has "touch'd" the queen "[f]orbiddenly":

This jealousy
Is for a precious creature: as she's rare,
Must it be great; and, as his person's mighty,
Must it be violent; and, as he does conceive
He is dishonour'd by a man which ever
Profess'd to him; why, his revenges must
In that be made more bitter . . . .

(WT 1.2.416-17, 451-57)

Leontes perceives that his honour has been besmirched, and like Othello he will couch personal revenge in the language of public justice. Although younger than the Fords and the Pages, Leontes and Hermione have been married several years; individuals growing old and couples growing apart are thematic concerns in The Winter's Tale as well. Leontes's self-esteem is shattered by the loss of two significant others—his wife and best friend—and the ensuing psychological chaos causes him to become irrational in his jealousy, tyrannical in his administration of justice, and dependent on self/object mergers in his recovery. Paulina, in
particular, helps Leontes achieve what Muslin paradoxically refers to as "self-repair" ("Shakespeare's" 227).

Where in other plays Shakespeare takes several scenes or acts to depict the onset of cuckoldry anxiety, here he condenses it into one explosive scene (1.2) exposing a troubled individual and a marriage in crisis. Despite the rapidity of its onset, however, Leontes's jealousy is a psychologically plausible occurrence, not a mere plot device. His jealousy arises during a kind of mid-life crisis, a reshuffling of the self brought about by the confluence of several factors: alienation from his wife; the fact that his son, Mamillius, outshines him; the departure of Polixenes; and the imminent birth of a second child. In light of these strains, Leontes's irrational behaviour in the second scene stems from feeling overwhelmed by situations beyond his control. His jealous rage is a desperate attempt to regain this control. Following an examination of the opening sequence, I will investigate how scenes in Bohemia further explore sexual jealousy, and how the problem is resolved in

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1 The play's Arden editor plays down the psychology of Leontes, arguing that "[h]e is not to be examined closely as a man" but rather as a "vehicle," an "agent to bring an evil force [i.e., jealousy] rapidly into play" (Pafford lxxi-lxxii; cf. Frye, Northrop 161). Critics who have examined Leontes's psychology nonetheless include Adelman, Suffocating 220-35; Barber and Wheeler 328-34; Byles 84-92; Cohen, Politics 138-54; Danson 77-79; Frey 119-32; Kahn, Man's 214-20; MacCary 195-217; Sokol 31-54; Stewart 30-37; Stockholder 184-96. The most detailed psychoanalytic accounts of the play are Schwartz, "Leontes" 202-25 and "Winter's" 145-99.

2 MacCary proposes that because Leontes is only thirty or so years of age at the play's opening we should consider him in the context of "the young lovers of the early and middle comedies" (196). However, since the average life-expectancy in Renaissance England was well short of sixty (S. Smith 126-27; Laslett 84), and half the population was under twenty years of age (Thomas, "Age" 212), then it seems more appropriate to investigate Leontes in terms of more adult concerns: nostalgia for lost youth, declining physical prowess, his own impending mortality and the legitimacy of his children.
the bittersweet reunions of friends and families in the play's final act.

As with the Pages, Leontes and Hermione appear to enjoy a model of companionate marriage which, on closer examination, shows signs of strain. In many respects, Leontes's marriage is a success: he has a virtuous wife, the "unspeakable comfort" of a healthy male heir, and another baby on the way (1.1.34). However, there seems to be bitterness, awkwardness, even disappointment lurking beneath the surface (W. Sanders 16). After failing to persuade his friend to remain in Bohemia, Leontes's first words to his wife seem terse and sarcastic: "Tongue-tied our queen? speak you" (1.2.27). Her ensuing playful persuasion triggers fears of wifely infidelity in her husband. Hermione begins by offering to exchange one month of her husband's company for one week of Polixenes's (1.2.38-42). Perceiving the insult inherent in her declaration, she assures her husband that she loves him "not a jar o' th' clock behind" (1.2.43), though as Wilbur Sanders points out, "[s]omething unhappy haunts these assurances of affection" (9). Hermione then invokes conventions of courtly love in which she, the lady, commands Polixenes, her vassal: "You shall not go: a lady's Verily's/ As potent as a lord's. Will you go yet?/ Force me to keep you as a prisoner" (1.2.50-53). Polixenes must choose between two erotic images, being prisoner of a female "gaoler" or being the "guest" of a "kind hostess" (1.2.59-60). He opts to be her guest.

The absence of passion in their marriage does not prevent sexual jealousy from afflicting Leontes. He seems less outraged by Hermione's apparent infidelity than by the degree to which she enjoys a spontaneous, even flirtations relationship with Polixenes:

Is whispering nothing?
Is leaning cheek to cheek? is meeting noses?
Kissing with inside lip? stopping the career
Of laughter with a sigh (a note infallible
Of breaking honesty)? horsing foot on foot?
Skulking in corners? wishing clocks more swift?
Hours, minutes? noon, midnight? and all eyes
Blind with the pin and web, but theirs; theirs only.

(1.2.284-91)

Whether these actions occurred during Polixenes's nine-month visit, during Hermione's
persuasion in the second scene, or entirely in the imagination of Leontes is immaterial. What
is important is that Leontes perceives Hermione to be displaying a side of herself, and to be
enjoying a type of relationship, never shared with her husband (Nathan 24). Even the most
potentially "romantic" period of Leontes's relationship with Hermione, their courtship, is
characterized as having been formal, strained, even unpleasant: "Three crabbed months had
sour'd themselves to death./ Ere I could make thee open thy white hand./ And clap thyself my
love" (1.2.102-04). No whispering, laughing, dancing, or rubbing noses was (or is) enjoyed
by this unhappy couple; instead, they too exemplify Slender's account of marriage: "if there
be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance"
(MWW 1.1.225-27). In contrast, Hermione easily opens her hand to Polixenes—a gesture
symbolic of sexuality exceeding the bounds of marriage (Traub 42-43).

In effect, Leontes's marriage is not a companionate one but a more aristocratic form
described as "feudal" by Lewis (13-17), or "open lineage" by Stone (Family 85-119). Feudal
marriages were founded upon concerns with property and succession:

The same woman who was the lady and 'the dearest dread' of her
vassals was often little better than a piece of property to her husband...
.. marriage was rather the drab background against which [courtly]
love stood out in all the contrast of its new tenderness and delicacy.
(Lewis 13)
Not all critics consider the adulterous overtones of Hermione's courtly rhetoric a serious threat; St. Pierre exonerates her behaviour as mere "innocent courtly hospitality" (140). However, from Leontes's perspective, her courtly flirtation suggests that she is unsatisfied with her marriage and seeks an emotional outlet.

Aspects of both Leontes's and Polixenes's marriages resemble key criteria of Stone's open lineage family (Family 85-87). Both husbands are concerned with lineage, honour and property. Leontes and Hermione are less passionate than business-like in their relations, and her role is largely circumscribed by the demanding task of providing heirs to the throne. Polixenes never even mentions his wife, except perhaps to express concern that she is home unsupervised: "I am question'd by my fears, of what may chance/ Or breed upon our absence" (WT 1.2.11-12). B. J. Sokol describes Polixenes here as "suggesting suspicions of cuckoldry and conspiracy which are native to Sicilia, not Bohemia" (25). Actually suspicion is native to both. Finally, as Stone points out, "the greatest fear" in the status-conscious open lineage family "was of social derogation in marriage, of alliance with a family of lower estate or degree than one's own" (Family 87). Such a fear underlies Polixenes's outrage that his son would choose to wed a lowly shepherdess. This father's plan to arrange his son's marriage in order to secure diplomatic alliances suggests that the older generation's matches were likewise arranged. In sum, open lineage marriage was characterized by the remoteness of spouses who slept in separate chambers, rarely had a moment alone, and too often sought "sexual alternatives through casual liaisons, the emotional outlet through marriage [being] largely non-existent for either husband or wife" (Stone, Family 102). Such arrangements may account for Hermione's apparent craving for approbation from her spouse:
I prithee tell me: cram 's with praise, and make 's
As fat as tame things: one good deed, dying tongueless,
Slaughters a thousand, waiting upon that.
Our praises are our wages. You may ride 's
With one soft kiss a thousand furlongs ere
With spur we heat an acre . . . .

(1.2.91-96)

Whether or not these lines reveal sexual frustration, Hermione is clearly emotionally deprived
by her husband. Leontes's household bustles with visitors, courtiers, servants, nurses and
guards--a far cry from the homy middle-class households of Shakespeare's Windsor.

In the context of the feudal/open lineage marriage system, Leontes's behaviour in the
early scenes makes more sense. Their marriage seems strained, formal, awkward, and they
are never on stage alone together. Leontes's contradictory expectations of marriage also make
sense within this system: he does not passionately love his wife, but he does feel entitled to
her ministrations to his emotional needs. This is what Kohut means when in his lectures he
clarifies that a selfobject "merger" need not always be reciprocal: "It is not a merger between
two people; it is a merger experience of [one person by another]" (Tolpin and Tolpin 353,
emphasis in original). Thus Leontes "cannot sustain a relationship with a woman based on
the union of his and her separate identities, in which trust and reciprocity mediate that
separateness" (Kahn, Man's 217). Even without reciprocity or trust, patriarchal marriage
predicates a husband's external reputation and his psychological well-being upon his wife's
behaviour: "Shakespearean heroes invest women with the capacity either to organize or to
disorganize their psychic universe" (Gohlke, "When" 44). Both Kahn's and Gohlke's
formulations are suggestive of exploitative self-selfobject relationships in which a subject
(e.g., Leontes) depends upon another (e.g., Hermione) to perform self functions (e.g., self-
esteem regulation). Polixenes condenses the patriarchal concern with property and the psychological need for self-objects in his characterization of Leontes's strange behaviour:

"The king hath on him such a countenance/ As he had lost some province, and a region/ Lov'd as he loves himself" (1.2.368-70).

That Leontes regards his wife as property, another characteristic of feudal/open lineage marriages, is suggested by his description of Hermione's imagined adultery as having "his pond fish'd by his next neighbour" or of men having their castle "gates open'd./ As mine, against their will" (1.2.195-98). If courtly love was often, as Lewis quaintly puts it, "what the nineteenth century called 'dishonourable' love" (2), then Polixenes's submission to Hermione's wish is doubly portentous: it undermines Leontes's authority and suggests that the queen is an adulteress. A courtly lover obeys his lady's every wish, "however whimsical," in order to demonstrate his absolute devotion:

There is a service of love closely modelled on the service which a feudal vassal owes to his lord. The lover is the lady's 'man'. He addresses her as midons, which etymologically represents not 'my lady' but 'my lord'. (Lewis 2, note omitted)

By agreeing to stay, Polixenes seems to admit that he is Hermione's lover, and to confirm she--midons--is running the kingdom. As Desdemona seems to govern Cyprus, Hermione has become lord of Sicily.

Leontes perceives himself becoming, in the eyes of his subjects, a passive husband ruled by his wife--a view confirmed during a debriefing with Camillo who observes that Polixenes "would not stay at your petitions; made/ His business more material" (1.2.215-16). That he can no longer influence other men, whether a childhood friend or a ruler from a
neighbouring kingdom, inflicts a narcissistic injury on the proud king. Camillo inadvertently "rubs it in" to Leontes by pointing out that anyone with an "understanding pate" knows that Polixenes stays "[a]t the good queen's entreaty" (1.2.220-33). Leontes thus hears confirmed that he is a cuckold, complaining in an aside: "They're here with me already; whisp'ring, rounding/ 'Sicilia's a so-forth': 'tis far gone,/ When I shall gust it last" (1.2.217-19). Pafford points out that, proverbially, the cuckold is always the last one to learn of his wife's infidelity (18 note). In his Anatomy of Melancholy (c. 1521-51), Robert Burton highlighted the damaging effects of appearing subservient to one's wife: "many noble senators and soldiers . . . have lost their honour, in being uxorii, so sottishly overruled by their wives" (3:268 [3.3.1.2]). Parten examines The Winter's Tale in terms of contrasting couples: Leontes tries to rule his wife whereas Antigonus has given up hope of ruling his ("Cuckoldry" 383-88). Leontes takes his fears of appearing ruled by Hermione and projects these outward in the form of scorn heaped on "hen-pecked" Antigonus. For example, when Antigonus fails to prevent his wife from confronting the king, Leontes scoffs, "What! canst not rule her?" (2.3.46). Underneath the scorn lies Leontes's fear that, in spite of Hermione's deferential appearance (she persuaded Polixenes only after being bid to do so), she too is an ungovernable "callat/ Of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband" (2.3.90-91). Parten describes Paulina as a stock comic shrew character whose domination of Antigonus suggests to Leontes a "disturbing caricature" of the royal couple ("Cuckoldry" 384). One crucial aspect of these contrasting couples ignored by Parten, however, is age.

To Leontes, Antigonus and Paulina present a frightening spectre of what the future holds in store. Though they may not be significantly older than the king and queen
(Antigonus's oldest child is only eleven [2.1.144]), Leontes characterizes them as a kind of Chanticlere and Pertelote (Pafford 47 note). Antigonus is "most ignorant by age" (2.1.173), a "dotard . . . unroosted/ By [his] dame Partlet" who is herself a "hag" and a "crone" (2.3.72-76, 107). Leontes's ageist attitude is further suggested by his disappointment at the appearance of Hermione years later: "But yet, Paulina,/ Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing/ So aged as this seems" (5.3.27-29). In Antigonus and Paulina Leontes sees his own declining years--years that promise quarrels with a "wrinkled" wife, physical decline, and a loosening grip on power as he is overshadowed by the more popular prince Mamillius.

No longer the "boy eternal" himself (1.2.65), Leontes may perceive that the prince is more popular than himself. "Mamillius . . . is a gentleman of the greatest promise that ever came into my note," marvels Archidamus (1.1.35-36). Mamillius is charming and "wanton" with the ladies (2.1.1-32); Leontes is suspicious and awkward. Mamillius's promise "makes old hearts fresh: they that went on crutches ere he was born desire yet their life to see him a man" (1.1.39-40); Leontes rather scorns than inspires the elderly. Mamillius grieves the abuse of Hermione; Leontes is callous and uncaring. In sum, "[t]he only man amongst them all, it would seem, is Mamillius" (W. Sanders 31). The ramifications of Leontes's declining popularity are twofold: first, he perceives sedition and conspiracy to be filling the power-vacuum created by his inability to govern household and kingdom; and second, he will subject Hermione to a demeaning show-trial and make her a laughing-stock in his place.

Leontes's crisis of confidence is brought about by several related factors, the most important of which is also the most obvious and the most frequently overlooked. Leontes suffers from what Freud termed "normal" or "competitive" jealousy, characterized by "the
pain caused by the thought of losing the loved object" and the "narcissistic wound" inflicted by scornful peers. This jealousy is disproportionate to actual circumstances because of its roots in "the earliest stirrings of the child's affective life" (Freud, "Some" 223). Leontes's ambivalence towards Hermione—he seems emotionally distant from her, yet psychologically dependent upon her—suggests that his jealousy has less to do with repressed homosexual desires for Polixenes (which would amount to "early" stirrings) than with unresolved narcissistic issues (the "earliest stirrings" of all). Building on Freud's formulation, Ernest Jones described how certain individuals treat love as an "accessory function . . . in affording reassurance and security about one's self-value" (49). Jones distinguished this form of love from healthy, mature object love because it is primarily self-centred, "a therapeutic cure" that gives the subject "the inner security that he otherwise lacks" (49). In a passage describing a self-other dynamic strikingly similar to Kohut's concept of the selfobject, Jones described people lacking the "internal capacity for self expression" as becoming dependent on the "external opportunity, i.e., on the object of affection" (Jones 49, emphasis in original). Like a drug-addict searching for a "dose," a self-centred lover demands constant reassurance from his significant other: "The most striking feature about his love is that, strictly speaking, it is not love at all, but a craving to be loved. He is not interested in the object of his affection as such, only in her relationship to himself" (49). Leontes does not love Hermione so much as he wants to be loved by her. Her apparent flirtation with Polixenes and her preoccupation with her children suggest to the king that he has been "usurped" from her affection. This is the "alienation" that psychologist Peter van Sommers describes as being a "dominant
component" of sexual jealousy; "a feeling of being left-out, excluded and isolated" (46).³

Several other factors exacerbate Leontes's insecurity. He is radically unsettled by the sudden departure of a friend who, at one time, allowed a relationship of "undifferentiated oneness" similar to that of an infant/mother bond (Kahn, Man's 216-17). Also, the imminent birth of a second child arouses in Leontes "the curious freaks of feeling to which husbands are sometimes subject in the latter stages of pregnancy" (W. Sanders 22).⁴ Finally, environmental changes that the imminent birth will bring about for Mamillius seem to arouse childlike anxieties in Leontes. His jealousy is an angry response to the prospect of, once again, losing the "unreliable maternal object"--this time, his wife (Adelman, Suffocating 223; cf. Erickson, "Patriarchal" 819). We do not know whether Leontes had any younger siblings, but if he did then he would have experienced a similar situation to that acted out in the court nursery. There, when Mamillius refuses to play with the Ladies, he is warned by the First Lady of the arrival of a new rival for their affection:

The queen your mother rounds apace: we shall
Present our services to a fine new prince

³ On the shattering of Leontes's self-esteem by Hermione's perceived failure to mirror his narcissistic needs, see Byles 85-88. Lawrence Danson writes that in figuring Hermione variously as a spider, a piece of property, and a fish to be caught by poachers, "Leontes cannot fully articulate an idea of his wife as a subject possessing an inward essence" (77). For surveys of psychoanalytic theories of jealousy, see Moi 134-53; Spielman 59-82; and van Sommers 128-49.

⁴ Sokol describes Leontes's behaviour as symptomatic of "couvade syndrome" which affects expectant fathers (42-49). In mild cases, the husband experiences symptoms of pregnancy such as discomfort, fatigue or anxiety—a phenomenon recognized by Robert Heath who wrote in 1650: "We observe each loving Husband when the wife/ Is labouring, by a strange reciproque strife/ Doth sympathizing sicken" (cited in Sokol 44). In extreme cases, fathers experience suspicion, paranoia, mental breakdown or "baseless sexual jealousy and/or certainty of cuckoldry" (Sokol 44).
One of these days, and then you'd wanton with us,
If we would have you.

(2.1.16-19)

The emotional and physical ramifications of a boy's separation from nurturing surroundings are played out as the play progresses. Mamillius is taken from his mother and Leontes fails to provide adequate sustenance for the prince who dies of grief at this "maternal deprivation" within a month (Erickson, "Patriarchal" 821). Mamillius's peril is re-enacted in the subsequent abandonment of his baby sister to the elements in Bohemia.

In earlier chapters, I have drawn analogies between the fostering of political suspicion in individuals through education, and of sexual suspicion through enculturating stereotypes. In other words, political paranoia led to sexual paranoia. In Leontes's case, we have come full circle. His perception of Hermione's infidelity, combined with Polixenes's sudden flight, suggest to the king that Sicily is rife with sedition. Sexual paranoia leads to political paranoia:

There is a plot against my life, my crown;
All's true that is mistrusted: that false villain,
Whom I employ'd, was pre-employ'd by him:
He has discover'd my design, and I
Remain a pinch'd thing; yea, a very trick
For them to play at will . . . .

(2.1.47-52)

Suddenly Shakespeare's romance seems to have become an Italianate revenge tragedy, as Sicily is transformed into a hot-bed of intrigue and counter-intrigue featuring a double-crossing "traitor" queen and her double-agent "federary" Camillo (2.1.89-90).

The more Leontes becomes suspicious, the more he becomes tyrannical. As most critics of the play have observed, Leontes has no Don John, Iago or Iachimo to foster his
suspicion: "Leontes's jealousy erupts out of nowhere and breaks his world apart" (Adelman, *Suffocating* 222). No-one sees it coming, largely because it occurs so early in the play. However, textual clues found subsequent to this "eruption" suggest that Leontes's paranoia stems from personal insecurities exacerbated by environmental stimuli. He vacillates between the desire to rule alone and the need for counsel; as he confesses to Antigonus, "I am a feather for each wind that blows" (2.3.153). At times, the most harmful stimuli come from his most loyal friends. Antigonus's promise to "geld" his own daughters if Hermione is unchaste (2.1.147), however rhetorical, strengthens Leontes's resolve to rule his family with an iron fist. Infuriated by a dissenting (but loyal) Lord, Leontes becomes increasingly intemperate: "Our prerogative/ Calls not your counsels" (2.1.163-64). His stubbornness proves disastrous during the trial of his wife, where Leontes repeatedly asserts the prerogatives of an absolute monarch. The desperate lengths to which he goes to "assert his authority" serve as a powerful indictment of tyranny, "the pathology of monarchy" (Overton 60-61).

Leontes arraigns Hermione ostensibly to give her "[a] just and open trial" (2.3.204), but by publishing her whore "on every post" the trial's outcome becomes a foregone conclusion (3.2.101-02). As Leontes warns the defendant, "feel our justice; in whose easiest passage/ Look for no less than death" (3.2.90-91). This is a mere "show trial" designed to exonerate the king's own strange behaviour: "Let us be clear'd/ Of being tyrannous, since we so openly/ Proceed in justice" (3.2.4-6; Overton 60). As with Othello, Leontes is punishing Hermione because she offended him, not because she committed a legal offence. In pleading her innocence, Hermione exposes the essential injustice of the trial:
Jealousy that is socially disruptive in ordinary husbands becomes deadly in a justice or a king: "Where Ford is ridiculous, Leontes is both ridiculous and dangerous" (Parten, "Cuckoldry" 370). This view is confirmed by Burton's anatomy of the "miseries" of states ruled by jealous monarchs: "where there is a cracked title, much tyranny, and many exactions" (3:261 [3.3.1.1]).

Leontes's jealous "surmises" place him in an increasingly untenable situation. To prove Hermione guilty in this public forum would proclaim him cuckold and his issue illegitimate; to find her innocent would, in the words of Paulina, expose his "weak-hing'd fancy" and make him "scandalous to the world" (2.3.118-20). Reputation is a particularly sore point with Leontes. Right from the onset of his doubts about Hermione, he fears that he plays "so disgrac'd a part, whose issue/ Will hiss me to my grave: contempt and clamour/ Will be my knell" (1.2.188-90). In a play featuring solemn funeral rites and elaborate monuments, the prospect of being buried in "contempt and clamour" rather than in stately ceremony seems especially irksome. Hermione further insults her husband by questioning his power to pass judgement, deferring to the Oracle instead: "Apollo be my judge!" (3.2.116).

However, when the oracle declares Hermione's innocence, Leontes stubbornly persists in his

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5 In this respect, Shakespeare seems to be following closely his source, where the travesty of justice is even more apparent. In Robert Greene's Pandosto (1595), Bellaria (Hermione) confronts her "false accusers" only to have Pandosto (Leontes) dismiss the jury and render all evidence of her innocence inadmissible: "The king presently made answer that in this case he might and would dispense with the law" (R. Greene 194-95).
kangaroo court (3.2.140-41). It is not until news comes that Mamillius has died that Leontes, now completely backed into a corner, admits his error. This revelation, combined with Hermione's dramatic on-stage collapse, wakes Leontes from his terrible dream: "I have too much believ'd mine own suspicion" (3.2.151).

Leontes's sudden capitulation represents as dramatic an about-face as Hector's agreement to fight the Greeks during the Trojan debate. Leontes's jealousy vanishes as suddenly as it appeared, though some vestiges linger, as we shall see. Just as the onset of his doubts is anticipated by a host of textual clues, so too should the eradication of these doubts come as no surprise. Like an over-inflated bubble, Leontes's narcissistic pride has to burst. Now he is forced to admit that his self is as fragile as his case against Hermione was tenuous—facts alluded to in his portentous admission before the trial:

... if I mistake
In those foundations which I build upon,
The centre is not big enough to bear
A school-boy's top . . .

(2.1.100-03)

His image of the top underscores the degree to which this king is needy and impressionable as a child. The trial scene is devised as a narcissistic display to generate self-esteem, but which instead lays bare the shaky "foundation" of Leontes's self. Before Cleomenes and Dion return from the Oracle, Leontes becomes increasingly isolated from his family (his wife is in prison, his daughter banished, his son near death) and he surrounds himself with yes-men who assure him that he is making wise decisions. Paulina scolds one sycophantic servant:
As Burton observes, narcissistic behaviour has both internal and external causes. Internally, it stems "from an overweening conceit we have of our good parts, own worth . . . for which, Narcissus-like, we admire, flatter, and applaud ourselves, and think all the world esteems so of us" (1:293 [1.2.3.14], note omitted). Dependent on external sources for self-esteem regulation, Leontes's tyrannical entitlement and an overinflated pride cannot conceal the fact that he is, in Burton's formulation, "passive":

the main engine which batters us is from others . . . that with immoderate praise and bombast epithets, glozing titles, false elogiums, so bedaub and applaud, gild over many a silly and undeserving man, that they clap him quite out of his wits. (1:297-98 [1.2.3.14])

Paulina's observation (quoted above) suggests that Leontes's misguided resolve is nourished by such flattery; he is "clapped out of his wits."

The final pre-trial clue that prepares us for Leontes's capitulation is also suggested by the image of the boy spinning a top. Leontes resents the strength and independence of women, yet at the same time he craves their approbation and guidance; he needs selfobject mergers possibly never provided him. For starters, descriptions of his childhood stress his frisking with Polixenes, but no mention is made of affectionate or corrective relationships with parental figures (1.2.60-80). Secondly, Mamillius's treatment in the second act, where he is shuffled from nurse to nurse because he "troubles" his mother (2.1.1), suggests that generations of Sicilian monarchs have been coddled, teased and indulged by court ladies but
not allowed to form more substantive psychological mergers with fathers preoccupied with affairs of state or with mothers busy producing more heirs in line for the throne.

Where others fail, Paulina tempers the narcissism of the king with her appropriate selfobject responses. Leontes recognizes her wisdom, and his conversion underscores Shakespeare's sympathetic depiction of "justifiable shrewishness" (Woodbridge, Women 198-99). To her credit, Paulina succeeds where men fail. In a court where Antigonus's infelicitous choice of words ("geld") recommends violence, Camillo dissimulates, and unnamed yes-men merely humour the king, Paulina challenges a tyrant ruled by "[f]ancies too weak for boys, too green and idle/ For girls of nine" (3.2.181-182). Her condescension puts events into perspective: "the Paulina-Leontes relation is really that of a nanny and a child in a screaming tantrum" (Frye, Northrop 163; cf. Stockholder 191-93; Erickson, "Patriarchal" 823). If so, she is a nurse who ministers closely, strictly, tirelessly, thanklessly. As an idealized selfobject, she outlines for him a rigorous daily regimen of penitence; and her impressionable charge acquiesces: "Come, and lead me/ To these sorrows" (3.2.242-43). Paulina's cure resembles that espoused by Burton; namely, inducing "some contrary passion [through] good counsel and persuasion" (3:289 [3.3.4.1]). To drive out jealousy, he says, requires first, "avoiding idleness, to be still seriously busied about some matters of importance, to drive out those vain fears, foolish fantasies, and irksome suspicions out of his head." This is accomplished with the help of "judicious friends" who correct the afflicted individual's behaviour through persuasion and by offering models of more suitable behaviour (3:289 [3.3.4.1]). Such is Paulina's course of action, as she purges the court of suspicion and flattery and induces in Leontes a passionate devotion to Hermione's memory.
The events that transpire during Leontes's hiatus are frequently described by critics as a pastoral interlude—in particular the sheep-shearing feast and Florizel's courtship of Perdita—that provides welcome relief from the overwrought events in Sicily. However, upon closer examination, Bohemia fails to function as a thematic foil to the wintry, "stale" and jealous court of Leontes (4.1.13). Events in Bohemia revive unresolved issues from earlier parts of the play (Overton 58-59). Polixenes's attendance at the festival in order to spy on his son recalls Leontes's obsessive monitoring of Hermione in Act 1, Scene 2. Suspicion reigns in Bohemia as well. Furthermore, Polixenes's discussion of "gillyvors"—grafted flowers that, as Perdita disdainfully observes, "some call nature's bastards" (4.4.81-85)—reintroduces the theme of legitimacy that preoccupied Leontes (e.g., 1.2.120-46). This discussion of flowers reveals the hypocrisy of Polixenes who extols the marriage of "[a] gentler scion to the wildest stock" in nature but is enraged that his son would wed a "sheep-hook" (4.4.93, 421).

Polixenes's subsequent threats to hang the old shepherd and to disfigure Perdita (4.4.421-27) overcompensate for doubts that he, like Leontes, is losing his grip on power. For Polixenes is also growing old, and will eventually be replaced by a robust, if disobedient, young prince:

Is not your father grown incapable
Of reasonable affairs? is he not stupid
With age and alt'ring rheums? can he speak? hear?
Know man from man? dispute his own estate?
Lies he not bed-rid? and again does nothing
But what he did being childish?

(4.4.398-403)

Northrop Frye describes the play as breaking in the middle—"the first part all gloom and tragedy, the second part all romantic comedy"—though he concedes some thematic continuity (Northrop 159). For a discussion of the play's structural coherence, see Pafford liv-lxiii.
It is no coincidence that Polixenes speaks these lines in a disguise that features a white beard.

His compendium of ageist prejudices suggests an underlying fear that one day he too will indeed be incapacitated by age—even though Florizel assures the stranger that Polixenes "has his health, and ampler strength indeed/ Than most have of his age" (4.4.404-05).

Polixenes's actions are contrasted with those of the old shepherd. At eighty-three years of age, he is the antithesis of Polixenes's caricature of the elderly. The shepherd is reasonable, capable of organizing a festival, worldly-wise and tolerant; for instance, his response to finding what appears to be a bastard babe--"some behind-door work" (3.3.74-75)--was to adopt Perdita, not to cast her out as did Leontes. The most significant aspect of the old shepherd's character, however, is his attitude toward his (now deceased) wife. When Perdita is reluctant to play hostess at the festival, her foster-father admonishes her to follow the example set by her foster-mother:

Fie, daughter! when my old wife liv'd, upon
This day she was both pantler, butler, cook,
Both dame and servant; welcom'd all, serv'd all;
Would sing her song and dance her turn; now here
At upper end o' th' table, now i' th' middle;
On his shoulder, and his; her face o' fire
With labour, and the thing she took to quench it
She would to each one sip . . . .

(4.4.55-62, emphasis added)

What is significant in this lesson is the fact that the "old wife" entertained male guests in her husband's presence—toasting all the local men as their "dame" and "servant"—without raising the spectre of infidelity. His speech demonstrates the possibility of innocent relations between strangers and a married woman, and contrasts with Leontes's interpretation of
Hermione's treatment of her guest, Polixenes.\(^7\)

Polixenes's court also differs little from Leontes's. For example, in spite of Camillo's reasonable request to return home, Polixenes refuses to let his guest of fifteen years depart: "As thou lov'st me, Camillo, wipe not out the rest of thy services by leaving me now" (4.2.10-11). In effect, Polixenes turns Camillo's request into a test of loyalty, re-enacting "the play's central preoccupation with separation" (Schwartz, "Winter's" 164). This time there is no queen to dissuade the guest from leaving, and Camillo agrees to stay with the Bohemian king who, like his Sicilian counterpart, displays "absolute dependency" on others and dreads separation from "the sources of his continuous well-being" (164). Polixenes's narcissism escalates dramatically in subsequent scenes, as he becomes as selfish, intemperate, and tyrannical as Leontes ever was (Pafford lxxv).

When Polixenes pursues Florizel and Perdita to Sicily, the play seems to return characters to their earlier unhealthy behaviour. With Polixenes comes suspicion, tyranny, and a third high-stakes loyalty test. Florizel is the first to articulate suspicion, for when learning of his father's arrival he immediately assumes that "Camillo has betray'd me" (5.1.192). This was Leontes's response sixteen years before. Perdita echoes the escalating paranoia of the opening scene with her own despairing observation, "[t]he heaven sets spies upon us" (5.1.202). Leontes's violent threats during Hermione's trial are echoed in Polixenes's sputtering rage now: "Bohemia stops his ears, and threatens them/ With divers deaths in

\(^7\) Critical accounts of this speech tend to focus on how it relates to Perdita's character, not the old Shepherd's. For example, Erickson describes the speech as teaching to Perdita "the role of hostess, which is an extension of maternal nurturance"; she must learn to care for infants and adult men alike ("Patriarchal" 824-25).
death" (5.2.200-01). When Florizel asks Leontes to grant him asylum, the wording of the request rings ominously in the context of earlier events: "Step forth mine advocate: at your request, My father will grant precious things as trifles" (5.2.221-22). The initial quarrel between the two kings arose precisely because Polixenes would not grant Leontes's request. When Leontes reappears in Act 5, he has spent sixteen years under the tutelage of Paulina, attending to affairs of state and visiting daily the tomb of his wife. Genuinely remorseful for leaving his kingdom "heirless," his former arrogance is gone (5.1.10). For example, Cleomenes chastises him for killing the queen, and Paulina orders him not to remarry without her permission, yet rather than get angry Leontes only wishes that he had "squar'd" himself to such counsel from the start (5.1.51-52). Was there ever a king more over-ruled than this? Parten sees Leontes's capitulation to Paulina as potentially farcical, as he "leaps out of the frying pan of his own temporarily unhappy marriage into the fire of sixteen years of feminine domination" ("Cuckoldry" 368). This poetic justice teaches Leontes important lessons about himself and about relationships. Monarchs can submit to counsel, without being weak; women can be forceful, without being witches: "He has lived with a shrew and learned that it is tolerable" (390).

There is, however, one important test of Leontes's "self-repair" in store. When Perdita and Florizel seek asylum in Sicily, Leontes is confronted with the spectre of cuckoldry that haunted him in the early part of the play. Florizel so resembles his father that Leontes marvels: "Your mother was most true to wedlock, prince;/ For she did print your royal father off;/ Conceiving you" (5.1.123-25). Leontes's obsession with legitimacy has not entirely disappeared. At the same time, the resemblance between father and son is almost too
Were I but twenty-one,
Your father's image is so hit in you,
His very air, that I should call you brother,
As I did him, and speak of something wildly
By us perform'd before. . . .

(5.1.125-29)

That unspecified "something wildly" may allude to one of their boyish pranks, but Leontes may also be referring to the irrational quarrel that ended his marriage and their friendship.

Soon after, Leontes expresses "wonder" that Florizel's love (the "Libyan" princess [5.1.156-67]) is as beautiful as Hermione (the former Russian princess [3.2.119]) once was:

And your fair princess,—goddess!—O, alas!
I lost a couple, that 'twixt heaven and earth
Might thus have stood, begetting wonder, as
You, gracious couple, do. . . .

(5.1.130-33)

Leontes's choice of words "couple" and "wonder" are revealing. He did lose a couple of (i.e., two) people, precisely because he perceived them to be a couple (i.e., lovers). Confronting Leontes is visual replica of the earlier stimulus to his jealous rage: Florizel (= Polixenes) has surreptitiously stolen Perdita (= Hermione) from her jealous guardian (= Leontes). He sees himself cuckolded all over again. Whereas sixteen years earlier such an image produced jealousy, now its recurrence induces "wonder" and a corresponding hope for the rejuvenation of the two kingdoms. Passing this final test brings an end to Paulina's curse of blight: "still winter/ In storm perpetual" (3.2.212-13). Now the kingdoms can be joined, and genealogical continuity and political stability will ensue. As Leontes phrases it, "[w]elcome hither,/ As is the spring to th' earth" (5.1.150-51).
Florizel's presence brings to mind Mamillius, conspicuous not so much by his absence (he is dead, after all), as by the absolute silence about him (contrasted with tales of Antigonus's demise and the drowning of unnamed sailors). It is as though Mamillius never existed. Since by all accounts he resembled his father, and since Florizel is the spitting image of Polixenes, Leontes's welcome to Florizel is visually suggestive: "I should call you brother,/ As I did him" (5.1.127-28). Leontes is no longer a young man, but had Mamillius lived the twinned lambs would be here united: Florizel (= Polixenes) with Mamillius (= Leontes). In order to avoid a repetition of the play's earlier "fratricidal" rivalry (as Fineman terms it), Shakespeare removes Mamillius and deftly substitutes a princess in his place. Now, instead of identical brothers competing for a woman, we have two kingdoms uniting in the marriage of Florizel and Perdita. Assured of Hermione's chastity and that the next generation will be spared sexual rivalry, Leontes's jealousy disappears and he begs Hermione and Polixenes pardon "[t]hat e'er I put between your holy looks/ My ill suspicion" (5.3.148-49). Mamillius, the "calf" that wanted "the rough pash and the shoots" (i.e., horns) of his father, has functioned as scapegoat for cuckoldry anxiety (1.2.124-28; cf. Erickson, "Patriarchal" 822-23). Mamillius's shoots never grow to suggest horns on his father's head; he dies so that the next generation of Sicilian and Bohemian royalty may live peaceably together.

Although the play's early scenes are suffused with the imagery of cuckold-lore--the "ancient garbage of misogynist cynicism and misanthropic prurience" (W. Sanders 20)--Leontes derived no solace from what Adelman describes as "his new identity as cuckold and his community with other men" (Suffocating 224). Indeed, the trial of Hermione suggests that an ever greater humiliation is the exposure of his error, that he is not a cuckold but a
tyrant instead. Rather than find a stable and supportive community of men, Leontes "shuts up himself" in a stern but caring self-object environment with Paulina (4.1.19). Leontes craves community in the sense that a narcissistic individual needs to surround him or herself with responsive others; but cuckoldry merely served to isolate him from crucial interpersonal resources. In a passage reminiscent of two key scenes of The Winter's Tale, Burton illustrates the heightened vigilance of jealous husbands, an attention to detail that can distort their perception of reality:

his eye is never off hers . . . observing on whom she looks, who looks at her, what she saith, doth, at dinner, at supper, sitting, walking, at home, abroad, he is the same, still inquiring, maunching, gazing, listening, affrighted with every small object; why did she smile, why did she pity him, commend him? why did she drink twice to such a man? why did she offer to kiss, to dance? etc. [sic]; a whore, a whore, an errant whore. (3.281 [3.3.2])

Like Hermione and the Shepherd's wife, Burton's hostess toasts her guests. Like Leontes but unlike the Shepherd, Burton's husband becomes jealous and vigilant in his surveillance of his wife, transforming a scene of hospitality into one of sexual depravity. Burton and Shakespeare alike do not merely condemn such behaviour, they anatomize it as symptomatic of a larger psychological disorder. Burton recognizes the afflicted husband's tendency to find out the worst in every situation: "If a dear friend or near kinsman come as a guest to his house, to visit him, he will never let him be out of his own sight and company, lest peradventure, etc. [sic]" (3:281-82 [3.3.2]). It is Burton's euphemistic "etc." that obsesses Shakespeare's narcissistic husbands who fill in the empty space with their own suspicions.

In attempting to shed the identity of imaginary cuckold, Leontes creates an even less popular public role as real tyrannical despot. Even when both identities are erased, his solace
is bittersweet for several reasons. The play's restoration of families is incomplete, as Paulina does not regain her Antigonus, and Mamillius is not re-called to life like his mother.

Although Hermione, the "medal" that seemed to hang around Bohemia's neck (1.2.307-08), is now restored to her rightful owner ("[s]he hangs about his neck!" [5.3.112]), she has been indelibly tarnished by the passage of time. They have become an old couple. The restoration of confidence and stability to the selves of the two kings also seems tenuous at best. For instance, sixteen years earlier Polixenes boasted of an all-encompassing emotional relationship with his son: "He's all my exercise, my mirth, my matter:/ Now my sworn friend, and then mine enemy:/ My parasite, my soldier, statesman, all" (1.2.166-68). Yet years later, he reacts to his rebellious son as if he truly were a "parasite" or an "enemy" to be purged from the state. Self psychology shows how individuals with fragile self-structures demand unconditional responses from others in an "all-or-nothing" fashion. As we have already seen, Jaques prefaces his Seven Ages of Man speech by saying that "one man in his time plays many parts" (AYL 2.7.142), and Helena describes the "parts" played by wives as including "[a] counsellor, a traitress, and a dear" (AWW 1.1.166). People are subject to change, just as relationships evolve over time. Trouble arises when a reshuffling of the self (brought about by, say, advancing age and children "leaving the nest" to marry) temporarily lays bare an individual's fragile core self-structure. During this temporary and transitional state of heightened insecurity, the smallest spousal disagreement becomes treachery, the slightest insult or jest becomes a massive narcissistic injury. This essential fragility motivates Leontes's admonition when, overwhelmed with grief and joy at seeing Hermione's life-like statue, he would touch his lost wife: "Let no man mock me./ For I will kiss her" (WT 5.3.79-
80, emphasis added). None does, but he has to be sure.

Thus *The Winter's Tale* demonstrates that cuckoldry anxiety is really just the "tip" of a kind of psychological "iceberg." Early in the play, Camillo admonishes Leontes, "[g]ood my lord, be cur'd/ Of this diseas'd opinion, and betimes,/ For 'tis most dangerous" (1.2.296-98). As I have argued throughout the thesis, cuckoldry anxiety is not so easily wished away--impeccably chaste women notwithstanding. Leontes's fear that, like a cuckoo, a guest has infiltrated his nest and left "the issue of Polixenes" (2.3.93) is realized in the supplanting of Mamillius by Florizel, future king of Sicily. However, the fact that both families survive the turmoil caused by imputations of cuckoldry recalls a second, now largely forgotten, connotation of the cuckoo as a symbol of longevity: "If its call is long, a long life is indicated" and vice versa (McLerran and McKee 35). In both kingdoms, the cuckoo has been calling for sixteen years; now that it has finally stopped, perhaps these dynasties will endure after all.
Conclusion

"'Peer out, peer out!'"

Old Age and Second Childishness

When Othello reassures the Venetian senate that his advancing age will prevent lust from interfering with his military duty (Oth. 1.3.262-66), he asserts his ability to govern wisely as a public leader, but undermines his rule at home by advertising inadequacies to lustier rivals who may lay siege to his young bride. Steven R. Smith points out that in Shakespeare's time the elderly were considered to be "finally free . . . from all the problems and vexations which accompany sexual and social activity" (134). Yet Shakespeare's older characters are anything but asexual or free from such "vexations" as imputations of cuckoldry.¹ Keith Thomas characterizes Renaissance England as a "gerontocracy" in which local government, churches, universities and so forth were ruled by men aged forty to fifty on average ("Age" 208-11). As men grew older, their influence over the young increased—a situation perpetuated by social practices which "prolong[ed] the period of legal and social infancy" such as lengthy apprenticeships and the delay of marriage (214-18). The resulting gerontocratic hegemony bred resentment in younger generations whose ambitions were held in check by their elders (242-44). Scorning seniors provided an outlet for pent-up frustrations in the young: "Lust in the elderly was an infallible occasion for ridicule and censure" (243).

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¹ The notion that people over fifty are asexual has persisted into this century. In the inaugural issue of the flagship journal of Gerontology, John W. Draper wrote dismissively: "Old women, since they are hardly appropriate as lovers, are rare in Shakespearean drama" ("Shakespeare's" 119).
Old men were especially mocked for marrying young women, as in the proverb, "He that is old and marries with a lass lies but at home and proves himself an ass" (Tilley L74).\(^2\)

The persistence of sexual anxiety into old age seems curious when unmarried characters articulate concerns about infidelity. Why does Prospero joke about the chastity of his dead wife and the legitimacy of Miranda (\textit{Tmp.} 1.2.56-59)? Why does Lear in his madness decry the lechery of women, when his affliction stems from filial disobedience, not wifely infidelity (\textit{Lr.} 4.6.110-32)? Why does the misanthropic senator, Timon, rail at "sluts/ [With] aprons mountant," when his misfortune stems from profligate spending and ungrateful friends (\textit{Tim.} 4.3.136-37)? I suggest that being cast out by their respective societies rekindles in these men, to varying degrees, concerns about betrayal and underlying yearnings for nurturing relationships.\(^3\) For instance, in ordering Alcibiades to massacre the Athenians, Timon invokes a lifetime of abandonment by friends, lovers and caregivers:

\begin{quote}
Let not the virgin's cheek
Make soft thy trenchant sword: for those milk-paps,
That through the window-bars bore at men's eyes,
Are not within the leaf of pity writ,
But set them down horrible traitors . . . .
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
(4.3.116-20)
\end{flushright}

\(^2\) Robert Burton argued that a gradual drying-up of vital humours renders an old husband impotent and hence suspicious of his wife: "when a man is not able of himself to perform those dues which he ought unto his wife . . . he begins presently to suspect, that wherein he is defective, she will satisfy herself, she will be pleased by some other means" (3:266-67 [3.3.1.2]). Burton's assertion is echoed in the proverb, "When bees are old they yield no honey" (Tilley B212)—honey connoting semen, its absence impotence (Rubinstein 128).

\(^3\) For detailed readings of Prospero, see Orgel 50-57; of Lear, see Kahn, "Absent" 33-49; and of Timon, see Kahn, "Magic" 34-57. Generally speaking, the elderly were criticized for jealously guarding those who could sustain them during their dotage (S. Smith 132)—a phenomenon illustrated by Shakespearean fathers who plan to spend "the remnant of [their] age/ . . . cherish'd by [their daughters'] child-like duty" (\textit{TGV} 3.1.74-75; cf. \textit{Lr.} 1.1.122-23).
Female inconstancy, whether maternal or sexual, represents a rich symbolic repertory from which men of all ages could draw to describe fears of social ostracism. In other words, misogyny was largely a rhetorical code through which more fundamental anxieties could be articulated.

As Shakespeare demonstrates in plays such as King Lear, every father who was once "king of his castle," however small, must make the difficult transition to a life of decreasing influence, authority, and security. Not surprisingly, elderly men in the Renaissance experienced a form of melancholy resembling modern-day depression. According to Burton,

> weak and old persons, especially such as have lived in action all their lives, had great employment, much business, much command, and many servants to oversee, and leave off ex aequo . . . are overcome with melancholy in an instant: . . . full of ache, sorrow, and grief, children again, dizzards, they carle many times as they sit, and talk to themselves, they are angry, waspish, displeased with everything . . . .

(1:210 [1.2.1.5])

Beatrice Gottlieb points out that in a society ruled by patriarchs, the "dependent father" was both a disturbing image and an embarrassing burden to be shuffled around or hidden away (19-20). One of Shakespeare's oldest characters, Adam, is emblematic of the treatment of the elderly in Shakespeare's society. A "figure of unregeneracy" dating back to the fourteenth century, Adam's name was synonymous with impotence—as in the scornful phrase "Old Adam" (G. Williams 1:9). Abandoned and unable to care for himself, there is no Eve waiting to rescue him in the seemingly hostile garden of Arden; he depends upon charity and "scarce can speak to thank" his rescuers (AYL 2.7.170). His brush with death seems to confirm Amiens's cynical refrain: "Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly" (2.7.174-94, italics in original).
Out of Shakespeare's elderly *dramatis personae*, one man appears more obsessed with sexuality than all the rest: Falstaff of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. ¹ Falstaff's overconfidence in his sexual prowess compensates for an acknowledged lack of confidence that he can support himself during his retirement. Specifically, he plans to use that which destabilizes households, adultery, to establish his own retirement nest-egg: "I will use her [i.e., Ford's wife] as the key of the cuckoldy rogue's coffer, and there's my harvest home" (*MWW* 2.2.262-64). Falstaff's failure and humiliations by the citizens of Windsor exemplify Renaissance ambivalence about, and anxieties experienced by, the elderly.

As with many contemporary accounts of the Ages of Man, Jaques divides old age into two distinct phases. The sixth age describes

... the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side,
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound....

(*AYL* 2.7.157-63)

His pouch symbolizes the money this miserly pantaloon has saved for retirement. His shrinking stature, overlarge clothes and "childish" voice emphasize his ridiculousness. Like Falstaff, he busies himself with establishing a secure environment in which to pass the seventh age, a phase of helplessness, senility and decline: "second childishness and mere oblivion;/ Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything" (*AYL* 2.7.165-66). Jaques's repetition of "sans" highlights the isolation and disintegration of the elderly in Shakespeare's

⁴ Shakespeare's elderly characters include Adam, Boyet, Egeon, Escalus, Falstaff, Gonzalo, John of Gaunt, Lafeu, Nestor and Shallow. For details, see Draper, "Shakespeare's" 119-21.
England, as they were gradually stripped of friends, spouses, possessions, and their physical and mental faculties (Draper, "Shakespeare's" 123; S. Smith 128-30). For instance, King Lear's daughters erode his retinue, cast him out of their castles, and exacerbate his mental decline. Likewise, Falstaff begins The Merry Wives of Windsor by radically "downsizing" his own gang: "I must turn away some of my followers" (1.3.4-6). In fact, penury forces him to "cashier" them all.

In her gloss on Jaques's speech, Agnes Latham points out that the pantaloon is a stock character from Italian comedy (57 note). What she doesn't mention is that Pantaloon is portrayed as an amorous, repulsive, old fool, who attempts to seduce young women by means of his money. He is typically depicted as a tall, thin, sickly old man with a beard and an absurdly large, erect phallus. Attempting to appear all-knowing and wise, he is actually regarded as foolish and irritating. In fact, he is so bothersome that others repeatedly beat him to keep him quiet. (McLerran and McKee 114)

Shakespeare's comedies contain several odious suitors to young women such as Thurio (TGV), Dr. Caius (MWW), and Gremio "the old pantaloon" (Shr. 3.1.36). Though each is ridiculous, none exhibits the pantaloon's comic sexual excesses to the same extent as Falstaff who represents an unforgettable variant of this type. He is amorous, repulsive and foolish, but he is anything but rich or thin. He attempts to seduce older wives, not young women. And he is spared the pantaloon's prominent phallus in favour of another sign of sexual transgression, an absurd rack of buck's horns that symbolizes the cuckoldry he would inflict on Windsor's established husbands. Falstaff's repeated beatings that culminate in physical abuse by local children in the play's closing mask return my thesis to its foundational premise, that sexual anxiety is inculcated in childhood, then extends my discussion to its
conclusion, that this same anxiety as experienced by the elderly as well.

Jaques's sixth and seventh ages are characterized as childish in the pejorative sense encapsulated in the proverb, "Old men are twice children" (Tilley M570). Like children the elderly were a vulnerable and neglected segment of a society which "was hostile to both youth and age . . . . it distrusted the old as much as it distrusted the young" (Stone, Past 385). Unlike most children, however, the elderly were left to fend for themselves: they did not live with adult children, financial pensions were rare, and there were few institutions to house or care for them (385-92; cf. Gottlieb 18-23). As I have argued throughout the thesis, cuckoldry anxiety is an adult manifestation of separation anxiety that originates in such child-rearing practices as wet-nursing, fostering out and apprenticeship. The very households in which individuals should have felt most secure were transient, impermanent and discontinuous (Gottlieb 22). Adult cuckoldry anxiety re-activates deep-rooted suspicion about relationships in general, and the suspicious nature of the elderly is merely the logical progression of behaviour learned earlier in life. They have been enculturated--and have learned from bitter experience--to trust no-one. Sexual anxiety is not confined to the married men; rather, those who should seem least concerned with "Eve's legacy" (TGV 3.1.330) of sexual infidelity also dread the underlying effects of unreliable nurturance, social scorn, and abandonment. That the declining sexual powers of the elderly undermines their social status in a gerontocratic society reveals the degree to which, upon closer examination, this society was profoundly gerontophobic as well. As such, the conflation of two Renaissance pariahs--the cuckold and old Adam--reveals the fragility of a patriarchal order premised upon contradictory criteria, seniority and virility.
Many commentators have described Falstaff's physical and social decline, though few have recognized the extent to which his infirmities are attributable to advancing age. Estimating him to be about sixty-two, Draper describes Falstaff as a man who uses wit and abuses wine in order to appear younger and more vital than he really is ("Shakespeare's" 121). Falstaff would seem to have every reason to conceal his age, for "when an Elizabethan soldier showed signs of age, his occupation was gone and he had no recourse but beggary [sic] and starvation" (121). Yet as The Merry Wives of Windsor opens, Falstaff seems to have tapped into the fountain of youth, resembling the Old Shepherd's picture of riotous youth, "getting wenches with child, wronging the ancientry, stealing, fighting" (WT 3.3.61-63):

SHALLOW. Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and broke open my lodge.

FALSTAFF. But not kissed your keeper's daughter?

(MWW 1.1.103-05)

Before long, however, the true Falstaff emerges from behind this pose of carefree bravura. He alludes to his advancing age in his letters to the merry wives (2.1.6), and characterizes members of his gang as "withered" (1.3.16). Admitting his age and poverty--"I am almost out at heels" (1.3.29)--he disbands his gang and is reduced to begging and petty thievery: "I must coney-catch; I must shift" (1.3.31-32).

His plan to seduce Ford's and Page's wives, we soon learn, is both the money-making scheme of a penniless pantaloon, and the notorious lechery of this same type: "O, she [Mrs. Ford] did so course o'er my exteriors with such a greedy intention that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning-glass!" (1.3.61-63). The image of the optical glass is appropriate here, for Falstaff also presents a creative variant of the mythological figure,
Narcissus (Ovid 3.431-642). Like Narcissus, who "seemde to stande betwene the state of man and Lad" (Ovid 3.438), Falstaff is reluctant to make the transition to the next phase of life. Like Narcissus "enamored of himselfe for want of taking heede" (Ovid 3.533), Falstaff is besotted with himself--ignoring external reality and the acerbic comments of his companions. Like Narcissus, Falstaff hears the (imagined) clamouring of not one but two Echos, the merry wives. While boasting in a public house of one wife's lust for him, that "sometimes the beam of her view gilded my foot, sometimes my portly belly" (MWW 1.3.57-58), Falstaff boosts his own self-esteem in the two areas he feels most inadequate--his worn shoes symbolizing his poverty and his portly belly representing his physical infirmity. With consummate resilience, Falstaff preserves his grandiose sense of self during indignity after indignity by sticking with his distorted perception of reality. However, this impaired perception enables the merry wives to lure the erstwhile trickster of the Henry IV plays into punishing ambushes no fewer than three times.

Like Pantaloon, Falstaff the "lecher" (3.5.134) seems deserving of his three punishments. In language reminiscent of Othello's rapture upon his reunion with Desdemona in Cyprus, Falstaff anticipates an adulterous liaison with Mrs. Ford: "Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel? Why, now let me die, for I have lived long enough: this is the period of my ambition" (3.3.38-40). Unlike Othello, however, Falstaff does not love women: he lusts after them. He does not extol their beauty: he desires their money. In short, he does not idealize women: he covets and defiles them. Even so, Falstaff the elderly knight seems undeserving of the extent of the abuse heaped on him, especially in light of his physical infirmities. Left alone, he reveals the vulnerabilities concealed beneath his outward bravura:
Say'st thou so, old Jack? Go thy ways; I'll make more of thy old body than I have done. Will they yet look after thee? Wilt thou, after the expense of so much money, be now a gainer? Good body, I thank thee. Let them say 'tis grossly done; so it be fairly done, no matter.

(2.2.133-38)

His lifetime of profligacy and debauchery aside, the fact that he must resort to trickery to ensure that someone "look after [him]" is an indictment of the ageism of Renaissance society. In the play's final scene, the citizens of Windsor encircle the fat knight and punish him as much for being old as for being a would-be adulterer.

From its inception to its delivery, the public shaming of Falstaff is profoundly gerontophobic in nature. It is as though Windsor would not only exorcise the demons of sexual licence, but also the infirmities that accompany old age. Falstaff functions as a scapegoat for adult cuckoldry anxiety and a moral warning for two younger generations of Windsorites: newlyweds Fenton and Anne, and the much younger children who participate in the punitive ritual. As such, the much-discussed finale of The Merry Wives of Windsor will also serve as the conclusion of the thesis, as it brings together all the generations of an English town with one common concern, sexual infidelity. We have travelled through Jaques's Seven Ages of Man and have found that the anxieties that underlie cuckoldry anxiety afflict everyone. As Cassandra warns her Trojan brothers, Menelaus and the Greeks will burn them all: "Virgins and boys, mid-age and wrinkled eld./ Soft infancy, that nothing canst but cry" (Tro. 2.2.105-06). In Windsor, the "firebrand brother" is not Paris (Tro. 2.2.111), but Falstaff--about to be burned with tapers by an army of children.

Although ostensibly conceived as punishment to make "public sport" of the "old fat fellow" (MWW 4.4.14-15), the closing masque also inculcates an awareness of cuckoldry in
the children of the town. Structured around a cautionary tale told by women "to affright their little [sic] children" (as the Quarto version of the play explains [cited in Oliver 118 note]), Herne the Hunter with his "great ragg'd horns" is a kind of Renaissance bogey-man who "blasts" trees and turns cow's milk into blood (4.4.31-34). Such legends were particularly frightening to children (Thomas, "Children" 67-68), but Mrs. Page also suggests that "[t]he superstitious idle-headed eld/ Receiv'd, and did deliver to our age,/ This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth" (4.4.36-38). The town's plan involves dressing its children as fairies who will "encircle" the horned Falstaff and pinch him until the adults emerge, "dis-horn the spirit,/ And mock him home to Windsor" (4.4.56, 62-63). Ford recognizes that since the children must play a pivotal role in what should prove to be a very frightening spectacle, they must be "practis'd well to this, or they'll ne'er do' t" (4.4.65). Evans and Mistress Quickly therefore rehearse the scenario carefully with them. The plan is a success, and the fairies frighten Falstaff until—like a child hiding beneath the covers—he lies face downwards and hopes they go away: "I'll wink and couch: no man their works must eye" (5.5.49). Humiliated, Falstaff begs the town's mercy.

Mrs. Page's description of Herne's origins in oral culture, passed down from the "idle-headed" older generation to credulous children, recalls another form of rhymed moral entertainment: the nursery rhyme. The text of Windsor's midnight pageant displays many affinities with this centuries-old genre that represents most children's first exposure to verse. The pageant features a host of elves, fairies and magical characters: Hobgoblin is the town

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5 Iona Opie and Peter Opie estimate that the traditions of nursery rhymes and games extend back 2000 years and that—based on internal evidence—approximately one-quarter of extant rhymes were also current in the sixteenth century (6-7).
crier, Cricket pinches maids for the Radiant Queen who "hates sluts and sluttery," and Bead punishes maids who fall asleep without saying their prayers (5.5.38-55). Mistress Quickly employs a popular feature of children's poems and songs, "miniaturization" (Hebel, Tillotson and Newdigate 203-04; Wooden 95), in her instruction that they search "[i]n em'rald tufts, flowers purple, blue and white" (5.5.71). For a time, Windsor's rough justice seems as harmless as an Easter-egg hunt. However, the children are soon brought back to purpose when the Queen, like the Giant in "Jack and the Beanstalk," discovers Falstaff: "But, stay, I smell a man of middle earth!" (5.5.81). She then leads the children in a circular dance and doggerel song, also common features of nursery rhymes:

| Fie on sinful fantasy, |
| Fie on lust and luxury! |
| Lust is but a bloody fire, |
| Kindled with unchaste desire . . . |

(5.5.94-97)

Just as the rhyme "Ring-a-ring o' roses" has for centuries delighted children despite its sinister subtext concerning deadly plagues (Opie and Opie 364-65), Mistress Quickly's rhyme evokes a fiery nightmare and dancing devils. What have these to do with the nursery?

To most observers, nursery rhymes are something sung by nurses or mothers to soothe sleepy babies, amuse bored toddlers, and teach children such things as counting or the alphabet. However, as Lucy Rollin points out, they also inculcate society's values--especially ones concerning wooing, wedding, and married life (41-74). In nursery rhymes, children get their first cultural representations of patriarchal husbands, unruly wives, even sexual betrayal: "the rhymes often show marriage as an angry and aggressive relationship in which neither gender is displayed sympathetically" (63). Thus historians like William J. Baker plunder
nursery rhymes for insights into the social mores of a largely agrarian society (many rhymes involve farm animals). The picture of relationships painted in these rhymes is at times realistic (few married couples live happily ever after), at times as exaggerated as those children will see in stage comedies later in life. For example, the well-known rhyme concerning Peter pumpkin eater who kept his wife "in a pumpkin shell" provides in miniature the plot of many stage plays about jealous husbands (Opie and Opie 346-47). Another rhyme resembles Leontes's apprehension that his pond has been fished by "Sir Smile, his neighbour" (WT 1.2.195-96):

Little Tommy Tittlemouse  
Lived in a little house;  
He caught fishes  
In other men's ditches.

(Opie and Opie 416)

Rollin suggests that here fishing is a metaphor for "sexual activity" (49); poaching fishes, I would add, is very suggestive of cuckolding other men. The frankness, bawdry and violence of rhymes reflected the psychological and social concerns of children and adults alike (Baker 645-52). Many early nursery rhymes were "extremely naughty" (Imm 23), and Thomas cites instances of "remarkably obscene drawings" found in the margins of Renaissance books as evidence of the "inevitable preoccupation of growing children . . . sex" ("Children" 69).

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6 According to Gordon Williams, "tit" was slang for both a loose woman and for a penis (3:1395-96), "to fish" was slang for to copulate (1:494-96), and "ditch" was slang for vagina (1:393-94). This rhyme resembles Pompey's bawdy phrase to describe Claudio's fornication in Measure for Measure: "Groping for trouts, in a peculiar river" (1.2.83). Since many surviving nursery rhymes are bowdlerized versions of bawdy ballads, drinking songs, scholarly riddles and political satires—not composed for, but in practice sung to, children (and thus preserved in the nursery)—these rhymes describe situations that are "by present standards, strikingly unsuitable for those of tender years" (Opie and Opie 3-4).
Mistress Quickly worries, "'tis not good that children should know any wickedness" (2.2.123-24), but they did and they do.

Rollin observes that despite the popularity of the cuckold as a stock character in folklore, ballads and other manifestations of popular culture, he is strangely absent from nursery rhymes (68 and note). This is not true. In fact, the horns are a prominent feature of one extant rhyme:

Snail, snail,
Come out of your hole,
Or else I'll beat you
As black as coal.

Snail, snail,
Put out your horns,
I'll give you bread
And barley corns.

(Opie and Opie 390)

In an early version of this rhyme, the second line reads "Peer out" instead of "Come out," a significant alteration in that it underlies the humour of Mrs. Page's description of Ford's horn-madness: "[he] buffets himself on the forehead, crying 'Peer out, peer out!'" (MWW 4.2.21-22; Opie and Opie 391 note). Indeed, Rosalind's joke about the husband sharing the snail's destiny, "horns" (AYL 4.1.57) and Berowne's pun on "the tender horns of cockled snails" (LLL 4.3.334) confirm that the cuckold and the snail were fixtures of the Renaissance imagination, right from the nursery. If anything, the cuckold's apparent absence in extant rhymes is due to scholarly editing that has rendered earlier, earthier versions anodyne. He does, however, manage to survive the following editorial hatchet job:
Blackamoor, Taunymoor,  
---- - -----, [sic]  
Your Father's  
A Cuckold,  
Your Mother told me.

Andrea L. Immel transcribes the missing line as "Suck a bubbly" (164). As "bubbly" was Renaissance slang for a woman's breast (G. Williams 1:160), this rhyme furnishes yet another example of the quick associations of breast-feeding and cuckoldry in that culture.7

Several other rhymes that can be traced to the Renaissance survive in a more unexpurgated form. In one barnyard love-triangle, a farmer refuses to "pound" his neighbour's pigs even though they are eating out of his garden: "I dare not on my life, / For though I love not Roger the Cook/ I dearly love his wife" (Opie and Opie 350). Another early rhyme, "The cuckoo is a lazy bird," inculcates this enduring symbol of cuckoldry in little minds:

She never hatches her own young,  
And that we all know,  
But leaves it for some other bird  
While she cries 'Cuckoo'.

(Opie and Opie 139)

The second line's "we all know" suggests that children, right from an early age, were let in on society's favourite joke. One more rhyme, from a 1632 broadside ballad, resembles the jingling song of Mistress Quickly and the children in The Merry Wives of Windsor:

7 The rhyme is cited in Baring-Gould and Baring-Gould 35-36 note 44, italics omitted. With respect to the ellipsis, the editors merely state that "we have deleted one especially objectionable line" (35-36, note 44). I have been unable to consult the original Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book (1744) from which the rhyme is taken (the sole surviving, unmicrofilmed copy is in the British Museum) in order to verify whether or not "bubby" is in fact what they consider more objectionable than racism, sexual slander, or taunting children about their paternity.
A man that hath a sluttish wife,
is in a beastly taking,
And he that hath a cleanly wife
is of another making . . . .

(Opie and Opie, Plate 22)

These surviving rhymes suggest that an English education in sexual paranoia began well before petty school.

That the children of Windsor are exposed to such ideas at an early age is suggested by the diminutive size of the fairies in Mistress Quickly's gang and the alacrity with which they learn to sing her "scornful rhyme" (5.5.92). It is not certain how much of Falstaff's lecherous assignation they overhear while lying in wait: his Ovidian soliloquy in praise of the seductions of Jove (5.5.1-15), his lewd characterization of two local wives as does with "black scuts" (suggesting pudenda), or his eager anticipation of a ménage à trois: "Divide me like a bribed buck, each a haunch" (5.5.18-25; Oliver 136 note). However, Renaissance children lived in houses that afforded much less privacy for events such as birth, procreation and death than did their Victorian or modern counterparts (Stone, Family 253-57). Thomas describes the period as one which cherished "precocious infants who rapidly assumed the externals of adult behaviour" ("Age" 210)--witness Mamillius's "wanton" banter with the ladies in The Winter's Tale (2.1.1-33). Through poems, songs and games, society taught them to recognize the warning signs of cuckoldry.

Not surprisingly, one of the first extant books of poetry specifically intended for children--Michael Drayton's 1627 Nymphidia, The Court of Fayrie--depicts the horn-madness of a cuckolded husband (Wooden 89-90). In the poem, the fairy king Oberon discovers that Queen Mab has escaped for an extramarital liaison with one of his knights, Pigwiggen. Like
Falstaff, Pigwiggen writes to Mab inviting her to a midnight assignation. Like Ford "that searched a hollow walnut for his wife's leman" (MWW 4.2.150-51), Oberon frantically searches for Mab and her attendants who are hidden in a hazelnut shell (Drayton lines 201-72). Like many of Shakespeare's jealous husbands, Oberon enlists an accomplice, Puck, to wreak his "vengeance": "Bring her to me alive or dead,/ Or that wilde thiefe, Pigwiggins
head,/ That villaine hath defil'd my bed" (300-04, italics in original). Oberon later challenges Pigwiggen to a duel over his "deare Ladies honour" (484), and the ensuing battle rages until Prosperina separates the combatants with a fog and reconciles them using Lethe water.

The enduring popularity of Drayton's poem suggests that it struck a chord with Renaissance readers, young and old. First, as with mythological Vulcan or Shakespearean Menelaus, the joke is entirely at Oberon's expense: "Queen Mab and her light Maydes the while,/ Amongst themselves doe closely smile,/ To see the King caught with this wile" (697-99, italics in original). Second, unlike most Shakespearean wives accused of adultery, Mab is an enthusiastic adulteress, and the poem makes no effort to condemn her behaviour. Third, the poem recommends to children that, where adultery is concerned, violence is an appropriate response; Oberon's problem is that he is so ineffectual at inflicting revenge on Mab and Pigwiggen. Finally, the poem teaches children that cuckolds are to be scorned and that women are not to be trusted. Oberon, like Peter pumpkin eater, should have kept his

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8 The poem was popular with children well into the eighteenth century (Wooden 89), and its appeal to adults is suggested by its transformation into a pantomime, Queen Mab, that ran for thirty-five nights at the Drury Lane theatre in 1750 (Hebel, Tillotson and Newdigate 202, note 1).
wife locked up at home.\(^9\) In his numerous depictions of imaginary cuckolds and wrongly accused wives, Shakespeare made a career out of trying to undo the damage done by such tales. If children were taught violence and mistrust in the nursery, then adults were taught compassion and trust in Shakespeare's theatre.

The serious nature of the multigenerational conclusion of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is better understood in light of the formative role nursery rhymes played in Renaissance lives. Whereas Warren J. Wooden suggests that modern children "might not fully comprehend the intricacies of the love plot" of *Nymphidia* (95), I suggest that Renaissance children would have recognized Oberon's behaviour as horn-madness, and that the children in Shakespeare's Windsor pageant understand what they are saying precisely because adults have taught them so well. Through the contradictory messages contained in rhymes, children were taught about the joys of marriage and the pains of infidelity, deference toward elders and contempt for victimized adults, the importance of social conformity and the delights of antisocial behaviour (Baker 647-51). Above all, Falstaff is singled out for abuse because he is old and unpopular:

'Rough music' against cuckolds, adulterers, and marital quarrellers may have enforced norms to which the whole community subscribed, but it also gave scope for youthful high spirits and the humiliation of unpopular elders. (Thomas, "Age" 219)

Since arriving in Windsor Falstaff makes few friends and many enemies. When the adults step forward to chastise him, they have more than his sexual immorality on their minds.

\(^9\) The lack of sympathy for cuckolds extends into this century. For example, despite Queen Mab's actual infidelity, Trienens writes of *Nymphidia*: "There is not much to say about this comic treatment of jealousy except that in Oberon's madness it represents the irrationality of that passion" (212).
They mock his physique, his lifestyle, and above all his age: "Old, cold, withered, and of intolerable entrails" (MWW 5.5.147-61, 154). Fast approaching second childishness, Falstaff’s judgement is as impaired as his physical body is in need of care. Their humiliation completed, the Windsorites invite Falstaff back into their midst. "Yet be cheerful, knight," offers Page, "thou shalt eat a posset to-night at my house" (5.5.171-72). Tomorrow, however, Falstaff will have to shift for himself. Like Mab and her maids in Nymphidia, Windsor will "laugh this sport o'er by a country fire" (5.5.239) as dis-horned Falstaff will become for generations of Windsorites a cautionary tale against lechery and a comic tale of a foolish old pantaloon. The fact that Fenton and Anne profit from this inauspicious ritual as a diversion to their secret wedding suggests the potential to overcome generational cycles of suspicion and scorn. Their love transcends the deceptive schemes and mercenary motives of parents who "would have married [Anne] most shamefully,/ Where there was no proportion held in love" (5.5.218-19). Their love will persevere, not with the assistance of social forces, but in spite of social forces that seem as determined to dissolve as cement marital bonds. Fenton boldly declares, "nothing can dissolve us," and the comic renewal of Windsor seems assured (5.5.221).

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In this thesis I have used self-psychology contextualized with social history and primary sources in order to examine critical misconceptions concerning Shakespearean cuckoldry anxiety. I have determined that the existence of sexual jealousy does not necessarily depend on mature, affectionate object love; characters engaged in the apparent opposite of this--immature, exploitative self-selfobject mergers--can experience this powerful
emotion. After all, as Mead pointed out, jealousy "is not a barometer by which depth of love can be read, it merely records the degree of the lover's insecurity" (40-41). The perpetuation of cuckold-lore stems not from a misogynous hatred of women, but from man's dependency and need for stability in relationships. The irrational behaviour that arises when selfobject bonds appear to rupture actually takes men further away from the spouses and peers they so desperately need to maintain a cohesive identity.

By definition, only a married man can be cuckolded, but in practice we have seen a variety of relationships threatened by imputations of sexual infidelity. Cuckoldry anxiety involves fears of betrayal, abandonment and social scorn all condensed into conventional symbols that serve as shorthand for the affliction but should not be mistaken for the affliction itself. For example, much critical effort has been expended exploring the contradictory associations of the cuckold's horns: do these signify virility (a stud bull), emasculated domesticity (a castrated or tethered bull), or humankind degraded by bestial anger (a raging bull)? The answer varies from situation to situation, but one constant remains: people in the Renaissance, married and unmarried, young and old, dreaded nothing so much as having horns placed on their heads. In an era where individuals were so careful about their reputations and the legitimacy of their offspring, to be called "cuckold" conjured nightmarish scenarios of ostracism, not only from the local community, but from mankind itself: "Terms! Names! Amaimon sounds well; Lucifer, well; Barbason, well: yet they are devils' additions, the names of fiends. But cuckold? Wittol? Cuckold! The devil himself hath not such a name" (MWW 2.2.285-89). Ford's panic underscores the critical misconception that when a man's wife is unfaithful, he is welcomed into a community of cuckold -- a kind of
support group (real or imagined) that consoles new members and proffers Iago-esque "seven-step solutions" ("first, ascertain her guilt... then, kill your wife"). Time and again, Shakespeare reveals that there is no such community, recommends that violence is not a solution, and excoriates the paranoia that his culture inculcated using everything from the simplest children's rhymes to the most sophisticated adult poetry. The fact that Shakespeare's plays are "so fram'd to the life, that they serue for the most common Commentaries, of all the actions of [Renaissance] liues" (Epistle to Tro., cited in Palmer 95) is confirmed by the writings of many contemporaries who echoed his insights. For example, Spenser's "Hymne in Honovr of Love" (1596) also succinctly documented

The doubts, the daungers, the delayes, the woes,
The fayned friends, the vnassured foes,
With thousands more then any tongue can tell,
[That] make a louers life a wretches hell.

(lines 262-65)

Endemic instability in relationships made the average Renaissance male particularly susceptible to the "monster Gelosie" (267). The male was reluctant to establish permanent, monogamous relationships because he had been taught to trust no-one. And when he did fall in love,

He nathemore can so contented rest,
But forceth further on, and striueth still
T'approch more neare, till in her inmost brest,
He may embosomd bee, and loued best;
And yet not best, but to be lou'd alone:
For loue can not endure a Paragone.

(246-51)

The "brest" here is less an erotic figure than a symbol of security, a safe haven in a dangerous world. His cuckoldry anxiety stemmed, not from deep-seated misogyny, but from his
desperation to stave off what his culture told him was lurking all around: a green-eyed monster, a horned beast. His greatest "feare" was not union with a woman but "loosing his felicitie" (270) and looking foolish to his peers as a result.

Another misconception is that the outlandish behaviour of the imaginary cuckold represents a reversion to chronologically childish, psychologically primitive, or naturally bestial behaviour. To describe the behaviour of Falstaff as narcissistic is not to drag this sixty-year-old back to a foundational developmental period experienced before most people can walk or talk. Narcissism is not a childish phase to be outgrown (or to which afflicted characters return), but rather a relational spectrum: the more narcissistic a character is, the less he experiences others as independent centres of volition; the less narcissistic a character is, the more he accords others independence, love and respect. However, one never out-grows the need for selfobject relationships, and a heightened dependency on this form of psychological sustenance is re-activated each time a person undergoes a life change. This is why I have employed Jaques's developmental model, The Seven Ages of Man, so extensively in my thesis; and why certain characters seem to co-exist in several stages at once. For instance, Stavropoulos cites Othello as experiencing several ages:

the lover telling wondrous tales of personal triumph; the valiant soldier of impeccable resolve . . . ; the justice with 'eyes severe' and a heart of stone formulating a verdict upon his wife; and then, finally, as executioner, performing the sentence of death, 'mere oblivion,' upon her and then upon himself. (130)

It is less important to ascribe precise chronological durations to each stage, than it is to recognize that characters engaged in transitions from one stage to another experience tumultuous reshufflings of the self that intensify selfobject dependency and render them
vulnerable to a host of external threats. Othello is a lover, a soldier, a judge and an old man. What makes him interesting are the difficulties he encounters when making the transitions from one role to another—and the challenges he faces when juggling several at the same time. Shakespeare's imaginary cuckolds inhabit, for the most part, the grey area between clearly delineated social roles. They are liminal, transitional, and very insecure as a result. Therein lies their dramatic interest, for nothing could be more dull than an afternoon at the theatre watching a well-adjusted student read his books, a contented lover be praised for his sonnets, a happily married couple co-exist peacefully, a heroic soldier boast of his battlefield exploits, a successful judge render humane verdicts, an old man experience security and respect during his physical decline. The well-adjusted just don't make for exciting theatre.

The situational, relative and contextual nature of self-psychology makes it fitting for a period in which, as many critics have recently asserted, the individual self as such did not yet exist. For example, in a new preface to her book, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*, Juliet Dusinberre rejects the autonomous "unified self" in favour of a "model of continually dissolving and reconstituting selves" (xxii). People in the Renaissance were as much defined by their parentage, their class, their occupation, their families, their friends and their position in the community as by their own personal attributes. In his complaint about Caliban, Prospero highlights identity as a constant flux between two poles, one external and contingent, the other internal and inherent. Caliban is "a born devil, on whose nature/Nurture can never stick" (*Timp*. 4.1.188-89); yet he is also subject to environmental influences, both bad (he follows the drunken sailors) and good (he returns to Prospero's tutelage). Indeed, it is reliable interpersonal relations that most affect characters, such as
when Prospero stands by his adoptive charge, "this thing of darkness I/ Acknowledge mine," prompting a sea-change in Caliban's demeanour: "I'll be wise hereafter,/ And seek for grace" (5.1.275-76, 294-95). Did the fact that Renaissance selves were constructed along interpersonal lines separate them from the modern individual? Self psychology suggests no, for the individualism of modern men and women is itself greatly exaggerated.

Psychologically, people have always been constructed out of relationships with others: primary caregivers provide the bedrock, and a lifetime of significant others fill in the pieces along the way. The key to investigating characters who inhabit other cultures at historically distant periods is to contextualize, inasmuch as is possible, this interpersonal environment. It is not an exact science, but it is not an anachronistic one either.

Methodologically speaking, I have endeavoured not to write a tautological thesis which sets out to examine Shakespearean cuckoldry anxiety and, surprise, finds it to be a prevalent concern. Nor have I sought to reduce each play to a kind of "psychological roman à clef," as John Bayley phrases it (140), whose secrets can only be unlocked using self psychology. In fact, self psychology may not be germane to infidelity in all of Shakespeare's plays; for example, he does not dwell on the psychological effects of Saturninus's cuckolding by Aaron (Tit.) or Albany's and Cornwall's near-cuckolding by Edmund (Lr.), two plays where infidelity merely provides narrative twists while the author plumbs other psychological depths. Instead, I have investigated cuckoldry anxiety in order to discover something new about the plays where it is a prevalent concern, and to relate this anxiety to enduring thematic controversies such as Valentine's gift to Proteus, Antipholus S's frightening initiation, the French ladies' unwillingness to be wooed, Claudio's vitriol, Troilus's coming-of-age,
Posthumus's wager, Othello's inept government, Ford's and Page's unhappy marriages, Leontes's sudden suspicion, and Falstaff's harsh treatment in Windsor forest. If at times I have treated dramatic characters as real human beings, it is because I believe that drama is founded upon a playwright's depiction of character, dramatized by living actors, and enjoyed by audiences who attend (or read) plays to see interesting people in engaging narrative situations. Rather than concoct childhoods for adult characters, I have limited myself to specific textual details and what may be logically inferred therefrom. For characters for whom no childhood details are provided, none are needed.

Finally, the most potentially controversial aspect of studying male cuckoldry anxiety is the danger that, in adopting a sympathetic stance vis-à-vis the subject, one rationalizes abusive behaviour. In locating the etiology of men's anxiety in the fear of abandonment, I am neither exonerating them nor am I blaming the women who at times seem to inflict this anxiety (the women themselves are cruelly victimized by this cultural malaise). Nor, however, do I wish to perpetuate a simplistic dichotomy (men bad/women good) for, as we have seen, women are as instrumental in perpetuating cuckold-lore as men are in attempting to transcend its distortions. Rather, by adopting the radically non-judgemental empathic manner of Kohut's self-psychology, I have sought to examine self-destructive and socially disruptive behaviour without placing moral blame. Though the cuckoo who sings on every tree "mocks married men," Shakespearean characters of all ages heed its "word of fear."


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