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SHAKESPEARE'S  
IMAGINATION

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**THE TYPOGRAPHY OF THIS BOOK  
CONFORMS TO THE  
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# SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGINATION

A STUDY  
OF THE PSYCHOLOGY  
OF ASSOCIATION AND  
INSPIRATION

By  
EDWARD A. ARMSTRONG

*. . . so full of shapes is fancy  
That it alone is high fantastical*

TWELFTH NIGHT, I. i. 15.



LINDSAY DRUMMOND LIMITED

LONDON, 1946

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To the memory  
of my friend  
Lieut. John Devenish Condy  
*Barrister-at-Law*  
Northern Irish Bar  
Dunkirk  
1940

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ABBREVIATIONS AND APPROXIMATE  
SEQUENCE OF THE PLAYS

The First Part of King Henry VI	1 <i>H. VI</i>
The Second Part of King Henry VI	2 <i>H. VI</i>
The Third Part of King Henry VI	3 <i>H. VI</i>
King Richard III	<i>K. R. III</i>
Titus Andronicus	<i>Titus</i>
Love's Labour's Lost	<i>L. L. L.</i>
The Two Gentlemen of Verona	<i>Two Gent.</i>
The Comedy of Errors	<i>C. of E.</i>
The Taming of the Shrew	<i>T. of S.</i>
Romeo and Juliet	<i>R. &amp; J.</i>
A Midsummer Night's Dream	<i>M. N. D.</i>
King Richard II	<i>K. R. II</i>
King John	<i>K. J.</i>
The Merchant of Venice	<i>M. of V.</i>
The First Part of King Henry IV	1 <i>H. IV</i>
The Second Part of King Henry IV	2 <i>H. IV</i>
Much Ado About Nothing	<i>M. Ado</i>
The Merry Wives of Windsor	<i>M. W.</i>
As You Like It	<i>A. Y. L. I.</i>
Julius Cæsar	<i>J. C.</i>
King Henry V	<i>K. H. V</i>
Troilus and Cressida	<i>T. &amp; C.</i>
Hamlet	<i>Ham.</i>
Twelfth Night	<i>Tw. N.</i>
Measure for Measure	<i>M. for M.</i>
All's Well That Ends Well	<i>A. W.</i>
Othello	<i>Oth.</i>
King Lear	<i>K. L.</i>
Macbeth	<i>Mac.</i>
Timon of Athens	<i>Timon</i>
Antony and Cleopatra	<i>A. &amp; C.</i>
Coriolanus	<i>Cor.</i>
Pericles	<i>Per.</i>
Cymbeline	<i>Cym.</i>
The Winter's Tale	<i>W. T.</i>
The Tempest	<i>Temp.</i>
King Henry VIII	<i>H. VIII</i>

POEMS

Venus and Adonis	<i>V. &amp; A.</i>
The Rape of Lucrece	<i>Luc.</i>
Sonnets	<i>Sonn.</i>

The order of the plays set out above is that adopted in Dr. G. B. Harrison's *Introducing Shakespeare* (1939), pp. 121-2. Detailed discussions of the dates of the plays will be found in Sir E. K. Chambers' *William Shakespeare* (1930) and *The New Shakespeare* edited by Professor J. Dover Wilson. The disagreement amongst experts as to the dates of some of the plays does not materially affect the issues discussed here, although if future research establishes an order differing somewhat from that I have adopted the reader will find that in a few instances the order in which images are shown as linked with others in the sequence of the plays may require some slight rectification.

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE poet, the dramatist and the novelist have the gift of making the insubstantial actual and sometimes can endow the creatures of their fancy with a greater reality than, in the eyes of their public, they have themselves :

And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

The personality of Falstaff or of Hamlet is more vividly apprehended by the theatre-goer than the personality of their creator. We are made to believe that we know the kind of things they would say or do in given circumstances, but it is more difficult for any of us, however well primed with the meagre biographical details of Shakespeare's life, to feel that we can similarly enter into his feelings or imagine his reactions. Indeed, the divergent views as to his character expressed by critics indicate how little we are acquainted with the man Shakespeare. He has been depicted as a libertine and as a saint. Yet every writer reveals himself to some extent in the recorded product of his mind. If it is sometimes difficult to catch a glimpse of the personality behind the page, it is a reasonable assumption that the work, studied in an appropriate way, will lead to a clearer conception of the mentality of the man ; and although personality is more than mentality yet some understanding of a man's psychological processes is an essential step towards an adequate appraisal of his personality. As the writing of plays was Shakespeare's chosen way of expressing himself, we may assume that any enlightenment we may gain as to how they were conceived will increase our insight into the aspects of the poet's genius which are of interest to the Shakespearean student and at the same time extend our knowledge of the remarkable capacities which contributed to the poet's pre-eminence.

This essay is an endeavour to study Shakespeare's mind in the travail of composition by investigating the associative processes revealed in his imagery and by supplementing the knowledge thus obtained by comparison and analogy with the methods of other poets and men of genius. It begins as an investigation of Shakespeare's imagination, but it becomes a study of human imagination for we

## *Shakespeare's Imagination*

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literary or psychological context. As we cannot study Shakespeare's mind introspectively and determine every shade of meaning in his use of words precision in this matter is impossible. Fortunately it is unnecessary. Furthermore, as the technique throughout this essay involves the study of associative links and groupings it sometimes happens that an item in a group, such as the word "hum," may be a verb, a noun or even an interjection and at times not an image in any precise sense of the term. None the less, I have spoken of "image clusters" rather than "word linkages" for the reason that, although in such groups some of the elements may not be images in the strict sense, yet they have the potentiality of participating fully in imagery and their association with images often gives them image characteristics. Above all, the use of the term "image" is a reminder that we are dealing with the intricacies of mental activity and not with syntax. It is the most appropriate term available and in using it we do not neglect the truth of Croce's statement: "What is called image is always a nexus of images, since image-atoms do not exist any more than thought atoms." <sup>1</sup>

In spite of its deficiencies in comparison with more modern texts I have used the Globe edition of Shakespeare throughout. John Bartlett's *Concordance* is based on this edition, and as the cogency of my argument is only fully apparent when the reader examines the passages in question I hope that the use of this edition may facilitate the consultation of the text.

The obstacles impeding concentration on this work have been formidable and had it not been for my wife's devotion in enabling me to secure interludes of relative tranquillity in the midst of the duties and anxieties of war-time it could not have been completed. I am greatly indebted to Professor F. C. Bartlett, F.R.S., who read the book in typescript, for advice and criticism of the psychological aspects of this essay, to Dr. E. M. W. Tillyard, Master of Jesus College, for corresponding help on the literary side and to Mr. T. R. Henn for reading the proofs.

CAMBRIDGE, 1945.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Essence of Aesthetic* (1921), p. 32.

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PART ONE  
*LINKED IMAGES*

CHAPTER

I

KITES AND COVERLETS

LET us begin our enquiry into the nature of Shakespeare's imagination with a topic which might seem at first glance remote from our subject. Its relevance will presently appear. What has the poet to say of a bird which he must often have seen—the kite? More particularly, what ideas and images came into his mind when he referred to the bird? This species, though now reduced to a sorry remnant of about fourteen individuals in Wales, was common in Tudor times, and not only did the birds capture partridges but many a housewife found it difficult 2 H. VI, 3.2.191

To guard the chicken from a hungry kite.

3.1.249  
Mac. 4.3.217

They would even snatch clothes from the bushes on which they were drying in order to incorporate them in their nests—hence Autolycus' warning,

When the kite builds, look to lesser linen.

W.T. 4.3.23

Kites of various species in different parts of the world are notorious for being, like Autolycus himself, snappers-up of unconsidered trifles. I have seen them picking up flotsam in Eastern harbours, and their nests have been called "the marine stores of the desert." The Bohemian traveller Schaschek, who was in England between 1465 and 1467, said that nowhere had he seen kites so numerous as in the neighbourhood of London Bridge. Some years later the Venetian ambassador Capello noted in his *Journal* that in London,

4.3.26

the kites . . . are so tame, that they often take out of the hands of little children, the bread smeared with butter, in the Flemish fashion, given to them, by their mothers.

In his treatise *Avium præcipuarum* (1544) William Turner also mentions how the kites would snatch food from children's hands, and Belon in 1560 speaks of an amazing number of these birds scavenging in London. It was not until 1662 when the plague was

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creeping across Europe that human scavengers were appointed to clear the London streets of refuse, but the legislation which provided that "Carts, Dung-pots and other fitting carriages were to visit all the streets daily, except Sunday" was too belated to prevent the terrible visitation of 1664-5. That there were limits to the accumulations of ordure permitted by civic authorities is shown by the fact that in April 1552 Shakespeare's father was fined twelve pence for having formed a large midden outside his house in Henley Street, Stratford.

In spite of the toleration with which the bird was regarded in his time, Shakespeare's kite is a despicable creature symbolic of cowardice, meanness, cruelty and death. On the lips of Antony and Lear "kite" is a term of opprobrium, but in associating the bird with unpleasantness of various kinds Shakespeare was following an ancient tradition, for the Greeks considered its appearance an evil omen, and Chaucer referred to "the coward kyte."<sup>1</sup> In *Rosalynde* Lodge criticised those who,

If they find women so fond, that they with such painted lures come to their bait, then they triumph till they be full gorged with pleasures; and then flye they away (like ramage kytes) to their own content, leaving the tame fool their mistresse full of fancie, yet without a feather.

Lodge is here using the language of falconry and indicates a reason other than their carrion-devouring habits why they were despised, for,

these kites  
*T. of S.* 4.1.198                      That bate and beat and will not be obedient,

were useless in falconry except as quarry. The address of a bird in hawking was the measure of its nobility. Because the kite did not hunt like the peregrine it became a symbol of craven-spiritedness. Hamlet mentions it in the same breath as "pigeon-liver'd."

*Ham.* 2.2.605

Shakespeare by a natural process of association pictured this carrion feeder flying over battlefields, and it is not surprising to find that he commonly connected it with sickness and disease for the expression "kite of Cressid's kind" was almost proverbial in his day. He used Stowe's edition of *Troilus and Cressida* (1561) and with it was bound *The Testament of Creseide* in which is related the story of how Creseide died a leprous beggar.

*J.C.* 5.1.85

*H. V.* 2.1.80

2.1.86

*R. III.* 1.1.136

*J.C.* 5.1.87

It is surprising, however, to find that the kite is frequently associated with the furnishings of a bed. Omitting the contexts in

<sup>1</sup> *Parlement of Foules*, 349.

which the kite is mentioned as "hell-kite" or "puttock"—which term was also used of the buzzard—reference is made to the bird by Shakespeare in fourteen contexts. In eight of these a bed or an article of bed furniture is mentioned. In *2 Henry VI* we have "sheets," in *Richard III* "bed," in *The Taming of the Shrew* "bed," "pillow," "bolster," "coverlet," and "sheets." *Henry V* gives us "bed," "sheets" and "warming-pan." *Julius Cæsar* provides a "canopy"—without which no Elizabethan bed was properly furnished—and then, the bed being equipped with all but blankets, this imagery is missing in three plays. In these, however, the bird is connected with the thought of man's last resting-place, the tomb, by the words "blench," "graves," "monuments" and "marble." In *Antony and Cleopatra* we have "pillow" back again and in *Coriolanus* the "canopy" once more. In *The Winter's Tale* we find "sheets" and "lesser linen" with "white sheet bleaching"—connecting the "bed" passages with the "blench" context. There is no passage in which the word "kite" appears apart from the first context in *2 Henry VI* which does not in the same context contain a reference to bed furnishings, bleaching or blenching, save only *Macbeth* and *King Lear* in which we have "monuments" and "marble-hearted" respectively. Moreover, as the appended table shows, in every context there is some image connected with feeding.

Is it credible that Shakespeare with conscious intent and of deliberate purpose introduced references to bedding when kites were in his mind? I do not think so. Rather, as the following passage suggests, we have good reason to suspect that he was by no means fully aware of his own idiosyncrasy in constantly linking such odd associates.

*Coriolanus*. Follow your function, go, and *batten on* Cor. 4.5.35  
*cold bits*. [Pushes him away.

*Third Servingman*. What, you will not? Prithee, tell my  
master what a strange guest he has  
here. [Exit.

*Second Servingman*. And I shall.

*Third Servingman*. Where dwellest thou?  
*Coriolanus*. Under the *canopy*.

*Third Servingman*. Under the *canopy*!  
*Coriolanus*. Ay.

*Third Servingman*. Where's that?  
*Coriolanus*. I' the city of *kites* and *crows*.

*Third Servingman*. I' the city of *kites* and *crows*! What an  
*ass* it is! Then thou dwellest with  
*daws* too?

*Coriolanus*. No, I serve not thy master.

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have already noticed, we have death imagery—blood, pale, white, sheet—and the kite is found to be keeping his usual company :

W.T. 4.3.1

When daffodils begin to peer,  
With heigh ! the doxy over the dale,  
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year ;  
For the red *blood* reigns in the winter's *pale*.

The white *sheet* bleaching on the hedge,

. . . . .

My traffic is *sheets* ; when the *kite* builds, look to lesser *linen*. My father named me Autolycus ; who, being as I am, littered under Mercury, was likewise a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. With *die* and drab I purchased this caparison, and my revenue is the silly cheat. Gallows and knock are too powerful on the highway : beating and *hanging* are terrors to me : for the *life to come*, I *sleep* out the thought of it. A prize ! a prize !

Pick out the significant words and we find—sheets—kite—linen—die—hanging—life to come. See what has happened ! Once the kite came on the scene—evoked by blood, pale, sheet and bleaching—thought veered round to death and the hereafter—and, incidentally, bed-linen suggested sleep.<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare was unwittingly being trailed at the tail of a chariot of his own fashioning. He uses “ die ” without the significance of death, but the earlier thought of death has become explicit.

• This preliminary analysis has shown that an image in Shakespeare's mind tended to acquire associates which became, at least in some instances, almost inseparable from it. Failing pressure from another set of associated images they tended to recur again and again, grouping themselves about a central image with the alacrity and pertinacity of chicks responding to a clucking hen. Shakespeare's kite has a strange but faithful brood ! But there are stranger things yet to be revealed.

---

<sup>1</sup> Autolycus was a “ hooker ” who plucked clothes from windows with a hook fixed on a long pole. Thomas Harman in *A Caveat or Warening for Common Cursetors* (1567) describes how one of these thieves stole all the bed-clothes from a man and two boys lying in bed “ and left them lying asleep naked saving their shirts, and had away all clean, and never could understand where it became.”

TABLE I.—THE KITE IMAGE CLUSTER.

CONTEXT	KITE	BED	DEATH	SPIRITS	BIRDS	FOOD
2 H. VI 3.1.249	kite <sup>249</sup>	sheets <sup>174</sup> bed <sup>213</sup>	death <sup>245</sup>	soul <sup>247</sup>	chicken <sup>249</sup> eagle <sup>245</sup> partridge <sup>191</sup>	empty <sup>248</sup> feast <sup>184</sup>
3.2.193 196 5.2.11	kite <sup>193,196</sup> kites <sup>11</sup>	bed <sup>143</sup>	dead <sup>193</sup> dead <sup>192</sup> deadly-handed <sup>9</sup>	ghost <sup>161</sup> soul <sup>18</sup>	crows <sup>11</sup>	empty <sup>4</sup> carrion <sup>11</sup> diet <sup>139</sup>
K. R. III 1.1.133	kite <sup>133</sup>	bed <sup>203</sup> pillow, bolster <sup>204</sup> coverlet, sheets <sup>205</sup> canopy <sup>88</sup>	die <sup>145</sup> kill <sup>211</sup>	soul <sup>119</sup> soul <sup>187</sup>	eagle <sup>132</sup> buzzards <sup>133</sup> falcon <sup>193</sup> haggard <sup>196</sup>	empty <sup>193</sup> full-gorged <sup>194</sup> eat no meat <sup>200</sup> gorging <sup>82</sup> feeding <sup>83</sup> couple a gorge <sup>75</sup> pudding <sup>91</sup> food <sup>97</sup>
T. of S. 4.1.198	kite <sup>198</sup>	Tearsheet <sup>181</sup> bed <sup>87</sup> sheets <sup>86</sup> warming pan <sup>88</sup> (John-a-dreams <sup>89,93</sup> ) (sleep <sup>229</sup> )	death <sup>65</sup>	ghost <sup>89</sup> spirits <sup>72</sup> devil <sup>95</sup>	ravens, crows <sup>85</sup> eagles <sup>91</sup> crow <sup>91</sup>	
J. C. 5.1.85	kites <sup>85</sup>					
K. H. V 2.1.80	kite <sup>80</sup>					
Ham. 2.2.607	kites <sup>607</sup>		murdered <sup>612</sup> bleached <sup>695</sup> marble-hearted <sup>481</sup> monuments <sup>73</sup> die <sup>79</sup> murders <sup>81</sup> dying <sup>95</sup>	soul <sup>90</sup> devil <sup>468</sup> devils <sup>273</sup> devil <sup>59</sup> (ghost)	pigeon <sup>604</sup>	offal <sup>468</sup> epicurism <sup>245</sup> feed <sup>58</sup>
K. L. 1.4.284 Mac. 3.4.73	kite <sup>284</sup> kites <sup>73</sup>		pillow <sup>705</sup> canopy <sup>43</sup> sheets <sup>23</sup> linen <sup>23</sup>	devils <sup>89</sup> soul <sup>181</sup> soul <sup>87</sup>		
A. & C. 3.13.89 Cor. 4.5.45 W. T. 2.3.186 4.3.23	kite <sup>89</sup> kite <sup>45</sup> kite <sup>186</sup> kite <sup>23</sup>		death <sup>184</sup> bleaching <sup>5</sup> die <sup>27</sup>		crows, daws <sup>45</sup> ravens <sup>186</sup> lark, thrush, jay <sup>10</sup>	feeders <sup>109</sup> batten <sup>35</sup> nurses <sup>187</sup> dish for a king <sup>8</sup>

The small figures refer to the number of the line in which the image occurs. They are placed above the image when it is on the same line as, or earlier than, the context image, and below the image when it occurs later than the context image.



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The crow and the beetle in partnership again! The conception of meeting death by casting oneself over a precipice is missing, but instead of thoughts of suicide we have murder premeditated.

•The crow and the beetle are now seen to be not such strange partners after all. Their appearances presage disaster and death. They are, in fact, both winged symbols of catastrophe and therefore in league with each other; their dark garb and crepuscular flight befit evil omens. Now we know why crows rather than sea-gulls inappropriately fly about the Dover cliffs. For Shakespeare symbolism was more important than exact natural history.

If we wish to ascertain why choughs accompany the crows around those cliffs we need not look further than a later scene in *Macbeth* where "choughs and rooks" flock together. In Shakespeare's mind these birds as well as crows were thought of as dark and ominous. They were appropriate symbols in tragic situations and to remember one of them was to recall its companions.<sup>1</sup>

M.N.D. 3.4.125  
2.2.22 What of the mice and the cock in *King Lear* which keep company with the beetles, crows and choughs? In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* rere-mice and beetles appear close to each other; there is no crow or cock here. But only five lines earlier in the penultimate line of the previous scene we read,

2.1.267 And look thou meet me ere the first *cock crow*.

True, "crow" here is a verb and in *King Lear* a bird, here "cock" is a bird and in *King Lear* it is a ship's dinghy, but the reader who has followed the devious ways of birds and beetles thus far will have realised that often the sounds of words rather than their meanings provided associations which brought them from the store-house of memory to the point of the pen—I will not say to consciousness, because in many instances they cannot have reached further than the fringe of consciousness. *A Midsummer Night's*

---

<sup>1</sup> There is nothing in Shakespeare's writings to suggest that he knew the red-legged chough. In his day the word "chough" was synonymous with jackdaw. Looking over the Dover cliffs he might have seen jackdaws, but is not likely to have seen crows. A close study of his ornithology has convinced me that personal observation played a very minor part, while traditional symbolism and folk-lore bulked large in his imagination. Incidentally, there is no indication of a personal acquaintance with any sea-bird. He mentions the cormorant but only as the symbol of greed. For what it is worth this negative evidence suggests that, contrary to the speculations of Brandes and other writers, Shakespeare had not much knowledge of the sea.

*Dream* was written twelve years before *King Lear*, but the images used were not so widely scattered that they could not be brought together again and, as is not unusual in Shakespeare's work, in closer contiguity than when they first made their appearance together. The subliminal sprite evidently had a tidy mind; or was it that images once having come within speaking distance of each other acquired such an affinity that constraint was upon them to strike up a closer acquaintance? This is picture-thinking of course, but it may facilitate a more vivid realisation of what took place in Will Shakespeare's peculiar mind. We shall consider the psychological processes involved in later pages.

We have not yet finished with mice. Lear, we might almost say, was haunted by them. A little later in the scene with which we are concerned the King prattles distractedly :

That fellow handles his bow like a *crow-keeper* : draw K.L. 4.6.87  
me a clothier's yard. Look, look, a *mouse*.

Much ingenuity has been devoted to the explication of these ejaculations. For example, Edmund Blunden in his essay, "Shakespeare's Significances," writes : " 'That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper.' Again we must see not only the fantasy of Lear but the bird-boy passing over the farm. 'Look, look! a mouse,' apparently a reminiscence of the classical proverb, certainly a Falstaffian comment on a supposed recruit's usefulness and clearly a remark brought on by spying a field mouse in the corn."<sup>1</sup> Lear's remarks are simply the outcome of wandering associative processes—such as are only too familiar to those who have to deal with the insane. The poet, endeavouring to suggest the dissociated and distraught state of the king's mind, lets his own mind wander for a moment and seizes on two images which float to the surface together without realising how they came to be in company. "Crow-keeper," "mouse" and "beetle" R. & J. 1.4.6  
1.4.32  
1.4.40 had already appeared together, though in loose association, in *Romeo and Juliet*—written close in time to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As we have seen, the partnership was sufficiently cemented for the trio to make its appearance later at the famous white cliffs.

So much for the history of the live-stock in Edgar's speech, but there is yet another word which deserves our attention. "Buoy" is used but once in the whole of Shakespeare, so there is no question

<sup>1</sup> *The Mind's Eye* (1934), p. 204.

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of tracing earlier associates. But in *Cymbeline* we find Belarius saying to the two boys :

*Cym.* 3.3.10

Now for our mountain sport : up to yond hill ;  
Your legs are young ; I'll tread these flats. Consider  
When you above perceive me like a *crow*,  
That it is place which lessens and sets off :  
And you may then revolve what tales I have told you  
Of courts, of princes, of the tricks in war :  
This service is not service so being done,  
But being so allow'd : to apprehend thus,  
Draws us a profit from all things we see ;  
And often to our comfort shall we find  
The sharded *beetle* in a safer hold  
Than is the full-wing'd eagle .

Earlier in the play Shakespeare had written,

1.3.15

As little as a *crow*, or less.

Once again he uses the crow to emphasise distance, but in *King Lear* the distant crows are as beetles and the boat as a buoy, while in *Cymbeline* the man is as a crow to the boys. Evidently as the poet let his imagination dwell on the theme of exiled notabilities in rugged surroundings some influence from the forlorn Gloucester and Edgar aroused the recollection of the bird and insect once more.

*Temp.* 1.2.340

After this, in Shakespeare's last complete play, *The Tempest*, there is a reminiscence of the strange alliance : the beetle is mentioned in company with the raven—one of the crow family—and bats (rere-mice).

*T. of S.* 4.1.160  
*A. & C.* 3.2.20

We have now noticed all the poet's references to the insect save two (omitting "beetle-headed")—one in *Antony and Cleopatra* in which we have "bird" and "shards,"<sup>1</sup> and the other in *Measure for Measure* :

*M. for M.* 3.1.77

• *Isabella.*

Darest thou *die* ?

The sense of *death* is most in apprehension ;  
And the poor *beetle* that we tread upon,  
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great  
As when a giant *dies*.

*Claudio.*

Why give you me this shame ?  
Think you I can a resolution fetch  
From flowery tenderness ? If I must *die*,  
I will encounter *darkness* as a bride,  
And hug it in mine arms.

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<sup>1</sup> In the successive beetle contexts of *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Cymbeline* the "shards" of the insect are mentioned—thus indicating the continuity of thought in these passages.

## *Birds and Beetles*

Here, with the reiterated idea of death we have a conception which is found in all our contexts, save *Cymbeline* alone. The *Romeo and Juliet* scene concludes with Romeo's prognostications of untimely death. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* there is the word "kill." In the *Hamlet*, *Lear* and *Macbeth* passages suicide or murder is contemplated. It is while Caliban curses Prospero, whom he wishes to murder, that beetles are mentioned. Only in *Cymbeline* is the word "life" reiterated as if in revolt against the contemplation of "dark December" and the relinquished glories aroused by the "pinching cave" in which the dialogue takes place. Thus there is one conception characteristic not only of the beetle contexts but also of the kite contexts of the previous chapter.<sup>1</sup> It is death. • Death is the Master Image about which all the others are orientated—or to express the situation more adequately, the image category to which they are all in lesser or greater degree relevant. It is this conception which aroused the ill-assorted trio, beetle, crow and mouse, to play a fantastic game amidst the poet's pages. The crow and the beetle are death's associates in their own right, as we saw earlier; the mouse creeps in by virtue of its confusion with the rere-mouse, for the bat in folk-lore is the symbol of the black-hooded figure who has the last word in the drama of life.

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<sup>1</sup> Another indication of the connexion between the passages in *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest* is that Belarius and the princes "house i' the rock", while Calaban complains,

here you sty me  
In this hard rock.

*Cym.* 8.3.8

*Temp.* 1.2.342

TABLE II.—THE BEETLE IMAGE CLUSTER

CONTEXT	BEETLE	BIRDS		MICE, ETC.	NIGHT	DEATH	MADNESS	FAIRIES	CLIFF
		CROW	VARIOUS						
T. of S. 4.1.160	beetle-headed <sup>160</sup>			mouse <sup>10</sup>	night <sup>1,80</sup> to-night <sup>50</sup>			fairies <sup>34</sup>	
R. & J. 1.4.32	beetle brows <sup>32</sup>	crow-keeper <sup>6</sup>				kill <sup>8</sup>		fairy <sup>1, 25</sup>	
M.N.D. 2.2.22	beetles <sup>22</sup>	crow <sup>2, 1, 267</sup>	cock <sup>2, 1, 267</sup>	rere-mice <sup>1</sup>	night <sup>19</sup>	death <sup>245</sup>			
2 H. IV 1.2.255	three-man beetle <sup>255</sup>					dead <sup>32</sup>	madness <sup>74</sup>	goblin <sup>40</sup>	cliff <sup>70</sup>
Ham. 1.4.71	beetles <sup>71</sup>				night <sup>54</sup>	dies <sup>77, 81</sup>			
M. for M. 3.1.79	beetle <sup>79</sup>		falcon, fowl <sup>82</sup>		darkness <sup>84</sup> night <sup>5, 101</sup>				
K.L. 4.6.14	beetles <sup>14</sup>	crow <sup>13</sup>	cock <sup>19</sup>	mice <sup>18</sup>	moon <sup>38</sup>	die <sup>48</sup>	brain turn <sup>23</sup>	fairies <sup>29</sup>	(cliff)
Mac. 3.2.42	beetle <sup>42</sup>	crow <sup>60</sup>		bat <sup>40</sup>	night's <sup>43</sup>	deed of dreadful note <sup>44</sup>			
A. & C. 3.2.20	beetle <sup>20</sup>		Arabian bird <sup>12</sup>			dead <sup>33</sup>			
Cym. 3.3.20	beetle <sup>20</sup>	crow <sup>12</sup>	eagle <sup>21</sup>		dark <sup>37</sup>				mountain <sup>10</sup>
Temp. 1.2.340	beetles <sup>340</sup>		raven <sup>322</sup> cock-a-diddle-dow <sup>304</sup>	bats <sup>240</sup>	night <sup>227, 326</sup>			sprites <sup>381</sup>	rock <sup>343</sup>

## CHAPTER

### III

#### THE EAGLE, THE WEASEL AND THE DRONE

**T**HE strange adventures of Shakespeare's beetle are not without parallel in his pages. Let us now consider what happened to his drone. In *2 Henry VI* we are 2 H. VI, 4.1.109 informed :

Drones suck not eagles' blood but rob bee-hives.

Why should it occur to Shakespeare that the idea of drones parasitising eagles needed correction? Why did he go out of his way to deny that drones played the part of lice with eagles as their victims? The poet was no entomologist—nor ornithologist, for that matter. A little observation would have shown him that the beetle is not “shard-borne” but that its elytra serve as covering for Mac. 3.2.42 the wings. If he had picked up a glow-worm he might easily have ascertained that the fairies could not light their tapers at its eyes—M.N.D. 3.1.173 for the luminescence is in its tail. Why, then, this concern with the natural history of the drone? In spite of his professed knowledge of bees Shakespeare shows himself to be no more an apiarist than a coleopterist. Critics have condemned as “utter nonsense” his description of the hive in *Henry V*, though it would be fairer to call it mythology.<sup>1</sup> He was, of course, no wiser than his age in believing that bees were ruled by a king or “emperor.” He H. V, 1.2.190 seems to have mistaken the sacs in which bees gather pollen for 1.2.196 “honey-bags.” Thus, when he was taking upon himself to correct M.N.D. 3.1.171 other people, his own knowledge was not above criticism. Like his contemporaries, he had no clear idea of the drones' function in the economy of the hive. His account of the life of the bee comes, not from experience and observation but from Virgil's *Fourth Georgic*. It is probable, however, that he was influenced by English translations and paraphrases such as the account of bee life given by Fidus to Euphues and Philautus in Lyly's *Euphues*. For instance, the passage :

And having gathered out of every flower hony they return  
loaden in their mouths, thighs, wings, and all the body, whom

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<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Raleigh, *Shakespeare* (1907), p. 37.

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they that tarried at home receive readily, as easing their backes  
of so great burthens,<sup>1</sup>

may have been in Shakespeare's mind when he wrote,

*M.N.D.* 3.1.171

The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,  
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,

and,

*H. V.* 1.2.200

The poor mechanic porters crowding in  
Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate.

However this may be, in Lyly's play *Endymion* (acted 1585, published 1591) which influenced *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the name character says :

There might I behold drones or beetles I know not how  
to term them, creeping under the wings of a princely eagle,  
who being carried into her nest, sought there to suck that  
vein, that would have killed the eagle.

In *Euphues* there is a reference to the

eagle . . . into whose nest the blind beetle would have crept  
and so being carried into her nest destroyed her young ones.<sup>2</sup>

Lyly is here serving up, as was his wont, a garbled version of very ancient folk-lore—much of which he obtained from Erasmus' works, especially his *Similia*. We have another redaction of it in Mouffet's *Theater of Insects*, written apparently about 1584 and published posthumously in Latin in 1634 and in English in 1658 :

The Beetle is bred of putrid things and of dung, and it chiefly feeds and delights in that. Of all plants they cannot away with rose-trees, for they die by the smell of them. They have no females, but have their generation from the sun. Though the eagle, its proud and cruel enemy, do make havoc and devour this creature of so mean a rank, yet as soon as it gets an opportunity it returneth like for like. For it flieth up nimble into her nest with its fellow-soldiers the scarab-beetles, and in the absence of the old she-eagle bringeth out of the nest the eagle's eggs one after another, which, falling and being broken, the young ones are deprived of life.<sup>3</sup>

Lyly's natural history was as fantastic as the *Physiologus*, from which some of it was ultimately derived. Not content with blood-sucking drones or beetles, he refers in *Euphues* to dragons poisoning

<sup>1</sup> *Euphues*, ed. M. W. Croll and H. Clemons (1916), p. 447.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 243.

<sup>3</sup> *Theater of Insects*, pp. 1005-13.

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themselves by sucking elephant's blood.<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare could, and often did, use folk-lore material when it suited his purpose, but although he was no natural scientist he disliked supernatural natural history such as was the fashion among the Euphuistic writers. As Brandes pointed out, Shakespeare even went out of his way to parody some of Lyly's natural history.<sup>2</sup> Blood-sucking drones were too much for Shakespeare and he made a stand against them.

In *The Comedy of Errors* we discover the drone with owls, *C. of E.* 2.2.196 a snail, an ape and an ass. The ass is mentioned by Luciana in a line which adumbrates an incident in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* : 2.2.201

If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an ass.

The drone in *The Rape of Lucrece* is in company with "a wandering wasp" which creeps into the "weak hive" to suck honey. Earlier, it may be noted, we have a "night-waking cat" hunting a "weak mouse," a "night-wandering weasel" and a "creeping thief." The "creeping" image also appeared in *2 Henry VI* :

*Luc.* 836  
554  
307  
305  
*2 H. VI*, 4.1.101

beggary  
Is crept into the palace of the king.

In the *Dream* the drone gives place to its colleague the beetle together with owl, snail, bear, ounce, pard and cat, but in *The Merchant of Venice* we read :

*Snail*-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day  
More than the wild-*cat* : *drones* hive not with me. *M. of V.* 2.5.47

In *1 Henry IV* the drone has become changed from an insect into a noise—a transmutation which will not surprise those who have already noted how frequently it is the sound of a word rather than its meaning which is significant for Shakespeare's associative activities :<sup>3</sup>

*Falstaff*. 'Sblood, I am as melancholy as a gib *cat* or a lugged bear. *1 H. IV*, 1.2.83  
*Prince Henry*. Or an old *lion*, or a lover's lute.

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> *William Shakespeare* (1899), p. 43. Polonius' advice is largely made up of quotations from *Euphues*.

<sup>3</sup> Table III shows that probably the notion of a droning instrument was latent in Shakespeare's mind when he was writing *The Merchant of Venice*. In this play we have the drum and fife, but when the poet next mentions "drone" in *1 Henry IV* it is the music of the bagpipes to which he explicitly refers—and afterwards whenever he mentioned the drone he also alluded to some form of music.



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*Falstaff*. Yea, or the *drone* of a Lincolnshire bagpipe.  
*Prince Henry*. What sayest thou to a hare, or the *melancholy* of  
Moor-ditch? <sup>1</sup>

The lion, king of beasts, takes the place of the ounce and pard in Oberon's incantation. Later in the same play the ape and weasel are mentioned by Lady Percy :

1 *H. IV*, 2.3.80

Out, you mad-headed *ape* !  
A *weasel* hath not such a deal of spleen  
As you are toss'd with.

In *As You Like It*, which can probably be dated between 1 *Henry IV*, written in 1597, and *Henry V*, in 1599, Jaques says,

*A. Y. L. I.* 2.5.13

I can *suck melancholy* out of a song, as a *weasel*  
*sucks eggs*.

So far we have a group of animals playing a place-changing game with various partners, including "sucking," instrumental sounds and "melancholy." Now, behold what meets our eye in *Henry V* :

*H. V*, 1.2.169

For once the *eagle* England being in prey,  
To her unguarded nest the *weasel* Scot  
Comes *sneaking* and so *sucks* her princely *eggs*,  
Playing the *mouse* in absence of the *cat*,  
To tear and havoc more than she can eat.

But this is not all. Almost immediately after the Earl of Westmorland's speech, in which these words occur, there follows the

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the folk-lore of the hare. In Turberville's *Booke of Hunting* (1576) we read : " The Hare first taught us the use of the hearbe called wilde Succorye, which is very excellent for those which are disposed to be melancholike : she hir selfe is one of the most melancholike beastes that is ; and to heale hir own infirmities, she goeth commonly to sit under that hearbe " (Oxford edn., 1908, p. 160). T. Cogan's *Haven of Health* (1584) contains this statement : " Hare-flesh beside that it is hard of digestion, maketh grosse and melancholy blood, and is one of the foure kinds of flesh that breed melancholy " (1605 edn., pp. 118-9). Fynes Moryson in his *Itinerary* (Pt. iii, p. 149) says that " hares are thought to nourish melancholy." Shakespeare's associative proclivities are illustrated curiously in the connexion established in his mind between " melancholy " and " hair," arising out of the traditional association between " melancholy " and " hare." Thus in *Titus Andronicus* Aaron uses the words,

*Titus*, 2.3.83

My silence and my cloudy *melancholy*,  
My fleece of woolly *hair*, that now uncurls ;

and in *Troilus and Cressida* Alexander says of Ajax,

*T. & C.* 1.2.27

He is *melancholy* without cause and merry against the *hair*.

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Archbishop of Canterbury's disquisition on bee society in which he contemplates,

•The *sad-eyed* justice, with his *surlly* hum,  
Delivering o'er to executors pale  
The lazy yawning *drone*.

H. V. 1.2.202

Here we have imagery which earlier was scattered and very loosely linked now concentrated and compact with the transformation of the "melancholy" of earlier contexts into "sad-eyed" and "surlly," and the addition of the imagery involved in the "drones suck not eagle's blood" statement of 2 *Henry VI*. The dramatist's thought has travelled by stages—the drone which does not suck the eagle but sucks honey, the wandering wasp sucking honey, the sneaking weasel which sucks eggs, the weasel which sucks the eagle's eggs—and the wheel having turned full circle we have the drone once more in an eagle context.

It will have been noted that in 2 *Henry VI* the drone—the king of insects, being a bee—appears with a human king and queen as well as the king of birds—the eagle;<sup>1</sup> in the *Comedy of Errors* with the king of monkeys—the ape; in 1 *Henry IV* it keeps company with the king of beasts—the lion; in *Pericles*, the robber drone *Per. 2.1.51* reappears with what was for Shakespeare the king of fishes—the whale! If we had glanced at *Hamlet* we might have guessed that this would happen, for there, though the drone is absent, the weasel and the whale are mentioned. Hamlet is talking about the shape of a cloud:

*Hamlet*. Methinks it is like a *weasel*.  
*Polonius*. It is backed like a *weasel*.  
*Hamlet*. Or like a *whale*?  
*Polonius*. Very like a *whale*.

*Ham. 3.2.397*

So the weasel partners the "creeping thief" in *Lucrece*, the ape in 1 *Henry IV*, the eagle and the drone in *Henry V* and the whale in *Pericles*—Tarquin, son of the king of Rome, the king of monkeys, king of birds, king of insects and king of fish.<sup>2</sup> Having once been

<sup>1</sup> There are many other monarchy images in the drone contexts.

<sup>2</sup> In a list of the primacies amongst created things in Peacham's *Complete Gentleman* (quoted by Dr. E. M. W. Tillyard in *The Mediæval World Picture*, 1943, p. 27) we read: "The lion we say is king of beasts, the eagle chief of birds, the whale and whirlpool among fishes, Jupiter's oak the forest's king"; and Raleigh in his *History of the World* says, "For that infinite wisdom of God, which hath distinguished his angels by degree, which hath given greater and less light and beauty to heavenly bodies, which hath made differences between beasts and bird, created the eagle and the fly, the cedar and the shrub . . . hath also ordained kings, dukes or leaders of the people, magistrates, judges, and other degrees among men."

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linked with royalty the weasel was associated in turn with a series of king creatures.<sup>1</sup> After *Pericles* the drone is seen no more, but some of its companions emerge for a last frolic in *The Tempest*—ape, pard and cat-o'-mountain. Thus the images which appear in early work tend to conglobulate—to use Dr. Johnson's word—though it is not until *Henry V* that we find them compactly together. Having achieved this consummation they show a tendency to disperse, although the group, as we have seen, can be traced in an attenuated form to *The Tempest*, in which Shakespeare relinquishes his magician's wand and buries his broken staff certain fathoms in the earth. Thus the drone group of images has a similar history to the beetle group, a process of progressive concentration as the plays proceed and then disintegration and dispersal. Shakespeare's images are seen to be like molecules in chemical reactions, making new combinations which constitute new substances with novel properties.

• It is not credible that the poet was fully aware of the strange frolics of his images as they changed partners like children in a

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare's weasel belongs to folk-lore rather than to natural history. Weasels hiss, squeak and make little barking sounds, but do not "shriek"; nor, apart from superstitious dread, do they "fright" such people as Tarquin. A naturalist would not describe them as "quarrelous." Shakespeare connected them with witchcraft. An old charm to be said at night runs :

Saint Francis and Saint Benedight,  
Bless this house from wicked wight,  
From the nightmare and the goblin  
That is hight Goodfellow Robin ;  
Keep it from all evil spirits,  
Fairies, weasels, rats and ferrets ;  
From curfew time  
To the next prime.

Weasels were amongst the " familiars " of witches (M. A. Murray, *The Witch-cult in Western Europe*, Oxford, 1921, pp. 209, 212, 241 ; *The God of the Witches*, 1933, pp. 40, 84). Packs of weasels were known as " fairy hounds " and all over Europe the weasel was regarded with superstitious dread (T. S. Duncan, *The Weasel in Myth, Superstition and Religion*, Washington University Studies, XII, Hum. Ser. No. 1, St. Louis, 1925). In *Love for Love* (Act II, Sc. 1) Congreve refers to the belief that it is unlucky to meet a weasel. He evidently connected the animal with witchcraft for a little later in the same scene he refers to a witch's familiar in the shape of a cat. In *Secret Memoirs of the late Mr. Duncan Campbell* (1732, p. 40) we read : " I have known people who have been put into such terrible apprehensions of death by the squeaking of a weasel, as have been very near bringing on them the fate they dreaded." A few lines after Hamlet's reference to the weasel he says :

*Ham.* 3.2.406

'Tis now the very witching time of night.

Possibly underlying this dialogue with its references to the camel and clouds was the realisation that witches practised divination by means of black horses and clouds (M. A. Murray, *op. cit.*, 1933, pp. 81, 83).

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game or dance, some dropping out to come in again later, or, perhaps, joining up with another group.<sup>1</sup> No doubt the pairing-up of the king of insects with what Shakespeare regarded as the king of birds, monkeys, beasts and fish in turn is due mainly to their inclusion in the category of king creatures, but consideration of the whole situation indicates that something more than this is involved. The adventures of the kite, beetle and drone which we have now traced suggest that we may postulate below the level of consciousness an active and subtle organising principle. The more closely Shakespeare's works are studied the more numerous such groups of images as these are found to be. They are not sporadic peculiarities but constant features of the poet's thought. It is evident that when he concentrated on the development of the main theme and directed his attention to attaining his dramatic purpose he was able, to a considerable extent, to leave the ordering of the images to his subliminal mind—shall we say to that capable and artful sprite who was always ready to lend a hand so long as his master did not pry too closely into his secrets nor attempt any drastic interference with his activities?

I would suggest that the grouping of images into what I shall call "image clusters" betokens the work of a subliminal organising principle linked in some degree with emotion. If so generalised an emotional connexion as that between "beetle" and "death" could be instrumental in initiating a long sequence of associations, we should remain alert to the possibility of finding linkages which reveal some more intense emotional disturbance, whether repressed or unrepressed. It is not our primary purpose in this enquiry into the nature of the imagination to probe into the personal emotional misadventures of the so-called "hidden Shakespeare," but the study of image clusters, besides providing a technique for interpreting Shakespeare's work and enabling us to gain new insight into his psychology, is also capable of shedding light on his personality;

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<sup>1</sup> We cannot discuss the activity of the imagination without having to speak of mental processes which are not fully conscious. Some of these may be such that they may be perceived consciously at certain times or with a little trouble, others are much more deeply concealed and their existence is a matter of inference. Apart from the philosophical objections to the use of the term "unconscious" it has such different connotations as used by the various schools of psychology that I have avoided it as much as possible. In referring to specifically Freudian conceptions I speak of the "Unconscious," but I shall use "subconscious" and "subliminal" as general terms for processes below full awareness without distinction as to how deeply they are located. I speak of material being in "focal consciousness" when it is the subject of interest and attention. We shall not be led astray by the picture-thinking terms of psychology if we remember that "they are wise men's counters but the money of fools."

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so we can hardly avoid asking ourselves whether by scrutinising these groups of images the writers who claim to have discovered, for instance, the nature of Shakespeare's relationship with various ladies, are likely to find support for their views. We shall bear this problem in mind as we proceed.

\*At this stage, however, we may formulate the conclusions with regard to the poet's mentality to which the study of these image clusters has led. His mind possessed the useful twin capacities—retentive memory and vigorous powers of association. He obtained many of his most striking effects by new combinations of the old. *Plus ça reste la même chose, plus ça change!* An image cluster may reappear after an absence, wax and wane, discard some elements, appropriate others and blossom again with new components. Shakespeare's imagination in some respects did not range as freely and widely as might at first appear to be the case. Its achievements modified subsequent activities. Furthermore, at the subliminal level permutations and combinations of images and ideas occurred in a strange fashion almost as if there were an independent consciousness at work shuffling the pack of images and dealing them in new "hands."

Clearly the egg-sucking weasel reference is not to be judged merely as natural history—and this applies to many of the poet's allusions to birds, beasts and insects,—but this much may be noted: whereas Lyly and many of Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries readily used natural history far-fetched both in time and sense the Stratford writer was sufficiently a countryman to be chary of using absolutely fantastic zoological mythology. He employed legendary matter of the cliché type freely, as when he referred to the phoenix and "kind life-rendering pelican," but these are acknowledged literary conceits. Although he was no ornithologist his correction of Lyly in this instance and his nature references as a whole indicate that he viewed unfavourably the fashion adopted by this writer and followed by Nashe, Greene and Gosson, of ransacking ancient and unreliable works of natural history to obtain esoteric similes for commonplace matters. Blood-sucking drones were more than he could stomach. \* It is to this wholesome revulsion from artificiality that much of the open-air charm of his plays is due, for the fauna of the *Physiologus*, derived as it was from ancient Palestinian and Egyptian sources, is not such as can permanently people a reasonable mental world. Man's spirit cries out for banks of wild thyme, larks singing at Heaven's gate, and rural nooks, beloved of martins, where the air smells woongly. We cannot but marvel that facts of observation should be woven

*Ham.* 4.5.146

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with such subtlety by Shakespeare into a fabric so largely composed of pre-determined material as to merge perfectly into the pattern of the whole. The kite swooping to pick a rag from a London midden finds a perch amongst the furnishings of a bed, the weasel sucking birds' eggs is made at home with the lazy drone and the whale. No stranger associates than these and their like have ever congregated with such felicity in any other poet's page.

TABLE III.—THE IMAGE CLUSTERS OF THE DRONE AND THE WEASEL

CONTEXT	DRONE	WEASEL	KING-CREATURE	CREEPING	CAT	MOOD	SUCKING	MUSIC
2 H. VI Luc.	4.1.109 307	drones <sup>100</sup> weasels <sup>307</sup>	eagle's <sup>100</sup>	crept <sup>102</sup> creeping <sup>305</sup>			suck <sup>100</sup>	
C. of E.	836	drone-like <sup>836</sup>		crept <sup>839</sup> snail <sup>106</sup>			suck'd <sup>840</sup> suck <sup>104</sup>	
M. of V.	2.2.196 2.5.48	drone <sup>196</sup> drones <sup>48</sup>	ape <sup>200</sup>	snail-slow <sup>47</sup>	wild-cat <sup>48</sup>			drum <sup>20</sup> fife <sup>30</sup>
1 H. IV	1.2.85 2.3.81	drone <sup>85</sup> weasel <sup>81</sup>	lion <sup>84</sup> ape <sup>80</sup>		gib cat <sup>83</sup>	melancholy <sup>83, 85</sup> spleen <sup>81</sup>	play with mammetts <sup>88</sup>	lute <sup>84</sup> bagpipe <sup>88</sup>
A.Y.L.I.	2.5.13	weasel <sup>13</sup>	dog-ape <sup>17</sup>			melancholy <sup>10, 13</sup>	sucks eggs <sup>13</sup>	song <sup>13</sup> sing <sup>18, 22</sup>
K.H. V	1.2.204	drone <sup>204</sup>	eagle <sup>169</sup>	sneaking <sup>171</sup>	cat <sup>172, 174</sup>	sad-eyed <sup>203</sup> surly <sup>202</sup>	sucks . . . eggs <sup>171</sup>	music <sup>83</sup>
Ham.	3.2.396	weasel <sup>396</sup>	whale <sup>398</sup>				drink <sup>408</sup>	pipe <sup>368, 387</sup> music <sup>375, 384</sup>
Cym.	3.4.162	weasel <sup>168</sup>				quarrelous <sup>163</sup>		music <sup>178</sup>
Per. 2. Gower	18 2.1.51	drone <sup>18</sup> drones <sup>51</sup>	whale <sup>32</sup> whales <sup>36</sup>			jangling <sup>45</sup>	swallowed <sup>45</sup>	bells <sup>38, 45</sup>

## CHAPTER

### IV

## HIDDEN IMAGES

LET us now apply the "cluster" technique to the interpretation of a few passages and ascertain whether we can find evidence that, as Shakespeare wrote, he was powerfully, and indeed almost irresistibly influenced by the associations which images had already established amongst themselves in his preceding plays. Instead of working through the plays to trace the evolution and life-history of image clusters we shall select contexts and consider whether we can detect such pre-determined linkages. The validity of the principle of cluster formation should be demonstrable, if the principle be sound, by enquiring whether in specific instances we can ascertain why the poet used a particular word in conjunction with another, rather than any other word. We shall find, I believe, that Shakespeare was a master builder who, having constructed a cloud-capped tower did not scruple to use it with alacrity as a quarry for his next gorgeous palace.

Here is Prince Henry making fun of Falstaff's corpulence :

How, now, my sweet creature of *bombast*. How long is't ago, Jack, since thou sawest thine own *knee* ? 1 *H. IV*, 2.4.360

*Falstaff*. My own *knee* ! when I was about thy years, Hal, I was not an *eagle's* talon in the waist.

Just why should an eagle's talon come into Shakespeare's mind ? I do not know what associations the word "knee" may have in the mind of the reader, but there is no doubt at all as to what its associations were for Shakespeare. Turn back to 3 *Henry VI* and we find "bend thy *knee*" in the scene before the Earl of Warwick speaks of the cedar, 3 *H. VI*, 5.1.22

Whose arms gave shelter to the princely *eagle*.<sup>1</sup> 5.2.12

In *Richard II* the Duke of York says of the king, *R. II*, 3.3.69

•Yet looks he like a king : behold his eye,  
As bright as is the *eagle's* lightens forth  
Controlling majesty :—alack, alack, for woe,  
That any harm should stain so fair a show !

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<sup>1</sup> The cedar and the oak are kings of evergreen and deciduous trees respectively as the eagle is king of birds.



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The king then remarks :

We are amazed ; and thus long have we stood  
To watch the fearful bending of thy *knee*.

Shakespeare pictures the portly Falstaff attempting to bend to see his knee—and the eagle which has been associated with bent knees on earlier occasions comes to his mind because the eagle is the symbol of pride and majesty, and these qualities are inseparably connected with the homage which they exact—represented by “bending the knee.”

•Pride is the master idea controlling or giving coherence to the image cluster of which “eagle” and “knee” are members. Shakespeare’s thought constantly moves in contrasts. His eagle references form an excellent illustration of this for as we shall see later there is a violent contrast in nearly all of them. In the passage with which we are concerned “bombast,” belonging to the Pride category is countered by the conception of Falstaff bending to see his knee. The eagle is such an integral part of the Pride group of images that it forces a way into the context.

A few lines later we have this dialogue :

1 H. IV, 2.4.379

*Prince*. He that rides at high speed and with his pistol kills a  
*sparrow* flying.

*Falstaff*. You have hit it.

*Prince*. So did he never the *sparrow*.

*Falstaff*. Well, what rascal hath good mettle in him ; he will not  
run.

*Prince*. Why, what a rascal art thou then, to praise him so for  
running !

*Falstaff*. O’ horseback, ye *cuckoo*.

Why is Prince Henry called a cuckoo rather than execrated with any of the other opprobrious epithets with which Shakespeare was so free ? Here there is no reference to cuckolding—a theme which elsewhere introduces the cuckoo. The sequence of thought is as follows : Shakespeare as we have seen has just referred to the eagle—a Pride bird. The dignified and royal eagle is associated by contrast with the mean, plebeian sparrow.

*Mac*. 1.2.35

As *sparrows eagles*, or the hare the lion,

he wrote in *Macbeth*. So the sparrow is mentioned. But he knew  
that,

*Luc*. 848

hateful *cuckoos* hatch in *sparrows’* nests,

and that,

*K.L.* 1.4.235

The hedge-*sparrow* fed the *cuckoo* so long,  
That it had it head bit off by it young.

Later, in the very play with which we are concerned, he wrote,

And being fed by us you used us so  
As that ungentle gull, the *cuckoo's* bird,  
Useth the *sparrow*.

1 H. IV, 5.1.59

Thus the reference to the cuckoo's fosterer inspired the mention of the fosterer itself. There is a continuity of association between Falstaff's knee, the eagle, the sparrow and the cuckoo. Therefore it is because Falstaff's waist was once like an eagle's talon in girth that he calls Prince Henry a cuckoo! A petty instance of association thinking—but if Shakespeare could do this in a green tree, what could he not do in a dry? The "fluidity" of Shakespeare's thought has often been commented on and we shall discuss it further in a later chapter. Now we see just how it worked. One group of objects—in this case birds—tended to call up other members of the group or other earlier associates. Shakespeare's mind, it will be observed, often took the line of least resistance—and with great effect.

Shall we follow the eagle-knee linkage a little further? In *Timon of Athens* we find another example and with it a rather odd expression—"a wide sea of wax." What connexion can there possibly be between the eagle and wax? The poet says,

• my free drift  
Halts not particularly, but moves itself  
In a wide *sea of wax* : no levell'd malice  
Infects one comma in the course I hold ;  
But flies an *eagle* flight, bold, and forth on,  
Leaving no tract behind.

*Timon*, 1.1.45

The contrast follows :

All sorts of hearts ; yea from the glass-faced flatterer  
To Apemantus, that few things loves better  
Than to abhor himself : even he drops down  
The *knee* before him, and returns in peace  
Most rich in Timon's nod.

1.1.58

Why "the sea of wax"? Because in the background of the poet's thought is Icarus who attached wings to his back with wax and for whom pride came before a fall. He also comes under the master idea Pride and is naturally linked with the image cluster in which the eagle appears. An earlier instance of implicit or latent Icarus imagery is in 3 *Henry VI* :

And of their feather many moe *proud birds*,  
Have wrought the easy-melting king like *wax*.

3 H. VI, 2.1.170

### *Shakespeare's Imagination*

- Further proof that Icarus is in the background here is furnished by his appearance with Dædalus later in the play<sup>1</sup>—another instance comparable with that of the cuckoo fostered by the hedge-sparrow in 1 *Henry IV* of an idea implicit early in a play becoming explicit later. Moreover it should be noted that pride is mentioned in the two explicit Icarus passages in 1 *Henry VI*, and that we have “sea of blood” in one of them and “sea” in the relevant context of 3 *Henry VI*. Shakespeare’s original recollection of Icarus is of the man flying over the sea—but in the course of the dance in Icarus’ honour within the halls of his imagination “sea” slips away from her partner and foots it, first with “blood” and then with “wax.” “Wax,” however, eventually dodges out of the building to a neighbouring dance-hall and joins the festivities in honour of another mythological hero, deserting the precincts of the Winged Man for those of the Winged Horse! In plain language, when Imogen opens the letter from Posthumus she says, “Good wax,” and after unsealing it, “O for a horse with wings.” Pegasus has displaced Icarus, but the use of “smothering” shortly afterwards is additional evidence that there lingered still some recollection of the ambitious youth drowning in the sea. Thus although Icarus and “wax” never occur together in Shakespeare’s plays they are associated latently in an image cluster.

3 H. VI, 5.6.21

1 H. VI, 4.6.55  
4.7.16

3 H. VI, 5.6.24

Cym. 3.2.50

The tendency of images to reappear with others with which they were previously associated makes it possible not only to detect ideas, such as those mentioned, which did not come to full expression but also, in some instances, to determine the meaning of certain obscure words and expressions. For example, Hamlet makes a remark which has been the occasion of a good deal of inconclusive speculation :

Ham. 2.2.396

I am but mad north-north-west ; when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Commentators often assume that we should read “hernshaw,” the old name for the heron, in place of “handsaw” in spite of the fact that the textual evidence for “handsaw” is very strong and they cite the saying, “He does not know a hawk from a hernshaw.”<sup>2</sup> The associated imagery, however, as we shall see, shows that Shakespeare wrote “handsaw.”

If we turn again to the scene in which Falstaff boasts of his waist once being as slender as an eagle’s talon we find the only

<sup>1</sup> Wax is not mentioned in this context, but we have the limed bird “with trembling wings.”

<sup>2</sup> J. Ray, *Proverbs* (1768), p. 196.

other occasion in Shakespeare's works when he used the word "handsaw":

I am a rogue, if I were not at *half-sword* with a dozen of them two hours together. I have 'scaped by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose; my buckler cut through and through; *my sword hacked like a handsaw*—ecce signum! I never dealt better since I was a man: all would not do. A plague of all cowards!

<sup>1</sup> *H. IV*, 2.4.182

A little earlier he had blustered,

A king's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a *dagger of lath*, and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of *wild-geese*, I'll never wear hair on my face more.

2.4.150

He brags,

I would *give a thousand pounds* I could run as fast as thou canst;

2.4.162

and goes on,

What's the matter! there be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pound this day morning.

*Prince*. Where is it, Jack, where is it?

*Falstaff*. Where is it! taken from us it is: a *hundred* upon poor four of us.

*Prince*. What, a *hundred*, man?

Then follows the half-sword handsaw reference.

In the *Hamlet* "handsaw" context we also find the goose. Rosencrantz says,

many wearing *rapiers* are afraid of *goose-quills*.

*Ham*. 2.2.359

Moreover Hamlet remarks that while his father lived there were those who would

*give* twenty, forty, fifty, an *hundred ducats* apiece for his picture in little.

2.2.382

In Shakespeare's mind, while writing 1 *Henry IV*, was the idea of a "dagger of lath"—a ridiculous and ineffective weapon.<sup>1</sup> His thought then moved on to the idea of a "sword hacked like a handsaw." Geese are associated with these ideas. When later he wrote *Hamlet* previously established associations intruded them-

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<sup>1</sup> The "dagger of lath" was brandished by Vice while chasing the devil in the Morality plays as described in the Clown's song in *Twelfth Night*. *Tw. N.* 4.2.136 Its connexion with madness here no doubt contributes to Hamlet's association of handsaw and madness.

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selves. A transaction in which a hundred coins are concerned reappears and the conception of another ridiculous and ineffective weapon—a goose-quill. Thus Rosencrantz would never have mentioned goose-quills if Falstaff had not threatened to drive Prince Henry's subjects like geese! We shall see, when we come to consider the groups of images connected with the goose, that they are represented in and link together the 1 *Henry IV* and the *Hamlet* passages, but I need cite no further similarities here to show that it was Rosencrantz's weapon reference which, reviving the memory of Falstaff's hacked sword, brought the word "hand-saw" to Hamlet's lips. It is likely enough that one so prone to equivocation as Shakespeare may have had in mind the pun "handsaw-hernshaw," but it is certain that he wrote down plain "handsaw."

One further instance of the influence of previously formed associations on subsequent work will suffice. It is well known that Elizabethan beauties had hair like wire; many a sonneteer said so,<sup>1</sup> though to give Shakespeare his due he seems a little diffident about the appropriateness of the simile:

*Sonn.* 130.4

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

However, hair and wires, even though reluctantly associated, were not lightly parted. King Philip says:

*K. J.* 3.4.61

• Bind up those tresses. O what love I note  
In the fair multitude of those her *hairs*!  
Where but by chance a silver drop has fallen,  
Even to that drop ten thousand *wiry* friends  
Do glue themselves in sociable grief.

When Cleopatra is informed that Antony has married Octavia she hauls the messenger up and down screaming,

*A. & C.* 2.5.65

Thou shalt be whipped with *wire*, and stew'd in brine,  
but immediately before that she cried,

I'll spurn thine eyes  
Like balls before me; I'll *unhair* thy head.

In his source, North's *Plutarch*, Shakespeare found it recorded that Seleucus, one of Cleopatra's treasurers, betrayed her deceitfulness in not giving Cæsar an accurate account of her estate and that "she was in such a rage with him that she flew upon him and took him by the hair of his head, and boxed him well-favouredly." This incident inspired the threat to scalp the messenger, the

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<sup>1</sup> Sir S. Lee, *A Life of Shakespeare* (14th edn. 1931), pp. 189-90.

mention of hair aroused the thought of wire—hence the precise character of the savage reprisals on the innocent fellow. He is scourged with wire, not simply as an expression of the Queen of Egypt's fury, but because of the queer conceits of Tudor sonneteers and the antecedent associations in Shakespeare's mind.

• It is evident that Shakespeare's word-associations were very frequently—and often rigidly—determined by associations established earlier and recorded in previous plays and poems ; so much so that it is often possible to predict, in the case of many images or words, what other images or words are likely to be found in any particular context. Five important processes may be detected. Firstly, if the mood or atmosphere of a passage is similar to an earlier context some of its images will probably appear ; secondly, a Master Image such as Pride or Darkness tends to be accompanied by a selection of the images belonging to the relevant image cluster ; thirdly, a member of a natural group, such as animals or colours or of a group connected by some dominating conception such as that of primacy commonly recalls another member of the group ; fourthly, an image already having occurred with, or close to, another image tends to be accompanied by it, or a very similar image, on a subsequent occasion ; fifthly, an image frequently calls forth its opposite.



*Pinch's Partners*

became increasingly connected with murder by way of sleep and the sleep of death. In *King Lear* "sleep" and "bed" are in the two "hum" contexts. The image reaches its zenith of significance in *Macbeth* where it occurs in the first context with "drowsy," and the thought of murder represented by "A deed of dreadful note," in the second with "sleep" and "bloody business" and finally with "slaughter'd" and "murder'd." Although in *Timon of Athens* "hum" is mentioned in two contexts, the "death" image is rather distant in the first and absent in the second, but the thought of illness is latent, as is shown by the references to "health," "physicians" and "take the cure." In *Coriolanus*, *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest* respectively it is associated in turn with "knell," "dead," and "sleep." Shakespeare uses the word in twenty contexts and in twelve of these there is death or sleep imagery.

*K.L.* 1.2.58  
3.4.48  
*Mac.* 3.2.42  
3.6.42  
4.3.203  
*Timon*, 2.2.204  
3.3.1  
3.3.9  
*Cor.* 5.4.22  
*Cym.* 3.5.103  
*Temp.* 3.2.147

The linkage is more striking than these facts show and it is worth while to examine the contexts more closely. In *Henry V* we read :

The sad-eyed justice, with his surly *hum*,  
Delivering o'er to *executors* pale  
The lazy *yawning* drone,

*H. V.* 1.2.202

and in *Macbeth* :

\*The shard-borne beetle with his *drowsy hums*  
Hath rung night's *yawning* peal.

*Mac.* 3.2.42

In both passages the imagery is concerned with both sleep and death. Even when "hum" is merely used as an interjection it is closely associated with death. Thus when Gloucester reads,

*Hum*—conspiracy! 'Sleep till I waked him—you  
should enjoy half his revenue,'

*K.L.* 1.2.58

he knows that murder is contemplated. Still more striking is the association in *Othello* :

*Desdemona.* If you say so, I hope you will not *kill* me.  
*Othello.* *Hum!*

*Oth.* 5.2.36

and it is quite definite in *Cymbeline* :

*Cloten.* *Hum!*  
*Pisano.* I'll write to my lord she's *dead*.

*Cym.* 3.5.103

These instances illustrate the principle already enunciated that once an image becomes included in a cluster it tends to recur.



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"Hum" appears first connected with subordinate death images and it is comparatively late in Shakespeare's life as an author that the association reaches its most concentrated expression.

Let us now analyse a passage to show how its imagery may be grouped according to the dominant Categories of Life and Death, and into other categories related to these.

Mac. 2.4.5

•Thou *seest*, the *heavens*, as troubled with man's act,  
Threaten his *bloody* stage : by the clock 'tis *day*,  
And yet *dark night* strangles the travelling *lamp* :  
Is't *night's* predominance, or the *day's* shame,  
That *darkness* does the face of earth *entomb*,  
When *living light* should *kiss* it ?

The images may be tabulated thus :

LIFE		DEATH	
	living		bloody entomb
Love	Light	Hate	Darkness
kiss	seest heavens day lamp day's light	strangles	dark night's darkness

•These categories are not to be considered only as a device for classifying Shakespeare's images ; they represent the work of an organising principle below the fully conscious level to which may be attributed the structure of image clusters. We have already noticed how these can interpenetrate and exchange elements so that the reader will hardly require the warning that associative principles, such as association by contrast or consonance, considerably complicate matters. Contrast associations are such that an image may have partners in opposing camps. A good example of this double signification with cross-referencing of images is supplied by certain of the categories connected with love. Shakespeare's symbolism nearly always is natural and traditional so that it is not surprising to find love connected with light ; consequently the lark, " the herald of the morn," is a love-bird occurring in amorous contexts. Darkness, as many a commentator has pointed out, is constantly and naturally associated with tragedy. But love in Shakespeare's mind was also linked with darkness, for it seemed to

R. & J. 3.5.6.

him natural that love-making should take place in darkness. Thus, in the brothel scene in *Pericles*, Lysimachus says,

If she'd do the deed of darkness, thou would'st say. Per. 6.4.32

Other instances are,

•“ In night ” quoth she, “ desire sees best of all.” V. & A. 720

•Lovers can see to do their amorous rites  
By their own beauties ; R. & J. 3.2.8

Blind is his love and best befits the dark. 2.1.32

. . . served the lust of my mistress' heart, and did the act  
of darkness with her. K.L. 3.4.89

•Thus darkness is a middle term linking life and death ; or putting it somewhat differently, love has groups of partner-images in both camps ; with Life, by virtue of associations with light, with Death because love-making takes place at night. It is by his masterly use of these associations, juxtaposed and contrasted, that Shakespeare builds up with overwhelming effectiveness the sense of tragedy in his plays, for tragedy always involves the contrast of what might have been with what is and every other poignant contrast known to man's heart.

Notice how death keeps company with love in these instances :

*Isabella.* Darest thou die ? M. for M. 3.1.77  
The sense of *death* is most in apprehension ;  
And the poor *beetle* that we tread upon,  
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great  
As when a giant dies.

*Claudio.* Why give me you this shame ?  
Think you I can a resolution fetch  
From flowery tenderness ? If I must die,  
I will encounter *darkness* as a *bride*,  
And *hug* it in mine arms.

I will be A. & C. 4.14.99  
A *bridegroom* in my *death*, and run into't  
As to a *lover's* bed.

The appearance of the beetle in the quotation above is appropriate as it is a death and darkness insect, and as we have seen that “ pinch,” by reason of being linked with such images as “ vault,” is also a member of the death and darkness series of images we have the answer to the question which we asked at the beginning of this

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chapter—Why were beetles and pinching connected in Shakespeare's mind? When Falstaff says "the pox pinches" a few moments after "fillip me with a three-man beetle" it is because latent death imagery connected an insect with pinching.<sup>1</sup>

We have noted that the kite and crow are death-birds, connected respectively with disease and darkness. The owl, too, is associated with death and darkness. In *Titus Andronicus* and *Troilus and Cressida* we have contrasts between death-darkness birds and love-light birds, lark and raven, and lark and crow. There is only one bird which is traditionally associated with darkness and love—and therefore constitutes the perfect symbol of romantic tragedy—the nightingale. In *Romeo and Juliet* it sings with poignant power in opposition to the lark—the love-bird of darkness against the love-bird of light. In that scene beginning,

*Titus*, 2.3.149  
3.1.158  
*T. & C.* 4.2.9

*R. & J.* 3.5.1

• Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:  
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,  
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear,

we have the nodal point of all the play's imagery. Indeed, the nightingale is the symbol *par excellence* of the whole play, epitomising the conflict of the powers of Light and Darkness. These contribute the dominant images throughout, appearing in frequent references to explosions and firearms as well as to the heavenly bodies. Here in the play in which Shakespeare's thought is concentrated on the eternal conflict between good and evil, love and hate, as represented in terms of light and darkness, we have the contrasts between sun and moon, music and discord, beloved bird and hated amphibian, love-bird of dawn and love-bird of darkness. The distinctive poignancy of the tragedy is, however, not the plain conflict between good and evil but Juliet's love torn between two opposing loyalties—lover and family. She belongs, like the nightingale, to two worlds; and while she lies unconscious in the

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<sup>1</sup> Another set of associations connects "pinch" with fairies. It is prominent in *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Tempest*. These associations are due to traditional ideas about fairies and elves. The fairy called Pinch of the play *Robin Good-fellow; his mad pranks and merry jests* says that he pinches servants until "their bodies are as many colours as a mackerel's back," and Robin sings of fairies "that do filch, black, and pinch maids of the dairies." Although the first edition extant is dated 1628, it was written earlier and may well have influenced Shakespeare. Some of the creatures associated with "pinch," such as the owl, cat and mouse, appear in Robin Good-fellow's song and are also "death" creatures through their traditional associations and nocturnal activities. Amongst other images linked with "pinch" is the ape—on four occasions. Diseases, sharp instruments and parts of the body also occur and death is prominent in some of these passages.

*Ham.* 3.4.183  
*Temp.* 5.1.77

tomb she is poised between the two and belongs both to life and death. But that temporary *tour de force* of reconciling irreconcilables having been achieved the play moves on to the tragic consummation which the life-death conflict demands. Love-darkness and death-darkness both claimed Juliet, the singing night-bird of all time.

## CHAPTER

### VI

#### THE GESTATION OF CALIBAN

**W**E have seen that for Shakespeare, the idea of confinement was closely connected with the word "pinch" since first he used it in reference to the bear-baiting in 3 *Henry VI*. In replying to Prospero's threat—"thou shalt be pinch'd," Caliban says,

*Temp.* 1.2.342

here you sty me  
In this hard rock.

*Cym.* 3.3.38  
3.3.8

In *Cymbeline* Arviragus refers to "this our pinching cave" and we have such words as "cell," "prison," "cage," and "bondage." Belarius and the boys "house i' the rock." Both of these passages contain "beetle." There are still further similarities between these two contexts and the Pinch reference to which we have

*C. of E.* 5.1.237

already alluded in *The Comedy of Errors*. Prospero and Belarius are both banished lords, Pinch and Caliban are both called slaves. Pinch is a schoolmaster and Prospero has been acting as schoolmaster to Caliban and Miranda, Belarius in a similar capacity to Guiderius and Arviragus. In the two later plays there is the idea of escape from bondage as in the *Comedy of Errors*. Pinch is said to be a fortune-teller and conjurer, Prospero, who wears a "magic garment," is a seer and conjurer too.

*Temp.* 1.2.24

We have already noted in regard to the "beetle" imagery in *Hamlet* and *King Lear* that when writing of a situation which recalled an earlier situation of a similar or closely related kind the group of images already used was wont to be resuscitated. The relationship between Belarius and Prospero suggests that the conjunction of imagery in one play is sometimes a step towards the evolution of characters and situations in later plays. • Thus a cluster of images or group of ideas may live a concealed life of its own in a poet's mind and reappear in an elaborated form. Imagery may generate further imagery. What began its manifest life as a group of images may evolve into a character or a plot, with the aid, of course, of manifold contributory mental activities. It seems that an image may, as it were, call the tune which sets its companions dancing in strange new figures.

*The Gestation of Caliban*

An infrequently used image sometimes is the most striking clue indicating an affinity between conceptions in two or more plays. We shall later observe how turkey-peacock imagery provides such a clue. Here let us consider the imagery connected with Chanticleer and his wife Dame Partlet.

Chanticleer, who is a character from the ancient Beast Epic, is mentioned in *As You Like It* and *The Tempest*. In the one play *A.Y.L.I.* 2.7.30 Duke Senior has exiled himself from the "envious court" and in *Temp.* 1.2.385 the other Prospero has been exiled by those who envied him. Now compare the two scenes in which the bird occurs, and this is what we find :

- Go to my cave *A.Y.L.I.* 2.7.197  
says Duke Senior ;  
Deservedly confined into this rock, *Temp.* 1.2.361  
says Prospero. Jaques speaks of,  
the foul body of th' infected world, *A.Y.L.I.* 2.7.60  
and Prospero—  
fill all thy bones with aches. *Temp.* 1.2.370  
Jaques says,  
As I do live by food, *A.Y.L.I.* 2.7.14  
and Caliban,  
I must eat my dinner. *Temp.* 1.2.330  
Duke Senior says of Jaques,  
I think he be transform'd into a beast ; *A.Y.L.I.* 2.7.1  
For I can no where find him like a man.  
Prospero thus describes Caliban,  
A freckled whelp hag-born—not honour'd with *Temp.* 1.2.283  
A human shape.  
In *As You Like It* there is this comment on Jaques :  
Here was he merry, hearing of a song ; *A.Y.L.I.* 2.7.4  
and Duke Senior remarks,  
If he, compact of jars, grow musical, 2.7.5  
We shall have shortly discord in the spheres.  
In *The Tempest* Ferdinand says,  
•This music crept by me upon the waters, *Temp.* 1.2.391  
Allaying both their fury and my passion  
With its sweet air.

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Duke Senior accuses Jaques of being

*A.Y.L.I.* 2.7.65

a libertine,  
As sensual as the brutish sting itself ;

and Prospero calls the libertine Caliban

*Temp.* 1.2.357

A thing most brutish.

Jaques says,

*A.Y.L.I.* 2.7.40

After a voyage, he hath strange places cramm'd  
With observation,

and Prospero describes how, after their "sea-sorrow,"

*Temp.* 1.2.171

Here in this island we arrived.

The antecedents of elements of *The Tempest* can be traced a good deal further back than *As You Like It*. In *Titus Andronicus* Aaron says :

*Titus*, 4.2.172

Now to the Goths, as swift as swallow flies,  
There to dispose this treasure in mine arms,  
And secretly to greet the empress' friends.  
Come on, you *thick-lipp'd slave*, I'll bear you hence ;  
For *it is you that puts us to our shifts* :  
I'll make you *feed on berries and on roots*,  
And feed on curds and whey, and suck the goat,  
And *cabin in a cave*.

Here, quite early in the poet's career, is a rough sketch of the incipient Caliban, Prospero's slave who lives in a cave, and collects berries and pig-nuts. It is not surprising that the model on which he has been fashioned does not appear in any of the works from which Shakespeare drew inspiration for his other characters. Caliban (alone amongst them some have claimed) is the creation entirely of his own imagination and it is possible to follow the process of his gestation wombed in the poet's thought and works.

1 *H. IV*, 3.3.60

Chanticleer's partner is also mentioned twice by Shakespeare.

*W.T.* 2.3.75

The "Dame Partlet" reference in *The Winter's Tale* forms a link between the Chanticleer associations of *As You Like It* and *The Tempest*. "A mankind witch" adumbrates "the foul witch Sycorax," Leontes would commit the babe to the fire "together with the dam," Prospero speaks of Caliban's "wicked dam." Antagonus says,

*Temp.* 1.2.258

*W.T.* 2.3.94

*Temp.* 1.2.320

*W.T.* 2.3.185

Come on, poor babe :  
Some *powerful spirit* instruct the kites and ravens  
To be thy nurses ! *Wolves and bears*, they say,  
Casting their savageness aside, have done  
Like offices of pity. Sir, be prosperous.

Prospero says of Caliban,

thy groans  
Did make *wolves* howl and penetrate the breasts  
Of ever-angry *bears*,

Temp. 1.2.288

and the play is full of spirits. We have, indeed, an example of Shakespeare's contrast-thinking when, a few lines later, Ariel says,

I will be correspondent to command  
And do my *spiriting gently*.

1.2.297

The names Prospero and Stephano were used in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* (1595), and there was a well-known riding master called Prospero in London during Shakespeare's time; but is it out of the question that the association between "powerful spirit" and "prosperous" in the quotation above had some influence in determining Shakespeare's choice of this name?

It has been pointed out by various critics that Prospero and Caliban have acquired some of their characteristics and the nature of their relationship from Ulysses and Thersites. Thersites actually gives us a pre-view of Caliban when he speaks of,

a very land-fish, languageless, a monster;

T. & C. 3.3.264

for Caliban is called "a strange fish," "no fish but an islander" and "a monster." He acknowledges what Prospero has done for him, saying,

Temp. 2.1.112  
2.2.31  
2.2.37  
1.2.363

You taught me language.

Thus to the composition of Caliban went part of the general nature of Thersites as well as some of the imagery used by him. It is obvious, of course, that he also inherited something of Timon's environment and characteristics.

•It has been commented on frequently that germs of later work appear in Shakespeare's earlier plays. As Professor Wilson Knight puts it, "Metaphors and fancies of one period become expanded to plots, the very stuff of intellectual and poetic vision in another."<sup>1</sup> Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch wrote, "There was never a great author who repeated himself at once so lavishly and economically, still husbanding his favourite themes while ever attempting new variations upon them."<sup>2</sup> It is a truism that the plots as well as incidents and characters in later plays are adumbrated in the earlier; but the psychological procedure deserves detailed scrutiny

<sup>1</sup> *The Shakespearean Tempest* (1932), p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> *Shakespeare's Workmanship* (1927), p. 6.



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and the extent to which previous constellations of images contributed to settings, incidents and characterisations in later plays, as well as to their poetry, would provide a profitable subject for further study. The occurrence of particular images in association in a play certainly tended to generate situations and characterisations in plays written afterwards.

It is apparent, as has been suggested earlier, that when Shakespeare was writing a play he sometimes deliberately recalled the mood of a previous play or scene, or perhaps found himself bathed in the atmosphere of prior imaginings, and that this emotional state aroused the earlier accompanying imagery—but by no means always to full consciousness—making the images available for further sorting, selection, association and utilisation. A psychologist has stated: “A wealth of psycho-analytic experience—as well as innumerable experiments with word-association tests where mediate associations occur—has shown that free associations may proceed without the awareness of the subject. In fact, where any consciously received impression awakens a reaction from the unconscious, it seems that this must be the mechanism of activation. It has been demonstrated again and again that these extra-conscious associations can take place at extreme speed.”<sup>1</sup>

As an actor in his own plays Shakespeare would be word-perfect in certain parts and he could, no doubt, recall a great deal that he had written. We do not know, however, precisely how much older material was brought into use again, consciously recognised as such. The problem is complicated by the fact that, as was remarked earlier, we may remember without realising that we have remembered. It is a common experience for most of us to find that in our own writing we commonly unwittingly repeat a word the same as or closely similar to a word which we have used a few lines before. Strangely enough, I noticed after I had written the preceding sentence that it exemplifies this psychological mechanism. Evidently even as I was writing the impulse towards the commission of this peccadillo was stronger than my conscious aversion in regard to it. Another trivial illustration from my own experience of the influence of associations unrealised at the time may be cited here. In describing a book I said to my wife, “The writer reached a high peak of achievement,” and she drew my attention to the fact that as the book was on mountaineering my metaphor had, without my realising it, been

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<sup>1</sup> J. T. MacCurdy, *The Psychology of Emotion* (1925), p. 430.

*The Gestation of Caliban*

called forth by the subject matter. Any reader attentive to his own or other persons' imagery will, I believe, have no difficulty in noting similar instances. We use words when our attention is concentrated elsewhere without a realisation of their antecedents. So, although Shakespeare may well have known that he was using material taken from *As You Like It* in *The Tempest*, it is unlikely that he realised in what measure he was doing so. So adroitly did his subliminal coadjutor work, altering a corbel or string course from the earlier building or choosing from its walls a gargoyle of appropriate design that it was apparent neither to the builder as he worked nor to later onlookers how much of the new building was the old re-fashioned.

To what extent was the work done as a sleep-walker goes downstairs or as a mathematician—in an instance known to me—solved a problem and wrote it down in his sleep? Later we shall consider further aspects of this question, but the facts already set forth show that the activities which went on below the level of full awareness can be traced and the processes involved analysed to some extent. As we have seen, images converge with others with which they have been associated in the historical sequence of the plays, forming image clusters which constantly lose and gain units, living, in some sense, a life of their own.

It is possible to find in Shakespeare's pages imagery representing every stage between what we can presume to be conscious association to what we can as probably presume to be achieved unwittingly. When the witches in *Macbeth* sing,

Fair is foul, and foul is fair,

*Mac.* 1.1.11

and later Macbeth himself says,

So foul and fair a day I have not seen,

1.3.38

we can be reasonably sure that this echo, like many other echoes in the play, is no accident. Again, when we read in *Macbeth* :

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more,

5.5.24

we can hardly doubt that Shakespeare in writing this remembered that he had written something similar only a few weeks or months earlier :

When we are born, we cry that we are come  
To this great stage of fools.

*K.L.* 4.6.186

But in the following passage it is not quite so probable that the

### *Shakespeare's Imagination*

poet realised that he inserted the word "broken" because of its association with "broken meats":

T. & C. 4.4.48

- He fumbles up into a loose adieu,  
And scants us with a single famish'd kiss,  
Distasted with the salt of broken tears.

It is definitely improbable that Shakespeare intentionally juggled with the drone and beetle images or was fully aware of what he was doing when he set Chanticleer in the midst of his incipient Caliban conceptions, and then, years later, with Caliban himself.

• Much of the dramatist's use of older material reminds us of the manner in which during our dreams we re-assort waking images and impressions. The objects and scenes which gleam upon the screen of our dreaming mind are those of waking life; but having achieved new associations they tell a story stranger, and even, in its way, more vivid than the panorama of normal sense impressions. Forgotten memories reappear and take their place, often in grotesque costume, amongst the other actors. But in our dreams no editorial scissors eliminate the inconsequential and join series to series in logical connexion in a fashion at all resembling that in which the dæmon in Shakespeare's mind nimbly rejected inartistic associations and articulated the appropriate material with consummate artistry.

## CHAPTER

### VII

#### THE UNSAVOURY GOOSE

**F**OR most people, I suppose, the associations of the word "goose" are pleasant. It arouses visions of a plump, appetising bird on the dining-table. Not so for Shakespeare. His goose is frequently connected with disease and lechery. He could hardly mention it without dragging in some unsavoury reference. Consider the execratory speech by Marcius in *Coriolanus*:

All the *contagion* of the south light on you,  
You shames of Rome! You herd of—*Boils* and *plagues* Cor. 1.4.30  
Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorr'd  
Further than seen and one *infect* another  
Against the wind a mile! You souls of *geese*,  
That bear the shapes of men, how have you run  
From slaves that apes would beat! Pluto and hell!  
All hurt behind; backs red, and faces pale  
With flight and *agued* fear! Mend and charge home,  
Or, by the fires of heaven, I'll leave the foe  
And make my wars on you: look to't: come on;  
If you'll stand fast we'll beat them to their wives,  
As they us to our trenches followed.

Incidentally it should be noted how "agued" and "geese," having been associated in *Coriolanus*, "ague" and "goose" are gratuitously dragged in together in a passage in *The Tempest*.

*Stephano*. Here, kiss the book. Though thou canst swim like *Temp.* 2.2.134  
a duck, thou art made like a *goose*.

*Trinculo*. O Stephano, hast any more of this?

*Stephano*. The whole butt, man; my cellar is in a rock by the  
sea-side, where my wine is hid. How now, moon-  
calf! how does thine *ague*?

The earlier context in *Coriolanus* shows Marcius rating the Roman citizens for their cowardice—calling them "geese" and "curs," and using such phrases as,

rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,  
Make yourselves scabs? Cor. 1.1.168

and,

your affections are 1.1.181  
A sick man's appetite.

In this passage we have "rogues," "ice," "hailstone," and "fire";

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similar images occur in many goose contexts—and amorous passages. In *King Lear* Kent refers to “rogues,” “snow,” and “fire,” concluding with,

K.L. 2.2.86           Knowing nought, like *dogs*, but following.  
                          A *plague* upon your *epileptic* visage!  
                          Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?  
                          *Goose*, if I had you on Sarum plain,  
                          I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

A reference to madness follows.

In dialogue during which “plague” is reiterated in Falstaff’s favourite execration we have the threat to Prince Henry that he will

1 H. IV, 2.4.152           drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of *wild-geese*.

A rather odd expression! How can one drive a flock of wild geese? In his second reference to “wild geese” there is the phrase,

2 H. IV, 5.1.85           men take diseases, one of another,  
                          reminding us of *Coriolanus*. We also read here,  
                          5.1.93           ache in his shoulders.

*Troilus and Cressida* concludes with as unpleasant imagery as was ever left in the minds of a departing audience:

T. & C. 5.10.47   Good traders in the flesh, set this in your painted cloths.  
                          As many as be here of Pandar’s hall,  
                          Your eyes, half-out, weep out at Pandar’s fall:  
                          Or, if you cannot weep, yet give some groans,  
                          Though not for me, yet for your *aching* bones.  
                          Brethren and sisters of the hold-door trade,  
                          Some two months hence my will shall here be made:  
                          It should be now, but that my fear is this,  
                          Some *galled goose* of Winchester would hiss:  
                          Till then I’ll sweat and seek about for eases,  
                          And at that time bequeathe you my *diseases*.<sup>1</sup>

1 H. VI, 1.3.53   We find the Bishop of Winchester called “Winchester goose” in a passage in which the Duke of Gloucester cries,

1.3.35           Thou that givest whores indulgences to sin.

Mac. 2.3.17       In the Porter’s soliloquy in *Macbeth* we discover “roast your goose” with “cold for hell,” “hell-gate,” “everlasting bonfire” and later, “lechery.” Macduff and Lennox then enter and Macduff asks,

2.3.29           What three things does drink especially provoke?

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<sup>1</sup> Sir E. K. Chambers, in *William Shakespeare* (1930), Vol. I, p. 445, thinks this epilogue may not be Shakespearean, but the evidence of the cluster imagery is in favour of its authenticity.

The porter answers,

• Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and *urine*. *Lechery*, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes; it provokes the desire but takes away the performance.

Act IV Scene IV of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* also begins with a soliloquy. Launce enters with his dog and chatters in the loose, loquacious style characteristic of watchmen, servants, carriers, clowns and fools in Shakespeare's pages.<sup>1</sup> In the course of his vulgar remarks, which are very like association-thinking when the subliminal censor of the Freudians is not active—such as Joyce tried to represent in *Ulysses*—he says,

I have stood on the pillory for geese.

*Two Gent.* 4.4.35

He comments repeatedly on "curs" and "dogs" and twice refers to micturition. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Falstaff, soliloquising at the opening of Act V, Scene v, remarks,

You were also, Jupiter, a swan for the love of Leda. *M.W.* 5.5.7  
O omnipotent *Love*! how near the god drew to the complexion of a goose!

and he also refers to micturition.

Blindness frequently appears with "goose" or "geese"—in *Two Gent.* 4.4.4  
*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet*. In *King Lear* the Fool prattles : *L.L.L.* 1.1.83  
*R. & J.* 2.4.16  
*K.L.* 2.4.46

Winter's not gone yet, if the *wild-geese* fly that way.

Fathers that wear rags,  
Do make their children *blind* ;  
But fathers that bear bags  
Shall see their children kind.

Fortune, that arrant *whore*,  
Ne'er turns the key to the poor.  
But for all this, thou shalt have as many *dolours* for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

In his next speech a little later the Fool remarks :

We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's *K.L.* 2.4.68  
no labouring i' the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but *blind* men; and there's not a nose among twenty that can smell him that's *stinking*.

His references to wild geese and ants in winter are, of course, taken from proverbs. The honey-bee, it may be noted, occurs in the

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Gordon has pointed out that Shakespeare's clowns may be divided into two categories: those who play with words or are played with by them (*Shakespearian Comedy and Other Studies*, Oxford, 1944, p. 64).

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*K.L.* 2.2.103  
2.4.41  
*Troilus and Cressida* context. "Saucy" occurs in one *King Lear* passage, "saucily" in the other, and we have "sauce" with "goose" in *Romeo and Juliet* as well as "saucy" in *Love's Labour's Lost*. No doubt this is a reminiscence of the familiar proverb. *K.L.* 2.4.88  
The *Lear* Fool did not learn "i' the stocks," Launce had "sat in the stocks" and "stood on the pillory for geese" another had killed, and like the Fool he makes reference to foul smells. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Slender says,

*M.W.* 3.4.40                    my father stole two geese out of a pen.

In this passage we find "long-tail," in the first *Lear* "goose" passage we have "wagtail"—a term of opprobrium applied to obsequious persons and loose women, having the secondary sense "dog" rather than "bird"—and in the 2 *Henry IV* context Falstaff says "we . . . are wags too." • Incidentally the goose contexts illustrate vividly three of the poet's most pronounced aversions—if we are to judge by the internal evidence of his writings—disease, dogs and bad smells.

Where he speaks of "wags" Falstaff remarks,

1.2.198                    you do measure the heat of our livers with the bitterness of your galls :

*T. & C.* 5.10.55  
*Mac.* 5.3.15  
*K.L.* 2.2.18  
This links the passage with the "galled goose of Winchester" of *Troilus and Cressida* and also with the two occasions when Shakespeare used "lily-liver'd"—both goose contexts. "Gooseberry," "livers," "galls" and "wags" keep company together in 2 *Henry IV*; "gravy" and "pregnancy" are mentioned just before, and later, we read,

1.2.258                    gout galls the one and the pox pinches the other.

*Mac.* 5.3.23  
*Ham.* 2.2.337  
*Tw. N.* 3.2.53  
In *Macbeth* we have "the sear, the yellow leaf" and in the *Hamlet* "goose-quill" context "tickle o' the sere." In *Twelfth Night* "goose-pen" and "gall" go together. It is apparent that it was through the double meaning of "pen" that the goose was connected with writing and also with a place of confinement. When Shakespeare wrote of Slender's father stealing geese out of a pen he probably was quite unaware that the idea had originated from the thought of a goose-pen or quill. One set of associations led from "goose" to "pillory" and "stocks" with "pen" as the image related to both and linking them together; the other from "goose-pen" via "ink," "gall" and "liver" to disease imagery. The black and white imagery of one of the *Macbeth* contexts was almost certainly aroused by the thought of writing with a goose-quill pen on white paper. Gall is often connected with the dove

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as well as the goose in Shakespeare's works. The association originated in the ancient and still current belief that the development of the crop in pigeons renders gall unnecessary. Drayton, for instance, speaks of

The Dove without a gall.<sup>1</sup>

An interesting unwitting or unexpressed association is provided by the occasion when Juliet's old nurse indulges in reminiscence :

For I had then laid *wormwood* to my dug,  
Sitting in the sun under the *dove*-house wall.

R. & J. 1.3.26

Bitter "gall" is the unexpressed term which linked "wormwood" and "dove" in Shakespeare's mind. "Bitter-sweeting" in the goose context of the same play and in distinctly "broad" conversation about a "broad goose" illustrates the same tendency, as well as that proclivity to indulge in contrast-thinking which is so typical of Shakespeare.

2.4.85

It is because the thought of bitterness recalled its opposite that sweetness appears as one of the components of the group of images connected with the goose, and probably the references to singing and music are due to the musically-minded poet's association of sweetness with melody.

If the Tables of Imagery showing the Kite, Beetle and Goose groups of images are compared it will be seen how closely connected are the images of *Lear* and *Macbeth*. Two of the images which appear rather far removed from "goose" in *Lear* are much closer to it in *Macbeth*. "Lily-liver'd" moves from seventy-one lines away to two lines distant, "tailor" from twenty-seven lines away to the next line. Thus we see, incidentally, that even when an image appears in some contexts far apart from another we may be justified, none the less, in regarding it as belonging to the same cluster if other evidence is in support.<sup>2</sup> It would also seem that

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<sup>1</sup> *The Owle*, 903.

<sup>2</sup> Another proof that even when images are somewhat distant there may be a thought-connexion between them is provided by Shakespeare's camel references. In *Troilus and Cressida* Thersites calls Ajax "camel" and twenty-nine lines later the "eye of Helen's needle" is mentioned. The probability that Shakespeare recalled the New Testament (Mat. xix. 24 ; Mk. x. 25 ; Lk. xviii. 25) becomes a certainty when we note another New Testament reminiscence in the same context—"nine sparrows for a penny" (Mat. x. 29 ; Lk. xii. 6)—and find Richard II in an earlier play quoting :

T. & C. 2.1.58

2.1.77

"It is as hard to come as for a camel  
To thread the postern of a small needle's eye."

R. II. 5.5.16

Incidentally, the reference to "witch" in *Troilus and Cressida* links the passage with the *Hamlet* context in which "witching" is mentioned.

T. & C. 2.1.46  
Ham. 3.2.394



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When Shakespeare mentioned "tailor" in the context with "goose" in *Lear* that at the back of his mind was the thought of the tailor's "goose" or smoothing iron, but the expression of this sense of the word was delayed until he wrote *Macbeth*. Such hints as these suggest that in some instances in which the order of the plays is uncertain an *ad hoc* study of the imagery might facilitate the determination of the correct order.

A curious problem is raised by the linkage of the "man in the moon" with "goose" on the only two occasions when this fabulous person is mentioned—in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Temp.* "Moon-calf" also appears close to "goose" in *The Temp.* It should be noted, however, that "goose," "moon" and "season'd" occur close together in *The Merchant of Venice*. In both the former plays the man in the moon is the representative of the element of phantasy which is common to them, but for some time I could not conjecture how the two images came to be connected in Shakespeare's mind. Then I realised that the intermediate term or image "season" is affiliated to "goose" through "sauce" and to the moon as a changing heavenly body associated with the changing seasons. The *Merchant of Venice* lines illustrate clearly the movement of Shakespeare's thought whereby "goose" aroused lunar and food imagery :

*M. of V.* 5.1.104

The nightingale, if she should sing by day,  
When every *goose* is cackling, would be thought  
No better a musician than the wren.  
How many things by *season season'd* are  
To their right praise and true perfection !  
Peace, ho ! the *moon* sleeps with Endymion.

Such associations are natural enough, but the connexion between the goose and repulsive things requires explanation. Why should the goose be constantly associated with disease, micturition and prostitution? There is really no mystery about it. The association arose through Shakespeare's familiarity with the phrase "Winchester goose" as a euphemism for a person suffering from venereal disease. He used it, as we have seen, in his first play and the thoughts involved kept constantly recurring. The expression originated from the fact that the Southwark brothels were on land within the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Winchester—sufficient explanation of the Duke of Gloucester's taunt. The Winchestrian Goose is also mentioned by Ben Jonson in his *Execration against Vulcan* (1640). In the case of the goose the explicit reference which reveals the origin of the image cluster occurs, as we have remarked, at the beginning of the poet's career

as a dramatist; in many other instances of peculiar linkages it is only in later plays that associations hitherto latent come out into the open. It should be noted that the connexion between "goose" and "blindness" indicates that at the back of Shakespeare's mind was the realisation that syphilis causes blindness.

The Elizabethan term "Winchester goose" does not, of course, mark the bird's first erotic associations in literature. These are frequent in the classical writers of Greece and Rome. In ancient China, as the *I Li* or *Book of Ceremonial* shows, it was an important emblem at nuptial ceremonies and as a fertility symbol its history goes back to very early times.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, typical of Shakespeare to adopt traditional symbols which are derived from ancient, if not primæval, folk-lore.

As this discussion has shown, the goose linkage admirably illustrates the "spread" of Shakespeare's associations. Each aspect of the original phrase, or it may be, word-image, starts a chain of associations such as the pen, ink, gall, liver sequence. As further examples we may note how "pregnancy" and "abortive birth" occur in *2 Henry IV* and *Love's Labour's Lost* respectively. <sup>2 H. IV, 1.2.192</sup>  
After banter about geese Mercutio refers to the time with a bawdy <sup>L.L.L. 1.1.104</sup>  
play on the meaning of "prick," but in the *Macbeth* context <sup>Mac. 5.3.14</sup>  
the word is used innocently. In the *Romeo and Juliet* scene <sup>R. & J. 2.4.21</sup>  
"prick-song," "the pox" and "whore" are also mentioned by Mercutio.

Although, as we have noted, the connexion between geese and disease appears implicitly in Shakespeare's earliest play yet the intensity of the disease references in goose contexts increases in later works such as *Troilus and Cressida*, *Lear* and *Coriolanus*. In these, revulsion is extreme, and in *Troilus and Cressida* the reference to venereal disease is quite definite. These facts should be viewed in the light of Dr. Spurgeon's argument that Shakespeare's interest in the treatment of disease increased as he reached middle age. She shows that his references to plague are rather playful up to the year 1600, but that after that date it is always mentioned in a serious way.<sup>2</sup>

• Have we in this persistent group of images a revelation of the poet's own experiences? Is the subconscious here betraying secrets that the wakeful mind would fain hide? Is the goose image cluster due to personal emotional experiences? More

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<sup>1</sup> E. A. Armstrong, "The Symbolism of the Swan and the Goose," *Folklore* (1944), Vol. LV, pp. 54-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Shakespeare's Imagery*, pp. 129-36. Cf. also W. Clemen, *Shakespeares Bilder* (Bonn, 1936), pp. 261-71.

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precisely, have we reason to think that Shakespeare himself suffered from venereal disease ?

The reader himself will be in a better position to answer these questions later when we have considered various other issues raised by our analysis of image clusters, but in my opinion the goose associations do not justify an affirmative answer to this last question. However, they do suggest a marked, if not morbid, preoccupation with the seamy side of things and their witness supports the opinion of many scholars that especially in the "unhappy period" 1602-6, during which Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *King Lear* and *Timon of Athens*, his attitude towards sex was far from healthy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (2nd edn., 1909), p. 328.

TABLE IV.—THE GOOSE IMAGE CLUSTER

CONTEXT	GOOSE	DISEASE	MUSIC	BITTERNESS	SEASONING	RESTRAINT
1 H. VI 1.3.53	goose <sup>53</sup>					rope <sup>31</sup>
L.L.L. 1.1.97	geese <sup>97</sup>	pain <sup>71</sup> blind <sup>76</sup> blinded <sup>81</sup>	sing <sup>103</sup>		saucy <sup>85</sup>	
3.1. <sup>98</sup> -123 4.3.75	goose <sup>98</sup> etc. goose <sup>75</sup>			liver-vein <sup>74</sup>		bound, etc. <sup>176</sup>
Two Gent. 4.4.35	geese <sup>35</sup>	blind <sup>4</sup>				hanged <sup>5</sup> hang <sup>24</sup> stocks <sup>33</sup> pillory <sup>35</sup>
R. & J. 2.4.75-90	wild-geese <sup>75</sup> goose <sup>86, 90</sup>			bitter sweetings <sup>83</sup>	saucy <sup>53</sup> saucy <sup>84</sup>	ropery <sup>153</sup>
M.N.D. 3.2.20 5.1.235-38	wild-geese <sup>20</sup> goose <sup>215, 238</sup>					
M. of V. 5.1.105	goose <sup>105</sup>	blind <sup>112</sup> sick <sup>124</sup>	sing <sup>102 104</sup> music <sup>97</sup> musician <sup>106</sup>		season <sup>107</sup> season'd <sup>107</sup>	stockish <sup>81</sup>
1 H. IV 2.4.152 3.1.232	wild-geese <sup>152</sup> goose <sup>32</sup>	plague <sup>148</sup>	sing <sup>147</sup> sing <sup>216, 223</sup> music <sup>232</sup> musician <sup>235</sup>			stocks <sup>130</sup> unchanged <sup>144</sup> hang <sup>227</sup> penn'd <sup>209</sup>
2 H. IV 1.2.196 5.1.79	gooseberry <sup>196</sup> wild-geese <sup>79</sup>	diseases <sup>85</sup> ache <sup>93</sup>	singing <sup>213</sup>	livers <sup>198</sup> bitterness <sup>198</sup> galls <sup>199</sup>	gravy <sup>184</sup>	
M.W. 3.4.41 5.1.27 5.5.9	geese <sup>31</sup> geese <sup>27</sup> goose <sup>9</sup>	sickly <sup>61</sup>	tune <sup>21</sup>	gall'd <sup>5</sup>		pen <sup>41</sup>
A.Y.L.L. 2.7.86 3.4.48	wild-geese <sup>86</sup> goose <sup>18</sup>	infected <sup>60</sup> sores <sup>67</sup>		bitterness <sup>3, 5, 3</sup>		
T. & C. 5.10.55	goose <sup>55</sup>	aching <sup>51</sup> diseases <sup>57</sup>	sing <sup>42</sup>	galled <sup>55</sup>		
Ham. 2.2.359	goose-quill <sup>359</sup>		sing <sup>363</sup>			
Tw.N. 3.2.53	goose-pen <sup>53</sup>			gall <sup>52</sup> liver <sup>66</sup>		hang <sup>29</sup> -pen <sup>53</sup> wainropes <sup>64</sup>
K.L. 2.2.89 2.4.46	goose <sup>89</sup> wild-geese <sup>46</sup>	plague <sup>87</sup> epileptic <sup>87</sup> blind <sup>40</sup> dolours <sup>54</sup>		lily-liver'd <sup>18</sup>	saucy <sup>103</sup> saucily <sup>41</sup>	cords <sup>80</sup> stocks <sup>65</sup>
Mac. 2.3.17 5.3.12-13	goose <sup>17</sup> goose <sup>12</sup> geese <sup>13</sup>	sick <sup>19</sup>		lily-liver'd <sup>15</sup>		hanged <sup>5</sup> turning the key <sup>2</sup>
Cor. 1.1.176 1.4.34	geese <sup>176</sup> geese <sup>34</sup>	itch <sup>168</sup> sick <sup>182</sup> contagion <sup>30</sup> boils <sup>31</sup> plagues <sup>31</sup> infect <sup>33</sup> agued <sup>38</sup>				hang <sup>185</sup> shut <sup>47</sup>
Temp. 2.2.135	goose <sup>135</sup>	ague <sup>139</sup>				

## CHAPTER

### VIII

#### THE PAINTED JAY

**S**HAKESPEARE alludes to the gaudy colouring of the jay in *The Taming of the Shrew*. After the tailor has been sent off with Katherina's dress—of which she had said she “never saw a better fashion'd gown”—her husband gives her this barren consolation :

*T. of S.* 4.3.17

What is the *jay* more precious than the lark,  
Because his feathers are more beautiful?  
Or is the *adder* better than the eel,  
Because his *painted* skin contents the eye?

*Cym.* 3.4.51

In *Cymbeline* Imogen says of Iachimo,

Some *jay* of Italy  
Whose mother was her *painting*, hath betray'd him.

At that period “jay” was a term for a wanton woman. Thus Mistress Ford says she will teach Falstaff

*M.W.* 3.3.44

to know turtles from *jays*.

The bird had long been synonymous with various unpleasant qualities. In Petronius' *Satyricon* we have a phrase meaning “he plucked a bad (unlucky) jay.” Chaucer spoke of “the skornynge jay,”<sup>1</sup> and Drayton called it “Carion Jay” and “counterfetting Jay.”<sup>2</sup> Spenser referred to “painted Iayes.”<sup>3</sup>

In four out of five contexts in which Shakespeare mentions the bird there is conversation about clothing. In two there are references to a snake, in two there are allusions to drunkenness or strong drink, and in yet other two there are thoughts of deception. “Sow-skin” occurs in the *Winter's Tale* passage, “pig-nuts” in *The Tempest*; “out of fashion” in *Cymbeline*, “out of service” in *The Winter's Tale*.

*W.T.* 4.3.20  
*Temp.* 2.2.172  
*Cym.* 3.4.53  
*W.T.* 4.3.14

What we have already seen of the manner in which Shakespeare's images recur and cohere into groups makes it improbable that such associations as these—extravagant clothing, duplicity, drink, women, snakes and jay are merely fortuitous. Have we here the unwitting self-revelation of a man who had found a painted and

<sup>1</sup> *Parlement of Foules*, 346.

<sup>2</sup> *The Owle*, 663; *Polyolbion*, Song xiii, 80.

<sup>3</sup> *The Faerie Queene*, II, viii, 5.

*The Painted Jay*

extravagantly dressed woman “a snake in the grass”? Had she treated him as “a garment out of fashion”?

We noted the words “painted skin” and “whose mother was her painting” in these jay contexts. Paint, used in the sense of make-up, is mentioned with such distaste by Shakespeare and is so constantly brought into connexion with certain unpleasant ideas that it can hardly be doubted that it had an intense emotional significance for him. Brandes makes this comment: “If there is anything which Shakespeare hated with a hatred somewhat disproportionate to the triviality of the matter, a hatred which finds expression in every stage of his career, it is the use of rouge and false hair.”<sup>1</sup> It is not only that rouge is mentioned with disgust but that when the word “paint” is used in some other sense than that of make-up it often seems tainted with the sordid associations of women’s rouge.

Timon says,

whore still ; *Timon*, 4.3.146  
Paint till a horse may mire upon your face  
A pox of wrinkles.

Hamlet, brandishing the skull, cries,

Now get you to my lady’s chamber, and tell her, let her *Ham.* 5.1.212  
paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come.

Note how, in an earlier context in the same play, “painted” appears close to, but divorced from, the rougeing which brought the word into Shakespeare’s mind :

The harlot’s cheek, beautied with plastering art, 3.1.51  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word :

Paint appears with thoughts of disloyalty and foolishness :

Disloyal ? *M. Ado*, 3.2.112  
The word is too good to paint out her wickedness ;

And paint your face and use you like a fool. *T. of S.* 1.1.65

• Fools on both sides ! Helen must needs be fair, *T. & C.* 1.1.93  
When with your blood you daily paint her thus.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly “painting” often had other than artistic associations for Shakespeare.

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<sup>1</sup> *William Shakespeare* (1899), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Caroline Spurgeon has pointed out the similarity in imagery between *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*, which were written close together in time, and drawn the conclusion that the imagery reveals poignant disillusionment and perturbation of nature (*Shakespeare’s Imagery*, p. 320).

## Shakespeare's Imagination

It will be remembered that Shakespeare wrote in *Sonnet CXXVII*

Therefore my mistress' brows are raven black,  
Her eyes so suited and they mourners seem.

It is not at all surprising that those who believe the *Sonnets* provide a picture of the Dark Lady—or as Hesketh Pearson calls her, the “black mistress”<sup>1</sup>—who had the poet in her toils, find her image again in *Love's Labour's Lost* :

L.L.L. 4.3.258

• O, if in *black* my lady's brows be deck'd,  
It mourns that *painting* and usurping hair  
Should ravish doters with a false aspect :  
And therefore is she born to make *black* fair.  
Her favour turns the fashion of the days,  
For native blood is counted *painting* now ;  
And therefore red, that would avoid dispraise,  
Paints itself *black* to imitate her brow.

Painting is here so dominant an image as to make us wonder why it should be thus reiterated. Are we harking back in this passage to that “jay” who on another occasion brought the thought of snakes and “painted skin” to the poet's mind? Is she depicted, not only here and in the *Sonnets* but also, as various writers have argued, in the portraits of Rosaline and the greatest woman of them all, Cleopatra? The reference to “Ethiopes of their sweet complexion” a few lines later hints at the possibility of a connexion between this passage and the portrait of the Queen of Egypt. It was of her that Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch wrote : “I am not, as you know, over fond of those critics who read Mary Fitton or some other ‘dark lady’ into everything Shakespeare wrote : but I must make them the handsome admission that if Shakespeare did not take some actual woman for his Cleopatra, I am clean at a loss to imagine how he created this wonder.”<sup>2</sup>

4.3.268

When Pisanio says :

Cym. 3.4.35

No, 'tis slander,  
Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue  
*Outvenoms* all the *worms of Nile*, whose breath  
Rides on the posting winds and doth belie  
All corners of the world : kings, queens and states,  
Maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave  
This *viperous* slander enters.

we notice an echo of something that has been said before, for Cleopatra cried,

A. & C. 1.5.25

‘Where's my *serpent of old Nile*?’  
For so he calls me : now I feed myself  
With most delicious *poison*.

<sup>1</sup> *A Life of Shakespeare* (1942), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Studies in Literature*, 2nd series (1927), pp. 188–9.

Ten lines after Pisanio's allusion to "viperous slander" the "jay of Italy whose mother was her painting" is mentioned. We have already remarked on the association between the jay and snakes. Because of the manner of Cleopatra's death the snake is a frequent image in the play. Thus the Queen of Egypt is associated with the complex of ideas and images with which the jay is connected.

Here, then, is a pretty problem! Is Cleopatra a portrait of some woman whom Shakespeare knew or is she a composite creature built up of miscellaneous components brought together by association in the poet's imagination? Which are right—the critics who see in her the lineaments of a woman whose fascination for Shakespeare was irresistible or those who proclaim she no more trod this earth than did any of a dozen other of Shakespeare's characters?

•The answer to the question whether such linkages as we have been considering tend to substantiate the existence of the Dark Lady and reinforce the possibility that she served as model for Cleopatra is of some importance, not merely because it would be a piquant achievement to discover the characteristics of Shakespeare's mistress—there are Shakespearean problems of greater moment than this—but because it raises the issue of the extent to which image clusters in general disclose the existence of emotional tensions not openly manifested. Are they due to personal emotional upheavals or merely to a kind of mental viscosity which caused images to cohere in patterns? In this chapter I have been pursuing a rather different method from that of earlier chapters in order to show what may be said on behalf of the "personal" type of interpretation, but the line of exposition adopted sets forth an admittedly precarious argument for it involves passing from one group of associations to another while assuming that they can all legitimately be supposed to have a specially significant connexion with one another. Many Shakespearean students have used this technique, but its validity is more than doubtful. Thus from the jay and painted snake we passed to the painted brunette by virtue of paint being an image associated with all three. The associations are not as constant as in other groupings which we have studied and they are not nearly as persistent as some of them which patently have no overwhelming emotional experience as their foundation.

The problem can be profitably discussed only after we have considered the psychological processes involved in imagination in general and image clusters in particular, but the answer is obviously not necessarily an affirmative to one possibility and a negative to the other. •It may well be that while many image clusters are not



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relics of specific personal emotional upheavals neither are they simply collocations of images independent of emotion. They may owe their being to an emotional factor without originating in experience of great emotional stress or revealing repressed disagreeable experiences.

Let us pass on to consider the odd and apparently arbitrary collection of the island's products which Caliban offered to show Trinculo—crab-apples, pig-nuts, filberts, marmosets, scamels and a jay's nest. Why a jay's nest rather than the nest of a parrot or some other exotic bird more appropriately domiciled on such an isle? Why did not Caliban offer to reveal the nest of a species the flesh or eggs of which would be pleasant food for shipwrecked mariners? Any naturalistic explanation based on the fact that a jay's nest is usually well concealed and that the knowledge of its whereabouts reinforced Caliban's self-importance is founded upon misconceptions as to how Shakespeare's mind worked. As we have seen, the study of passages in which a somewhat arbitrary word or group of words occurs suggests that in such cases we should suspect some not fully conscious process rather than suppose that we are dealing with straightforward natural history. Consider Caliban's bounty. The precise meaning of "scamels" is unknown, though elsewhere I have hazarded the guess that the term may denote ducks of some sort.<sup>1</sup> "Filberts," never elsewhere mentioned by Shakespeare, were probably suggested by the previous word "nuts." We are left with crab-apples, pig-nuts, a jay's nest and marmosets. A curious selection. At first glance we might say that they have nothing in common. But the imagery of each represents something unpleasant. Crabs, as Shakespeare was well aware, are bitter. He associates them in two contexts with "sour." Bitterness appears in the "jay" context in *The Winter's Tale*—"set my pugging tooth on edge," and the "edge" image is in the *Cymbeline* "jay" passage: "whose edge is sharper than the sword." Hence "crabs" being so sour as to set one's teeth on edge are found with a jay's nest on Prospero's island. We have "sow-skin" in Autolycus' song and it seems that this, together with the swinishness of Caliban's nature, occasioned his reference to pig-nuts. Did he not complain to Prospero, "Here you sty me"? As for the marmoset, a beast which had been reported from Guiana by the traveller Wilson who returned in 1606,<sup>2</sup> it

<sup>1</sup> *Birds of the Grey Wind* (2nd edn., 1944), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> S. Purchas, *His Pilgrimes* (4th edn., 1625), Vol. IV, p. 1261. The word is found in the English language long before the discovery of America. In *Bibliotheca Eliotæ*, a Latin-English dictionary dated 1548, there is the definition: "*Cercopithecus*, an ape with a taile, called a marmoset."

probably appears not only because it is a denizen of strange and remote countries but because Shakespeare was acquainted with Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, which was first performed in 1600. In that play appear the lines,

He past, appears some mincing marmoset  
Made all of clothes, and face.

III. iv. 22.

•As Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*, which was first acted before the king on 1st November, 1611, and conjured up suitable inhabitants for his island, his thought, passing on from the swine image, flashed back to that animal with a sub-human appearance which symbolised vanity and artificiality and which has this in common with the pig that unworthy men are likened to both. The marmoset amongst animals is the symbolical counterpart of the jay amongst birds, for both are associated with wantonness, trickery and gaudy dress. Hence Caliban's pride in being able to show Trinculo a jay's nest.

•Thus the clue to Caliban's offerings is the nature of Caliban himself. His name is an anagram on Canibal and he represents human beastliness and animality, the perversion of human nature and the subordination of the spirit to the lusts of the flesh. He offers to find the jay's nest because, for Shakespeare, it was a breeding-place of deceit, spite, vanity and lust. Shakespeare's birds and other creatures tend to have a symbolical significance suited to the characters who mention them, the contexts they appear in, and, as we shall see in our next chapter, to the theme of the plays in which they appear.

## CHAPTER

### IX

#### BIRDS OF A FEATHER

NO student of Shakespeare can have failed to notice how frequently creatures of a similar type congregate together in his pages. Dr. Spurgeon in *Shakespeare's Imagery*, Professor Wilson Knight in *The Shakespearian Tempest* and Dr. Wolfgang Clemen in *Shakespeares Bilder*<sup>1</sup> have discussed the animal associations which contribute powerfully to the atmosphere of the plays, so it is not necessary to consider them in detail here. They are used to conjure up an appropriate atmosphere and to point the contrast between good and evil. This effect is achieved as well by subconscious processes of association as by conscious choice of these beasts for their parts. In *Macbeth*, as Dr. Spurgeon points out, there consort together the ravening vulture, the hell-kite devouring chickens, the puny wren fighting the owl in order to protect her nestlings, birds in fear of snare, lime and net, as well as fierce beasts such as the rhinoceros, bear and tiger.<sup>2</sup> As in *Romeo and Juliet* ominous and pleasant creatures are constantly set in contrast. In *Julius Caesar* there are eagles, elephant, lions, bears, unicorn, ape and ferret. In *King Lear* we find the contrasts lark and crow, nightingale and raven, hedge-sparrow and cuckoo. The wren, so heroic in *Macbeth*, is now but a symbol of lust. *Othello* significantly contains but one singing bird—the swan which “dies in music,” though there are daws, a boding raven, parrot, guinea-hen, snipe and haggard. The play is full of strange beasts—baboon, monkeys, lion, wild cats, wolves, goats, toads, crocodile, viper, serpent, aspic, a spider catching a fly, and a monster “too hideous to be shown.” As Dr. Spurgeon remarks, in *Othello* the animals prey upon one another in a more or less natural or mischievous way in keeping with the jealous malignity of Iago, but the inhuman and relentless cruelty of *King Lear* is represented by a long array of repulsive or ferocious beasts—vulture, kite, dragon, monkeys, lion, tiger, bear, wolves, savage dogs, “ditch-dog,” rat, frog, toad, adder and serpent. Particularly noticeable is the

*Oth.* 3.3.108

<sup>1</sup> *Shakespeares Bilder ; ihre Entwicklung und ihre Funktionen im dramatischen Werk ; mit einem Ausblick auf Bild und Gleichnis im elisabethanischen Zeitalter.* Bonner Studien z. engl. Philol., 27 (Bonn, 1936).

<sup>2</sup> *Shakespeare's Imagery*, p. 334.

deceptiveness and gratuitous cruelty shown by many of them. Unpleasant ideas are associated with innocent birds—lust with the wren and the devil’s deceit with the nightingale. The cuckoo biting off its foster-parent’s head (as no cuckoo outside a play ever did) is the very type of monstrous unnatural ingratitude and greed. There appear disgusting and nightmarish bastard creatures. They convey a sense of depravity and of beastliness more horrible than the image of any living animal could conjure up. Kent speaks of Lear’s “dog-hearted daughters”; they are “she-foxes,” and Goneril has a “wolfish visage” and “boarish fangs.” Edgar calls Edmund “A most toad-spotted traitor,” and Edmund says “My father compounded with my mother under the dragon’s tail; and my nativity was under ursa major.” There is a metaphor of the young pelicans killing their parent—particularly profane, as the pelican is the traditional symbol of devout self-sacrifice. Thus the animals represent the characters of Goneril and Regan, of whom Coleridge said they were “the only picture of the unnatural in Shakespeare; the pure unnatural.”<sup>1</sup> Not only the butterflies are “gilded” but also the lecherous fly and the serpent Goneril. In contrast to the dialogue in *Titus Andronicus* in which Titus compassionately speaks of the “poor harmless fly,”—thereby reflexly emphasising man’s cruelty—we have,

K.L. 4.6.114  
3.6.31  
1.4.235  
  
4.3.47  
3.6.24  
1.4.330  
3.7.58  
5.3.138  
1.2.139  
  
3.4.77  
  
  
  
5.3.13  
4.6.114  
5.3.84  
  
Titus, 3.2.63  
  
K.L. 4.1.38

\* As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods,  
They kill us for their sport,

summing up the theme of the play and touching the nadir of Shakespeare’s pessimism.

To appreciate how repulsive images can occur clotted together it is only necessary to look up Shakespeare’s vulture contexts. In *2 Henry IV*, for example, we have at the end of one scene a reference to “vultures”; the imagery connected with these birds is carried over into the next scene where we find such expressions as “tripe,” “bloody,” “blue-bottle,” “starved blood-hound” and “death.” In a context loaded with the thoughts of devil, hell and lust which so often accompany unpleasant birds in Shakespeare’s pages, Macduff says,

there cannot be  
That vulture in you, to devour so many.

In the background of this imagery are reminiscences of Prometheus’ fate, just as elsewhere when wax is mentioned we know that the legend of Icarus is responsible for the associated words. Other

<sup>1</sup> *Table Talk*, 5 April 1833.

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dramatists, of course, made use of this myth and connected the vulture and hell. Marston in his *Satyres* wrote,

Prometheus : . . .  
Is ding'd to Hell and vulture eats his heart  
Which did such deep Philosophy impart.

Obviously the image of Prometheus bound elicited Lear's remark about Goneril :

*K.L.* 2.4.137

O Regan, she hath *tied*  
Sharp-tootht unkindness, like a vulture, here.

Shakespeare's effective phrase describing conscience as

*Titus*, 5.2.31

the gnawing vulture of thy mind,

unites two images in such masterly conjunction that we fail to notice that it is ornithologically ridiculous. The vulture does not gnaw.

The vulture image cluster is obviously linked with death and although the vulture is not, like the owl, a nocturnal bird, it is several times associated with darkness and dusky vapours, as is the crow in *Macbeth*. "Vulture folly" in *Lucrece* is accompanied by "pitchy vapours" and "foul night-waking cat"; in *Venus and Adonis* we find the shrieking owl, "coal black clouds" and "reek and smoke," and *Titus Andronicus* gives us "vast obscurity or misty vale" adumbrating the "fen-sucked fogs" of *King Lear*.

*Mac.* 3.2.50

*Luc.* 556

550

*V. & A.* 551

533

535

*Titus*, 5.2.31

*K.L.* 2.4.137

2.4.169

An interesting illustration of the tendency of like images to be attracted to each other is the appearance of two talking birds in one play—the starling and the parrot in 1 *Henry IV*. (Another example of the same kind of thing is the reference in *Henry V* to two exotic birds with imposing nuptial array—the turkey and the peacock.) Hotspur, who has been forbidden by the King ever to allude to Mortimer in his presence, thinks of a device to keep the King's rage ever on the boil :

*H. V.*, 4.1.213

5.1.16

1 *H. IV.*, 1.3.221

But I will find him when he lies asleep,  
And in his ear I'll holla 'Mortimer !'  
Nay,  
I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak  
Nothing but 'Mortimer' and give it him,  
To keep his anger still in motion.

He does not seem to have reflected that the life of the bird would be brief. Drayton also mentions

a Starling that is taught to prate.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Owle*, 634.

*Birds of a Feather*

Starlings have been taught to speak from early times. Pliny recorded that Germanicus and Drusus "had one Stare and sundry Nightingales taught to parle Greek and Latin." It was believed that by slitting the bird's tongue, particularly with a silver sixpence, it could be taught to speak more effectively.

In the same play Prince Henry, annoyed by Francis' perpetual "Anon, anon," says :

That ever this fellow should have fewer words than a <sup>1</sup> *H. IV, 2.5.42* parrot, and yet the son of a woman !

And still later, nicely illustrating Shakespeare's predilection to recur to like ideas or to variations on a theme, we find Hotspur suggesting in these words that Lady Percy's voice is fine enough to be a model for others :

'Tis the next way to turn tailor, or be redbreast teacher. 3.1.265

This is thought to have reference to the practice of teaching tame song-birds to sing by means of the recorder, but it was usually the rosy-breasted bullfinch which was trained in this way. However, John Morton, who published *The Natural History of Northamptonshire* in 1712, wrote : " Besides the common Sort of Singing Birds . . . the Ingenious Mr. Mansel has had . . . a Robin redbreast that not only learnt Flagelet Tunes, but spoke distinctly several short sentences." There are other allusions, including one by Porphyry in the 3rd Century A.D., to robins learning to speak.

·In nothing is the orientation of Shakespeare's mind about the affairs of humanity rather than Nature more clearly manifested than in his special interest in the creatures which have human characteristics. It is typical of him, too, to mention sub-human or quasi-human creatures together with those, like the parrot, which have some point of resemblance to humanity. Salarino in *The Merchant of Venice*—a play in which Shakespeare thinks of ships bringing strange merchandise from strange places—says to Antonio :

Now by *two-headed Janus*, *M. of V. 1.1.50*  
Nature that framed strange fellows in her time :  
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,  
And laugh like *parrots*, at a bag-piper.

When Rosalind is fooling Orlando she says she will be " more <sup>*A. Y. L. I.*</sup> clamorous than a parrot against rain," and mentions an ape, a monkey and the only animal which Shakespeare thought of as being able to laugh—" a hyen." Thus things that look like, laugh like or talk like human beings were linked in his thought ; they 4.1.152  
4.1.156

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2 H. IV, 2.4.261 were all in their respective ways caricatures of man. "Hang him, baboon," says Falstaff, and a few lines later there are these remarks :

2.4.280 *Poins.* Let's beat him before his *whore*.  
*Prince.* Look, whether the withered elder hath not his poll  
clawed like a *parrot*.  
*Poins.* Is it not strange that *desire* should so many years outlive  
performance.

The parrot, and also apes and monkeys, are associated with lechery. Thersites says of Patroclus,

T. & C. 5.2.193 the *parrot* will not do more for an almond than he for a  
commodious *drab*. *Lechery, lechery* ; still, wars and *lechery*.

In this passage we have another example of the flocking together of birds of a feather. Two lines earlier Thersites, repeating himself like a parrot and expressing how a man may imitate the raven as the parrot mimics human speech, says,

5.2.191 I would croak like a raven ; I would bode, I would bode.

The cuckoo is thought of as calling the equivalent of "cuckold" :

L.L.L. 5.2.908 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 !

What is partly human is sub-human (unless, like the angels, it partakes of divinity), what is sub-human is bestial—this is how Shakespeare's mind worked. His thought was moulded by mediæval doctrines of the hierarchies of beings, but his habits of association added a contribution of their own. He was interested in creatures which had some human characteristics, but they also aroused unpleasant ideas through being deprived of reason and therefore less than human. It is after Cassio has confessed,

Oth. 2.3.263 I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what  
remains is bestial,

that he mentions the parrot. He soon returns to a similar idea :

2.3.291 O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths  
to steal away their brains ! that we should, with joy,  
pleasance, revel and applause, transform ourselves into  
beasts !

The devil is also mentioned. As birds and beasts may acquire human characteristics and accomplishments so men, abandoning their human dignity, may descend to the status of beasts. In the person of Iago, as in that of Thersites, we have an illustration of

this. Thus a bird or beast may symbolise a dominant theme in a play—as we saw to be the case with the nightingale in *Romeo and Juliet*. It is interesting to note that Cassio's plaint that he has become less than a man has an earlier counterpart in *The Merchant of Venice*—a play which, in some respects, foreshadows *Othello*. In a parrot context, Lancelot, referring to Jessica, says,

if she be less than an honest woman.

*M. of V.* 3.5.45

The conception of a man becoming sub-human seems to underlie the "parrot" passage in *The Comedy of Errors*, where we read,

Is not your husband mad ?

*C. of E.* 4.4.48

and the general idea of man being deprived of his essential nature is expressed by Arviragus when he says, "We are beastly," and mentions the fox, wolf and "prison'd bird." In the *King Lear* passage in which the king says,

We two will sing alone like birds i' the cage,

we also have foxes mentioned. The animal's proverbial craftiness brought it into Shakespeare's sub-human categories. It is difficult to avoid the impression that Shakespeare felt himself to be

a sweet melodious bird,

*Titus* 3.1.85

trammelled by circumstances as by a "hollow cage." *King Lear* and *Cymbeline* express this frustration in different ways, but perhaps in *Cymbeline* we have an indication that a way of escape has been found from "the dark night of the soul" :

our cage

*Cym.* 3.3.43

We make a quire, as doth the prison'd bird,

We have already noted that the ape is associated with the parrot in *As You Like It*. That the thought-linkage between them is that both partake of human characteristics without being human clearly appears from the comment "less than a man" in an ape context in *Much Ado About Nothing*, a parallel to the already mentioned "less than an honest woman" in *The Merchant of Venice*. A curious illustration of this is the appearance close to "ape" in a number of instances of "angels" or "devil." These came into the image-cluster because for Shakespeare they were, like parrots and apes, not quite human. Divinities were evidently in the same category. Just as the parrot is partnered by "two-headed Janus" so the ape is accompanied in various contexts by Jove, Venus, Cupid and Pluto; perhaps even Saint Peter was included, for he appears with the ape and devil in *Much Ado*. By virtue of their semi-human appearance and characteristics



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fairies and spirits sometimes accompany the ape. There are also references to madness in ape contexts as well as in the parrot passages.

•These associations furnish further proof, if it were needed, that Shakespeare's interest in birds and beasts was strictly determined by their human reference. Man was the centre of his world and he would have endorsed the Greek sophists' opinion that he is the measure of all things. It is true of many of his flowers, also, that they are symbols before all else.

Turn aside for a few moments to notice how his violet is impregnated with human associations. Like his raven and sparrow which both have ambivalent or contrary associations, due on the one hand to folk-lore traditions and on the other to Biblical allusions, the violet has partners in two camps.<sup>1</sup> It is a love-flower and a death-flower. As a love-flower it "steals" its sweet scent from "love's breath" and grows where "love keeps his revels." Violets are closely connected with breath. They are

*Sonn.* 99.2

*V. & A.* 1.23

*W. T.* 4.4.121

sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes  
Or Cytherea's *breath*.

*Tw. N.* 1.1.5

We have also mention of,  
the sweet sound  
That *breathes* upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing and giving odour!

*Ham.* 1.3.7

*M.N.D.* 2.1.250

*Cym.* 4.2.172

*Per.* 4.1.16

*W.T.* 4.4.119

Incidentally, it is possibly because violets and swallows are both connected with wind—the one through its association with breath, the other with the wind itself—that they come together in *The Winter's Tale*, and this association with wind may be one of the reasons why Shakespeare altered the statement in his source and located swallows' nests in "Cleopatra's sails" instead of under the poop, as North's *Plutarch* records.

*A. & C.* 4.2.3

<sup>1</sup> From classical times—and possibly earlier—the sparrow was associated with lechery and in Shakespeare's day its eggs were in demand as an aphrodisiac (*M. Drayton, The Owle, 369*). Lucio, referring to the strict morality enforced by the Deputy Duke of Verona, says,

*M. f M.* 3.2.185

sparrows must not build in his house-eaves because they are lecherous.  
Hamlet, however, recalling St. Matthew's Gospel (x. 29), can say,

*Ham.* 5.2.231

There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow,  
and Adam in *As You Like It* reflects,

*A. Y. L. I.* 2.3.43

He that doth the ravens feed,  
Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,  
Be comfort to my age!

*T. & C.* 5.2.191

Here the Biblical associations of the raven (Psalm, cxlvii. 9; Job, xxxviii. 41) give it an entirely different symbolism from that usually connected with it as an ominous, malevolent, carrion feeder.

## *Birds of a Feather*

The association of the violet with love is natural enough, for what lover has not given his beloved a bunch of violets? But why is it connected with death? Probably this is due to violet being the Church's mourning colour. Ophelia says,

I would give you some *violets*, but they withered all  
when my *father died*. *Ham.* 4.5.184

Marina mourns with violets for her nurse :

No, I will rob Tellus of her weed, *Per.* 4.1.14  
To strew thy *grave* with flowers ; the yellows, blues,  
The purple *violets*, and marigolds,  
Shall as a carpet, hang upon thy *grave*,  
While summer-days do last. Ay me, poor maid  
Born in a *tempest* when my *mother died*,

and she, too, recalls the death of a parent. Thus although sweet airs steal about the violet banks and martins' nests, tempests are not far away ; they sway the daffodils and precede the swallows. So beauty and tragedy often go hand in hand. Before the Queen strews flowers on Ophelia's grave, Laertes says,

from her fair and unpolled flesh *Ham.* 5.1.262  
May violets spring !

Here we have again the contrast between the bride-bed and the grave. The dove appears in this funeral scene but the mewing cat warns us of further tragedy to follow just as the raven croaks of doom before Duncan and Banquo arrive at the fatal portals where the martins are nesting. Shakespeare often perches a bird near where flowers are strewn. After singing of violets Ophelia refers to *Ham.* 4.5.187 "bonny, sweet Robin" ; in *The Taming of the Shrew* we have *T of S.* Ind.2.42 nightingales, hawks and "the morning lark" close to "bestrew the ground." In *Cymbeline* a wren is mentioned immediately *Cym.* 4.2.305 after Belarius strews flowers on Imogen and Cloten, and in the *4.2.224* earlier flower-strewing reference in the same scene the robin performs his time-honoured task of strewing moss over the dead. This is another instance of birds of a feather flocking together for traditionally

The robin and the wren  
Are God Almighty's cock and hen.

Even in Cambridge I have found people who still believe that the robin and wren are male and female of the same species.

It is strange that stealing or robbery is referred to within not more than a dozen lines of "violets" in *Venus and Adonis*,

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*Sonnet xcix, Hamlet, Twelfth Night, Measure for Measure and Pericles.* "Steal" also appears in one passage in which the primrose is mentioned, and "thief-stol'n" in another. Possibly the frequent references in "violet" passages to how the wind "blows" may have suggested the violence of robbers. Another possibility is that Shakespeare had stolen violets at some time or that they were associated in his mind with some other form of theft, such as deer-stealing, but collocations of oddly assorted words occur so frequently without any indication that they are due to personal experiences that I see no reason to prefer this view—quite apart from the lack of evidence that Shakespeare ever did poach deer. To go no further than our primrose contexts, we find "liquid tears," "liquid pearl," and "liquid dew" in succession. It might be argued, but could not be proved, that Shakespeare pictured the flowers by running streams. What we can be certain is that by reason of its paleness the primrose is a death-flower and therefore is incorporated in image clusters in which death is a motif. The primrose, like the violet, is used by Shakespeare to adorn his tale because of its associations with human concerns and its symbolic value.

*M.N.D.* 1.1.213  
*Cym.* 1.6.5

*2 H. VI*, 3.2.60  
*M.N.D.* 1.1.211  
*Ham.* 1.3.41

The tendency of Shakespeare's flowers to have symbolic human relevance enables us to be reasonably certain as to what the poet meant by "cuckoo-flowers." Many suggestions have been put forward, but Dr. C. T. Onions in *A Shakespeare Glossary* sums up the discussion in his note which states that these flowers are "not identified." The question, however, has not been considered from the standpoint of imagery. Just as the creatures in a play or a context are usually appropriate to the nature of the sentiments expressed, so flowers are introduced, as we have seen, because of their fitness to the action or the characters mentioning them or appearing with them in the context. It is Cordelia who says of her father :

*K.L.* 4.4.1

Alack, 'tis he : why, he was met even now  
As mad as the vex'd sea ; singing aloud ;  
Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow-weeds,  
With bur-docks, hemlock, nettles, *cuckoo-flowers*.

John Clare in his *Shepherd's Calendar* speaks of

fumitory too—a name  
That Superstition holds to fame.

Hemlock is a sinister poison and nettles are invasive weeds which cause a continuous irritation analogous to the continuous spiteful

pin-pricks and stabs inflicted by Lear's daughters. In considering the symbolism of "cuckoo-flowers" it should be noted that Shakespeare's cuckoo is frequently connected with singing, but it is also associated with foolishness. After Bottom has sung of it he says, "Who would set his wit to so foolish a bird?" He says this, *M.N.D.* 3.1.137 of course, because the cuckoo arouses thoughts of cuckolding and of men being fooled. Some men were even "cuckold-mad." *C. of E.* 2.1.58 The "cuckoo-flower" is therefore appropriate as a field weed to be incorporated in a crown for a crazy king because the cuckoo and King Lear are both within the category of foolishness and craziness. "Cuckoo-buds" are also suitable to adorn a song about how married men are duped :

- When daisies pied and violets blue *L.L.L.* 5.2.904  
And lady-smocks all silver-white  
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue  
Do paint the meadows with delight,  
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 !

According to Dr. R. C. A. Prior, buttercups were called "cuckoo-buds"<sup>1</sup> and they are the only yellow flowers which "paint the meadows"; kingcups require marshy ground and the cowslip's yellow is too pale for Shakespeare's phrase to be apt. The significant fact, however, is that according to this authority they were also called "crazies." Thus it was with "crazies"—buttercups—that the crazy king crowned himself.

• This short survey of the associations of some birds, beasts and flowers shows that certain images occur in image clusters by reason of their inclusion in the category "sub-human" or "quasi-human." This category contains elements which belong both to the Life and Death sets of images, for Cupid and the angels belong to the former, the ape and the devil to the latter. The violet also belongs to Life and Love imagery as well as to Death and Disaster. Such ambivalent associations cause the image clusters to intersect and interpenetrate. This is a constant feature of Shakespeare's imagination because so much of his association-thinking was by contrast. The combining-contrast device by which an image such as "violet" is used so that the associations aroused in our minds hover between joyful anticipation and presentiments of disaster is one of the subtlest means of unobtrusively heightening the tragical effect.

<sup>1</sup> *On the Popular Names of British Plants* (3rd edn., 1879), p. 57.

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But if, in attempting to analyse Shakespeare's imagery, we keep in mind the key principle that it is ranged according to the supreme categories of Life and Death, with subordinate categories such as Light and Darkness, we shall find that this clue will serve us well in enabling us to find our way through the intricacies of his imaginative thought.

## CHAPTER

### X

#### FIREARMS, FISH, FLEAS AND FOWL

THE foregoing pages have shown that image clusters may originate in various ways ; in one instance through a scrap of ridiculous natural history calling for contradiction and in another because two dark flying creatures became associated with death. They may also arise through more ordinary associations springing from a connexion in symbolism, mythology or common locutions. We have already noted that some of the most persistent linkages have very trivial antecedents and that, to express the matter crudely, many of Shakespeare's images have a strange cohesiveness. To describe the situation more accurately it must be viewed from the standpoint of the poet's mentality. If, when he sat down to write a play, the theme recalled the mood in which another play, or often merely some incident or characterisation in it, was conceived, the imagery of the earlier play tended to return to mind. The process, as we remarked earlier, seems also to have operated in the reverse direction. A conception, image or word could resuscitate something of the mood in which it was used on a previous occasion, and as a consequence the earlier imagery was also recalled but in an elaborated or transmuted condition. Of course the co-ordination of memory and mood is far more complicated than we can take account of here, though we shall later have more to say about it. We must not forget that the mind is an organic system, though the exigencies of exposition entail the consideration of psychological processes in artificial isolation. Recurrent associations cannot be attributed merely to a kind of mental conservatism or the re-animation of what has been in company earlier. They are due to the intertexture of many activities and influences.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of these psychological processes in Shakespeare's case was not only to resuscitate in later years linkages established early in his writing life—though always these linkages were, as we have seen, subject to modification—but also to animate a tendency to bring together in later plays images which first occurred scattered

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Livingston Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu : A Study in the Ways of the Imagination* (1927), and D. Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker* (1940), pp. 94-6.

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"throughout a scene or even a whole play. It is not easy to demonstrate this effect convincingly except in the case of images so sparingly used by Shakespeare that their linkages can be readily traced and recognised. One such image is the firearm "pistol," which is mentioned on only six occasions, two of these being in 1 *Henry IV* and another in 2 *Henry IV*. The significant imagery may be set out thus :

PISTOL-TURKEY IMAGERY

	FIREARMS	" BIRD "	PRIDE	VARIOUS
1 <i>H. IV</i> , 2.1.15 2.4.380	pistol pistol pistol-proof	turkeys ; cock	bombast	razes of ginger
5.3.53		Turk Barbary hen		swagger
2 <i>H. IV</i> , 2.4.125				

These images thereafter play a game of exchanging partners. In *A.Y.L.L.I.* 4.3.33 *As You Like It* we find "Turk" with "play the swaggerer" and *H. V*, 2.1.55 "phoenix": in *Henry V* "Pistol's cock" with "braggart" (and also "Barbason" and "foul," which may carry reminiscences of "Barbary" and "hen"). In a later passage of the same play we have "turkey-cock," "Pistol" and "swelling." In *Hamlet* 5.1.16 "pistol" is missing, but we find "Turk," "pajock," "forest of feathers" and "razed shoes." *Twelfth Night* provides "turkey-cock," "pistol him," "over-weening" and "jets under advanced plumes." The two other "pistol" passages—in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Pericles*—do not contain imagery significant in this connexion.

Let us look at the *Twelfth Night* context. Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian are spying on Malvolio in Olivia's garden shortly before he finds the letter she has dropped :

*Tw. N.* 2.5.36                      *Fabian.* O, peace! Contemplation makes a rare *turkey-cock* of him: how he jets under his advanced plumes!

*Sir Andrew.* 'Slight, I could so beat the rogue!

*Sir Toby.* Peace I say.

*Malvolio.* To be Count Malvolio!

*Sir Toby.* Ah, rogue!

*Sir Andrew.* *Pistol him, pistol him.*

*H. V*, 5.1.15      In *Henry V* we read :

Enter *Pistol*.

*Gower.* Why, here he comes, swelling like a *turkey-cock*.

*Fluellen.* 'Tis no matter for his swellings nor his *turkey-cocks*.  
God pless you Aunchient *Pistol*!

These are the only occasions on which Shakespeare uses the word "turkey-cock" and he never elsewhere than in *Twelfth Night* uses "pistol" as a verb. From this we can conclude that Fabian thinks of Malvolio as a turkey-cock and Sir Andrew cries "Pistol him" not only because in *Henry V* turkey-cock and Pistol are mentioned in the same breath but because as far back as 1 *Henry IV* turkeys and cock, pistol and bombast, pistol and Turk appeared together. It should be noted that in the *As You Like It* Turk-phoenix-swaggering passage Rosalind reads one of Orlando's poems just as in *Twelfth Night* Malvolio reads the letter which has been dropped to entrap him.

There is a further point of interest in connexion with the *Hamlet* context. The word "pajock" has puzzled commentators, but Dyce pointed out that in Scotland the peacock was called "peajock," which is very similar to "pajock," and the associated imagery provides proof that by "pajock" Shakespeare meant the peacock. "Turk" and "razed shoes," occurring in *Hamlet* with "pajock," connect it with "turkeys," "cock" and "razes of ginger" in 1 *Henry IV*. "Forest of feathers" is reminiscent of the Barbary hen in 2 *Henry IV*, whose "feathers turn back in any show," and the turkey-cock with "advanced plumes" in *Twelfth Night*.

The turkey-cock and the peacock were naturally connected in Shakespeare's mind, both being Pride birds which make a great parade of their feathers. Although he mentions the turkey-cock only twice and the peacock only five times, they both appear in *Henry V* in accordance with the poet's tendency to let birds of a feather flock together and also in keeping with the flamboyant character of personalities in the play. Earlier suggestions of the displaying turkey-cock of *Henry V* and *Twelfth Night* may be found in the "peacock" context of 1 *Henry VI*. La Pucelle says :

•Let *frantic* Talbot triumph for a while  
And like a *peacock* sweep along his *tail* ;  
We'll pull his *plumes* and take away his *train*,

1 H. VI, 3.3.5

and in *Troilus and Cressida* we have the strutting, displaying T. & C. 3.3.252  
bird making "a stride and a stand." The turkey, peacock and phoenix all have anger and lunacy imagery associated with them.

Minsheu's *Dictionary*, a book which represents the knowledge of Shakespeare's time, shows in its definition of "turkey-cock" that it was natural for the turkey and peacock—and also



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the cock—to have similar associations and to share the same imagery :

Turkey-cock, or cock of India, brought to us from India, or Arabia or Africa. It seems to partake of the nature of the cock and of the peacock.<sup>1</sup>

The partner images of the turkey and the connexions in imagery between 1 *Henry IV* and *Twelfth Night* may be pursued still further. Consider the dialogue between the carriers in the inn yard at Rochester :

1 *H. IV*, 2.1.15      *Second Carrier*. I think this be the most villainous house in all London road for *fleas* : I am *stung* like a *tench*.

*First Carrier*. Like a *tench* ! by the mass, there is ne'er a king christen could be better *bit* than I have been since the first *cock*.

*Second Carrier*. Why, they will allow us ne'er a jordan, and then we leak in the chimney ; and your chamber-lie breeds *fleas* like a *loach*.<sup>2</sup>

*First Carrier*. What, ostler ! come away, and be hanged ! come away.

*Second Carrier*. I have a gammon of bacon and two *razes* of ginger to be delivered as far as Charing-cross.

*First Carrier*. God's body, the *turkeys* in my pannier are quite starved.

*Tw. N.* 2.5.6      In *Twelfth Night* shortly after Sir Toby Belch asks,

Wouldst thou not be glad to have the niggardly rascally *sheep-biter* come by some notable shame ?

Maria says,

here comes the *trout* that must be caught with *tickling*.

<sup>1</sup> The turkey was imported by Spanish adventurers from the New World into Spain in the sixteenth century and was not introduced into England until 1524. Thus the references to it in 1 *Henry IV* and *Henry V* are amongst Shakespeare's numerous anachronisms. In 1525 this rhyme was composed :

Turkies, carps, hoppes, piccarell, and beere,  
Came into England all in one yeare.

<sup>2</sup> In *Bartholomew (Batman)*, xviii, 89, we read : " Horse-urine breedeth fleas . . . his flesh wasps." Shakespeare was familiar with the information in this book though he may have used the older edition of Berthelet. The full title reads : *Liber de proprietatibus rerum editus a fratre Bartholomeo anglico ordinis fratrum minorum. Impressus Argentine Anno domini MCCCCLXXXV*. Trevisa's English translation of " Batman upon Bartholome " is dated 1582.

Malvolio then makes a short speech and Sir Toby remarks,

Here's an *overweening* rogue !

and Fabian replies,

O, peace ! Contemplation makes a rare *turkey-cock* of him.

It might seem that the association in the two passages of turkey, fish and irritating vermin was accidental were it not that in the intermediate plays we find the same linkages. For instance, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* louses and fish appear together ;

*Sir Hugh Evans.* The dozen white *louses* do become an old M.W. 1.1.19  
coat well ; it agrees well, passant ; it is a  
familiar beast to man, and signifies love.

*Shallow.* The luce is the fresh *fish* ; the salt *fish* is an  
old coat.<sup>1</sup>

In *Henry V* Gower comments as Pistol enters that he is H. V, 5.1.15.  
"swelling like a *turkey-cock*" and Fluellen immediately calls him  
"lousy." Thersites, in *Troilus and Cressida* protests,

To be a dog, a mule, a cat, a fitchew, a toad, a lizard, T. & C. 5.1.67  
an owl, a puttock, or a *herring* without a roe, I would not  
care ; but to be Menelaus ! I would conspire against  
destiny. Ask me not what I should be, if I were not  
Thersites ; for I care not to be the *louse* of a lazar, so I were  
not Menelaus.

Thus the turkey-fish-vermin linkage has a history somewhat resembling the turkey-pistol-swagger grouping but differing in that while the latter is only incipient in 1 *Henry IV* and reaches its zenith in *Twelfth Night*, the turkey-fish-vermin association appears complete in 1 *Henry IV*, becomes rather dispersed and incomplete in the intermediate plays and reappears complete in *Twelfth Night*.

We have already seen that because of their affinity as two swaggering, plume-displaying birds the turkey and peacock as image-symbols are related to each other, so it is not surprising to find some images connected with both. Thus in the *Troilus and Cressida* peacock context we have "tick in a sheep" and in *The Temp.* 3.3.252 4.1.74

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<sup>1</sup> Leslie Hotson in *Shakespeare versus Shallow* (1931) shows that Justice Shallow is in many respects a burlesque of Shakespeare's enemy, the unscrupulous Justice William Gardiner, who was entitled by his marriage to Frances Luce or Lucy to impale the Lucy arms—three white luces (or pike) with his golden griffin. It may be a coincidence but Shakespeare speaks of "a finless fish, A clip-wing'd griffin" in one of the two passages 1 H. IV, 3.1.151 in which he mentions the griffin. After mentioning "the old pike" Falstaff says, "I see no reason in the law of nature but I may snap at him." 2 H. IV, 3.2.356

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*Tempest* "waspish-headed." As we remarked earlier, Thersites of *Troilus and Cressida* foreshadows Caliban who is "a very land-fish" and there is fairly close contact between some of the ideas and imagery of *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Tempest* although the atmospheres of these plays are so different; thus peacock-vermin associations follow from one to the other.

We have a clue to the origin of the association of fish, fleas and lice, for in Pliny's *Natural History* (IX. xlvi) we are told: "Some fishes there be, which of themselves are given to breed fleas and lice, among which the *chalcis* a kind of turbot is one." Shakespeare may well have read this passage and probably the notion of fish generating lice had become the common coin of folk-lore through Pliny's influence.<sup>1</sup>

At this point our efforts to trace the origin of these odd associations of fish, fleas and fowl must become rather tentative. The nature of the case is such that it is not possible to build up a completely cogent argument, for precision and certainty are unattainable in regard to that limbo where image clusters are generated. We have already noted how the turkey-pistol-swagger linkage first appeared in the very diffused form of a few words widely scattered throughout a play. Possibly the turkey-vermin linkage may be traced back to a number of words dispersed throughout 150 lines of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

If the reader will turn to Act II, Scene I of this play and examine the dialogue between lines 200 and 350 he will find these words: "meacock," "Turkey," "cock" and "wasp." Also "coxcomb," "crest" and "tail." "Meacock" and "Turkey" never occur elsewhere in Shakespeare's plays. Is it coincidence that these images should here be scattered and later assort themselves into more definite relationships?

It is in the plays later than *The Taming of the Shrew* that turkey and peacock are associated with vermin which sting and bite.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that the outcome of the collocation of "meacock" and "Turkey" with "wasp" was instrumental in bringing the turkey and irritating vermin into association. "Turkey" and stinging wasps having appeared in *The Taming of the Shrew*, "turkeys" and "fleas" which "sting" followed in 1 *Henry IV* and as fleas were associated (through ancient folk-lore) with fish in this passage we have "tick in a sheep," "bites" and "land-fish"

<sup>1</sup> Another strand of association is probably connected with the word "cod-piece" which is mentioned with "stock-fishes" and "urine" in *M. f M.* 3.21.22 and with "louse" in *King Lear*.

<sup>2</sup> I have used the term "vermin" to include the various creatures which sting and bite as "insect" would not include the sheep tick.

in *Troilus and Cressida*, "turkey-cock," "sheep-biter" and "trout" in *Twelfth Night*, and "peacock" and "waspish-headed" in *The Tempest*. Doubtless also the fact that the peacock and turkey have prominent "tails"<sup>1</sup> and that some insects have stings in their "tails" served also to create the linkage. In the context with which we are concerned in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio says,

Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting? In his tail.<sup>2</sup> T. of S. 2.1.214

Support for the view that linkages which later appear definitely established may be traced back to their inception in this scene of *The Taming of the Shrew* is provided by another group of images which reappear in somewhat altered form later. In it, not long after a reference to "a combless cock" Petruchio tells Katherina,

Thou canst not *frown*, thou canst not *look askance*,  
Nor *bite the lip*, as angry *wenches* will. T. of S. 2.1.249

<sup>1</sup> It is the peacock's train rather than the tail which is prominent during its display.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, it may be remarked, shows very clearly his personal acquaintance with fleas in his bed and clothes. This appears indirectly and it is probable that he never realised how closely bedding and clothing were associated with fleas in his mind. "Shirt," "stockings," "clothes," "linen," "bed" and "sheets" in "flea" contexts show that daily annoyance and sleepless nights due to verminous beds had influenced his ideas. His references of this kind are not merely gags to draw sniggers from the gallery—fleas were too common for jokes about them to be really funny—but souvenirs of discomforts endured which found utterance almost in spite of himself. As Dr. Spurgeon has pointed out, his imagery suggests that he disliked dirt and disorder. It is not surprising that "blood" and "bitter" and painful things such as "gall" and "sword" accompany the flea, but it is interesting to note that the nit calls forth, or is called forth by, the thought of sharp instruments on the two occasions when it is mentioned: in the one case "nail" and "needle" and in the other "pin" and "pricks." Lice are not associated with bedding in Shakespeare, though a few lines after mentioning "louse" in *King Lear* the fool says "turn his sleep to wake." But in the nine relevant contexts we have "beggarly" twice, "beggars" and "lazar" once each. The inference is that fleas were a nuisance to everybody, but lice were only found in circumstances of special squalor. Fleas were taken for granted much as we tolerate the smoke pollution of our cities. All that we have deduced from this subliminal imagery is borne out by a remark made by Mouffet in his *Theater of Insects*:  
T. of S. 4.3.110  
L.L.L. 4.1.150  
K.L. 3.2.34

It is not any disgrace to a man to be troubled by Fleas as it is to be lousy.

Evidently some progress had been made in the personal amenities of life since the time when Thomas à Becket was murdered. The dead archbishop was found to be wearing a suit of coarse hair-cloth next to the skin, which was so infested with vermin—apparently lice—that according to a chronicler it "boiled over with them like water in a simmering cauldron." Those who stood by "burst into alternate fits of weeping and laughter, between the sorrow of having lost such a head, and the joy of having found such a saint" (MacArthur, *Old-time Typhus in Britain*, cit. in K. M. Smith, *Beyond the Microscope*, 1943, p. 27).

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In the *Twelfth Night* passage in which the *turkey-cock* appears Malvolio uses the phrases,

*Tw. N. 2.5.59*            after a demure travel of regard,  
and,                    I frown the while.

Sir Toby remarks,

And does not Toby take you a blow of the *lips* then ?

There might seem to be no special connexion between these two passages but that a *Troilus and Cressida* peacock context shows that there is. Thersites describes Ajax thus :

*T. & C. 3.3.252*            Why, he stalks up and down like a *peacock*—a stride  
and a stand : ruminates like a *hostess* that hath no arithmetic  
but her brain to set down her reckoning : *bites his lip with*  
*a politic regard . . .*

Clearly much of the *Twelfth Night* scene is latent in, or developed from, Thersites' picture of Ajax. Shakespeare, when writing *Twelfth Night*, revived the mood in which he had described Ajax and amplified a few words into a scene. The strutting bird is the most outstanding image linking the scenes and it is probable that the turkey-peacock conception played an active part in the process of generating the *Twelfth Night* scene.

These and all the preceding dissections of contexts which we have undertaken in order to lay bare the relationship of the images they contain indicate an immense and fascinating realm of psychological interest as yet unexplored. We have been able in these chapters to do no more than touch the fringe of themes which call for further investigation. The task is similar to that of the palæontologist who, examining fossils, tries to arrange them in evolutionary series and with their aid endeavours to reconstruct a picture of the environment which gave birth to the organisms they represent and in which they were active, sentient creatures. To the uninitiated a fossil stands for something lifeless and dull ; to those who realise its meaning it is a passport to a world of intense interest. In the course of this study we have been dealing with the image-vestiges left by a mind of pre-eminent ability and we should not be satisfied merely to be prospectors who glance at the fossils which our hammers reveal, content to wonder at their queer structure and to pass on. We must venture further and enquire, not only what image clusters can tell us of Shakespeare's imagination, but also what enlightenment they can give us as to the imaginative powers of the human mind. In every sense the study of Shakespeare is the study of humanity.

PART TWO

*THE PSYCHOLOGY OF  
IMAGINATION*

CHAPTER

XI

THE ORGANISATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S  
IMAGINATIVE ACTIVITY

SO strange are the facts revealed in the foregoing analysis that some readers may be inclined to think that they show that Shakespeare's mind was, at least in certain respects, eccentric, if not in the pathological sense abnormal. Philosophers, as well as common men, have ever been wont to regard great poets as unbalanced. Plato in the *Ion* said, "The poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he is inspired and out of his senses." Probably most people would endorse Pascal's opinion that "l'extrême esprit est voisin de l'extrême folie." It would not be difficult for some *littérateur* intent on proving that Shakespeare's genius was akin to madness so to represent the idiosyncrasies we have been considering that they might seem to support his thesis. But if he were to do so would he advance our knowledge further than the dramatist's own statement?—

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason ever comprehends.

M.N.D. 5.1.4

Even if it could be shown that there are pathological peculiarities in Shakespeare's modes of thought this would not reduce the magnitude of his achievement. His work is his monument and history is his witness. No theory of his personality which fails to take full account of the measure in which men of the most diverse kinds have been moved and inspired by his plays deserves the least consideration. Coleridge, whose psychological insight and opium-eating experiences entitled him to have an opinion on this

matter, expressed himself on it in his *Table Talk* (1st May 1833) in forthright fashion :

• “Great wits are sure to madness near allied,” says Dryden, and true so far as this, that genius of the highest kind implies an unusual intensity . . . but it would be at least as true, that great genius is most alien from madness—yea, divided from it by an impassable mountain—namely the activity of thought and vivacity of the accumulative memory, which are no less essential constituents of “great wit.”

• However surprising such aspects of Shakespeare's thought as image-cluster formation may be, these groups of images are always integrated into the fabric of his work and we have found no instances of that apparently inconsequential association or absolute fixation of ideas which is characteristic of the insane. Nor, indeed, as I hope the course of this discussion will show, have we discovered the existence in his mind of any mechanisms or artifices of association which may not in some measure be discerned in the work of other poets and in the minds of each one of us. So far as the linkages which we have examined are concerned the outstanding fact is that none of them was found to be arbitrary or irrational. The psychiatrist does not suspect abnormality if a subject's associations run in a series such that connexions between words are natural and apparent ; he may sometimes detect an emotional nexus accounting for the short-circuiting of a series of associations to, for instance, a girl's name—a natural enough phenomenon when Tom, Dick or Harry is in love ; but when, during free association, a word appears the antecedents of which are unaccountable alike to analyst and subject, then some hidden inhibition may be suspected.<sup>1</sup> In default of such odd linkages it is reasonable to proceed on the assumption that Shakespeare's genius lay in the degree of development and unusual co-ordination of faculties with which we are all endowed. Thus the further analysis of the facts already disclosed and the processes responsible for them is as much an enquiry into the nature of imagination as an investigation of Shakespeare's mentality.

Although psychologists have not found it easy to classify and analyse the functions of the imagination, Shakespeare's imaginative faculty can be shown to have consisted of an organic system of activities. A brief résumé of some of the modes in which the poet's mind associated images, as shown in the earlier section of this study, will indicate the remarkable equilibrium of these

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. T. MacCurdy, *The Psychology of Emotion* (1925), p. 525.

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activities and show that so far as they are concerned his was far from being an "unbalanced" mind.

### DUALISM

\*The foundation of Shakespeare's imaginative thought, as we noted in Part I, Chapter V, is the realisation and expression of life's dualism. His mind was dominated by the warring opposites disclosed by experience. Here we have one of many indications of the "primitive" or "universal" mould of his mentality. Whether we contemplate the philosophies of East or West, ancient or modern, or consider the ordinary man's attitude to life, dualism, in spite of its deficiencies as a philosophical creed, has been, and still is, found attractive. One variety or another of the Taoist doctrine of Yin and Yang with its various antinomies and conceptions of opposing forces may be said to be the basis of most primitive or unsophisticated philosophy. Life and Death, Good and Evil, Day and Night—contrasts of this kind impress us all. To a remarkable extent Shakespeare's imagery can be ranged into categories according to such antitheses.<sup>1</sup>

The reader will readily recall instances of this contrast-thinking on the grand scale in the plots and characterisation of the plays. Here I need do no more by way of illustration than show how systematically it occurs in connexion with a single image. We have already noticed that the eagle was for Shakespeare above all else a symbol of power and pride. If we scrutinise the passages in which the bird is mentioned we shall find that the associated thoughts of exaltation and glory are almost invariably accompanied by their opposites. It will suffice to note contrasts in eagle contexts in the first nine of the plays :

1 H. VI	1.2.141	Proud-insulting—fal'n down
2 H. VI	3.1.248	life—death
2 H. VI	4.1.109	O that I were a god—lowly vassal
3 H. VI	1.1.268	love—hateful

<sup>1</sup> The art of the Drama in the West (and possibly in the East) arose from the Spring Dance, the mime of Winter and Summer in which one actor played the two parts, Death and Life (J. E. Harrison, *Ancient Art and Ritual*, 1913, p. 143). The spectacle represented the primitive human concern about survival and fertility. Shakespeare's mind played a similar dual rôle. Rites related to the Greek Dithyramb performed all over the world by primitive folk express deep ancestral fears and hopes ; so also does the dualism of Shakespeare's imagery. For all its intellectual subtlety and complexity it is a cathartic manifestation of primitive emotions and associations. Thus in the last analysis the appeal of Shakespeare's poetry lies in the responsive chords which it awakens in the depths of our nature. This is why we can never adequately explain why passages of Shakespeare thrill us, as we say, "to the marrow."



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3 H. VI	2.1.91	venge thy death—or die
R. III	1.1.132	mew'd—liberty
R. III	1.3.71	Every Jack a gentleman—many gentle persons a Jack
Titus	4.4.83	sun—shadow
L.L.L.	4.3.334	gaze—blind
R. & J.	3.5.221	dishclout—lovely gentleman
R. II	1.3.129	sleep—wake
R. II	3.3.69	dim—bright
K. J.	5.2.149	gallant—degenerate.

Fame and obscurity, pride and degradation, riches and poverty, palace and prison, life and death—such contrasts are to be found wherever the eagle is mentioned. Moreover, in sixteen out of thirty-two eagle contexts in the plays the king of birds is mentioned with feeble or, according to Elizabethan opinions, despicable birds—chickens, dove, wren, sparrow, kite, buzzard, raven or crow. Nasty insects such as the drone, gnat and fly, are found in these passages. It is natural that other kingly symbols such as the loin, oak and cedar should appear with the eagle, but the consistency with which the pride-symbol calls forth its opposite is noteworthy. Shakespeare's imagination constantly swings from an image to its contrary. This oscillatory movement, it is interesting to note, is also characteristic of dream-thinking, according to Freud. He points out that "it may be said to be almost the rule that one train of thought is followed by its contradictory" and continues "no feature known to our reason whilst awake is absent."<sup>1</sup> In the sequel we shall find that there are further significant correspondences between dream-thinking and the work of the creative imagination.

### THE CATEGORIES

The discussion in Chapter V showed that all Shakespeare's imagery can be grouped in relation to Life and Death. We also noticed that the imagery connected with Love is correlated with that of Life and that their opposites are also correlated. By combining the correlated conceptions Life-Love and Death-Hatred we denominate the supreme opposing Categories in relation to which every image holds a position of greater or lesser importance and on which its symbolic value depends.<sup>2</sup> Within these Supreme

<sup>1</sup> *On Dreams* (tr. M. D. Eder, 1914), p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Caroline Spurgeon (*Shakespeare's Imagery*, pp. 154-5, 156-8) claims that for Shakespeare as for Saint John (1 John, iv. 18) fear is the opposite of love, but the poet himself says :

The love of wicked men converts to fear ;  
That fear to hate, and hate turns one or both  
To worthy danger and deserved death.

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Categories, Life-Love and Death-Hatred, are Subordinate Categories of lesser range and content. Such Subordinate Categories within the Supreme Category of Life-Love are—Light, Warmth, Virtue, Pride, Health, Growth, Beauty, Cleanliness, Sweetness, Harmony, Perfume, and so forth. These have their opposite categories in the Supreme Category of Death-Hatred—Darkness, Frigidity, Vice, Abasement, Disease, Decay, Ugliness, Filth, Bitterness, Discord and Stench. A series of sub-categories of these might be compiled, as for instance “instrument,” within the Category of Harmony. Our classification would end with particular objects such as lute and bagpipe. But beyond a certain point such systematisation leads to falsification unless qualified at every stage by reference to other intersecting relationships. For example, Darkness and Discord are so connected that “owl” is associated with both and therefore many and various loud or raucous noises are mentioned in owl contexts. Again, lust being thought of as hot, some warmth images have associates in the Death category. It would be idle to attempt to reduce Shakespeare's thought to rigid rules and this schematisation is intended only to make apparent the system and equilibrium which are characteristic of his imagination. It presents certain modalities of thought which are not without exceptions and which, on occasion, are subordinate to other modalities.

### CONTIGUOUS OPPOSITION

I would, however, emphasise that exceptions or apparent exceptions to this system can usually be accounted for according to other principles of Shakespearean thought. They are by no means arbitrary or fortuitous. A Category, as we have seen, may have ambivalent imagery such that some of the thoughts and images associated by it or contained within it have a contrary significance to that which is most usual. The reader will remember the erotic images which Shakespeare connected with darkness so that tracts of darkness imagery are subsumed under Life and Love, thus furnishing a device by which Life and Death images are brought into almost, if not quite, contiguous opposition, constituting the very stuff of Tragedy. We have seen how effectively this was done in regard to the nightingale image in *Romeo and Juliet*. Minor examples amongst bird images are the sparrow and raven which, because of their symbolism being derived from biblical as well as classical sources, have sometimes good and sometimes evil or unpleasant associations. To attach maleficent as well as beneficent qualities or powers to one and the same object

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is another characteristically primitive mode of thought. The thunder-god, for example, is revered amongst primitive peoples for his benevolence in bringing the fertility-bestowing rain, and held in awe for his malignancy in casting the destructive thunder-bolt. Similarly in the older roots of many languages we find that a word may have two antithetical meanings, as for example, in Latin, *altus* meaning both high and deep, and *sacer*, holy and accursed. Man only gradually was able to separate both sides of the antithesis contained in his primitive words. We can realise how the same word in ancient Egyptian could mean both "strong" and "weak" when we consider how our word "power" may refer to force responsible either for good or evil effects. In so far as Freud is correct in insisting that each element in a dream can be interpreted by its opposite as well as by itself and that only its relationship to other elements in the dream can enable us to decide in favour of one or the other significance, he provides further evidence of ambivalent imagery from the wide realm of dreamland.

The contiguous opposition of Love and Death imagery in such plays as *Romeo and Juliet* is, of course, the working out in detail of the central tragic theme. The numerous related images, like the hundreds of images mediated by the facets of a fly's eye, cumulatively impose one distinctive but multitudinously constituted impression of Life-Love—Death-Hatred conflict. Thus the author's dominant idea, the inspiring conception of a whole play, is re-created in the mind of the spectator or reader with such masterly subtlety that the apparatus of imagery by which the effect is achieved is more or less unwittingly accepted as "natural"—as appropriate to the theme as the leaf to the flower. Again, when Shakespeare, in characteristic fashion opposing Love and Death, makes Antony say,

A. & C.

3.13.193

I'll make *death love* me ; for I will contend  
Even with his pestilent scythe,

and,

3.13.514

my *good stars*, that were my former guides,  
Have empty left their orbs, and shot their fires  
Into the *abyss of hell*,

he is expressing in his contrasting imagery, as he does so frequently throughout the play, the cosmic proportions of great Tragedy. Heaven and Hell—the powers of Life and Death—are shown fiercely interlocked, wrestling mightily together. Commenting on this play, Professor Wilson Knight quotes with approval Mr.

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Middleton Murry's phrase that the protagonists "die into love" and proceeds :

\* The love-problems and death-problems are resolved by being harmonised in the unity of death-in-love. It is difficult to speak adequately of this perhaps the greatest but one of Shakespeare's plays. In the cold forms of conceptual thought one can say that by synchronising a fine moment of love-consciousness with the time-vanquishing act of death the timeless nature of that love-consciousness is made apparent ; or that the death and love union represents a vision of immortality in terms of quality rather than quantity, of value rather than time. But the language of conceptual thought fails before the transcendent reality of this death-revelation.<sup>1</sup>

Another instance of personal tragedy being raised to a cosmic plane by the use of appropriate contrasting imagery may be found in *Othello*. The Moor says,

But I do *love* thee ! and when I *love* thee not  
*Chaos* is come again, Oth. 3.3.92

and later, before suffocating Desdemona :

For to deny each article with oath  
Cannot remove nor *choke* the strong conception 5.2.54  
That I do groan withal.

The particular interest here lies in the fact that this is the culmination of linkages of images which appear much earlier. In the speech in which Romeo speaks of "*love*, whose view is *muffled*" R. & J. 1.1.177  
still" and mentions "loving hate" and other antinomies he goes 1.1.200  
on to use the word "choking." In the famous passage on degree and order which begins :

The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre T. & C. 1.3.85  
Observe degree, priority and place,  
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,  
Office and custom, in all line of order ;

we read,

Great Agamemnon,  
This *chaos*, when degree is *suffocate*,  
Follows the *choking*.

The tragedy of Othello who in "loving hate" chokes and suffocates Desdemona is already incipient in the *Romeo and Juliet* image cluster. The association of "chaos" and the disruption of the

<sup>1</sup> *Myth and Miracle ; an Essay on the Mystic Symbolism of Shakespeare* (1929), pp. 9-10.

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scheme of the universe in the *Troilus and Cressida* passage in which parricide is mentioned with "degree is suffocate" and "choking" foreshadows not only the suffocation of Othello's wife, but also the accompanying imagery characteristic of this play and *Antony and Cleopatra* with their constant suggestions of parallels between man's tragedy and universal cosmic disorder.

•The least reflective person is often impressed and sometimes almost overwhelmed by the possibilities of good and evil latent in particular situations. How delicately is humanity poised between bliss and perdition; how fearfully must man walk the knife-edge path of destiny! A moment's thoughtlessness or a single false step may have terrible consequences. Such considerations have impressed men's imaginations and stirred their wills throughout millennia, but the realisation of the cosmic setting of human life was particularly acute in Elizabethan times because the men who accepted the conception of man's crucial state, between Heaven and Hell in hope, and beast and angel in constitution, were growing in the appreciation of how varied and vast were human potentialities and opportunities. Perceiving the vista of brave new worlds both topographical and spiritual they accepted implicitly the doctrine of man's dual nature on which pagan philosophy, as they understood it, and Christian theology were agreed. Pythagoras (according to Photius) had taught that,

. . . being an amalgam of many and varied elements, we find our life difficult to order. For every other creature is guided by one principle; but we are pulled in different directions by our different faculties. For instance at one time we are drawn towards the better by the god-like element, at another time towards the worse by the domination of the bestial element within us.<sup>1</sup>

In the Psalms (VIII. 5-6) and the Epistle to the Hebrews (II. 7-8) it was proclaimed that man was made a little lower than the angels and that all things were put in subjection under him. Hamlet did but voice in high-sounding words a hoary commonplace philosophy and the uncontroverted opinions of the Elizabethan market-place when he said :

*Ham. 2.2.316*

What a piece of work is a man ! how noble in reason !  
how infinite in faculty ! in form and moving how express  
and admirable ! in action how like an angel ! in apprehension  
how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of  
animals !

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<sup>1</sup> Cit. in E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1943), p. 61.

—and yet dismissed his splendour as merely “the quintessence of dust.” It is this man-in-the-street philosophy which Shakespeare so faithfully expresses as well in his use of imagery as in his philosophy.

EQUIVOCAL OR AMBIVALENT TERMS

It needs no further argument to show that Combining-contrast association is not only frequent in Shakespeare's pages but is fundamental in his thought. Realising that, we are able to understand why punning associations are used so often. Granted that some of Shakespeare's puns seem to us almost pathetically crude and even puerile this should not prevent our recognising that some are effective and subtle. The use of the words “boil” and “stew” in *Troilus and Cressida* provides an illustration of this, for each of them includes opposing image contents lying latent until stirred into activity by associated images. So effectively does “stew” exemplify the juxtaposition of opposite imagery that we may say that it is a key-word epitomising the play just as “nightingale” contains within its symbolism the whole tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*.<sup>1</sup> Its significance lies in the fact that “stew” represents what is excellent to satisfy the appetite of hunger and repulsive to satisfy the appetite of sex. This appears very clearly if we look up the four Shakespearean contexts in which the words “stewed prunes” are used. We find “bawd's house,” “hot-house,” “fornication, adultery and all uncleanness” and “great with child” in the *Measure for Measure* context; “bawdy house,” “foul-mouthed” and “thou art a beast” in 1 *Henry IV*; “bawdy house” and “whore's ruff” in 2 *Henry IV*, and in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* “cannot abide the smell.”<sup>2</sup> Animals associated with unpleasant smells, such as the fox and bear, are also mentioned in some of these passages. Thus when Shakespeare used “stew” of cooking it conjured up images of the brothel, evil smells and beastliness. When he spoke openly of a house of ill-fame the word “stew” revived cooking imagery:

if he shall think it fit,  
A saucy stranger in his court to mart  
As in a Romish *stew* and to expound  
His beastly mind to us . . .

*Cym.* 1.6.150

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Spurgeon has shown that *Troilus and Cressida* has more than double the number of food, drink and cooking images of *Hamlet* and that *Hamlet* contains considerably more of these images than any other play. (*Shakespeare's Imagery*, Chart VIII.)

<sup>2</sup> It was said that stewed prunes were served in brothels. Thus in *The Seven Deadly Sinnes of London* Thomas Dekker refers to “a house where they set stewed prunes before you.”

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When Kent describes the arrival of the sweating,

K.L. 2.4.30

reeking post

*Stew'd* in his haste,

he uses the word "saucily" and when he finishes his speech the Fool says,

Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly that way

Fathers that wear rags

Do make their children *blind* ;

But fathers that bear bags

Shall see their children kind.

Fortune, that arrant *whore*,

Ne'er turns the key to the poor.

But for all this, thou shalt have as many *dolours* for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

The implicit connexion between "stew" and disease is shown when Cleopatra shrieks at the bearer of evil tidings that he will be

A. & C. 2.5.65 "stew'd in brine" after she has uttered the curse

The most *infectious pestilence* upon thee !

In Chapter VII we noted that the goose is associated with food, lust and disease. We also found that the word "boils" has similar affiliations. Thus "boil" and "stew" are both connected with "corruption," as in these lines from *Measure for Measure* :

M. for M.

5.1.320

I have seen *corruption boil* and bubble

Till it o'er-run the *stew*.

Thus through double meanings and ambivalent associations a wide series of inter-connexions is established between varied categories of images such as animals, diseases, food and lust. One image tends to arouse others connected with it, though not always into full consciousness. Hence the emotional force and intense signification of the clotted imagery involved in words such as those used by Hamlet to his mother :

Ham. 3.4.91

Nay, but to live

In the *rank sweat* of an unseamed bed

*Stew'd* in *corruption, honeying* and *making love*

Over the nasty *sty*.

Almost every word arouses a group of linked images and each group is linked with each other group by inter-penetrating meanings. Thus it is evident why cooking imagery is so prominent in *Troilus and Cressida*. Shakespeare is concerned with the physical appetites, and the Life-Love, Death-Hatred contrast is symbolised by the double significance of the word "stew" with its association with good food and bad women, health and disease.

We may note incidentally that so active a sensitivity to the unsavoury meanings of words which usually have a pleasant or an innocent connotation suggests a subconscious preoccupation with the immoral and diseased which does not support the exalted moral estimate of Shakespeare reached by Dr. Caroline Spurgeon.<sup>1</sup> His pages teem with sexual equivocations and cryptic erotic allusions.

We need but recall the strange associations of "crow" and "beetle" both as verbs and substantives and the manner in which "drone" is used as a verb amongst images with which it was earlier associated as a noun for it to be apparent that Shakespeare's puns vary from those made in cold blood to instances of *double entendre* so obscure that we can be sure that they were not perpetrated wittingly. If an Irishism is permissible we might say that the poet was so pun-conscious that he punned unconsciously.

• If the use of *double entendre* by Shakespeare was due to some extent to the delight which he, in common with other writers of his time, found in exploiting the pliability of the English language at a period when there was great scope for experimentation, it also indicates the activity of mental processes which are characteristic of dreams, day-dreams and other more or less dissociated states of mind.

Consonance may provide the point of affinity drawing together two images which have until the perception of this link nothing in common. This is true of mental activity both waking and dreaming. From early times the importance of puns in dream symbolism has been recognised.<sup>2</sup> Probably one so musical as Shakespeare was more than usually alert to the consonance of words. Dr. W. H. R. Rivers has described how in a dream he looked over the shoulder of the President of the Royal Anthropological Institute and noticed that S. Poole had been nominated as the next President. Introspective analysis and other research showed that this name was a dream substitute for his own and that it had appeared in consequence of the following associations :

1. Pool is a disposition of water in a river.
2. As an anthropologist Rivers was familiar with Stanley Pool as a feature of the Congo.
3. Dr. Lane-Poole the orientalist was called Stanley. (Rivers was not manifestly aware of this at the time of the dream.)
4. Rivers had earlier seen the name Samuel Pool in the *British Medical Journal*.

<sup>1</sup> *Shakespeare's Imagery*, pp. 206-7.

<sup>2</sup> Artemidorus Daldianus, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (tr. R. Wood, 4th edn., 1644).



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Rivers—river—a pool on the Congo river—Temp. Lieut. Samuel Pool, M.B., R.A.M.C.—Dr. Stanley Lane-Poole—S. Poole—everyone who has paid attention to his dreams and day-dreams is familiar with this type of association.<sup>1</sup> Catching ourselves day-dreaming, we may retrace a chain of associations such as this, or analysing a dream we find, as Rivers found, that a symbol embodies a varied group of images. Readers of Miss Dorothy Sayers' *The Mind of the Maker* will remember her analysis of similar processes which contribute to the creation of imaginative literature. Here we need not discuss these aspects of mental functioning further as we shall have occasion to consider them again. Let it suffice to realise that there is ample evidence that processes identical with, or very similar to, those of dreaming contribute to the production of works of genius. Amongst these are the capacity to pass extremely swiftly from one meaning to another meaning and the ability to hold condensed and latent within an image an assortment of associations.

### • IMAGE CLUSTERS

As so much of the earlier part of this study is devoted to the origin and development of the groups of images which I have called image clusters and as much of what follows has a bearing on their nature, psychological etiology and constitution, I need do little more now than remind the reader of certain facts about them and peculiarities which characterise them :

- (1) Psychologically they are so remarkable and stylistically so gratuitous that it is impossible to believe them to be elaborated or maintained wittingly.
- (2) Once formed they tend to reappear again and again, though some of the component images may vary from time to time. Sometimes they seem to be subject to principles of growth and decay, organisation and disintegration. The crow-beetle linkage appears scattered, becomes concentrated, then scatters again. The drone cluster behaves like a set of dancers exchanging partners and from time to time including a new dancer in place of an old. There is an interesting parallel between the relatively independent life and autonomous development of some of Shakespeare's characters and the development of his image clusters.
- (3) In its passage through the plays an image may acquire a series of partners by any of the modes of association.
- (4) An image cluster may come into being in various different ways. Some may be traced to the poet's reading, others to his observation or experience.

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<sup>1</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, *Conflict and Dream* (1923), pp. 9-15.

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Two functions of the mind which contribute to the genesis and maintenance of an image cluster call for special stress—memory, the holding together of what was previously brought into association, and emotion, which in most instances certainly, and in others probably, constitutes the bond responsible for the linkage. In the next chapter we shall pass to an examination of the first of these activities and consider what we know or can infer about some aspects of Shakespeare's powers of memory. Later we shall examine emotion's contribution to imaginative thought.

TYPES OF ASSOCIATION

It is unnecessary for our present purpose to discuss the doctrine of the "Association of Ideas" as developed by Locke, Hume, Hartley, J. and J. S. Mill, for evolutionary and dynamic conceptions applied to psychology have made the views associated with these philosophers of more historical interest than psychological relevance. It is interesting to note, however, that Locke in his *Essay on the Human Understanding* appreciated to some extent the nature of image clusters. He wrote :

Ideas, that in themselves are not at all of kin, come to be so united in some men's minds, that it is very hard to separate them ; they always keep in company, and the one no sooner at any time comes into the understanding, but its associate appears with it ; and if they are more than two which are thus united, the whole gang always inseparable shew themselves together.

The types of association are classified in different ways in modern psychological works. In his *Text-Book of Experimental Psychology* (3rd edn., 1925, Cambridge, p. 142) C. S. Myers gives the table below, showing all the types logically possible :

Similarity	{	in meaning	{	co-ordination
				superordination
				subordination
		in sound		contrast
				in letters or syllables
				in rhyme
Contiguity	{	in time		causal
		in space		verbal

For practical purposes, such as the consideration of association-types in Shakespeare, a classification drawn up for word-association

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tests is likely to prove more useful.<sup>1</sup> The examples are from the plays.

A. *Intrinsic Association*. Continuity. An essential resemblance between the meanings of the relevant words.

I. Co-ordination. Essential similarity between the two.

Peacock—turkey.

II. Predication. One word expresses some predicate, judgment, function or attribute of the other word or defines or explains it.

Butterfly—gilded.

III. Causal dependence. A relationship of causation between the words.

Perfumes—sweeten.

B. *Extrinsic Association*. Contiguity. The resemblance is superficial, personal or fortuitous.

I. Co-existence. Simultaneous. The two words connected through prior or frequent simultaneous use.

Prunes—stewed.

II. Identity. Synonyms or near-synonyms.

Unlesson'd—unschool'd.

III. Motor-speech forms. Connected through frequent use in daily expressions, proverbs, etc.

Cat—mouse.

C. *Sound Association*. Primarily auditory.

I. Word completion.

Ever—everlasting.

II. Clang.

Kate—cat.

III. Rhyme.

Nit—wit.

D. *Miscellaneous*.

I. Mediate. An indirect association intelligible only on the assumption of an intermediary bond that does not appear.

Wax—sea.

<sup>1</sup> E. Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (1918), pp. 307-8. For a more elaborate system of classification cf. C. G. Jung, *Studies in Word-Association* (tr. M. D. Eder, 1918).

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So far as the analysis of Shakespearean types of association is concerned the usefulness of these tables is seriously limited. In word-association tests cue words are chosen to which in response a reaction word is supplied; but to treat Shakespeare's words simply as stimulus words in relation to others is to disregard the psychological intricacies of association. Moreover, in particular instances it is often doubtful which principle of association was dominant. A further complication arises through the fact that a given association may be due to a combination of ways of associating. The attempt to classify psychological processes into static logical categories is foredoomed to failure. It is seeking the living amongst the dead. Psychological modes of association cannot be accurately correlated with apparent literary affinities save when in the context or otherwise we are provided with additional clues. An association appears in literature as a word linked with another word, but the mental process involved is by no means the linking of one word with another. Associations blossom into conscious expression because of their wide-spreading roots beneath the surface of consciousness. Emotions and even physiological processes play a part and associative activities may perhaps be traced even into the tenebrous realm of the wordless.

## CHAPTER

### XII

#### SHAKESPEARE'S MEMORY

**T**HERE is no doubt that Shakespeare's memory was very retentive. Critics, with much justice, say "he forgot nothing," though the wonder is rather that he made such complete yet economical use of what he remembered. We have seen how ideas used in his early work reappeared in his later plays. Making all allowance for the familiarity with his own plays which he must have attained through acting in them and seeing them acted or through revising parts of them, yet the more closely they are studied the more ineluctable is the impression that he was gifted with a memory of more than usual efficiency.

Illiteracy was so widespread and books so costly in Tudor times that folk-memory played a part as the custodian of local knowledge which the newspaper and public library have now usurped. There still lingered something of that high regard for memory which we find amongst primitive peoples whose conservatism is such that they will not tolerate the slightest deviation from tradition in the telling of a saga or ancient tale. Moreover, the writer of the period was not so beset by the necessity fastidiously to avoid plagiarism and eschew the infringement of copyright as is the author to-day, although resentment might indeed be aroused by the appropriation of literary material, as when Greene on his death-bed charged Shakespeare with being "an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers." Our acute sense of copyright endows us with a cast of mind which Tudor dramatists possessed in lesser degree. The dread of infringing copyright inclines us to lay aside and forget—so far as our literary work is concerned—ideas and phrases which, however beautiful and effective they may be, are presented to us like church hymn-books inscribed, "Not to be taken away." Shakespeare and his fellows, as is well known, freely used each other's ideas and borrowed plots, phrases and images from their predecessors and contemporaries without compunction. "The grey-eyed morn" is mentioned by Nashe, Shakespeare, Chapman, Beaumont and Nabbes, and the iron car of darkness is associated with rust by Spenser,

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Marlowe, Marston and Heywood, as, for example, in Marlowe's *Edward II* :

Gallop apace, bright Phœbus, through the sky ;  
And dusky Night, in rusty iron car,  
Between you both shorten the time, I pray.<sup>1</sup>

Memory is one of the faculties in which the disparities in human endowment are most apparent. Forty years after casually reading two poems in a newspaper, Macaulay was able to repeat them verbatim, although he had never given them a thought in the interval. He claimed that if all copies of *Paradise Lost* and *Pilgrim's Progress* were destroyed he could reproduce them from memory.<sup>2</sup> Mozart was able to write down Allegri's *Miserere*, sung in the Sistine Chapel, after hearing it once, or possibly twice. Of Coleridge a friend wrote :

What evenings have I spent in those rooms ! What little suppers, or *sizings*, as they were called, have I enjoyed ; when Æschylus and Plato and Thucydides were pushed aside . . . to discuss the pamphlets of the day. Ever and anon, a pamphlet issued from the pen of Burke. There was no need of having the book before us. Coleridge had read it in the morning, and in the evening he would repeat whole pages verbatim. Frennd's trial was then in progress. Pamphlets swarmed from the press. Coleridge had read them all ; in the evening with our negus, we had them *viva voce* gloriously.<sup>3</sup>

A collector of folk-tales records that he took down a long tale from a Kerry story-teller who had heard it out of a book twice and remembered it word for word, as comparison with the printed text showed.<sup>4</sup>

So far as proof of the retentiveness of Shakespeare's memory is concerned we need seek no further than the examples of recurrent association cited in earlier chapters. Years after a word had appeared in a context with another word the recollection of one was apt to recall the other. It is apparent from the nature of his imagery that facility of recall was characteristic of his memory. Shakespeare's capacities may not have been quite of the order of the

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<sup>1</sup> H. Bayley in *The Shakespeare Symphony* (1906) shows how many phrases were worn threadbare by the Elizabethan dramatists.

<sup>2</sup> Sir G. O. Trevelyan, *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (1881) pp. 37-8.

<sup>3</sup> C. V. le Grice, *Gentleman's Magazine*, Dec. 1834, p. 606.

<sup>4</sup> S. O. Duilearga, "Irish Stories and Story-tellers," *Studies*, March 1942.

## *Shakespeare's Imagination*

Kerry story-teller, but clearly they were outstanding—and herein we have evidence of another “primitive” characteristic which his mind possessed. Ideas and images, like the blossoms of water-lilies at dusk, did but withdraw beneath the surface to reappear again. In his pool of memory how little decayed!

To be fully effective it is not enough that memory should be tenacious; it must also be systematising. These are the very qualities which Coleridge said that he possessed and which we may believe were also Shakespeare's. The series of image clusters which we have reviewed has already shown how systematic were the associative activities of the poet's mind. Here I would call attention to their remarkable balance and co-ordination. The imaginative processes had readily available in the realms of memory material appertaining to a variety of “universes of discourse” and they chose and ordered it with astonishing felicity.

Such a statement as this needs qualification, however, and it is advisable to formulate the point of view here set forth in rather more psychological terms lest it should be supposed that I accept the view that images or “memory traces” are stored intact within the memory as discretely and tidily as cans of pork in a grocer's basement. This theory, which in one form or another was popular in the older psychology and still lingers in Freudian circles, must be abandoned for a more dynamic conception such as that suggested by Professor F. C. Bartlett.<sup>1</sup> According to this view a large number of “schemata” built of words and images and composing active organisations of past reactions and experiences are not stable but, on the contrary, constantly changing and therefore “remembering . . . is an imaginative reconstruction.”<sup>2</sup> Evidence for this is furnished by experiments on the revival of images and the memorising of narratives. The general mental attitude—constituted by the appetites, instincts, interests and ideals of the subject—is found to modify the remembering process and consequently the matter remembered. A story, reproduced from memory some time after hearing it, will be found to have sustained various alterations through the influence, usually unrecognised, of these interests. We find a description of this process in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*: “Put an idea into your intelligence and leave it there for an hour, a day, a year, without ever having occasion to refer to it. When at last you return to it, you do not find it as it was when acquired. It has domiciliated itself, so to speak—become at

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<sup>1</sup> *Remembering* (Cambridge, 1932).

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 213.

home—entered into your other thoughts and integrated itself into the whole fabric of your mind.”<sup>1</sup>

• In recall the “schemata” are activated. They overlap so that items from one may be incorporated in the recall of items from another, but according to Professor Bartlett the distinction between remembering and imagining is that, in the former, material from a centrally organised mass accumulated under a specific interest is central and other “schemes” are ancillary, while in imagining the central “scheme” is not predetermined; material organised under one or another of many interests and participating in a variety of “schemata” may be utilised—and, indeed, it is the degree of effectiveness with which the interaction of these takes place that constitutes the appropriateness of the resulting products—the poetry, music or other artistic creation.

This theory, set forth here in all too brief outline, finds justification in the adequacy with which it enables us to interpret the activities of Shakespeare's memory. Of course, in so far as memory uses images it is a form of imagining, and, as suggested above, to the extent that it alters the material committed to it memory may be called imaginative. William McDougall does not accept the common view that imagination and memory are different functions. In his opinion imagination takes the three forms of simple imagination, anticipation and remembering.<sup>2</sup> But as in ordinary speech “memory” denotes the preservative functions of the mind and “imagination” has a creative connotation we may best avoid confusion by using the terms in these senses. In accepting the statement that “remembering is an imaginative reconstruction” we acknowledge that the registrative and preservative functions of the mind do not operate in isolation or independence. It would be better to use the term “imagining” for the types distinguished by McDougall so that “imagination” could be understood in the sense in which I employ it as the specifically creative activity in which images are involved and to which memory, emotion and reason contribute. It should be noted that as far back as Plotinus *φαντασία* was considered to be intermediate between *φύσις* (the lower soul) and the perfect apprehension of *νοῦς*, and that St. John

<sup>1</sup> J. Livingston Lowes in *The Road to Xanadu*, pp. 57–8, has an interesting comment on this. Thirty years after reading the passage it recalled the figure of something with white, spreading tentacles under a stone. On turning to the book he discovered in a different context a reference to plant life sprouting under a stone. The connexion of the two conceptions in the hidden recesses of the mind admirably illustrates the truth of Oliver Wendell Holmes' statement.

<sup>2</sup> *An Outline of Psychology* (7th edn., 1936), p. 305.



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of the Cross considered imagination to constitute a link between intellect and memory.<sup>1</sup>

I would suggest that man's outstanding capacity for memory reconstructions is due to the extension of his powers of association in alliance with emotion and the integration of this capacity with other capacities. The relative freedom from determination which is characteristic of the human imagination affects the process of remembering so that the possibility of imaginative modification, and perchance falsification of the content of memory, is the penalty which we have to pay for the much greater range of our individual memorising powers in comparison with those of animals.

Our thesis, then, is that memory, emotion and reason are all active in the work of the creative imagination and that the specific contribution of memory is preservative, chronological and reproductive. Memory, however, is so allied with other functions that it does more than record. Emotional and other factors modify it (or are utilised by it) so that its products can become so changed from what they were when registered that in comparison they may be described as imaginative. Thus the difficulty in defining human memory and its functions lies in the degree in which we formulate our conception of it as an abstraction and define it by its preservative functions, or on the other hand, admit into its definition those modificatory activities to which it is subject. Fortunately it is unnecessary to pursue this matter further here. It is sufficient if I have made it clear that while Professor Bartlett regards "imaginative" activity as characteristic of the nature of memory as he understands it, I consider the modificatory activities of memory as contributed by, and belonging properly to, the functions which constitute the imagination.

Shakespeare realised the interdependence of the capacities which in common speech we distinguish as memory and imagination, for, in a passage which we are entitled to believe was suggested by his own introspection, he wrote :

*L.L.L.* 4.2.67

This is a gift I have . . . full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions : these are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourisht in the womb of pia mater, and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. But the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am thankful for it.

5.2.150  
*Cor.* 5.3.40

He refers later in the play—and also in *Coriolanus* and *Sonnet XXIII*—to the effect of a contemptuous reception by the audience

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism* (1899), p. 226.

in causing an actor to forget his part. Had this at some time been his own experience?

When, after an interval, we are asked to repeat a story and do so introducing modifications unwittingly into it our minds are acting in a parallel manner to the action of Shakespeare's mind in reproducing image clusters with components which change from time to time in the sequence of the plays. The "schemata" are subject to change so that mere rote reproduction is avoided and images are able to change partners and assort themselves into different patterns. Thus, as I shall illustrate in the next chapter, material organised under a variety of different interests is brought together in a process of cross-fertilisation, for themes and images are not merely juxtaposed but interpenetrate and influence each other in a strangely fluent way so that a few contiguous words become, not a phrase, but a spell.

It will be appropriate here, however, as an illustration of how Shakespeare's memory contributed to his creative imagination, to give an instance of how the revival of an interest reanimated a large number of images which in the past had been associated with it. Let us consider how a few words at the beginning of one of Shakespeare's plays exerted such a power to arouse related imagery as to constitute a constant theme. This type of imagery—which I call "Thematic," in which a thought excites the frequent appearance throughout a play of images all connected with a body of memories already organised into association with one another under a specific interest—deserves more attention from Shakespearean students than it has received. It differs from the dominant, running or reiterative imagery commented on by Dr. Spurgeon in several respects but especially in its involving the continual allusion to a latent or secondary theme and its manifold content.

A superficial reading of *As You Like It* is sufficient to show that religious references are frequent. Why should this be so? In Shakespeare's source—Lodge's *Rosalynde*—religion is hardly mentioned, nor is it given any prominence in Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, from which Shakespeare borrowed when writing Act III, Scene II. Note, however, that *As You Like It* opens with the words:

As I remember, Adam . . .

A.Y.L.I. 1.1.1

In *Rosalynde* there is a character called Adam Spencer who inspired the Adam of *As You Like It* to whom these opening words are addressed. This name, or more correctly these words, together with some similarity apparently perceived between certain biblical features such as the Garden of Eden and the setting of Lodge's

## *Shakespeare's Imagination*

play, initiated a series of memory associations which constituted an undercurrent of religious reminiscence manifesting itself in the imagery of the play from beginning to end. The poet keeps "remembering Adam" again and again.<sup>1</sup>

A. Y. L. I. 5.4.36  
2.5.63

We have references to the story of the Ark and the Plagues of Egypt from the Old Testament as well as to the parable of the Prodigal Son from the Gospels. Moreover, references to the doctrines and practices of the Church abound. We find such words and phrases as "testament," "purgation," "sermons," "bear no cross," "bells have knoll'd to church," "sacred," "damned," "sin," "pilgrimage," "homily," "parishioners," "heavenly synod," "scrip," "mountains may be moved," "catechism," "count atomies," "christened," "deifying," "priest," "Judas," "touch of holy bread," "nun," "religious," "Christian," "Godhead," "prayers," "fasting" and "olive trees." What happened in Shakespeare's mind is clear. The first words of the play aroused memories of the account of Adam and Eve in Genesis, and the recollected idyllic atmosphere of the Garden of Eden story being so similar to the sentiments aroused by *Rosalynde*, Shakespeare found himself in a mood such that a stream of religious images flowed from his pen.

The doctrine of the Fall of Man is the background of the play with the parable of the Prodigal Son as its archetype. Not many lines from the beginning, Orlando says to Oliver, his elder brother :

1.1.40            Shall I keep your hogs, and eat husks with them?  
                  What prodigal portion have I spent, that I should come to  
                  such penury?

<sup>1</sup> Another example of the effectiveness of a personal name in reviving memory-associations is to be found in *Hamlet*. The Queen describes how Ophelia was drowned where "a willow grows aslant the brook"—

*Ham.* 4.7.173

There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds  
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;  
And mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:

Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death.

When Shakespeare was sixteen a girl was found drowned after an unfortunate love affair, and at the inquest which was held at Stratford her parents, endeavouring to prevent a verdict of *felo de se*, pleaded that their daughter was drowned by accident and that she slipped from a great slanting willow while dipping flowers she had gathered in the stream. Her name was Katharine Hamlett. (Cf. L. de Chambrun, *Shakespeare: Actor-Poet*, 1927, pp. 26-7.)

Both before and after these words we have hints that the parable is in Shakespeare's mind—when Orlando says,

call you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth,  
that differs not from the stalling of an ox ?

*A.Y.L.I.* 1.1.10

and later demands,

give me the poor allottery my father left me by testament ;  
with that I will go buy my fortunes.

1.1.76

It is evident that Shakespeare was conscious of the resemblance between his theme and that of the parable—the difference in character of the two brothers and the ultimate reformation of one of them.

If we glance at a single scene, Act III, Scene II, we find plentiful reminiscences of the first chapters of Genesis. In the Duke's opening speech the words "seek him with candle" may be a telescoping or synthesis of the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Lost Talent. Some lines after "sin is damnation," Touchstone says :

Wilt thou rest damn'd ? God help thee shallow man :  
God make incision in thee, thou art raw.

3.2.74

Although the overt reference is to medicinal bleeding, it is possible that there is an underlying and unrecognised thought of the rib which was taken from man to form woman. This is indicated by the collocation of "ribs," "ladies" and "sides" in an earlier passage in which "men may grow wiser every day" may have been suggested by the consequence of Eve's sin. The devil and damnation are now mentioned and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is adumbrated in the words "I found them on a tree" and "the tree yields bad fruit." The identification is supported by the occurrence of "wisely" soon afterwards. Orlando's screed which follows is crammed with religious imagery—the unpeopled desert suggests the epoch before the creation of Adam, "how brief the life of man," his condemnation, "violated vows," Eve's sinfulness. "Feet were lame and would not bear themselves" and, later, "stretched along like a wounded knight" are reminiscences of the snake which is explicitly referred to twice in Act IV, Scene III. This "green and gilded snake," the reclining man "o'ergrown with hair" and the palm tree of Act III, Scene II, are very probably derived from mediæval representations of the Garden of Eden—in pictures and designs, religious plays or

1.2.145

3.2.122

4.3.109

3.2.186

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- tapestries.<sup>1</sup> As long ago as 1774 commentators pointed out how much poetic imagery was derived from such sources.<sup>2</sup> "Seven . . . days out of the wonder" is another recollection of the Creation narrative and "mountains may be remov'd" connects the thought of the Creation and Christ's reference to faith. The idea of Creation appears in "So you may put a man in your belly" and also in Rosalind's enquiry, "Is he of God's making?" with the reference to God and the devil.
- We have another glimpse of the Tree of Knowledge with the words, "I found him under a tree like a dropp'd acorn" and Rosalind's rejoinder, "It may well be call'd Jove's tree when it drops forth fruit." "No breather in the world but myself" is a clear reference to Adam's creation and the comments on Time and "seven year" are drawn from the same complex of ideas. The scene is full of references to ecclesiastical matters, such as the homily, catechism, christening and "a priest that lacks Latin."
- It is tempting to regard the "right painted cloth" as referring to the actual representations of biblical scenes from which the imagery is drawn. In other scenes there are even more explicit references to the Fall, such as in Act II, Scene II—"Here feel we not the penalty of Adam"<sup>3</sup> and in Act IV, Scene I, to the Creation of the World—"almost six thousand years old" and of man—"chide God for making you." It will be noted that the gardening and food imagery coheres with the Garden of Eden theme.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor Dover Wilson in *The New Cambridge Shakespeare* (1926, p. 138) remarks on the commentators' efforts to explain the presence of a palm-tree in the Forest of Arden, but neither their suggestion that "pussy willow" is intended nor his that the palm is mentioned as a symbol of victory carries conviction. It is more probable that it was introduced because of its association with pictures of the Garden of Eden. Amongst the subjects represented in church wall-paintings were the Making of Eve out of Adam's Rib, the Fall and the Expulsion from the Garden. However, I have been unable to find any record of such scenes in Stratford church and the paintings in most Midland churches had been covered up by Shakespeare's time.

<sup>2</sup> T. Warton, *The History of English Poetry from the Close of the 11th to the Commencement of the 17th Century* (1774-81), Vol. I, pp. 209-13, Vol. II, pp. 215-17, Vol. IV, p. 122, Vol. VIII, p. 579. Cf. also W. Whiter, *A Specimen of a Commentary on Shakespeare* (1794), p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> The Folio text reading "not" in place of "but." Cf. J. D. Wilson, *The New Cambridge Shakespeare*, "As You Like It" (1926), p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Caroline Spurgeon does not comment on the abundant religious imagery in this and other plays. Her very complete index does not contain a single reference to religious imagery outside the appendices. She comments on the "small number" of theatrical images (*Shakespeare's Imagery*, p. 45) although, as Sir E. K. Chambers pointed out (*Shakespearean Gleanings*, Oxford, 1944, pp. 43-51), they are prominent in the plays. Her system of card-indexing images was useful statistically and in other ways, but evidently obscured the significance of many of them. Under this system "hogs" for example, would, no doubt, be indexed under "Animals," with no indication of their religious relevance. Undoubtedly this defect in method was responsible for some erroneous conclusions.

Such thematic imagery may be compared with the variations on a theme in a musical composition. They may be so cleverly introduced and cunningly modified that it exercises an expert musician to discern how frequently elements of the theme are introduced. Just as it is probable that Shakespeare was not fully aware how a theme might dominate his mind, so composers achieve effects unwittingly. Delius declared "harmony is an instinct" and, psychologically questionable as the expression may be, it indicates that a musician may realise that his effects are sometimes obtained intuitively and without manifest artifice. The animation of material organised under a dominant interest whether in memory or imagination may be subject to subconscious modification.

This example of thematic imagery illustrates several of the most characteristic features of Shakespeare's memory. (1) An apparently insignificant cue may initiate the recall of a very extensive series of images. As Keats said in connexion with the association of ideas—"merely pulling an apron string we set a pretty peal of Chimes at work."<sup>1</sup> (2) Once a theme or interest assumes importance it tends to recur and become integrated into the texture of the play. (3) The associations of the images are not achieved mainly on the conscious level. It is improbable that Shakespeare realised completely the extent to which he was continually "remembering Adam" in *As You Like It*. (4) Images revive one another in a continuous and fluent way.<sup>2</sup>

•To sum up: Shakespeare's memory was remarkably efficient and systematic. It combined the qualities of retentiveness and availability. Everywhere in the plays we find evidence of its efficient and unobtrusive ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Letters of John Keats* (ed. M. B. Forman, 2nd edn., 1935), Letter 64, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> Another example of thematic imagery is provided by the late Robert Nichols' "Sunrise Poem," printed with an account of how it was conceived in Dr. Rosamond Harding's *Anatomy of Inspiration* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1942). Biblical imagery, and especially imagery connected with the Epiphany, appears frequently in its twenty-eight lines. We have such words as "Arabian," "mages," "gold," "scribe," "Greek," "Jew"; also the lines:

Or the most scholarly of sages,  
Or the most awkward of those who plod,

appear to reflect the contrast between the Wise Men and the Shepherds. The poem also contains a quotation from Psalm xix and a reminiscence of one of the Good Friday collects. In his detailed introspective analysis of the composition of the poem Robert Nichols does not mention the stream of biblical imagery and in a letter written in response to an enquiry from me he replied that he was not conscious of being influenced by the Epiphany conception. If my deduction is correct we have here an instance of a motif used unwittingly. It is all the more interesting and significant as it is in connexion with a poem the genesis of which is critically discussed in great detail by its author.

CHAPTER  
XIII  
STREAMY ASSOCIATIONS

**M**OST people seeing a church would not think immediately of a wreck, yet Salarino acknowledged that had he given such hostages to fortune as Antonio his anxiety would constantly beguile his thoughts from the sight of the most irrelevant objects and unrelated acts back to his treasure ships :

*M. of V. 1.1.22*

My wind cooling my broth  
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought  
What harm a wind too great at sea might do.  
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,  
But I should think of shallows and of flats,  
And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,  
Vailing her high tops lower than her ribs  
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church  
And see the holy edifice of stone,  
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,  
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,  
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,  
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,  
And, in a word, but even now worth this,  
And now worth nothing ?

•Salarino mentally “tossing on the ocean” with his imaginary ships involuntarily perceived connexions between them and casual objects of daily experience, for anxiety prompts the utilisation of every kind of material in building bridges back to the disturbing thought. Emotional stress may thus hamper normal associative activity. Concentrated attention, as we shall presently see, may also shackle association. Inspired work is dependent on a harmony between the emotional and the intellectual such that the processes of association are free in the sense in which the citizen of an ideal state is free. The legal limitations of his liberty which he accepts give him freedom within wide limits to pursue his chosen aims with tranquillity and singleness of heart. When the mind can discipline all its faculties to the attainment of its creative purpose and at the

same time permit its associative powers to enjoy the maximum freedom consistent with their serving its ends, we have the condition pre-requisite to great artistic achievement. Shakespeare possessed this ability to an extraordinary degree. While the upper levels of his mind were intent on working out some great theme, the lower levels busied themselves in contributory associative activity.

It is impossible here to discuss adequately the great versatility of Shakespeare's powers of association, but what has been called the "streaminess" of his thought is worthy of particular attention. Coleridge remarked on it in his *Table Talk* of 7th April 1833: "In Shakespeare one sentence begets the other naturally; the meaning is all inwoven. He goes on kindling like a meteor through the dark atmosphere." This impression of fluidity is largely due to the manner in which one word or image arouses another connected with it in experience and consequently linked to it by inclusion within the same interest. The religious imagery of *As You Like It* has already provided an illustration on a large scale of this type of association, but its effectiveness is best realised when we perceive how it pervades Shakespeare's style and is implicitly accepted by the hearer or reader. Images and ideas follow in a sequence which is natural in the sense that there is already established in the average person's mind an association between them. But it is subtly contrived in that the process is unobtrusive by which the co-operation of associations in the reader's mind is enlisted. We have an illustration of this in the thematic ecclesiastical imagery of Salarino's speech, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. "Ague" leads to the thought of "burial," "burial" to "church," "church" to "spices," although the primary thought is not of burial rites. For an example of multiple themes consider Macbeth's famous speech:

- She should have died hereafter ;  
There would have been a time for such a word.  
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
To the last syllable of recorded time.  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle !  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more : it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.

*Mac. 5.5.17*



## Shakespeare's Imagination

The images group themselves according to certain interests :

Hereafter—to-morrow—to-day—time—yesterdays—hour.  
Word—syllable—recorded—tale.  
Creeps—walking—struts.  
Petty—brief—nothing.  
Lighted—candle—shadow.  
Died—death—life's.  
Frets—fury.  
Player—stage.

Thus, for example, in the line,

To the last syllable of recorded time,

“syllable” is the more apt because our minds have been prepared for it by “word.” In their turn “syllable” and “word” lead the mind smoothly on to the “player” heard upon the stage. So with nearly all Shakespeare's writing; he employs the full potency of his word symbols by integrating them into the context and awakening chains of not fully conscious associations which co-operate in the reader's mind to give emotional tone. Much of Shakespeare's poetic genius lies in the capacity of his subconscious thought to arouse harmonics in our minds.<sup>1</sup>

• This natural artifice is augmented by the manner in which his thought oscillates from the abstract to the concrete and carries our minds with it in its movement, never expressing itself so abstractly that the minds of lesser men are lost in the abstraction but continually building pictures and arousing images. This is particularly evident in his superb mastery of metaphor. As Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch expressed it: “In handling a thought he ever inclines to put it in the concretest form; as conversely, his most vivid visualisations are ever shading off into thought.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. H. W. Wells in his *Poetic Imagery illustrated from Elizabethan Literature* (New York, 1924), classifies images into groups according to their distinctive qualities. For instance, what he styles the “Sunken image” is “one which powerfully affects the imagination without conveying a definite picture—as “Ripeness is all” (p. 76), while the “Expansive image” is “one in which each term is strongly modified by the others” (p. 169). It differs from the Sunken figure in that its terms are fully visualised or realised. If we were to adopt this terminology we might say that the Expansive image was much used by Shakespeare; but stimulating and useful as is Mr. Wells' endeavour to discriminate images into types, it is—as all such efforts must be—somewhat arbitrary, and unsatisfactory from the psychological point of view.

<sup>2</sup> *Studies in Literature* (2nd series, pocket edn., Cambridge, 1927), p. 162

Just as when we introduce two of our friends to one another aspects of their character which we had never suspected may become apparent, so with Shakespeare's images : they transform and reciprocally augment each other's power and content when brought together. As Mr. Desmond MacCarthy has said :

This streamy quality of his mind gave Shakespeare's mind its felicitous facility, and, at great moments, a matchless homogeneity. His words modify each other more than those of other writers ; they melt and blend together in so extraordinary a degree that a whole passage often has the unity of a single phrase. Hence his glory as a craftsman ; hence, too, his obscurity and difficulty.<sup>1</sup>

Out of three sounds he frames " not a fourth sound, but a star."

Consider it well : each tone of our scale is nought ;  
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all  
is said :  
Give it to me to use ! I mix it with two in my thought :  
And there ! ye have heard and seen : consider and bow  
the head !

Often the device—though it is hardly accurate to call it such as the process is so native to his mind—by which Shakespeare achieves this effect, is the employment of words in such a way that secondary meanings of which our minds are dimly aware bridge the gap between the units of speech. Thus when Metellus says :

O, let us have him, for his *silver* hairs  
Will *purchase* us a good opinion, J.C. 2.1.144

the unexpressed conception is " money " or " coin." Another example of a different kind may be found in *Hamlet*. The King speaks the lines :

This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
Sits smiling to my heart : in grace whereof,  
No jocund health that Denmark drinks today,  
But the great *cannon* to the clouds shall tell ; Ham. 1.2.123

Three lines later the Prince wishes,

that the Everlasting had not fixt  
His *canon* 'gainst self-*slaughter* !

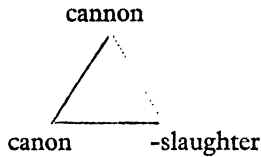
Here although the first reference is to a cannonade as a salute, the thought of the cannon as a lethal weapon is so close to expression

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<sup>1</sup> *Sunday Times*, 13th October, 1935.

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that it almost slips out. A few moments later "canon" and "-slaughter" appear together. The relationship of the images may be shown thus :



The dotted line represents the conception latent in the minds of both playwright and audience but not expressed. So far the associations turn on a crude pun. It is not until the peal of ordnance is heard as the final Curtain falls that the linkage is complete. The thunder of the guns provides the perfect conclusion to the play, for the pivot of the tragedy is Hamlet's lack of the complaisant "accord" which the King was so ready to honour with a salute of guns, and his choice of suicide in spite of the "canon 'gainst self-slaughter." "Words, words, words"—no word is sufficient to express the depth of tragedy here. Only the voice of guns is adequate. "The rest is silence."

Ham. 2.2.194

5.2.369

Yet another instance of latent secondary meanings occurs in *Romeo and Juliet*. When we scrutinise the words with which Friar Laurence greets Juliet's entry they seem rather inept, if not, indeed, fatuous :

R. & J. 2.6.16

Here comes the lady : O, so *light* a foot  
Will ne'er wear out the *everlasting* flint :  
A lover may bestride the gossamer  
That idles in the wanton summer air,  
And yet not fall ; so *light* is vanity.

Would it not have been more appropriate to suggest that the grass hardly bent beneath her tread or that the worm scarcely felt the pressure of her foot ? Why emphasise that the hardest of stones would not be worn out by the lightest of feet ? Such expressions are only to be understood when we realise that they are due to typically Shakespearean associative modes of thought. The word "light" gives us the clue we need. It is preceded some lines earlier by "fire and powder" and followed by "flint." To a man of his time the image connecting these would be some kind of firearm, and so, we can be sure, it was with Shakespeare. As Mr. R. W. Cruttwell has pointed out, there is here the underlying thought of the newly invented "snaphance," which was an improvement on the type of musket preceding it in that the powder was ignited by the contact between flint and steel rather than

between iron pyrites and steel.<sup>1</sup> The syllable "light" with the mention of violence in Friar Laurence's previous remark,

These violent *delights* have violent ends,

R & J. 2.6.9

leads on to and coheres with the thought of firearms which is implicit so soon afterwards and the brawls and killing which are mentioned at the beginning of the next scene. So also does "everlasting." This word, as is apparent on reference to other contexts in which it is used, had, rather naturally, a religious connotation in Shakespeare's mind, and moreover, we have already noted in the *Hamlet* context its association with firearms. Through the intermediate link of "hell" it was closely connected in thought with "fire" and "light." Thus Falstaff, after mentioning "hell-fire," says,

O, thou art a perpetual triumph, an *everlasting bonfire light* ! 1 H. IV. 3.3.46

Aaron cries,

If there be devils, would I were a devil,  
To live and burn in *everlasting fire*,  
So I might have your company in *hell*,

Titus, 5.1.147

and the Porter in *Macbeth* mutters,

I had thought to have let in some of all professions that  
go the primrose way to the *everlasting bonfire*. Mac. 2.3.21

The hearer's or reader's mind has been prepared to accept "everlasting" in this context as the entirely appropriate word by the preceding thematic religious imagery "heavens," "holy," "amen," "death," "die" and "consume."

The Porter's speech, indeed, excellently exemplifies streaminess of thought and equivocal associations. He says "Here's a farmer," and after some further knocking at the gate "Here's an equivocator." At first glance there is no apparent reason why "farmer" and "equivocator" should thus be brought into association. The explanation is that "Mr. Farmer" was the *alias* of Garnett the Jesuit who had been hanged not long before for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot. His equivocation had made his name a by-word.<sup>2</sup> Here Shakespeare himself was equivocating consciously and intentionally and when the play was first produced the audience no doubt appreciated the reference, just as the audiences which first enjoyed Gilbert and Sullivan's musical comedies relished topical references which are lost on the gallery to-day.

<sup>1</sup> *Times Literary Supplement*, 24th April 1943.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sir E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare* (1930), Vol. I, p. 474 ; E. E. Kellett, *Suggestions, Literary Essays* (Cambridge, 1923), p. 64.

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Shakespeare's sensitivity to the imagery latent in the alternative senses of words may be further illustrated by his use of the word "cross." In the majority of instances, even when it is a verb and without any sacred significance, he sets some religious expression close to it. Thus in *Measure for Measure* :

*M. for M.*  
4.2.173

*Provost.* Pray, sir, in what ?

*Duke.* In the delaying *death*.

*Provost.* Alack, how may I do it, having the hour limited and an express command, under penalty, to deliver his head in the view of *Angelo* ? I may make my case as Claudio's to *cross* this in the smallest.

*Duke.* By the *vow of mine order* I warrant you, if my instructions may be your guide. Let this Bernardine be this morning executed and *his head borne to Angelo*.

The implicit reference to the fate of John the Baptist is obvious. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* :

*M.N.D.* 2.1.119

*Oberon.* Why should Titania *cross* her Oberon ?  
I do but beg a little changeling boy,  
To be my henchman.

*Titania.* Set your heart at rest !  
The fairy land buys not the child of me :  
His mother was a *votaress of my order*.

In *Much Ado About Nothing* occurs this dialogue :

*M. Ado,* 5.1.138

*Claudio.* Nay, then, give him another staff : this last was broke *cross*.

*Don Pedro.* By this light, he changes more and more : I think he be angry indeed.

*Claudio.* If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

*Benedick.* Shall I speak a word in your ear ?

*Claudio.* *God bless me* from a challenge.

Hamlet speaks of the omens which,

*Ham.* 1.1.124

Have *heaven* and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climatures and countrymen.

*Re-enter* GHOST.

But soft, behold ! lo, where it comes again !  
I'll *cross* it, though it blast me.

An example from the Vision in *Cymbeline* is of particular interest as so many scholars question whether Shakespeare wrote these lines. Jupiter says,

*Cym.* 5.4.101

Whom best I love I *cross* ; to make my gift,  
The more delay'd, delighted. Be content ;  
Your low-laid son our *godhead* will uplift.

One further example may be found in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* :

*Second Carrier.* I have a gammon of bacon and two razes of ginger to be delivered as far as Charing-cross. 1 H. IV, 2.1.26

*First Carrier.* God's body, the turkeys in my pannier are starved.

Almost it seems as if some inner constraint were upon Shakespeare to recognise and employ double meanings and equivocations wherever possible.

Such passages as those cited above show that when Shakespeare used a word or an image, the words or images immediately following were apt to be determined or modified by it, but we have seen that two images associated on one occasion tended to come together on later occasions. Thus as the ink from Shakespeare's pen flowed forth in poetry the imagery was influenced by prior associations as well as by contemporaneously perceived associations.

Another device which contributes to the streamy effect and homogeneity of his writings is the displacement of words from the image or conception to which they would normally be most relevant. In *As You Like It* Adam says :

Though I look old, yet I am strong and *lusty* ; A. Y. L. I. 2.3.47  
For in my youth I never did apply  
*Hot*, and rebellious liquors to my blood,  
Nor did not with unbashful forehead *woo*,  
The means of weakness and debility,  
Therefore my age is as a *lusty* winter,  
*Frosty*, but kindly.

The use of "woo" suggests that the "means of weakness and debility" to which Adam refers are sexual immorality and such lustful excesses. Lust is here implicit and the thought has occasioned the reiteration of "lusty." Moreover, "hot," so often associated with sex, is followed by its antithesis "frosty." A parallel instance occurs in *King Richard II* where Percy says of young Bolingbroke :

His answer was, he would unto the *stews*, R. II, 5.3.16  
And from the common'st creature pluck a glove,  
And wear it as a favour ; and with that  
He would unhorse the *lustiest* challenger.

Another example of displacement shows Shakespeare giving a twist to a proverbial saying :

If that the earth could teem with woman's tears, Orh. 4.1.256  
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.

The inspiration of these lines was, of course, the old fable that the crocodile weeps to deceive and attract the unwary traveller—an appropriate conception for an outlandish person like the Moor to

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use, convinced as he was that he had been deceived by Desdemona. In Sparke's *Narrative of Hawkins' Voyage : 1565* in *Hakluyt*<sup>1</sup> we read of the reptile :

His nature is ever when he would have his prey to cry and sob like a Christian body, to provoke them to come to him, and then he snatcheth at them and thereupon came this proverb that is applied to women when they weep, *lachrymæ crocodili*, the meaning whereof is, that as the Crocodile when he crieth, goeth then about most to deceive, so doth a woman most commonly when she weepeth.

This thought is in the Moor's mind, but a transposition of words has taken place so that we have the fantastic idea of the tear-drops becoming crocodiles.

One further instance of the dislocation or displacement of images may be taken from *As You Like It*, illustrating double transposition. Oliver says :

A.Y.L.I.  
4.3.105

Under an old *oak*, whose boughs were moss'd with age  
And high top, *bald* with dry antiquity :  
A wretched ragged *man*, *o'ergrown* with *hair*  
Lay sleeping on his back.

In this case "bald" more appropriately applies to a man and "o'ergrown" to a tree, but a pleasing effect of homogeneity is attained by the transposition. Notice, too, the subtle antithesis between "bald" and "hair." By such *curiosa felicitas* did Shakespeare weave his imaginative tapestries.

Effects of the kind we have been considering are by no means always achieved by conscious artifice, as is apparent from what has already been said. Associations originated in Shakespeare's mind beyond the fringe of focussed attention, as Walter Whiter, writing as long ago as 1794, realised : "I define therefore the power of this association over the genius of the poet to consist in supplying him with words and ideas which have been suggested to the mind by a principle of union unperceived by himself, and independent of the subject to which they are applied." Later he refers to "the minute and even ridiculous combinations, which have been imposed on the mind of the poet, and which are able to deceive and controul the most acute and powerful understanding."<sup>2</sup> Image clusters are outstanding instances of such combinations.

It would be to illustrate crudely the nature of Shakespearean association to say that the images seem to stretch out prehensile

<sup>1</sup> *Hakluyt* (edn. 1598), p. 534.

<sup>2</sup> W. Whiter, *A Specimen of a Commentary on Shakespeare* (London, 1794), pp. 68, 79.

tentacles, some to their immediate neighbours, others further afield both in space and time. We are concerned not with images frozen into lines of poetry but with their associations in the minds, and more particularly the memories, of poet and reader—or hearer of the lines recited. We must not forget that what we style “images” in this discussion are much more clear-cut than their symbolic content. Shakespeare in a supreme degree employed secondary and associated meanings to achieve an effect which is felt by the reader or hearer to be masterly because levels of consciousness lower than that of conscious attention respond to the undertones of the poet’s song.<sup>1</sup> By such means he was able to give “adequate

<sup>1</sup> In his British Academy lecture, *Shakespeare’s Audience* (1944, p. 10), Mr. H. S. Bennett criticises Dr. Spurgeon for stating that recurrent imagery raises and sustains emotion in such a way that “we are unconscious of what is happening, and know only the total result of the effect on our imaginative sensibility.” This, he claims, is obscuring the difference between the effect of what is read and what is heard. But Dr. Spurgeon, by studying Shakespeare’s imagery as it appears on the printed page, contributed to our understanding of how the effect is achieved on the stage, just as the musical critic by analysing a symphony helps the non-expert in the theory of music to understand not only how the composition is built up but also why it appeals even to the comparatively untrained mind as great music. He does not thereby reduce the enjoyment of the orchestral performance, but adds to it. Professor Spearman has pointed out that in studying pictorial art there are two kinds of aesthetic reward according as our road of approach is by way of indolence or diligence, by passive contemplation or by analytical appreciation (*Creative Mind*, 1930, pp. 43–7). What is true in regard to the enjoyment of music and painting is no less true of literature. He whose mind is trained to take, now one, now the other road, has learned how best to appreciate any masterpiece. So long as the study of Shakespeare’s imagery is regarded as an avenue to the understanding of both his mind and his works it need not lead us, as Mr. Bennett fears it may, “into a world as far removed from that of Shakespeare’s drama as were the much derided Mrs. Jamesons and Mary Cowden Clarkes of the nineteenth century.” Moreover many Shakespeare enthusiasts agree with Charles Lamb “that the plays of Shakespeare are less calculated for performance on the stage than those of almost any dramatist whatever” (*Complete Works*, 1875, p. 255). There is a strange psychological bias which tempts those interested in large issues to belittle detailed work. Probably this is because, as Robert Louis Stevenson said, “There is nothing more disenchanting to man than to be shown the springs and mechanisms of any art.” Yet he emphasises, “Those disclosures which seem fatal to the dignity of art seem so perhaps only in the proportion of our ignorance; and those conscious and unconscious artifices which it seems unworthy of the serious artist to employ were yet, if we had the power to trace them to their springs, indications of a delicacy of the sense finer than we conceive, and hints of ancient harmonies in nature.” The genius of Shakespeare is evident in his affording scope for both the detailed and the spacious methods of study and it is the student who can keep an equilibrium between appreciation of detail and comprehension of the large effect who is most likely to understand as well as to enjoy the plays. Shakespeare’s creative gifts are evident in imaginative microcosm and macrocosm alike. His genius is of that character which, so far as human designs may, most closely resembles the work of Creation as manifested in the natural order.



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expression to the subtlest turns of consciousness, the fitting shadows and half-conceived ideas and purposes which count for so much in the life of the mind—which determine action, indeed, although they could not be rationally formulated by a lawyer as a plea for action.”<sup>1</sup>

• In great poetry deep calls unto deep. It is work of this kind which, according to Coleridge's definition, is Imaginative rather than Fanciful. Whether we accept the distinction between the two as being as precise as Coleridge claimed or regard it as being a difference of intensity rather than quality—Mr. Livingston Lowes' view<sup>2</sup>—the terms are useful in that they draw our attention to the contrast between poetry which is predominantly consciously and intellectually contrived and that which is in considerable measure the outcome of subliminal processes. Fancy is described as “the faculty of bringing together images dissimilar in the main by some one point or more of likeness distinguished.”<sup>3</sup> These images remain when put together the same as when apart and are yoked together by no natural connexion but by the poet through some accidental coincidence. The activity responsible for joining them is that of choice. Imagination creates poetry in which the meanings of the words interpenetrate as the mind discovers cross-connexions between them. The reader's mind is called into active co-operation.<sup>4</sup> Of the Imaginative poet Coleridge says, “You feel him to be a poet, inasmuch as for a time he has made you one—an active creative being.” So powerful, indeed, are the effects of great poetry that not only the reader's imagination is stirred but there may be physiological effects such as those recorded by A. E. Housman in *The Name and Nature of Poetry*. Dr. Richards points out that in a truly Imaginative passage phrases such as “black

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Walter Raleigh, *Shakespeare* (1907), p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> *The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination* (1927), p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> T. M. Raysor, *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism* (1930), Vol. I, p. 212.

<sup>4</sup> In his *Table Talk* of 23 June, 1834, Coleridge said: “You may conceive the difference in kind between the Fancy and the Imagination in this way, that if the check of the sense and the reason were withdrawn the first would become delirium, and the last mania. The Fancy brings together images which have no connexion natural or moral but are yoked together by the poet by means of some accidental coincidence as in the well-known passage in *Hudibras* :

The sun had long since in the lap  
Of Thetis taken out his nap,  
And like a lobster boy'd the morn  
From black to red began to turn.

The Imagination modifies images and gives unity to variety; it sees all things in one.” Later he speaks of Shakespeare as “the absolute master” of the dramatic Imagination.

vesper's pageants" carry "at first unnoticed, secondary and tertiary co-implications among their possibilities of interpretation" which "need not be explicitly reflectable in articulated thought."<sup>1</sup>

In psycho-analytic terminology this inter-penetration might be attributed to the fact that, according to the founder of the school, the Unconscious is wordless. It is in the Preconscious that the possibility of the union between thing and word exists. Freud stated: "The conscious idea embraces the presentation of the thing *plus that of the word belonging to it*, whereas the Unconscious idea is the presentation of the thing alone."<sup>2</sup> This view does not necessarily contradict the findings of Freud's follower, Varendonck, that below the fully conscious level we think in words, as indeed the composition of such dream verse as John Masefield's *The Woman Speaks* is sufficient to prove.<sup>3</sup> Freud may be considered to be referring to a deeper and darker realm than that in which poetry can be composed but which has its influence upon it. Whether or not we accept the validity of his conceptions, there is no doubt, firstly, of the capacity of great poetry to arouse a deep and not completely explicable response within us to the satisfying blending of its imagery and, secondly, of the ability of a genius to stir our feelings to vibrate in harmony with his by making available for our appreciation relationships hitherto only dimly apprehended which satisfy profound and universal emotional demands.

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<sup>1</sup> I. A. Richards, *Coleridge on Imagination* (1934), p. 94. Approaching the question of literary appreciation from the psychological standpoint, Dr. O. Wheeler reached conclusions which confirm the importance of image-interpenetration as a quality of great poetry. She says, "The fullest enjoyment of a poem is only possible when the images and their meanings, as well as the emotional tones accompanying them, blend and interpenetrate" and when the dominant mood of the poet is sympathetically induced in the mind of the reader ("An Analysis of Literary Appreciation," *British Journal of Psychology*, General Section, Vol. XIII, Pt. iii, p. 238).

<sup>2</sup> S. Freud, *Sammlung Kleiner Schriften*, Vol. IV, p. 334.

<sup>3</sup> J. Varendonck, *The Psychology of Day-dreams* (1921), p. 300.

## CHAPTER

### XIV

#### THE FUNCTION OF EMOTION IN IMAGINATION

**S**ALARINO'S speech, quoted at the beginning of the last chapter, reminded us of emotion's significant rôle in arousing associations. To this aspect of imaginative activity we must now return. It has already been suggested that in the work of the imagination memory, emotion and reason co-operate—indeed I would urge that creative imagination be considered the co-operation of these three functions under the directive influence of the will.<sup>1</sup> Let us now consider emotion's contribution. We have already noted some affinities between dream processes and creative imaginative thinking. They have this in common, that in both of them emotion is active in stimulating association.

Psychologists differ as to the technique of the interpretation of dreams, but there is general agreement as to their affective aspect. Indeed, we need give only a little attention to our own dreams to realise how many wishes and fears they express or conceal. Shakespeare, whose interest in dreams is evident, describes a great variety, ranging from the midnight terrors of the guilty suffered by King Richard and the "thick-coming fancies" which troubled Lady Macbeth to the wish-fulfilment dreams attributed to Queen Mab's playfulness :

*R. III, 5.3.171*

*Mac. 5.3.38*

*R. & J. 1.4.80*

Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,  
Then dreams he of another benefice.

In view of the vividness of the nightmare and its prominence in the material available to the psycho-therapist as well as in literature, it is rather surprising that Freud, who knew his Shakespeare, should have been content to accept the type of dream in which a distressing experience is re-lived in dream accompanied by great emotional disturbance as a "serious difficulty" without succeeding in accommodating his theory to explain such out-

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge claimed that in the act of thinking two powers, active and passive, are at work and that this is only possible through the activity of the intermediate faculty, the Imagination. He remarked that "in common language, and especially on the subject of poetry, we appropriate the name to a superior degree of the faculty, joined to a superior voluntary control over it" (*Biographia Literaria*, Everyman edn., p. 65).

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standing exceptions.<sup>1</sup> Rivers' view that dreams characterised by much affect are the expression of conflict deals more adequately with the problem of the nightmare, though it, too, has its deficiencies.<sup>2</sup> It does not explain, for instance, why so many painful experiences are not repressed. Let it suffice for our present thesis that affective processes are extremely active in dreams.

Day-dreaming is an activity with affinities, on the one hand with dreaming and on the other with constructive imagination. Its nature has been carefully investigated by Dr. J. Varendonck.<sup>3</sup> His conclusion is that day-dreaming is fundamentally affective. Each chain of associations originates with a remembrance which is, as a rule, emotionally accentuated, and the associative process is directed by one or more wishes. The chains come to an end when some affect causes them to rise to the surface. It is significant that Varendonck discovered visualisation to be predominant when the chains of association are closest to what he calls, in his Freudian terminology, the Unconscious level.<sup>4</sup> This is in accordance with the fact that visualisation is more active in children than in adults and is supported by the experience of psychologists such as Rivers, who could develop images in sleep but not in waking life.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, analytical procedure shows that all subjects tend to become visualisers in relaxed states.<sup>6</sup> As it is obvious that in the work of composition Shakespeare's mind moved swiftly back and forth from sight and sound memory imagery to abstract thought and back again, there can be no doubt that the lower strata of consciousness continually contributed to his imagination. The nature of image clusters is in itself sufficient assurance that this was so.

• Day-dreams are not simply "escapist" for many of the affects in the chains of association involved are unpleasant; indeed, there is often a systematic alternation between unpleasant and consolatory elements such as fear and hope. There are also processes in which potential solutions of problems present themselves in succession until at length a solution appears without any valid objection accompanying it. The first of these mechanisms may possibly have some relevance to Shakespeare's combining-

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<sup>1</sup> S. Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (tr. W. J. H. Sprott, 1933), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, *Conflict and Dream* (1923).

<sup>3</sup> *The Psychology of Day-dreams* (1921).

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 179.

<sup>5</sup> *Instinct and the Unconscious* (2nd edn., 1921), p. 11; *Conflict and Dream*, p. 95.

<sup>6</sup> D. O. Williams, *Remembering in Relaxed States: An Analytical Study of Organising Principles in Mental Life*. Thesis presented to the University of New Zealand in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Literature (unpublished).

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contrast modes of thought and to his image-dualism. His day-dreamers, such as Philip the Bastard, are apt to indulge in imaginary conversations in which their lot is in favourable contrast with that of some person occupying an inferior position. The second contributes to our understanding of how inspiration occurs as the sudden perception of the end-product of chains of concealed activity.<sup>1</sup> Confirmation of the existence of these concealed chains is afforded by the emotion which accompanies or even precedes the solution of a problem.<sup>2</sup>

A trivial instance in my own experience is the vague glow of recognition of a book as that which I require for a particular purpose some slight space of time before I perceive exactly what book it is or for what purpose I require it. A friend gives me another example. Walking in the street, he was suddenly assailed by the pangs of hunger. He realised an appreciable time afterwards that they had been aroused by seeing a poster on which appeared the words "Lunch-time Concert." Professor R. G. Collingwood, Waynfleet Professor of Metaphysics at Oxford, records his experience after reading Kant's *Theory of Ethics* when he was eight years old :

I was attacked by a strange succession of emotions. First came an intense excitement. I felt that things of the highest importance were being said about things of the utmost urgency ; things which at all costs I must understand. Then, with a wave of indignation, came the discovery that I could not understand them. . . . Then, third and last, came the strangest emotion of all. I felt that the contents of this book, although I could not understand it, were somehow my business. . . . I felt as if a veil had been lifted and my destiny revealed. . . . There came upon me by degrees . . . a sensation . . . I must think. What I was to think about I did not know, and when, obeying this command, I fell silent and absent-minded in company, or sought solitude in order to think without interruption, I could not have said, and still cannot say, what it was I actually thought. There were no particular questions I asked myself . . . there was only a formless and aimless intellectual disturbance as if I were wrestling with a fog.

I know now that this is what always happens when I am in the early stages of work on a problem. Until the problem has gone a long way towards being solved, I do not know what it is ; all I am conscious of is this vague perturbation of mind, this sense of being worried about I cannot say what. I know now that the problems of my life's work were taking, deep down inside me, their first embryonic shape.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Varendonck, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> *An Autobiography* (1937), pp. 4-5.

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He describes how his elders thought he had fallen into the habit of loafing because he spent much of his time wandering in the woods and mountains or cutting out regiments of paper men during these periods of assimilative relaxation. Further proof that emotion does not always wait upon realised memory, explicit understanding or the appearance in full consciousness of chains of association is provided by the discovery on the part of psycho-therapists that patients under analysis sometimes manifest emotional excitement before the experiences to which they are relevant are recalled.<sup>1</sup>

Graham Wallas has questioned whether Varendonck is correct in attributing trains of association to wishes, ambitions, fears, regrets and other such affects, claiming that their prominence in Varendonck's day-dreams was due to the anxieties with which he was beset at the time he collected his introspective material.<sup>2</sup> It is true that Varendonck was anxious about military, matrimonial and professional matters, but Wallas in his own account of day-dreaming gives such prominence to emotional influences that his criticisms do not materially affect Varendonck's conclusions. In this matter the reader may best form an opinion by devoting attentive scrutiny to his own day-dreams. My introspection leaves me in no doubt of the prominence of affective processes although I would agree with Wallas that Varendonck somewhat exaggerated their importance in initiating associative chains. Shakespeare's own evidence is of interest. We know that he took for granted the potent influence of affective factors in day-dreams. For instance, those of Malvolio are thronged with ambitions, wishes and fears.

Thus in dreaming, day-dreaming and the inspiration which accompanies creative imagining emotion is an active and important influence. It would seem that fundamentally these activities have a good deal in common and that their differentiation lies largely in the degree of control exercised over, or imposed upon, the pictorial and emotional elements. They shade into one another, as the composition of dream poetry proves. W. H. R. Rivers testified that many of the ideas which he valued most, as well as the language in which they were expressed, came to him in the half-sleeping, half-waking state directly continuous with sleep.<sup>3</sup> W. B. Yeats once dropped his pen while writing a highly symbolic poem and, stooping to pick it up, found himself remembering a series of fantastic adventures which he suddenly realised were his dreams

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<sup>1</sup> D. O. Williams, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Art of Thought* (1926), pp. 74, 77-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Conflict and Dream*, pp. 7, 56.

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over many nights. When he tried to recollect what he had done that morning he found himself unable to do so. He commented, "had my pen not fallen on the ground and so made me turn from the images that I was weaving into verse, I would never have known that meditation had become trance. . . . So I think that in the making and in the understanding of a work of art . . . we are lured to the threshold of sleep, and it may be far beyond it, without knowing that we have ever set our feet upon the steps of horn or ivory."<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, in describing the ecstasy of poetic inspiration, refers to,

. . . that serene and blessed mood,  
In which the affections gently lead us on,—  
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
And even the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul :  
While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things.

(*Tintern Abbey.*)

The poets testify that emotion is the source of power and frequently describe the emotional accompaniments of inspiration. Dreaming, day-dreaming and creative imagination all are affective—the products or manifestation of emotion. Coleridge, who was a competent introspective psychologist, remarked, "Association depends in a much greater degree on the recurrence of resembling states of feeling than on trains of ideas. . . . Ideas no more recall one another than the leaves of a tree fluttering in the breeze propagate their motion to one another."<sup>2</sup>

An anthropologist, who is also a psycho-therapist, agrees with the poets. Dr. John Layard states : "The fact that feeling precedes and *underlies* and provides the dynamic force for thought is of fundamental importance to all spiritual progress."<sup>3</sup>

The function of emotion in association is well expressed by Dr. W. D. Paden in a passage which is particularly relevant to the process by which image clusters are formed :

A group of images may become connected in the imagination not only by similarities in the circumstances of their apprehension, or by similarities in their constituents,

<sup>1</sup> *Essays* (Collected Edition, 1924), pp. 196-7.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. I. A. Richards, *Coleridge on Inspiration* (1934), p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> *The Lady of the Hare* (1944), p. 90.

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but by similarities between the emotional tones with which each is, to a greater or lesser degree, suffused. An image so connected with others may become imbued with an emotion of a quality or intensity first possessed by another or others in the group; images in such a group may interchange items from among their constituents, in a way similar to the merging and inter-modification of images circumstantially or logically connected.

And finally, the presence in the imagination of a group of images that are connected by similar emotional tones will strengthen and sharpen the apprehension of images that are or may become imbued with like tones. The greater the number of images in such a group, and the greater the intensity of the emotional tone or tones with which the group is suffused, the more likely is any one among the images to enter the stream of conscious thought in connexion with old problems or new experiences, or to be recalled in casual meditation, or to occur in dreams.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of the preceding analytical chapters we have encountered many instances of the process by which an image becomes suffused with emotion through its association with other images. The death associations of "hum" illustrate this process particularly well as "hum" normally has little or no emotional content.

•Important as is the function of emotion it is necessary to stress the significance of the will in all creative imagination. To quote Coleridge again: "Imagination is put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed control."<sup>2</sup> While the day-dreamer is motivated primarily by feeling and by affective influences the creative literary artist is inspired through the influence of emotion under the direction or surveillance of reason and will. Often, indeed, the influence of will may not be very evident at the time of inspiration, as in the instances quoted above, but in artistic creation it is always present to supplement and give effectiveness to the contribution of emotion.

If memory, as we have seen, contributes materials for association emotion troubles the waters in which they lie immersed so that there float up from the depths products of startling beauty. We shall pursue the analogy further in our next chapter.

<sup>1</sup> *Tennyson in Egypt: A Study of the Imagery in his Earlier Work* (1942). Univ. of Kansas Publ. No. 27, p. 7. Cf. also C. G. Jung, *Studies in Word Association* (tr. M. D. Eder, 1918).

<sup>2</sup> *Biographia Literaria* (1930), Vol. II, p. 13.



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The points of similarity between day-dreams and the phantasies of the author were seized upon by Freud and used to support his view that imaginative work is the expression of thwarted drives. Of day-dreams he said :

•The content of these phantasies is dictated by a very transparent motivation. They are scenes and events which gratify either the egoistic cravings of ambition or thirst for power, or the erotic desires of the subject. In young men ambitious phantasies predominate; in women, whose ambition centres on success in love, erotic phantasies; but the erotic requirement can often enough in men too be detected in the background, all their heroic deeds and successes are really only intended to win the admiration and favour of women. In other respects these day-dreams show great diversity and their fate varies. All of them are either given up after a short time and replaced by a new one, or retained, spun out into long stories, and adapted to changing circumstances in life. They march with the times, receiving as it were "date-stamps" upon them which show the influence of new situations. They form the raw material of poetic production; for the writer by transforming, disguising or curtailing them creates out of his day-dreams the situations which he embodies in his stories, novels and dramas. The hero of a day-dream is, however, always the subject himself, either directly imagined in the part or transparently identified with someone else.<sup>1</sup>

We shall have occasion to comment on this view later, but here we may stress the fact that the emotion expressed in a work of art need not be of the kind associated with specific personal experiences. It may be generalised, detached and to a very considerable extent impersonal. It is not always so, but the highest forms of artistic expression are characterised by the approach to universality in this respect. Conversely, such abstract mental activity as mathematical discovery is accompanied by æsthetic emotion. Poincaré stated: "Useful combinations are precisely the most beautiful, I mean those than can charm most that special sensibility that all mathematicians know."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Roger Fry, who took up the cudgels for the artists against the Freudians, admitted that some of them whose work is not in the first class are preoccupied with creating a phantasy world in which wish-fulfilment is predominant. The other group, artists in the true sense and highest meaning of the term, are concerned with the contemplation of formal relations and are as much detached from the instinctive level

<sup>1</sup> *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (tr. J. Riviere, 1922), pp. 80-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Science and Method* (tr. F. Maitland, 1914), p. 59.

as those concerned with any human activity. His view is thus expressed :

But in art there is, I think, an affective quality which lies outside that (of wish-fulfilment). It is not a mere recognition of order and inter-relation ; every part, as well as the whole, becomes suffused with an emotional tone. Now, from our definition of this pure beauty, the emotional tone is not due to any recognisable reminiscence or suggestion of the emotional experience of life ; but I sometimes wonder if it nevertheless does not get its force from arousing some very deep, very vague, and immensely generalised reminiscences. It looks as though art had access to the substratum of all the emotional colours of life, to something which underlies all the particular and specialised emotions of actual life. It seems to derive an emotional energy from the very conditions of our existence by its revelation of an emotional significance in time and space. But it may be that art really calls up, as it were, the residual traces left on the spirit by the different emotions of life, without recalling the actual experiences, so that we get an echo of the emotion without the limitation and particular direction which it had in experience.<sup>1</sup>

This view appears to me to be fundamentally sound. Just as the study of biology reveals many instances of functions becoming emancipated in the course of time to serve more generalised or more delicate purposes in higher organisms, so with our own capacities. The hand which is a modified paw now is used to hold a pen or play the piano ; the mind which evolved as an instrument of more effective preservatory and predatory activity becomes capable of surveying with philosophic calm all time and all existence ; and the imagination, building its phantasies, not aimlessly but under control and direction, escapes from the tyranny of the lowly biological functions which it first came into being to serve.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Artist and Psycho-Analysis," *The Hogarth Essays* (1924), p. 19.

## CHAPTER

### XV

#### THE "SLEEPING IMAGES" AND THE "QUICK FORGE"

**V**ERY many poets, philosophers, inventors and other original thinkers have testified that inspiration came to them after periods of assimilation and during interludes when the mind was relaxed and conscious effort had been relinquished. In an interesting and well-known passage A. E. Housman stated that this was his experience. He also, it should be noted, found that when he enjoyed such visitations of the divine afflatus emotion did not follow but accompanied inspiration—a point of some significance in connexion with the discussion in the preceding chapter. He wrote :

Having drunk a pint of beer at luncheon—beer is a sedative to the brain, and my afternoons are the least intellectual portion of my life—I would go out for a walk of two or three hours. As I went along, thinking of nothing in particular, only looking at things around me and following the progress of the seasons, there would flow into my mind with sudden and unaccountable emotion, sometimes a line or two of verse, sometimes a whole stanza at once, accompanied, not preceded, by a vague notion of the poem which they were destined to be part of. Then there would usually be a lull for an hour or so, then perhaps the spring would bubble again. When I got home I wrote them down, leaving gaps, and hoping that further inspiration might be forthcoming another day. Sometimes it was, if I took my walks in a receptive and expectant frame of mind ; but sometimes the poem had to be taken in hand and completed by the brain, which was apt to be a matter of trouble and anxiety, involving trial and disappointment and sometimes ending in failure.<sup>1</sup>

In *A Defence of Poetry* Shelley wrote :

I appeal to the greatest poets of the present day, whether it is not an error to assert that the finest passages of poetry are produced by labour and study. The toil and the delay recommended by critics, can be justly interpreted to mean no more than a careful observation of the inspired moments,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Name and Nature of Poetry* (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 49–50.

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and an artificial connection of the spaces between their suggestions, by the intertexture of conventional expressions ; a necessity only imposed by the limitedness of the poetic faculty itself. . . . We are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling . . . always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression.

Paul Valéry in *Les Pas* speaks of the coming of inspiration after a time of waiting :

Tes pas, enfants de mon silence,  
Saintement, lentement placés,  
Vers le lit de ma vigilance  
Procèdent muets et glacés.

Rudyard Kipling's advice to young journalists was to lay aside the draft of an article and "let it lie by to drain as long as possible";<sup>1</sup> and Henry James said that he took the original suggestion for the plot of *The American* and "dropped it for the time into the deep well of unconscious cerebration."<sup>2</sup> The word "unconscious" keeps cropping up in these autobiographical descriptions. Poincaré wrote :

▸ This unconscious work . . . is not possible, or in any case not fruitful unless it is first preceded and then followed by a period of conscious work.

He added :

• It is certain that the combinations which present themselves to the mind in a kind of sudden illumination after a somewhat prolonged period of unconscious work are generally useful and profitable combinations, which appear to be the result of a preliminary sifting.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever philosophical or psychological ambiguities may be involved in the use of the term "unconscious," non-psychologists find it impossible to describe their experiences without using it or some equivalent expression. Long before the days of Freud, we find Dryden writing to the Earl of Orrery :

This worthless Present was design'd you, long before  
it was a Play ; when it was only a confus'd Mass of Thoughts,  
tumbling over one another in the Dark : when the Fancy  
was yet in its first Work, moving the Sleeping Images of  
things towards the Light, there to be distinguished and then  
either chosen or rejected by the Judgment.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Something of Myself* (1937), pp. 208-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Works* (N.Y. edn.), Vol. II, p. vii.

<sup>3</sup> *Science and Method*, pp. 56, 58.

<sup>4</sup> *Works*, ed. Scott-Saintsbury (1904), Vol. II, pp. 129-30.

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The process of inspiration in scientific discovery is very similar to that involved in the composition of poetry. According to Helmholtz there are three stages: the time of preparation and concentration, a stage of abstention from concentration, and then, often in the morning on waking, the inspiration. Speaking at a banquet on his seventieth birthday, he said: "Happy ideas come unexpectedly without effort, like an inspiration. So far as I am concerned, they have never come to me when my mind was fatigued, or when I was at my working table. . . . They came particularly readily during the slow ascent of wooded hills on a sunny day."<sup>1</sup> When what he calls "the redeeming ideas" did not come he was,

Like to a beast upon a barren heath  
Dragged in a circle by an evil spirit,  
While all around are pleasant pastures green.

When mystics, such as Walter Hilton, speak of how, "by spiritual and bodily exercises," the "third stage of contemplation" is attained, when "reason is turned into light and will into love,"<sup>2</sup> or refer to the "rich nothing" when the soul is "at rest as to thoughts of any earthly thing,"<sup>3</sup> they emphasise a quietist technique whereby inspiration may be nurtured which has affinities with that adopted, recognised and advocated by poets, scientists and psychologists. In practice the desirability of assimilative interludes is often neglected by educationalists. Teachers and leaders of youth may well ponder the fact that an overloaded curriculum is inimical to original thought. How fundamental is the need for intervals of relaxation and mental incubation is suggested by the findings of psychologists who have studied the behaviour of apes. When confronted with a problem these animals often experience a period of bewilderment and frustration. Suddenly an impulse arises which leads to success.<sup>4</sup>

Keats, in one of his letters, has a very penetrating comment on the importance of permitting the mind to relax and hold judgment in suspense in order that inspiration may make

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<sup>1</sup> H. von Helmholtz, *Vorträge und Reden*, Vol I. *Erinnerungen, Tischreden gehalten bei der Feier des 70. Geburtstages* (Berlin, 1891), pp. 15-16. For a survey of how inspiration comes to scientists cf. J. Y. Simpson, *Landmarks in the struggle between Science and Religion* (1925), pp. 61-73. An illuminating study of the whole subject will be found in Dr. Rosamond E. M. Harding's *Anatomy of Inspiration* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1942).

<sup>2</sup> *The Scale (or Ladder) of Perfection* (ed. R. E. Guy, 1869), p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism* (1899), pp. 198-9.

<sup>4</sup> W. Köhler, *The Mentality of Apes* (2nd edn., 1927), p. 181.

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its appearance. Referring to a conversation with Dilke, he says :

• At once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean *Negative Capability*, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable searching after fact and reason—Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of half-knowledge. This pursued through volumes would take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.<sup>1</sup>

• Amiel expressed this finely—"If a bird sing among your branches do not be too ready to tame it." The truth is that reason contributes most effectively to imagination when its influence directs and pervades rather than disciplines. At times it is most useful to imagination as a sleeping partner. When the intellect is at full stretch intuition fares badly.

Thus can be explained the experience known to the artist, whatever his medium, and assuredly, we may believe, to Shakespeare, of finding that he has builded better than he knew. It may be that as the literary artist works—perhaps after tedious hours of travail—he becomes aware that the pieces of the puzzle are fitting themselves into place; or later, on scrutinising the accomplished design, is surprised and delighted to find that a harmony of elements more subtle than he realised has been achieved. A concealed coadjutor, the psychological counterpart of the brownie of folk-lore who tidies up the house when the inmates are in bed, has been at work.

If the prime requirement on which the genesis of inspiration depends is mental leisure for assimilation and incubation after concentration, the characteristic feature of its emergence is suddenness and the warrant of its authenticity the conviction which it brings. While stepping on to a car the solution of a problem came to Poincaré, bringing with it a feeling of absolute

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<sup>1</sup> *The Letters of John Keats* (ed. M. B. Forman, 2nd edn. 1935), Letter 32, p. 72. Cf. Professor Dowden's comment on Shakespeare: "Little solutions of your large difficulties can readily be obtained from priest and *philosophe*. Shakspeare prefers to let you remain in the solemn presence of a mystery. He does not invite you into his little church or his little library, brilliantly illuminated by philosophical or theological rushlights. You remain in the darkness. But you remain in the vital air. And the great night is overhead" (*Shakspeare: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art*, 5th edn., 1880, p. 226.)

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certainty,<sup>1</sup> and it was during a stroll with his wife in Dublin that Sir William Rowan Hamilton discovered quaternions. He wrote to his son :

I was walking with your mother along the Royal Canal and, although she talked with me now and then, yet an undercurrent of thought was going on in my mind which gave at last a result whereof it is not too much to say that I felt at once the importance. An electric circuit seemed to close and a spark flashed forth, the herald (as I foresaw immediately) of many long years to come of definitely directed thought and work. . . . Nor could I resist the impulse—unphilosophical as it may have been—to cut with a knife on a stone of Brougham Bridge as we passed it the fundamental formula with the symbols  $i, j, k$ .<sup>2</sup>

His experience did not prevent Hamilton insisting that inspiration is the reward of concentrated attention and continuous thought. It was after a time of inaction during a dangerous illness that W. B. Yeats found himself full of “an uncontrollable energy” which expressed itself in the series of poems entitled *Words for Music Perhaps*. The Russian poet Alexander Blok, who is said to have composed his masterpiece *The Twelve* in a single night, describes in *Artist* the pangs of the poet's travail. Summarising its theme, the Warden of Wadham writes :

•While other men marry, make merry and die, he waits in deadly boredom for those bells in the sky which are a sign that the moment is near. When it comes the whole world changes. He asks if it is a whirlwind in the sea, are paradisaical birds singing among the leaves, does Time stand still . . . ? His soul is filled with a new strength. But then comes the crisis and the end. The soul gives place to the reason ; the reason conquers the soul and kills it.<sup>3</sup>

G. K. Chesterton, who composed part of *The Ballad of the White Horse* in his sleep, wrote it down at an extraordinary speed. His wife gathered the sheets as he threw them to the floor. When they went through them together they found that there was scarcely a correction to be made.<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Sharp in her memoir of her husband, “Fiona Macleod,” describes him as having been very imaginative as a child. He apparently organised his phantasies and day-dreams into a system apart from the rest of his mental

<sup>1</sup> *Science and Method*, p. 53. Poincaré pointed out that the feeling of certainty in such cases is not always reliable.

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic* (1859–60), Vol. I, p. 255.

<sup>3</sup> C. M. Bowra, *The Heritage of Symbolism*, p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> M. Ward, *Gilbert Keith Chesterton* (1944), pp. 243–4.

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life. "He learned," she writes, "to shut it away, to keep it as a thing apart":

From time to time the emotional, the more intimate self would sweep aside all conscious control; a dream, a sudden inner vision, an idea that had been dormant in what he called "the mind behind the mind" would suddenly visualise itself and blot out everything else from his consciousness, and under such impulse he would write with great speed, hardly aware of what he wrote, so absorbed was he in the vision with which for the moment he was identified.<sup>1</sup>

There are several interesting parallels between what we are told of William Sharp and what we know or can infer about Shakespeare. Evidence is available, not only from the nature of his writing, but also, as we shall presently see, from the testimony of those who knew him, to show that Shakespeare also wrote at great speed, especially when his style had matured. He passed from the stage in which his thought was slower than its expression to a middle period when thought and expression kept pace with each other and advanced beyond this to the point when expression was unable to overtake the rapidity of thought and the flow of imagery.<sup>2</sup> As Charles Lamb put it, "before one idea has burst its shell, another is hatched and clamours for disclosure."<sup>3</sup> Like Jaques, he moralised a spectacle "into a thousand similes." The result A. Y. L. I. 2.1.45

was a concentrated, almost clotted, style. Our analysis of his imaginative thought makes it evident that this characteristic style was in large measure due to the highly accentuated tendency for an image in his mind to revive other images associated earlier with it. In Shakespeare's later period these now numerous partner-images crowded his mind, elbowed each other for room and we might almost say, gate-crashed into his verse. Dryden's mind appears to have developed in a way somewhat similar to Shakespeare's. In old age he wrote in the preface to his *Fables*: "What judgment I had increases rather than diminishes; and thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only difficulty is to choose or to reject, to run them into verse, or to give them the other harmony of prose." William Sharp's evolution

<sup>1</sup> *William Sharp, A Memoir* (1912), Vol. I, pp. 13, 171.

<sup>2</sup> E. Dowden, *Shakespeare Primer*, "Shakespeare" (Literature Primers, ed. J. R. Green, 1877), p. 37; most of Mr. G. Rylands' *Words and Poetry* (1928) is concerned with the relationship of Shakespeare's imagery to the development of his style.

<sup>3</sup> *Complete Works* (ed. R. H. Shepherd, 1875), "Notes on the Elizabethan and other Dramatists," p. 281.



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as an imaginative writer, like Shakespeare's, proceeded through three stages. His biographer says, "In watching the development of the 'Fiona Macleod' phase of experience it has seemed to me that the writer in that work lived a new sequent life, and passed through its successive phases of growth and development independently of the tenor of his ordinary life as 'W. S.'"<sup>1</sup> The biographical evidence indicates that in business matters Shakespeare was a practical man, yet his imagery shows that his imaginative life was unified, self-subsistent and self-developing to a marked degree. We have already commented on such "primitive" traits in his mentality as his retentive memory and his dualism. Other indications of this primitive strain are his delight in folk-lore, his elaboration of traditional folk-tale into plays, as in *King Lear*, and his constant use of traditional symbolism. Yeats, in a lecture, said "Sharp had in many ways an extraordinarily primitive mind."<sup>2</sup> It is not suggested that Shakespeare's mind was as definitely organised into separate fields as was William Sharp's, but it may well have been of somewhat the same type.

• Although our direct testimony as to how inspiration came to Shakespeare is meagre, yet what there is entirely supports the inferences that we have drawn from his writings. "His mind and hand went together," said Heminge and Condell, who were his friends as well as his editors, "and what he thought he uttered with that easiness we scarce have a blot in his papers." According to Ben Jonson, "he had an excellent phantasy, brave notions and gentle expressions; wherein he flowed with that facility, that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped." He quotes the players as often mentioning that "in his writing (whatsoever he penn'd) he never blotted out line." What Shakespeare himself called "the quick forge and working-house of thought" poured out its artifacts white hot. Fuller's well-known remarks in his *Worthies*, forty years after the poet's death, are of less evidential value than the comments of these contemporaries, but testify equally to his quick wit and immediate inspiration :

Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in performance. Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Sharp, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 334.

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There is a tradition, first recorded by Dennis in the dedication to *The Comical Gallant* (1702) that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written to Queen Elizabeth's command in fourteen days. Even if the tradition were untrue, it is evidence that at the beginning of the eighteenth century it was realised that Shakespeare was a quick worker.

Professor Dover Wilson's claim that a passage in Jonson's *Discoveries*—the posthumous work containing Jonson's appreciation of Shakespeare—refers to his friend and rival has much in its favour :

Ease and relaxation are profitable to all studies. The mind is like a bow, the stronger by being unbent. But the temper of the spirits is all, when to command a man's wit, when to favour it. I have known a man, vehement on both sides ; that knew no mean either to intermit his studies or call upon them again. When he hath set himself to writing he would join night and day ; press upon himself without release, not minding it till he fainted : and when he left off, resolve himself into all sports and looseness again ; that it was almost a despair to draw him to his book ; but once got to it, he grew stronger and more earnest by the ease. His whole powers were renewed : he would work out of himself what he desired, but with such excess as his study could not be ruled : he knew not how to dispose his own abilities or husband them, he was of that immoderate power against himself.<sup>1</sup>

It is said that Lamartine, visiting a friend, asked, "What are you doing with your head held thus in your hands ?" His friend replied, "I am thinking." "Strange !" said Lamartine, "as for me I never think ; my thoughts think for me !"<sup>2</sup> Lamartine, and greater poets than he, had mental characteristics not altogether unlike those of the little girl who, being told to be sure of her meaning before she spoke, said, "How can I know what I think till I see what I say !"

\*Shakespeare's genius was of an intuitional and associative rather than a ratiocinative type. His sapient view of life is not the outcome of strenuous reasoning nor of rigidly disciplined thought. In a sense it may be said of him that "his thoughts thought for him." Professor Bradley has pointed out that Shakespeare's imagination discovered or created in the sources he used "a mass of truth about life, which was brought to birth by the process of composition, but never preceded it in the shape of

<sup>1</sup> Cit. in *The Essential Shakespeare* (1932), p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> E. Legouvé, *Soixante ans de souvenirs* (Paris), Vol. IV, p. 232.

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ideas, and probably never, even after it, took that shape in the poet's mind."<sup>1</sup> We must be wary of identifying the sentiments of Shakespeare's characters with his own opinions, but the evidence that he held philosophers in low esteem is strong :

*M. Ado*, 5.1.35

For there was never yet philosopher  
That could endure the tooth-ache patiently,  
However they have writ the style of gods.

It is noteworthy that those of his characters who protest that their emotions are ruled by reason are silly, self-deluded and conceited. As Dowden remarks in connexion with the Friar in *Romeo and Juliet*, "Shakespeare has never made the moderate, self-possessed, sedate person, a final or absolute judge of the impulsive and the passionate." Friar Laurence was mistaken in thinking that "by virtue of his prudence, his moderation, his sage counsels, his amiable sophistries, he could guide these two young, passionate lives."<sup>2</sup>

If, as we have reason to believe, the muse visited Shakespeare with almost overwhelming power, it is no less certain that the inspiration was the outcome of the incubation of ideas on which he had concentrated earlier. The reader will be familiar with many instances of ideas, plots, characters and associations adumbrated long before they were maturely realised or fully expressed. Years prior to Shylock's appearance on the stage, Shakespeare wrote :

*L.L.L.* 3.1.136

My sweet ounce of man's flesh ! my incony Jew.

In the foregoing pages we have noticed a number of such foreshadowings of what is expressed in *The Tempest*. The fact that image clusters can be traced through the plays is conclusive evidence that Shakespeare cherished in what Sharp called "the mind behind the mind" material which could be used even more effectively later on. How much finer are these later utilisations of recalled imagery ! John of Gaunt complains,

*R. II*, 1.3.221

My oil-dried lamp and time bewasted light  
Shall be extinct with age,

but Macbeth says all this—and how much more !—in four words :

*Mac.* 5.5.23

Out, out, brief candle !

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<sup>1</sup> A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures* (1909), p. 173. Cf. also E. Holmes, *Aspects of Elizabethan Imagery* (1929), p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Shakspere : A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* (5th edn., 1880), p. 121.

## *The "Sleeping Images" and the "Quick-Forge"*

Thus we have abundant evidence that Shakespeare's procedure was that of other gifted men—Concentration, Incubation, Inspiration. Like the writers and thinkers quoted above, he saturated his ideas and images in the "well of unconscious cerebration." The "sleeping images" lay submerged, and after sojourning in the depths were called forth again, altered in shape or tint and linked with partners, some new, some old.

Earlier we pictured the images as being like children participating in a game or folk-dance and changing partners from time to time. I prefer this analogy as suggesting most vividly the measure of freedom enjoyed by the images, but Mr. Livingston Lowes conceived them as being endowed with hooks and becoming attached and detached.<sup>1</sup> Such an illustration is most applicable if we think in terms of the molecules of chemistry or the atoms of the older physics. Poincaré, in describing how inspiration came to him, wrote :

If I may be permitted a crude comparison, let me represent the future elements of our combinations (*i.e.*, those responsible for fertile ideas) as something resembling Epicurus's hooked atoms. When the mind is in complete repose these atoms are immovable ; they are, so to speak, attached to the wall. This complete repose may continue indefinitely without the atoms meeting, and, consequently, without the possibility of the formation of any combinations.

On the other hand, during a period of apparent repose, but of unconscious work, some of them are detached from the wall and set in motion. They plough through space in all directions, like a swarm of gnats, for instance, or, if we prefer a more learned comparison, like the gaseous molecules in the kinetic theory of gases. Their mutual collisions may then produce new combinations.

What is the part to be played by the preliminary conscious work ? Clearly it is to liberate some of these atoms, to detach them from the wall and set them in motion . . . after the agitation imparted to them by our will, they do not return to their original repose, but continue to circulate freely.<sup>2</sup>

Is it merely fortuitous that the same analogy should be applicable to both images and ideas ? Rather may we assume that the mental activities responsible for the formation of image clusters are essentially the same processes by which inspiration is achieved. It is clear that beneath the surface of Shakespeare's consciousness certain organising principles were at work. Let me refer back to but one instance of this. In Part I, Chapter X, we noticed that

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<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Xanadu*, pp. 343-55.

<sup>2</sup> *Science and Method*, p. 61.

## *Shakespeare's Imagination*

amidst the thousands of words in 1 *Henry IV* we may pick out four—Turk, turkeys, pistol and bombast—which are scattered widely apart, but become associated in a few lines of *Twelfth Night*, a play written years later. Moreover, it has been shown by studying the related imagery of 2 *Henry IV*, *As You Like It*, *Henry V* and *Hamlet* that the close association of these images in *Twelfth Night* is no coincidence or unaccountable occurrence but the result of permutations and combinations of images in Shakespeare's mind during the intervening years. There is no reason to suppose that the processes represented in these and other image clusters differ in kind from the activities which issued in the mathematical discoveries of Poincaré, Sir William Hamilton or any other genius to whom illumination came with sudden brilliance.<sup>1</sup>

Direct testimony, the nature of Shakespeare's writing with its fluency, its repetitions and clotted imagery, as well as analogy from the experience of other poets and the negative evidence of Shakespeare's non-rationalistic cast of mind, all suggest that puissant inspiration came to him after times of relaxation or assimilation. We can be confident that when he wrote,

*Temp.* 4.1.162

a turn or two I'll walk  
To still my beating mind,

he referred to what was for him a familiar experience. When the creative moment was attained, the quick forge of imagination glowed and sparkled as the splendid products of the master's craftsmanship took sudden shape.

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<sup>1</sup> This subliminal organising principle is at work in realms much less exalted than those of insight, illumination and inspiration. The saying, "We learn to swim in winter and to skate in summer," summarises the fact of common experience that when a certain measure of accomplishment and skill has been reached in the exercise of bodily as well as mental faculties we may find, after a season of relaxed effort and relinquished concentration, that we are more adept than before. Moreover, students of animal behaviour have pointed out that a process to which they have given the name of "latent learning" is involved when an animal such as an insect or a mammal explores its environment without the incentive of satisfying any immediate need, but in so doing acquires information which it may later put to good use in securing food or escaping from confinement or from enemies (W. H. Thorpe, "Types of Learning in Insects and other Arthropods," *British Journal of Psychology*, 1943, General Section, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 20-3). Some authorities consider that this kind of learning is equivalent to insight learning (N. R. F. Maier and T. C. Schneirla, *Principles of Animal Psychology*, New York and London, 1935). Whether or not this is so, there is involved a concealed organising principle which so relates its data to each other and experience in general that they are ultimately available for biologically effective utilisation.

## CHAPTER

### XVI

#### TYPES OF IMAGE CLUSTERS

HAVING reviewed in earlier chapters some of the evidence indicating how memory, the Mother of all the Muses, and emotion, as well as reason, contribute to the work of the creative imagination, we noticed in the last chapter that inspiration is commonly consequent upon a period of mental assimilation. It is of the essential nature of an image cluster to be held together over a considerable space of time, though the organisation of its components may be subject to modification, and therefore it is apparent that it undergoes the process which we call "incubation." It is the product of remembered emotional and intellectual elements. The rational element is patent from the fashion in which linkages established in earlier plays are integrated into later work by Shakespeare, and we have already noted that emotion is active in creating and maintaining some, and possibly most, clusters. Thus these linkages represent in miniature the functions involved in all imagination—memory, emotion and reason.

We must now examine various types of image cluster, not restricting ourselves to Shakespearean examples, in order to learn more of their origin and constitution and to ascertain, if possible, to what extent such types of association owe their origin to their respective author's personal emotional experiences. We shall enquire whether by the analysis of linkages we may disclose reactions of a personal nature which caused them to arise and to manifest themselves continuously without their creator's realisation of their existence.

Let us consider an instance of an image cluster taken from the works of a subjective and autobiographical poet—Wordsworth. If image clusters ever crystallise personal emotional experiences it should be possible to discover evidence of this in the poetry of one who tells us so much about himself.

In *The Excursion* we have this description :

Such was the *Boy*—but for the growing Youth  
What soul was his, when, from the *naked* top  
Of some bold headland, he beheld the *sun*  
Rise up, and *bathe* the world in *light* !

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He looked—  
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth  
And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay  
Beneath him.

(I, 197.)

Similar imagery appears in *The Prelude* :

• I watched the golden beams of *light*  
Flung from the setting *sun*, as they reposed  
In silent beauty on the *naked* ridge  
Of a high eastern hill—thus flowed my thoughts  
In a pure *stream* of words fresh from the heart.

(VIII, 463.)

Nakedness, sunlight and water in different dispositions are common to the two passages and the occurrence of "bathe" also suggests that we may have here a reminiscence of some personal experience in which instead of the sun bathing the mountains the author bathed in a mountain stream. The hypothesis is certainly correct, for elsewhere in *The Prelude* he tells us :

Oh, many a time have I, a five years *child*,<sup>1</sup>  
In a small mill-race severed from his *stream*,  
Made one long *bathing* of a summer's day ;  
Basked in the *sun*, and plunged and basked again

..... as if I had been born  
On Indian plains, and from my mother's hut  
Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport  
A *naked* savage in the thunder shower.

(I, 288.)

While it is unlikely, indeed out of the question, that Wordsworth deliberately chose to bring this constellation of words together three times, it is highly probable that what we might style the emotional reverberations of the joyful escapades of boyhood were responsible for their repetition. Possibly also the word "naked" had in its own right an emotional significance which provided a nucleus for the formation of a cluster.<sup>1</sup> "Naked" is unusually—one might say abnormally—prominent in Wordsworth's poetry. In *The Prelude* it is applied to such various things as the moon and a well, and in *The Excursion* to a house and a branch, as well as to various features of the earth's surface. Professor Wilson Knight points out that "*The Prelude* is peculiarly non-sexual," but thinks that certain phrases in *The Borderers* "hint a perversion of sexual

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the lines in *The Excursion* (I, 118-9) :

From his sixth year, the Boy of whom I speak  
In summer tended cattle on the hills.

energy." He also remarks that "naked" as used by Wordsworth is "quite divorced from erotic sensation."<sup>1</sup> If this is so it suggests that there may be some repressed emotional experience connected with the image. Thus we have the possibility that the formation of this cluster is due to two emotional elements, one conscious and the other latent. It will be shown later that it is possible for the same individual to react to remembered experiences in contrary ways according as they are revived on a higher or lower level and that what is viewed with relish or equanimity on one plane of recollection may arouse disgust on another. Consequently it is not surprising that contrary emotions should be involved in a cluster. Dr. W. D. Paden in his study of the imagery in Tennyson's earlier work has shown that "in a complex of imagery, one image may be suffused with two emotions—one approved and conscious, the other repressed in whole or in part."<sup>2</sup> Thus in an unpublished early poem two images which the young Tennyson found in Claude-Étienne Savary's *Letters on Egypt* are related in such a way that the one becomes a substitute for the other. Naked women and buffaloes are both described as disporting themselves in the water of the Nile but in the poem in question the buffaloes replaced the naked girls, by the psychological process of substitution. One of the characteristic effects of the substitution process, as Dr. Paden remarks, is that images may appear with an intensity of emotion completely foreign to their normal content, as in this instance. Thus although Wordsworth's "bathing" cluster bears testimony to his joy as a child in making "one long bathing of a summer's day" we cannot assume that joyful emotion was entirely responsible for its creation. It is no more justifiable to dogmatise that clusters are the products of repressed unpleasant affects than to argue that they are the outcome of pleasant memories and associations. Only careful analysis can determine the factors which have gone to the creation of a particular cluster.

The fact that pleasurable emotion sometimes plays a major part in the formation of linkages does, however, require emphasis because so much Freudian effort has been devoted to stressing the potent effect of repressed unpleasant emotion. It is probable that some unwitting associations and errors of the kind discussed in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* may be due to pleasant associations latent in the mind obtruding themselves at the expense

<sup>1</sup> *The Starlit Dome*, 1941, pp. 21, 34, 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Tennyson in Egypt: A Study of the Imagery in his Earlier Work*. Univ. of Kansas Publ. No. 27, pp. 14, 48-9. Cf. also C. G. Jung, *Studies in Word Association* (tr. M. D. Eder, New York, 1919).



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of others rather than to repressed disagreeable associations. Freud admits, for example, that when he missed a train connexion on his way to visit his brother in England it was the wish to see Rembrandt's masterpieces in Holland which caused him to make the mistake.<sup>1</sup> He would probably have attributed the forgetfulness of the Foolish Virgins in the parable to jealousy of the bride, but it is at least as likely that it was the excited anticipation of an enjoyable function which was responsible for their failure to trim their lamps. It is by no means out of the question that in the case of some of them their thoughtlessness was accentuated by a mixture of emotions.

When we ask ourselves to what extent the clusters in the poetry of A. E. Housman have a personal reference, our problem is more difficult. The biographical material is scanty and contradictory, though fortunately Housman, as we have noted, recorded the circumstances in which his verse was composed.

Here are examples from *A Shropshire Lad* :

Lovers' ills are all to buy :  
The wan look, the hollow tone,  
The hung head, the *sunken* eye,  
You can have them for your own.

Buy them, buy them : eve and *morn*  
Lovers' ills are all to sell.  
Then you can lie down *forlorn* ;  
But the lover will be well.  
(vi, 5-12.)

They hang us now in Shrewsbury jail :  
The whistles blow *forlorn*,  
And *trains* all night groan on the rail  
To men that die at *morn*.  
(ix, 9-12.)

In *Last Poems* we find :

Too fast to yonder strand *forlorn*  
We journey to the *sunken* bourn.  
(i, 33-34.)

The night goes out and under  
With all its *train forlorn*,  
Hues in the east assemble,  
And cocks crow up the *morn*.  
(xix, 17-20.)

It will be seen that in these verses there is an association between "sunken," "morn," "forlorn" and "train."

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* (1938), pp. 166-7.

Again, in *A Shropshire Lad* we have :

But in the *golden*-sanded *brooks*  
And *azure* meres I spy  
A silly *lad* that longs and looks  
And wishes he were I.  
(xx, 13-16.)

Once in the wind of morning  
I ranged the thymy wold ;  
The world-wide air was *azure*  
And all the *brooks* ran *gold*.  
(xlii. 1-4).

With rue my heart is laden  
For *golden* friends I had,  
For many a rose-lipt maiden  
And many a light-foot *lad*

By *brooks* too broad for leaping  
The light-foot *boys* are laid :  
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping  
In fields where roses fade.  
(liv, 1-8.)

Here the linked images are "golden," "azure," "brooks" and "lad." Incidentally, Shakespeare's influence is evident. Housman remembered the song in *Cymbeline* when he wrote in *Last Poems* :

What golden lads are low.  
(ii, 6.)

This we know because there are echoes of the same song in *A Shropshire Lad* :

Fear the heat o' the sun no more.  
(xliii, 30.)

Dust's your wages, son of sorrow,  
But men may come to worse than dust.  
(xliv, 15-16.)

Housman, indeed, wrote to M. Maurice Pollet in connexion with *A Shropshire Lad* : " Its chief sources of which I am conscious are Shakespeare's Songs, the Scottish Border Ballads and Heine." <sup>1</sup> However, the circumstances in which his poetry was composed show that at the time of inspiration there was no conscious imitation, or indeed memory, of the sources.

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<sup>1</sup> G. Richards, *Housman, 1897-1936* (Oxford, 1941), p. 270.

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Are Housman's associations due to personal emotional experiences of some poignant nature? Can we, for example, infer from the linkage above that some sorrowful parting in the dim light of dawn on a railway station seared his soul and caused him to become shy and *difficile*? I do not think so. His sister says: "The actual blow that damaged A. E. Housman's life was his blameable failure in the final schools at Oxford,"<sup>1</sup> while Dr. Withers attributes the psychological disaster to an unhappy love affair.<sup>2</sup> Such contradictory testimony is little help.

If we had to choose between the alternative explanations of the change in Housman's temperament, an unfortunate love affair might explain the association between railways and lugubrious feelings better than a failure in the Oxford schools, for trains are more often associated with unhappy farewells than with being "pipped" in examinations. But we do not need a great knowledge of psychology to make us dubious as to whether either a love affair or failure in an examination could alter a personality fundamentally unless there were antecedent conditions, dating possibly from childhood, which had created special susceptibility to emotional stress.

Leaving aside such speculation and returning to realms in which a tolerable measure of certainty is possible, we note that Wordsworth's "bathing" cluster and Housman's "train" cluster have each an overt emotional bond, in the one case joy, in the other sadness.<sup>3</sup> Intellectual and memory elements, of course, also are evident in both. From what Housman recorded of the way in which inspiration came to him we can be certain that most, if not all, of his clusters are the product of a period of incubation. The imagery endured saturation in "the well of unconscious cerebration" before the verse into which it integrated itself burst over the threshold. No doubt this is also true of Wordsworth's "bathing" cluster.

Some clusters—or perhaps we should call them pseudo-clusters—are of a cruder kind and their imperfection or spuriousness is revealed by the absence of the emotional bond or nucleus and their appearance of having been laboriously put together.

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* Introduction by Mrs. E. W. Symons, pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>2</sup> P. Withers, *A Buried Life* (1940), pp. 129-30.

<sup>3</sup> The function of emotion in "fixing" ideas receives interesting confirmation from the achievements of brain surgeons in relieving the pathological fixation of ideas such as delusions, obsessions and verbigeration. They conclude that it is emotion which fixes ideas so that they become noxious. Cf. W. Freeman and J. W. Watts, "Prefrontal Lobotomy: the Surgical Relief of Mental Pain," *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* (1942), Vol. XVIII, 2nd series, No. 12, p. 807.

Coleridge wrote poetry which has every characteristic indicative of thorough steeping in the "well," but sometimes, as with Housman, the muse deserted him and left him to do a jobbing joiner's work—or perhaps he was too impatient to await the muse's pleasure. Mr. J. Livingston Lowes in *The Road to Xanadu* shows that when Coleridge was reading Crantz's *History of Greenland* he came across a description of how the thawing ice

. . . plunges into the bay in *huge pieces* . . . and with such an *agitation of the water*, as will overset a *boat* a good way off ; and many a *poor Greenlander*, coasting without concern along the shore, *has lost his life by it*.

He remembered this when completing Southey's poem *Joan of Arc* :

Yet its *fragments many and huge*  
Astounded ocean with the dreadful *dance*  
Of *whirlpools* numberless, absorbing oft  
The *blameless* fisher at his perilous toil,

and again when he wrote in *Osorio* :

Ye too split  
The ice-mount, and with *fragments many and huge*,  
Tempest the new-thaw'd sea, whose sudden gulphs  
Suck in, perchance, some *Lapland wizard's skiff*  
Then round and round the *whirlpool's* marge ye *dance*.

The "blameless fisher" becomes a "Lapland wizard" because a "Greenland wizard" appears in the immediate context of *Joan of Arc*, and the change to "Lapland" is due, according to Mr. Lowes, to Coleridge's reading of *De Lapponibus* by Leemius.<sup>1</sup>

This linkage is crude because the processes involved in its formation were superficial in the sense of being dominated by conscious effort rather than by subconscious selection. Just because it is crude, however, it enables us to detect some of the machinery of cluster formation at work. We note in it : (1) The employment of imagery remembered from several earlier written sources ; (2) The reproduction with alterations of remembered material. (To what extent the poet deliberately altered his material we cannot know ; the verse suggests that it was constructed in that kind of way, but as we noticed earlier it is a characteristic of memory to change the data committed to it without the subject's realising what has taken place) ; (3) The repetition of linked images ; (4) The linking on of an image—wizard—in a later passage by reason of its occurrence in an earlier association. But the

<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Xanadu*, p. 95.

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cluster is dead. It has its limbs intact but lacks the vitality which emotion gives and the beauty bestowed by the elixir in the "well of unconscious cerebration."

Let us now consider some of Shakespeare's clusters in the light of what we have learned about image clusters in general. The most famous specimen and the only cluster which has been commented on to any extent—so far as I am aware—is that to which Walter Whiter drew attention more than 150 years ago.<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare frequently associates dogs, candy and flattery, as these few selected examples will suffice to show.

Hotspur speaks of Bolingbroke's attitude thus :

1 H. IV, 1.3.251

Why, what a *candy* deal of courtesy  
This *fawning greyhound* then did proffer me !

When Metellus Cimber would abase himself before Cæsar he is restrained with these words :

J.C. 3.1.39

Be not fond,  
To think that Cæsar bears such rebel blood  
That will be *thaw'd* from the true quality  
With that which *melte*th fools, I mean *sweet* words,  
*Low-crook'd court'sies* and base *spaniel-fawning*.<sup>2</sup>

An interesting variant appears later in the same play where honey takes the place of candy in the cluster. Cassius protests,

5.1.34

But for your words, they rob the Hybla bees,  
And leave them *honeyle*ss,

and Antony a little later cries,

You show'd your teeth like apes, and *fawn'd* like *hounds*,  
And *bow'd* like *bondmen*, *kissing Cæsar's feet* ;  
While damned Casca, like a *cur*, behind  
Struck Cæsar on the neck.

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<sup>1</sup> W. Whiter, *A Specimen of a Commentary on Shakespeare* (London, 1794), pp. 138-41.

<sup>2</sup> Originally the metaphor seems to have been suggested by melting wax or ice as in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* :

*Two Gent.*

2.4.200

That I did love, for now my love is *thaw'd* ;  
Which like a *waxen image* 'gainst a fire,  
Bears no *impression* of the thing it was.

and

3.2.6

This weak impress of love is as a figure  
Trenched in *ice*, which with an hour's heat  
*Dissolves* to water and doth lose its form.

Possibly Shakespeare had in mind the magical practice of melting the image of a hated person. The evolution of the cluster culminates in *Timon* (Cf. G. Rylands, *Words and Poetry*, p. 239).

Hamlet says to Horatio :

No, let the *candied tongue lick* absurd pomp,  
And *crook the pregnant hinges of the knee*  
Where thrift may follow *fawning*.

Ham. 3.2.65

*Timon of Athens* is pervaded with dog imagery. Timon says,

Thou art a slave, whom Fortune's tender arm  
With favour never clasp'd ; but bred a *dog*.  
Hadst thou, like us from our first swath, proceeded  
The *sweet* degrees that this brief world affords  
To such as may the passive dregs of it  
Freely command, thou wouldst have plunged thyself  
In general riot ; *melted* down thy youth  
In different beds of lust, and never learn'd  
The *icy* precepts of respect, but follow'd  
The *sugar'd* game before thee. But myself,  
Who had the world as my *confectionary*,  
The *mouths*, the *tongues*, the eyes and hearts of men  
They never *flatter'd* thee.

Timon, 4.3.250

It may be as an outcome of these associations that we have a dog named Sweetheart in *Lear*. The king says,

The little *dogs* and all,  
Tray, Blanch and *Sweet-heart*, see, they bark at me.

K.L. 3.6.65

Be thy mouth or black or white.<sup>1</sup>

Probably Dr. Caroline Spurgeon was right in suggesting that the cluster arose in connexion with the revulsion which the poet felt at the sight of dogs fawning about the dinner-table, begging for and devouring fragments of the sweetmeats with slobbering mouths. Shakespeare detested dogs, as any reader who cares to look up his references to them can easily verify. Indeed the curs which ran wild in Tudor streets were not very lovable. Moreover there is not much doubt that his experience of literary patronage made him loathe a relationship which sometimes forced an author into feeling little better than a lickspittle. Thus fawning dogs embodied a great deal which Shakespeare hated. Obviously, then, the emotional bond in the dog-candy-flattery cluster is not far to seek. But Mr. Middleton Murry carries inference to much greater lengths than this. He proceeds to picture Shakespeare in Sir Thomas Lucy's hall "on the mat" for deer-stealing, watching the slobbering dogs and henceforth bearing within his breast a resentment

<sup>1</sup> This image cluster is further discussed in the Appendix.

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which manifested itself in the dog-candy-flattery linkage. He says :

In the investigation of one recurrent and extremely peculiar strand in Shakespeare's imagination, I find myself compelled to account for it by supposing an incident in Shakespeare's life which made an indelible impression on his unconscious mind—a moment when he was standing before the table in an Elizabethan hall, watching the hounds wagging their tails, licking the hands of a pompous company, gobbling up the rich and sticky sweet-meats thrown to them—and this experience so deeply nauseated Shakespeare that it went on working unconsciously within him, and became a self-creating image of servility and flattery.<sup>1</sup>

Quite apart from the fact that the tale about Shakespeare's deer-stealing in Lucy's park is a manifest fiction—Sir Thomas Lucy had no deer-park at Charlecote when Shakespeare was a boy<sup>2</sup>—this kind of speculative reconstruction, by which a set of linked images is assumed without any evidence to have originated in a specific incident, is illegitimate. The device is as seductive to the imaginative writer as it is attractive to a public agog to know what Shakespeare chose not to tell. Cluster criticism provides a means whereby we may in some measure draw aside the veil shrouding Shakespeare's personality, but if associative linkages are to become the subject of unthrifty inference the truth which they reveal will be submerged in a sea of specious error.

It is noteworthy that the presence of one of the components in this cluster is not due to any emotional experience but to an association of quite another kind. Antony, believing himself abandoned by Cleopatra and her supporters, cries out :

A. & C.  
4.12.20

The hearts  
That *spaniel'd* me at heels, to whom I gave  
Their wishes, do *discandy*, melt their sweets  
On blossoming Cæsar ; and this pine is *bark'd*  
That overtopp'd them all.

In *A Companion to Shakespeare Studies* Mr. G. Rylands comments : " Shakespeare thinks of falsity in friendship ; it suggests flattery ; flattery suggests a fawning dog begging for sweetmeats, and then his mind makes an unaccountable leap—or were Elizabethan candies formed to represent flowers?—from the dinner table to the peeled and stripped forest tree."<sup>3</sup> But there is no leap

<sup>1</sup> *Shakespeare* (1936), p. 37. Cf. also p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> B. R. Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents* (Stanford Univ., 1940), Vol. I, pp. 98, 322-4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also G. Rylands, *Words and Poetry* (1928), pp. 176, 239.

—merely a step. The thought of the spaniel aroused a memory of the dog's bark and "bark" suggested the stripped pine metaphor.

Thus we can sometimes analyse a cluster into components, some of which are there because of their emotional significance and others conjoined by reason of some similarity of sound or sense, or even because of mere contiguity in the past. Images group themselves into a cluster because of the dominant influence of one or another of three associative activities—memory, emotion or reason—though, of course, none of these functions of the mind ever operates in independence of the others. In an analogous way at a lecture we may find that the assembly is made up of three groups—those who have to "keep" a certain number of attendances, those whose main interest is in a member of the opposite sex, and those who are interested in the subject of the lecture. It is sometimes obvious enough to the onlooker which impulse is responsible for the presence of particular students, but at other times he would be hard put to it to decide whether a particular student's dominating interest was in Elizabethan literature or in the girl on the next bench. We are sometimes in like case in endeavouring to distinguish the degree of personal reference in an image cluster. Each has to be considered on its merits.

\* Although we can frequently recognise the dominant emotional bond in a linkage, it is extremely difficult to show in any instance that it owes its origin to emotional experiences personal to the poet as distinct from participation in more general emotion. Only when we are able to discover that one or more of the component terms had a specific or peculiar emotional significance for Shakespeare have we reason to suspect that the poet is betraying himself. But even in such instances it is doubtful whether the distastes and preferences so revealed point back to the kind of emotional upheavals connected with women which some critics so enthusiastically announce that they have discovered. If they are right we may expect a cluster in which "love" is involved to reveal something of Shakespeare's amours. Let us therefore consider the remarkable association between love and books, to which attention was also drawn by Whiter.

Lady Capulet asks Juliet :

What say you ? can you *love* the gentleman ?  
This night you shall behold him at our feast ;  
*Read* o'er the *volume* of young Paris' face  
And find delight *writ* there with beauty's pen ;

R. & J. 1.3.79



*Shakespeare's Imagination*

Examine every married lineament  
And see how one another lends content,  
And what obscured in this fair volume lies  
Find *written* in the *margent* of his eyes.  
This precious book of *love*, this *unbound lover*,  
To beautify him only lacks a *cover* :  
The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride  
For fair without the fair within to hide ;  
That *book* in many's eyes doth share the glory,  
That in *gold clasps* locks in the golden story.

Later, Juliet says of Romeo,

R. & J. 3.2.83

Was ever *book*, containing such vile matter,  
So fairly *bound* ?

In ancient books comments were printed in the margin. From this practice Shakespeare derives a number of metaphors. For example, in the *Rape of Lucrece* :

Luc. 99

But she, that never cop'd with stranger eyes,  
Could pick no meaning from their parling looks,  
Nor read the subtle shining secrecies  
Writ in the glassy *margent* of such *books*.

In *Much Ado About Nothing* Don Pedro says :

M. Ado, 1.1.309

Thou wilt be like a *lover* presently  
And tire the hearer with a *book* of *words*.  
If thou dost *love* fair Hero, cherish it,  
And I will break with her and with her father  
And thou shalt have her. Was't not to this end  
That thou began'st to twist so fine a *story* ?

And in her bosom I'll *unclasp* my heart  
And take her hearing prisoner with the force  
And strong encounter of my *amorous tale*.

The Duke in *Twelfth Night* expresses similar sentiments to Cesario in regard to his love for Olivia :

Tw. N. 1.4.14

Thou know'st no less but all ; I have *unclasp'd*  
To thee the *book* even of my secret soul.<sup>1</sup>

Love is explicitly the emotional bond in these instances, but its association with books and reading suggests that we are not

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also *T. and C.* 4.5.58-61 ; *L.L.L.* 4.3.350-4 ; *M.N.D.* 2.2.120-3 ; *W.T.* 4.4.171-4.

concerned with any of Shakespeare's adventures or misadventures in love. Rupert Brooke might write :

Now that we've done our best and worst, and parted,  
I would fill my mind with thoughts that will not rend.  
(O heart, I do not dare go empty-hearted)  
I'll think of Love in books, Love without end ;

but there is no reason to believe that love and books went together in Shakespeare's mind because of being disappointed in love ; nor does this linkage give the least support to the inference that his treatment by Anne Hathaway or a raven-haired mistress sent him to Italian *novelle*. The cluster is an elaboration of metaphors in common use and found in the works of various playwrights. For instance, near the beginning of *Four Plays in One* by Beaumont and Fletcher we find Isabella saying :

Or if this brest of mine, your crystall brook,  
Ever take other form in, other look  
But yours, or ere produce unto your grace  
A strange reflection or another's face,  
But be your *love-book clasp'd*, open'd to none  
But you, nor hold a *storie* but your own.

It is quite possible that the prominence of the love-books-binding cluster in Shakespeare's plays is partly due to the influence of romances he had read imbuing his memory with their emotional tinge, but the facts are against the view that the cluster owes its origin or prominence to any of Shakespeare's love affairs. Those anxious to find evidence of the poet's amours must look elsewhere.

## CHAPTER

### XVII

#### THE APPLICATION OF PSYCHO-ANALYTIC METHODS TO LITERARY CRITICISM

**W**E shall be able to consider the significance of the image clusters reviewed in earlier chapters more effectively if we comment briefly on the methods at present fashionable of analysing a writer's character by a psychological dissection of his works. Freudian ideas have so saturated the thought of our age that biographers and literary critics almost inevitably scrutinise an author's works with psycho-analytic conceptions, if not preconceptions, in their minds. Shakespeare, of course, has not escaped this kind of attention and experts at reading between the lines claim to have disclosed a rich variety of facts about his personality, his misadventures in matrimony, relationships with mistresses and many intimate matters upon which history tells us little or nothing. Not all these attempts to attain a clear-cut picture of the man Shakespeare have been explicitly Freudian; nor have their results tallied with one another. Frank Harris found Shakespeare to have been "a neuropath," a man of "ungovernable sensuality" and the victim of "erotic mania,"<sup>1</sup> while Caroline Spurgeon concluded he was "healthy in body as in mind, clean and fastidious" . . . "in many ways in character what one can only describe as Christ-like."<sup>2</sup> Some of the supposed facts disclosed and theories evolved by these methods recall the story of the schoolboy who, replying to a Divinity question, wrote: "There is not much about this in the Gospels but full particulars can be found in Dean Farrar's *Life of Christ*." The divergent findings of the critics arouse the suspicion that it is easier to create a Shakespeare to fit our preconceptions than to know him as he was, but fairness constrains us to admit that in spite of their contradictory results the critics' researches have revealed aspects of the poet's character which are of interest and sometimes of importance. Their disagreement reminds us that a universal genius is an intractable subject for concise and clear-cut characterisation. Yet Shakespeare offers

<sup>1</sup> *The Man Shakespeare* (1909), pp. 281, 336, 378, 389.

<sup>2</sup> *Shakespeare's Imagery*, pp. 203, 207.

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a crucial test case for all those who believe that no author can conceal his personality in his works. Can psychological criticism augment the meagre biographical record? The strangeness of image clusters as psychological phenomena challenges us to consider their significance as clues to character and temperament. Moreover, as we have seen, they are microcosms revealing imaginative activity as a dynamic alliance of memory, emotion and reason.

Freud's views, or more often distorted versions of them, are so widely accepted or assumed uncritically to be true, that nowadays many an author's reputation is called in question because of what Freudians discern between the lines. To penetrate to the hidden springs of an author's character by psychological analysis is assumed by many critics to be a much simpler matter than in fact it is. Unquestionably all writers reveal something of themselves in their works and some make unwitting disclosures of certain aspects of their personalities. Coleridge was wrong when, in his *Table Talk* of 15th March 1834, he commented, "How absolutely nothing do we know of Shakespeare!" But some of the alleged skeletons dragged forth and dangled in grisly indecency before us as a result of the modern orgy of hunting in literary cupboards have been manufactured by the imaginations of their exhibitors. There are critics endowed with imaginations so vivid that they could discover a skeleton in the barest cupboard. Moreover, they are apt to forget that a work of art is not less a work of art were it created by Beelzebub himself.

Contemporary literature is full of these psychological inquests, varying greatly in subtlety and justification in fact. H. G. Wells makes this surprising statement :

I was struck by the streak of cruelty for cruelty's sake in the late Sir Hugh Walpole's *Portrait of a Man with Red Hair*. The only interest in the book was cruelty. I do not think Hugh went beyond imagining and gloating on cruelty. His circumstances would not allow any practices.<sup>1</sup>

Miss Evelyn Hardy in her book on Donne states that "Donne's violent misogyny may have sprung from his perverted love for his mother, a love which, like Hamlet's, got twisted from its natural heritage and nourished on a false diet," and she suggests that even his handwriting gives a hint of homosexual tendencies.<sup>2</sup> Professor Edmund Wilson, in his psycho-analytical study of Kipling, draws various unfavourable inferences as to his character. Even when he is least dogmatic his comments sometimes carry innuendoes.

<sup>1</sup> '42 to '44 (1944), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Donne : A Spirit in Conflict* (1942), pp. 86, 264-5.

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In regard to Kipling's theme of a man hounded to death by a woman he has wronged, he writes :

We do not know enough about his life to be able to assign it to an assumption on the part of the six-year-old Kipling that he must somehow have sinned against the mother who had abandoned him so inexplicably at Southsea. . . . All we can say is that the theme of the anguish which is suffered without being deserved has the appearance of having been derived from a morbid permanent feeling of injury inflicted by his experience at Southsea.<sup>1</sup>

Even before psycho-analysis gave new impetus to speculations of this type critics claimed that they could disclose much of Shakespeare's "hidden life." They discovered in the sonnets and plays—so they believed—a great deal about Shakespeare's relations with the "dark lady" and some succeeded in identifying her with Mary Fitton, although portraits of the lady show that she was not a brunette.<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately our present theme does not require us to assess the accuracy or otherwise of charges brought against writers because of the misdemeanours of their imaginary puppets. Those interested in psycho-analysing the psycho-analysts may, however, find some significance in the fact that they so seldom attribute the virtues of an author's characters to their creator. But it is of importance both for an understanding of the nature and function of imagination and in order that we may form a correct opinion, so far as may be, as to how much Shakespeare unwittingly and unwillingly revealed of himself in his plays in general and the image clusters in particular that we should consider whether the Freudian theory of the imagination is sound.

◦ Freud's views, expressed in his *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, are well known. Artistic creation is the product of unconscious wishes. Phantasy, with its elaboration into forms of Art, is "a mental activity in which . . . relinquished sources of pleasure and abandoned paths of gratification are permitted to continue their existence, a form of existence in which they are free from the demands of reality." The artist is "urged on by instinctive needs which are too clamorous ; he longs to attain to honour, power, riches, fame, and the love of women," but "he understands how to elaborate his day-dreams, so that they lose that personal note which grates upon strange ears and becomes enjoy-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Wound and the Bow* (1941), p. 166. For a critique of Professor Wilson's views the reader is referred to Professor E. E. Stoll's *From Shakespeare to Joyce* (New York, 1944), pp. 339-88.

<sup>2</sup> Sir S. Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare* (14th edn.), pp. 195, 694.

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able to others ; he knows too how to modify them sufficiently so that their origin in prohibited sources is not easily detected." So " he opens out to others the way back to the comfort and consolation of their own unconscious sources of pleasure, and so reaps their gratitude and admiration " and thus achieves " through his phantasy—what before he could only win in phantasy : honour, power, and the love of women." <sup>1</sup> Repressed appetites and aspirations which are not acceptable to the ego or not publicly approved by society are in the guise of phantasy able to find expression ; and the relish with which the public appreciates such products of the imagination is the measure of the extent to which they appeal to unacknowledged desires. It follows that could we but carry analysis far enough we might lay bare what the artist has concealed in a wordy épopée—his materialistic and erotic aspirations.

It is indisputable that authors may sometimes unwittingly reveal their personal aspirations and idiosyncrasies in their work ; <sup>2</sup> but this should not prevent our realising that a writer is often aware to what extent a character in a novel represents himself or herself. For instance, Miss Winifred Holtby wrote in connexion with *The Crowded Street* : " My Muriel is myself—part of me only—the stupid frightened part." And in another letter :

I am working every morning on *The Land of Green Ginger*, and at present so happy with it. I love my Joanna. She's all the best of me, but without my academic side and with far more pluck. I started by hating her husband and am growing so sorry for him that I shall end with loving him best of all. It is queer how one goes on making the better acquaintance with one's characters, just as though they were people. I could no more make mine do what I want them to do, once I have created them, than I could make you do something. They have a complete individual life, and I could follow every word and action and thought of theirs during a whole day if that were artistically possible. The only difficulty is to know what bits to choose and what to leave out. Novel-writing is not creation, it is selection. Once characters have been born they assume a complete life about which everything exists waiting to be recorded. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (tr. J. Riviere, 1922), pp. 314–5.

<sup>2</sup> In his study, entitled *Tennyson in Egypt* (University of Kansas Humanistic Studies, No. 27), Dr. W. D. Paden has shown from Tennyson's imagery that his father signified for him the forces of domination and repression. Analysis of his imagery bears out what we know from other sources, that he suffered from neurotic conflicts. Since a poet's imagery may thus reveal mental disturbances, we may presume the converse to be true—that if after careful scrutiny of imagery we find no indication of neurosis there is so much the more reason to assume his normality.

<sup>3</sup> W. Holtby, *Letters to a Friend* (ed. by A. Holtby and J. McWilliam, 1937), pp. 288, 427.

Somerset Maugham says in the preface to *Cakes and Ale* :

A character in a writer's head, unwritten, remains a possession ; his thoughts recur to it constantly, and while his imagination continually enriches it he enjoys the singular pleasure of feeling that there, in his mind, someone is living a varied and tremulous life, obedient to his fancy and yet in a queer wilful way independent of him.

Many other writers have testified to the same effect. The excerpt from Miss Holtby's letter, however, will suffice to show that a novelist may select as the nucleus of a fictitious character some aspect of his or her own personality and then let the imagination play with and develop this projected nucleus within the bounds which its associative potentialities, as integrated into the imaginative scheme, restrict it from exceeding. Coleridge suggested that Shakespeare did this, seizing upon some moral or intellectual characteristic of his own, imagining it exaggerated, sometimes to morbid excess, and conceiving his personality thus distorted in some situation which emphasises the excess in a comic or tragic way.

The most interesting testimony for our present purpose is that of Trollope who, on his own confession, was the hero of his early novels, but advanced to more objective procedure. He wrote in his *Autobiography*, "In after years—I have discarded the hero of my early dreams and have been able to lay my own identity aside." Mr. C. S. Lewis, who quotes this statement in disproof of Freud's theory, points out that we can distinguish in our own minds between wish-fulfilment phantasies and truly imaginative phantasies.<sup>1</sup> We are not necessarily unaware of those occasions when we allow dreams of honour, power and love to run away with us.

The Freudian case, however, is not so easily confuted, for it can be argued that Trollope was self-deluded in believing that he could and did set his identity aside. No doubt he ceased consciously to create characters out of the projected fragments of his own personality or experience, but did lower levels of the mind, subconscious levels, take over the work? Where our own repressions and complexes are concerned, we are not always able to distinguish between our wish-fulfilment phantasies and those of pure imagination. Who can doubt that Sir James Barrie in his plays unwittingly reveals some of his complexes? The Freudian might well retort to Mr. Lewis that the wish-fulfilment phantasies which we are not able to distinguish as such are precisely those

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<sup>1</sup> *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association* (1941), xxvii, pp. 7-21.

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which are most potent in artistic creation. Thus the literary psycho-analyst can always get the better of the argument by following the ancient geographers' practice, deplored by Aeneas Sylvius, of locating his mysteries in ever remoter regions.

His thesis, however, can be assaulted from another direction, for he can be accused of undue simplification in his treatment of art. The æsthetic is given a subordinate place, the function of harmony in relationships is neglected, the subjective drives are unduly stressed, and the ethical element involved in the Censorship principle is surreptitiously intruded by postulating the origin of phantasies in "prohibited sources." These sources are in the Unconscious, which the Freudian tells us is a-moral. Unrestrained it would express itself in ways not approved by society. Its products appear disguised as the phantasies of the poet or artist. The agency which disguises them is the Preconscious Censorship and its function is to exclude material which has not been made to conform to the standards of the conscious level. The Censorship—as its name implies—is conceived as acting on a moral basis. Thus Freud's vivid conception of the Censorship principle with its dramatic appeal has prejudiced people's minds in favour of the view that the appearance of material in consciousness is a matter of its moral respectability. But when we consider the wide realms of imaginative activity it is obvious that the availability of images or ideas for association is dependent on a great variety of mental activities unconnected, or connected very remotely, with any moral or social censorship. There is no reason to believe that imaginative creation is necessarily either motivated or moulded by concealed a-moral impulses, whether disguised or not, except in so far as psychic energy ultimately derives from the fundamental self-preservatory and reproductive drives. If most of the subliminal processes involved in imagination are independent of ethical relevance, we cannot assume that the symbols and phantasies in which they manifest themselves are related to an ethical universe of discourse at all, and to regard them as emanating from "prohibited sources," or interpret them as being disguised expressions of morally illegitimate and therefore relinquished sources of gratification, is gratuitous.

Freud's description of imagination at best is therefore very inadequate. The type of generalisation in which Freudians indulge, even if justified, as for example the statement of Dr. Oscar Pfister that Goethe kills himself as Werther and thus escapes suicide, throws scanty light on the activities of the imagination. Undoubtedly artistic expression may have a cathartic effect, but to say so does not go far towards explaining the creative processes.



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Even if we take into account the processes of secondary elaboration which Freud postulated, the production of the phantasies of literature is a much more intricate matter than he represented it to be. In creative imagination there is no dominant censorship principle of the kind he envisaged in the position of supreme authority. Moreover, as was shown in Chapter XV, creative functions of the highest significance are active below the level of consciousness. It is not merely a realm of negative and repressive activity. Freud paid little attention to the achievements of the subliminal realm in providing optimum conditions for the gestation of inspiration—hence the incompleteness of his picture of the concealed processes. We shall presently discuss his schematic description of the mind and endeavour to reach a more adequate conception of the imaginative activities.

This digression from the theme of our last chapter has been necessary in order to emphasise the futility of supposing that the operations of the imagination can be accounted for by some simple formula. If Freud's theories had been valid we might have hoped to discover and avail ourselves of certain rules based on the principle that what is unwittingly expressed is a disguised manifestation of the Unconscious. Thus we might readily have learnt a great deal about a writer's concealed motives and aspirations. But our task is not so easy. The careful examination of image clusters and other products of subliminal activity may by wary scrutiny and careful study yield information about the man Shakespeare as well as give us glimpses of the creative activity of his imagination, but there is no royal road of psychological interpretation such that the wayfaring man may not err therein.

## CHAPTER

### XVIII

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGE CLUSTERS

**W**HEN we endeavour, in the light of the preceding discussion, to estimate the significance of the image clusters discussed in the earlier pages of this essay we find that the intimacy of personal experience represented by them varies greatly. Some appear to have originated in specific emotional reactions comparable with, or even more definite than, those involved in the dog-candy-flattery cluster, others are based on generalised emotional responses, and yet others are the outcome of elaborated conventional associations.

The nucleus and bond of the kite-bed linkage is provided by the emotional content of "death"—one of the Supreme Categories of Shakespearean association. It is certain that the poet often saw kites mauling scraps of stinking carrion in the streets of London. The image cluster records his feeling of revulsion. More than this, it illustrates his characteristic movement of thought from what he saw—bird, beast or inanimate object—to its human relevance. Wide as were his interests, his proper study was mankind. Whether some death-bed scene gave special vividness to the association in the poet's mind and helped to endow the cluster with its striking coherence and persistence is a speculative matter. The most we can say is that this is not unlikely.

The emotions aroused by the thought of death also provide the basis for the beetle-mouse-darkness cluster, as we have already noted, and by association the neutral word "hum" was drawn into the death complex. The partnership with various king creatures, in which both the drone and the weasel participate, is in rather different case. The kingship conception is the dominant associative factor and it seems as if a kind of thematic unfolding of its content must be evoked to explain the appearance of the insect and the animal with different king creatures in the sequence of the plays. It was suggested that Lyly's notion of drones acting as eagles' lice irritated Shakespeare into contradicting such nonsense and that possibly this stimulus was partly responsible for bringing the drone and other king creatures together on later occasions. Although the

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imagery undoubtedly appertains to the Pride category and there are references to disagreeable moods the personal emotional content of the cluster is comparatively meagre. The contrary is true so far as the goose-disease linkage is concerned. The emotional bond is so evident that it needs no further emphasis. So persistent is the linkage, so fierce is the underlying loathing of venereal diseases that there cannot be the slightest doubt that Shakespeare was intimately acquainted with and revolted by these maladies and their dreadful sequelæ, such as blindness. More than this we cannot infer from the evidence. I would, however, again stress a point mentioned earlier. Although the goose was brought into connexion with disease, as in the *Tempest* "ague" context, on occasions when the venereal disease association was not explicitly formulated and Shakespeare in all probability was not wittingly maintaining the linkage, yet so far as the cluster as a whole is concerned the disgust which he felt is not repressed. There is nothing to indicate that shameful memories were evading a Censorship or that the Freudian Unconscious should be invoked to explain the linkage.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This point is of some theoretical importance although I can merely allude to its significance here. Psycho-analytic theory is befogged by inconsistency in the use of the word "Unconscious." Freud says in his *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, in connexion with the everyday mistake, "a slip of the tongue," that to explain it we have to assume that "an intention to say some particular thing had formed itself in the mind of the person who made the slip." "If we subsequently bring the intention to the speaker's notice, he may recognise it as a familiar one, in which case it was only temporarily unconscious, or he may repudiate it as foreign to him, in which case it was permanently unconscious" (p. 95). In actual fact matters are not so simple as this. The person in question may, after a little reflection, come to accept the interpretation of his *lapsus lingui* which he at first repudiated. By processes of incubation and assimilation associations may form in his mind and bridge the gaps which caused certain ideas to appear disconnected. Freud further says that we are in a position to distinguish two kinds of Unconscious :

. . . one which is transformed into conscious material easily and under conditions which frequently arise, and another in the case of which such transformation is difficult, can only come about with a considerable expenditure of energy, or may never occur at all. In order to avoid any ambiguity as to whether we are referring to the one or the other unconscious, whether we are using the word in the descriptive or dynamic sense, we make use of a legitimate and simple expedient. We call the unconscious which is only latent, and so can easily become conscious, the "preconscious" and keep the name "unconscious" for the other . . . from a purely descriptive point of view, the "preconscious" is also unconscious. . . (pp. 95-6).

Thus the distinction between the Preconscious and the dynamic Unconscious lies in the potentiality of emergence into full consciousness being easy or difficult. As it is utterly impossible to describe objectively where the line is to be drawn between ease and difficulty of recall, Freud's

The significance of the jay-paint cluster must now be considered in the light of what we have ascertained. Its interpretation is crucial, for if it could be shown to have originated through the poet's disillusionment with some brunette we would have reason to believe other clusters had their origin in specific personal emotional disturbances. Moreover, the analysis of image clusters would be demonstrated as a technique capable of wide application as a means of revealing a writer's secret thoughts. On the other hand, if even in this instance no certainty is attainable, how much more reason we have to be suspicious of pseudo-psycho-analytic generalisations as to authors' characters and hidden motives!

In Part I, Chapter VIII, it was pointed out that the imagery associated with the jay was unpleasant. The bird is mentioned in conjunction with "paint" which, although in itself an innocent word, has sordid associations for Shakespeare. Its connotation was emotional, for his mind tended constantly to equate the term with "rouge," and Shakespeare, as context after context indicates, detested made-up women, so that he could hardly think of "paint" without immediately thinking also of a harlot. "Paint" we noted to be connected with brunettes. Can we argue that this link reinforces the suspicion that the "jay" was the Dark Lady and that the unpleasant characteristics, such as gaudiness and wantonness, associated with the bird, were really those of the lady? Have we here additional proof of what some critics have proclaimed—the great influence of his mistress over the poet? Hesketh Pearson, for instance, the latest advocate of the view that the lady's lineaments may be discerned in several of the plays, says: "That the 'black' mistress had a model is placed beyond doubt by the descriptions of her that are repeated quite unnecessarily, throughout his work, just as his feelings for Southampton reappear in the

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definitions and a good deal of his theoretical superstructure break down. The truth is that if we try to define what is unconscious otherwise than as that which the individual cannot ever unaided bring into consciousness, we involve ourselves in confusion, and even if we adopt this definition we are not out of the wood, for individuals by relaxation and other techniques can uncover very deeply buried material, as for instance in the case of the psychologist who claims to have been able to recollect his mother suckling him (D. O. Williams, *op. cit.*) We may define unconscious material as that which is inaccessible to consciousness, but it is exceedingly difficult to specify the material to which this applies. We are ignorant as to the extent to which any material is completely insulated from transfer to consciousness. So far as our present theme is concerned we cannot assume that anything unwittingly expressed by Shakespeare in image clusters is a revelation of material repressed or unconscious in the sense of being incapable of translation into consciousness. He may have revealed more than he realised he was revealing, but the revelations are not of complexes beyond redemption by consciousness.

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relationship between older and younger men in several of the plays ;” and “ His mistress appears unmistakably in Berowne’s description of Rosaline :

L.L.L. 3.1.198

A wightly wanton with a velvet brow,  
With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes ;  
Ay, and, by heaven, one that will do the deed,  
Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard.

The pitch-eyes haunt him : ‘ I am toiling in a pitch—pitch that defiles. . . .’ The King tells Berowne that his love ‘ is black as ebony ’ to which he retorts ‘ No face is fair that is not full of black. . . .’ ”<sup>1</sup>

The argument is unsound. We know that Shakespeare could adopt Elizabethan conventions as to female beauty when he chose and that the laudation of “ blackness ” is a conceit used by the French sonneteers and adopted by Sir Philip Sidney in *Astrophel and Stella*.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, we have had to acknowledge that evidence is lacking that any cluster is in itself authentication of specific emotional experiences associated with a particular person. Thus the linkage “ pitch-black-ebony-eyes ” cannot be assumed to reveal the characteristics of his mistress. Moreover, it has been quite definitely established that the frequent recurrence of linkages of ideas and images is no indication that they originated in some personal emotional upheaval as distinct from the normal emotional activities involved in associative processes.

It will be realised that were we to accept as proven the connexion between the “ jay ” and the dark mistress or between her and the brunette passages in the sonnets and plays we could build up a detailed picture of her by following out the intersecting image clusters. What a woman ! Deceitful as a snake, wanton and lustful, dolled up in extravagant clothes, with painted lips and pitch-black eyes. Thus we might proceed to describe her with circumstantial precision. But the method is quite unsound, as may be perceived when we recollect that there are other figures, such as Pinch—not to speak of Caliban—who might be given as fictitious a reality. Also, as we have seen, images may be incorporated into a cluster because of non-emotional reasons as, for instance, when “ bark ” was included in the dog-candy-flattery cluster. The most of which we can be tolerably sure is that impressions of or experiences with women almost certainly provided or reinforced

<sup>1</sup> *A Life of Shakespeare* (1942), pp. 33, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Sidney Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare* (14th edn., 1931), pp. 191-2.

the emotional bond in some clusters, such as that in which "paint" is involved.

In spite of having to conclude that this method of analysis does not provide the intriguing intimate details about the poet which some would like to obtain, yet the results, so far as our knowledge of the personality of the poet is concerned, are not inconsiderable. If the scrutiny of a limited number of arbitrarily selected clusters can provide us with so many indications of the extent of his feelings and the sensitivity of his reactions it may well be that a carefully planned investigation, with the definite object of discovering more about certain aspects of his personality, would furnish interesting results.

The difficulty of glimpsing the poet's personality in the unwitting revelation of himself in the image clusters is significant, for it shows how harmoniously co-ordinated were his imaginative faculties—memory, emotion and reason. Lesser men in their poetry and plays often reveal much more of their personalities, but Shakespeare dwelt—so far as his imagination was concerned—in a more universal realm. His imagination achieved a high degree of autonomy. Of no poet may it be more truly said that he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at. Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* rightly says, "If ever a human being got his work expressed completely, it was Shakespeare. If ever a mind was incandescent, . . . it was Shakespeare's mind," and she stresses the fact that his poetry could flow forth unimpeded because he was not concerned to protest or preach. But she exaggerates his objectivity when she declares that his antipathies are hidden from us.

The problem of discovering the man in his work is further complicated by the fact that a harmoniously co-ordinated imagination does not necessarily presuppose a correspondingly evenly balanced personality. Such writers as William Sharp reached a high level of co-ordination in their creative phantasies although their imaginative life enjoyed a considerable measure of independence. There is, indeed, reason to believe that Shakespeare's imagination was more harmonious than his personality. The predominance of clusters in his work and the capacity for self-development which they show suggest that there was a peculiar obsessiveness in his mentality. I do not think that the clustery nature of his thought justifies us in considering this obsessiveness morbid, but it is sufficiently apparent to lend support to the hypothesis which has been set forth in greatest detail by Frank Harris in *The Man Shakespeare* that the poet depicted himself

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most clearly in Hamlet. No student may lightly set aside his argument with its evidence that many of Shakespeare's characters as various as Jaques, Macbeth and Prospero are infected with Hamlet's cast of mind. I would emphasise that a Hamlet mentality is exactly that in which we would be least surprised to find image-cluster formation dominant. This is not to say that I believe Hamlet is a portrait of Shakespeare. Neither Frank Harris nor any of his supporters have produced convincing evidence of this, but those who believe, with Coleridge, that Shakespeare evolved characters by the exaggeration of his own characteristics, can hardly doubt that the constant harking back to circles of ideas which cluster-thinking involves, indicates that in himself Shakespeare found the nucleus of Hamlet. Hamlet is cluster-thinking come to life.

## CHAPTER

### XIX

#### THE STRUCTURE OF THE IMAGINATION

**W**E speak of "inspiration" when a new conception is attained, as in mathematical discovery, but we also call a work "inspired" if in it is manifested a supremely satisfying relationship between the parts and the whole as well as between the parts themselves. In both cases the achievement is the outcome of apt association and integration. Intuition, too, involves the perception of fertile or appropriate relationships. When we say that inspiration frequently comes through intuition we recognise that the perception of appropriate relationships and the achievement of fertile associations are often due to activities below the level of focal consciousness. The evidence we have reviewed indicates that this is also true of works of imagination. Inspiration and intuition may thus be considered to be aspects or special manifestations of the more inclusive process which we denote by the term "imagination." Thus we should expect to find the investigation of the nature of inspiration and the exploration of the processes of the imagination reciprocally illuminating each other. Acting on this principle, we may now attempt to construct a scheme to illustrate the structure of imagination. If we bear in mind that to use topographical terminology of psychological processes is a concession to expository convenience there is no need for any reader to be misled into supposing that we are doing more than availing ourselves of a pictorial means of grappling with the problems involved.

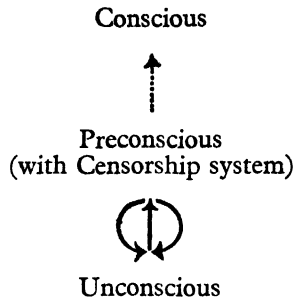
It is not surprising that the conception of the mind to which we have been led differs from the picture presented by Freud. As a medical man his concern was primarily with the pathological and thus, as we all know, his interest was directed more particularly to the crude and primitive aspects and activities of the mind. Our interest has been concentrated on the higher aspects of mental life—the work of the imagination and the genesis of inspiration—and so our approach to our problems has been from the opposite direction to that taken by the Viennese psychiatrist. It has led to a theory of the mind which might be described as reversed Freudianism, but I would emphasise that this conception is



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supplementary to, not contrary to, those aspects of the Freudian scheme set out below which I accept as giving, within certain limits, a true description of mental functioning. Freud's ambiguous use of the term "Unconscious," which has already been commented upon, does not affect our present argument.

Simplifying Freud's conceptions and his own diagram in his *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*<sup>1</sup> we have a scheme of this kind :



Freud rightly conceives the rude energy of the psyche as proceeding from below—that is from the primitive level. According to his theory, some of the material repressed in these lower strata, passing through the levels of Preconscious censorship, is compulsorily tricked out in acceptable costume to emerge upon the stage of consciousness, and eventually, some of it, as literature. But our survey has shown that what transpires upon the stage influences what happens in the cellarage. It is by no means true that consciousness is completely at the mercy of hidden artificers. "All roads from outer perception to the Unconscious are as a rule free," says Freud himself,<sup>2</sup> and practical psychotherapy has shown that consciousness can and does influence the Unconscious and that the Preconscious and Unconscious can collaborate. None the less, the angle of psycho-analytical approach has been such as to over-emphasise the influence of the Freudian lower levels.

• Our review of the mode in which illumination comes to poets, novelists, philosophers, mathematicians, inventors and saints showed the first essential in the process of inspiration to be concentration. Inspiration, as we have seen, frequently comes suddenly and unexpectedly, but not gratuitously. Those who seek, find ; their reward usually is the outcome of much travail.

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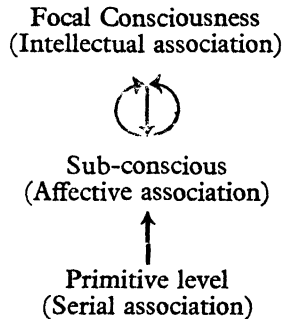
<sup>1</sup> Tr. W. J. H. Sprott (1933), p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Sammlung Kleiner Schriften*, Vol. IV, p. 326.

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The artist's or inventor's psychic energy comes from the lower levels of the mind, yet imaginative creation starts from focal consciousness. It follows the strenuous, and often painful, direction of will towards the achievement of an aspiration or the solution of a problem. The whitest light of consciousness is focussed at the obscure point ; then the process is completed below the threshold of consciousness. Eventually the solution bursts over that threshold. Thus the traffic of consciousness moves downwards and then upwards to the light again.

The creative activity of the mind can be represented diagrammatically in the same style and with limitations similar to those of our earlier diagram.



This diagram is intended only to emphasise on each plane the activity most important from the point of view of our study of the imagination. It represents the subconscious as fertilised by focal consciousness as well as by such primitive elements as animal drive and instinctive mechanisms. This realm—or psychic system—provides the milieu appropriate to the most varied associative activity. It is a region of selectivity. Indeed it has qualities similar in nature but opposite in function to those which Freud attributes to the Censorship.

Different as are the functions of the two principles of Selective Subconscious Association and the Freudian Censorship, yet the activities in their departments are strikingly similar. Quoting Freud, a disciple of his says, "The originally repressed idea is neither dead nor passive. It may be, on the contrary, intensely dynamic and alive. It organises associations. It creates products of its own. It has a rich unfettered development, 'in darkness as it were,' exercising attraction on everything with which it can connect itself. This is what is meant when it is said that repression does not *destroy* an impulse. What it really does is 'to disturb the

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relation to the conscious system.' These creations of the repressed idea continue to develop in phantasy unchecked, until, under certain conditions, they are enabled to come to light in the neurotic."<sup>1</sup> Substitute for "repressed" the word "activated" (charged with intellectual interest), and we have an excellent description of what happens in the zone of creative imagination. It is interesting to note that Varendonck may be quoted in support of this reversed Freudianism. He says that "intuition seems to be the reverse of repression."<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the initiation of the process, Freud's statement "that complex mental operations are possible without the co-operation of consciousness" applies to the higher as well as to the lower activities—if by "consciousness" we mean "focal consciousness" and regard the statement as applying to the process by which inspiration is attained subsequent to concentration on the problem. Indeed, in that same shadowy region referred to in the quotation above the activated, wandering idea may undergo "a rich, unfettered development." Wordsworth has described the process in *The Prelude* :

Visionary power  
Attends the motions of the viewless winds,  
Embodied in the mystery of words :  
There darkness makes abode, and all the host  
Of shadowy things work endless changes,—there  
As in a mansion like their proper home,  
Even forms and substances are interfused  
By that transparent veil with light divine,  
And, through the turnings intricate of verse,  
Present themselves as objects recognised,  
In flashes, and with glory not their own.

(V, 595.)

Thus approaching the problem of the nature of mental activity from the standpoint of the highest achievements of imagination and inspiration we have been led to the recognition of an intermediate region of selectivity, just as Freud's study of pathological conditions led to his postulate of the Censorship, but while his Censorship principle is in considerable measure co-extensive with repression we recognise a beneficent selectivity in the subconscious realm which facilitates creative association. Both activities are affective.

It is significant that two very different methods of approach, one based on pathological material, the other on the data of creative

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<sup>1</sup> I. Levine, *The Unconscious* (1923), pp. 117-8.

<sup>2</sup> J. Varendonck, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

achievement, should lead to the recognition of this selective realm below the level of consciousness. The same system has ambivalent functions, repressive and constructive, rejecting some items and selecting others. Freud has maligned it by emphasising one aspect of its activity. Its selective function is usually, if not always, exercised adaptively—to enable the individual to cope more adequately with the problems of all kinds which life presents, but sometimes in seeking an immediate solution by selecting troublesome material for relegation to limbo it lays up future embarrassment for the personality. The Censorship of Freudian psychology is an aspect of the principle of adaptation by which the organism relates its internal reactions to the impact of the external world. The intermediate level of the mind, the level of selective subconscious association, is seen to be alive with potentialities for creative freedom of association as well as for repression. The creatures of the activated idea continue to develop in their underground abode and come to light creative and beneficent. Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that in the obscure and busy workshop of the subconscious, material from above and below is handled. There power from the depths is available to charge and activate the data of consciousness ; there, too, images and ideas associate with one another in a freedom denied them when held within the white spot-light of consciousness. The will aids focal consciousness in bringing its concentrated beam to bear on the objects which interest it and only a small number of images are illuminated by its limited ray ; but down below where the tension is relaxed, in the realm where wish is not dominated by will and emotion is not subordinated to intellect, the shadowy denizens glide hither and thither inspired with a mission entrusted to them by intellect ; ever and anon they succeed in finding their affinities.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps we may best describe the creative functions of the lower levels of consciousness by developing one of Freud's own illustrations. "The creation of the mental domain of phantasy," he says, "has a complete counterpart in the establishment of 'reservations' and 'nature-parks' in places where the inroads of agriculture, traffic, or industry threaten to change the original face of the earth rapidly into something unrecognizable. The 'reservation' is to maintain the old condition of things which has been

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<sup>1</sup> Darwin showed considerable penetration when he said : "The imagination is one of the highest prerogatives of man. By this faculty he unites former images and ideas, independently of the will, and thus creates brilliant and novel results" (*Descent of Man*, 1901, p. 113). But in so far as the imagination is creative it is never completely independent of will.

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regretfully sacrificed to necessity everywhere else ; there everything may grow and spread as it pleases, including what is useless and even what is harmful. The mental realm of phantasy is also such a reservation reclaimed from the encroaches of the reality-principle.”<sup>1</sup> But the function of the nature reserve is not only the conservation of old conditions, nor are such areas merely open spaces available for recreation. They are places where men may gain inspiration, it may be by roaming the hillsides in that relaxed state in which great thoughts “ strike across the brain,” or through observation of the animals and study of the plant life. In their quiet fastnesses illumination may arise in the mind of the poet, inspiration may attend the meditations of the saint and creative ideas reward the scientist's patience. The function of the nature reserve is positive, and even if the organisms which are speciously called useless and commonly regarded as harmful are preserved, they are there to contribute to the amenities of the place, the beauty and interest of the scene, to furnish material for the scientist's study, and above all because of their status as integral elements in a scenically harmonious and biologically balanced terrain. If the nature reserve harbours an ancient and, from some points of view, harmful flora and fauna, it does so for our delight and profit. Its *raison d'être* is by no means merely escapist. There the memory is satisfied by the preservation of the ancient scene, the emotions are stirred by natural harmony and the intellect is stimulated by the plenitude of interesting material for study. So the realm of phantasy is a constructive sphere and the creative imagination, which is its finest flowering, draws tribute from memory, emotion and reason and thereby attains new and noble visions.

It will have been observed that in our diagram the region of creative association is represented as distinctively affective but contributed to by intellect and memory, directed by reason and energised by primitive psychic energy. Throughout this discussion we have noted that reason, emotion and memory co-operate in the processes of imagination. Indeed, imagination, as we have already emphasised, is the capacity for creative association facilitated by the collaboration of reasoning, emotional and remembering activities. A man cannot imagine greatly with a fragment of himself. He must give all he is and has to the children of his imagination. It should, of course, be recognised that we have been compelled in the interests of brevity and by the exigencies of exposition to make certain psychological distinctions more clear-cut

<sup>1</sup> *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1922), pp 311-12.

than they are in fact. When we speak of the reasoning, the emotional or the remembering processes we are patently using a device to enable us to concentrate upon the part played in the mental operations with which we are concerned by the three kinds of activity commonly subsumed under these terms. For analytical purposes we find it necessary to distinguish them although the supreme fact of consciousness is their integration. None the less, the use of these categories by psychologists as well as by the man in the street indicates that they correspond to distinctions of importance. It should not be supposed that they imply a sympathy with the old faculty psychology. Creative imaginative work is the outcome of the effective co-operation of the different planes of mental activity represented by these categories. The implication of this is that we should consider that Shakespeare's genius is attributable to the remarkable integration of his capacities, rather than to the outstanding nature of any one of them.

If we consider what is known of man's mental evolution and its recapitulation during childhood, we find that predetermined succession is typical of the lowest level, reason of the highest. Without embarking upon a discussion of the extremely complicated problem of the relationship between instinct, habit and rote memory, we may identify in each of them this quality of serial sequence. "This follows that" is a simple and very primitive form of association. It is the reproduction without appreciable change of what has been experienced before. Advance to higher forms of association is marked by the selective substitution of appropriate components not serially determined.

As the Freudians have explored the primitive aspects of the mind with greatest diligence we may consider what they have to say on this matter. Freud himself wrote: "If there are inherited psychical formations anything analogous to the instinct of animals, this constitutes the nucleus of consciousness."<sup>1</sup> Varendonck makes a similar inference: "Instinct seems to constitute the first attempt of nature to interpose intellection between stimulus and reaction."<sup>2</sup> The point needs little emphasis as so many lines of thought lead to the same conclusion—that the primitive nucleus of consciousness is of the instinctive order, the order which is characterised by the carrying over from generation to generation of like response to like stimulus.

Primitive forms of remembering are also characterised by "this follows thatness." Anthropologists, colonial administrators

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<sup>1</sup> *Sammlung Kleiner Schriften*, Vol. IV, p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> *The Psychology of Day-Dreams*, p. 275.

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and officials having to deal with natives find that such people when endeavouring to recollect and describe an incident often feel it necessary to go through a lengthy process of recalling event after event leading up to it, frequently imposing considerable strain on the white man's patience. Professor F. C. Bartlett in *Remembering* gives examples of such serial recollection and the structure of many folk-tales in which incident follows incident in a long and rather monotonous cumulative sequence provides further evidence of it. Primitive people sometimes seem to have to re-live episodes in order to remember them ; in fact there seems to be a distinction between re-living and developed memory.<sup>1</sup> All this is corroborated by the clinical evidence of psycho-therapists who have found that recollection during the most relaxed states, such as deep sleep, is on the chronological level, patients in this state re-living without emotion experiences which, recalled on a higher level, are accompanied by highly affective manifestations.<sup>2</sup> This plane is the realm of conditioning rather than association.

If our tendency to simple chronological recall is, as I suggest, indicative of the primitive antecedents and constituents of our minds, the same is also true of emotion, though it is interesting to note that only the higher organisms show behaviour which is of such a nature as to have the term emotional applied to it.<sup>3</sup> As Payot said of passion : " We take rank again, while it is growling, in the zoological series." The emotional is on a higher level than the chronological and has an important function in organising experience, but it is our rationality, not our emotiveness, which distinguishes us as human beings.

• Clinical procedure supports this conception of a mental hierarchy. Dr. D. O. Williams has suggested that the evidence gained from the study of relaxed states indicates that the mind is organised on three levels, represented by the states of full awareness, relaxation and sleep. His conclusion is that " The organisation of the fully aware level tends to be basically intellectual, that of the relaxed stages basically affective and associative and that of the sleep state merely chronological." <sup>4</sup> In normal waking conditions the activity

<sup>1</sup> W. Stern, *General Psychology from the Personalistic Standpoint* (tr. H. D. Speerl, 1938), p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> D. O. Williams, *Remembering in Relaxed States : An Analytical Study of Organising Principles in Mental Life*. Thesis presented to the University of New Zealand in fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Literature (unpublished).

<sup>3</sup> P. T. Young, *Emotion in Man and Animal ; Its nature and relation to attitude and motive* (1943).

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*

of these levels is blended. Dr. Williams supports his views with a mass of cogent evidence. He finds, for instance, that when memories of sex expression are revived and viewed on different levels the reaction varies. On the lowest level—that of primitive organisation—a particular recollection will arouse pleasurable anticipation, on the level of affective organisation the response is horror and disgust, and on the intellectual level the presented material is viewed with unemotional frankness and mild interest. Thus the individual manifests at different levels psychological characteristics corresponding to the mental evolution of the race, and what is phylogenetically most ancient is found to be psychologically deepest. This is in agreement with Rivers' theories set forth in *Instinct and the Unconscious* and also, as we have seen, with the conclusions reached by Dr. Paden in his analysis of Tennyson's imagery. It is highly significant that evidence gained from the study of imagery should lead to conclusions very similar to those reached independently by the psychiatrist. The physiological investigation mentioned by Rivers, indicating that there are planes of sensation arranged in a hierarchy,<sup>1</sup> the psycho-therapeutical work of Williams concerned directly with the personality and Dr. Paden's and my own indirect exploration of the mentality of the poet through the analysis of imagery all suggest that the mind is organised hierarchically and that the nature and extent of the emotion manifested is an indication as to whether in any particular situation a high or low plane is involved.

• In earlier chapters we noted how important was the contribution of memory and emotion to the imagination in general and how much Shakespeare's work is enriched by both. The share of reason in supervising, directing and integrating needs no special stress, but it is significant that this study has shown clearly that beyond a certain limit intellectual activity may hinder creative work, just as too great anxiety to excel in a game may make play erratic. It has been possible to show that although image clusters are the permanent vestiges of dynamic processes, the three categories of mental activity have contributed to them—in different instances the influence of one or the other predominating. When reason obtrudes and interferes with the operation of the affective processes the clusters betray their artificiality and the verse in which they are embedded lacks spontaneity; on the other hand verse dominated by crude memory elements is full of clichés and the clangour of the banjo.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. also K. S. Lashley, "Basic neural mechanisms in behavior," *Psychological Review* (1930), Vol. XXXVII, p. 16.



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•Poetry in which emotion unduly predominates may have sensuous beauty but is not permanently satisfying. There is truth in Housman's assertion that the function of poetry is to transfuse emotion, not to transmit truth, but it is not the whole story.<sup>1</sup> It is apparent that the finest verse owes its splendour to the extent to which rational, emotional and memory elements are integrated into harmonious unity by saturation in "the well of unconscious cerebration." It is because great poetry is of this nature that most people find it so difficult to explain just why it should have so potent and "magical" an effect upon them.

In support of the views advocated here I would cite Shakespeare himself. In *The Tempest* he sets forth in allegorical form the nature of imagination. Ariel is Imagination, partly in his own right but also in relation to the other characters of the play, especially to Prospero the almost god-like Reason, and Caliban, the representative of the carnal, animal and libidinous, who, before Prospero took him in hand, was as wordless as the Freudian Unconscious. Thus, although Shakespeare, as we have seen, was ignorant of some of the tricks which his fancy played on him, yet intuitively he realised its true nature. Ariel, who is described as the spirit of fire, air and music, flies on the wind and fetches dew from enchanted islands, but he can transform himself alike into the lightning or a mermaid. He is full of pranks, but often his lightsome frolics have a more serious intent than is at first apparent. At one time he served evil as slave to the witch Sycorax—the embodiment of sensuality and perverted emotion. (Did Shakespeare, looking back on his "dark period," perceive that then Caliban was active?) At the time the play opens he is at the bidding of Prospero, the scholar-magician. So the imagination may serve evil or good ends, be at the mercy of emotion or under the guidance of reason. But Ariel continually aspires after freedom. In like manner the imagination may achieve great things on the wings of emotion or under the discipline of reason, but its finest achievements are attained when it is most free. In the measure that Ariel is in thralldom to emotion or reason he is less a sprite than a servant. Few there are sufficiently spacious-minded to hold Ariel so lightly that he is most his independent self.

Behold Ariel, then, as the spirit revealed by our investigation. We have been following in his elusive wake when we have playfully spoken of a sprite or artificer below the level of consciousness and when we have postulated a selective principle responsible for apt association and fertile invention. He it is who played tricks with

<sup>1</sup> *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, p. 12.

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words and images when Prospero-Shakespeare was engaged with more serious thoughts. He is the spirit of the image clusters, the organiser of their dance :

Come unto these yellow sands,  
And then take hands :  
Courtsied when you have and kiss'd  
The wild waves whist,  
Foot it feately here and there  
And, sweet sprites, the burden bear.

*Temp.* 1.2.376

As he could be trusted to charm the ears and control the movements of the conspirators—dancing, too, but in the mire—when Prospero was busy with the masque and had forgotten about their activities, so he could be relied on to sing the images into place. He attains his greatest measure of liberty—or shall we say imagination attains to its highest degree of harmonious autonomy—when memory, emotion and reason are in highest reciprocity and harmony. Then do characters run away with their authors as Thackeray confessed they did with him. Shakespeare himself, in a *ben trovato* tradition retailed by Dryden, is said to have confessed that he had to kill Mercutio or else Mercutio would have killed him. Ariel, the all-but-free imagination, has built many a cloud-capped tower at the instance of Prosperos down the ages. He is the muse who “dictated” to Milton “the unpremeditated song,” “the other who sings as he likes” of whom George Sand wrote to Flaubert,<sup>1</sup> the demon who seated himself on the feather of Sir Walter Scott’s pen.<sup>2</sup> Ariel it is who lives on after Prospero breaks and buries his staff, the elusive embodiment of the completely integrated imagination and the symbol of all the dreamed-of perfection which eluded the poet’s pen.

4.1.139

<sup>1</sup> *The George Sand—Gustave Flaubert Letters* (tr. A. L. McKenzie, 1922), Letter XXXIII, pp. 32–3.

<sup>2</sup> *The Fortunes of Nigel*. Introduction.

## APPENDIX

### THE STUDY OF IMAGE CLUSTERS AS AN AID TO THE AUTHENTICATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORK

**A**S no two poets employ the same image clusters, therefore work of doubtful provenance can be assigned to a poet with certainty if it contains clusters, or exhibits principles of cluster formation, characteristic of writings known to be authentic. Exceptions to this rule fall into two categories and are easily identifiable. Firstly, a forger or plagiarist, having discovered the clusters in a writer's verse might set himself deliberately to reproduce them. However, so far as Shakespeare is concerned, the ramifications of his image clusters have never hitherto received attention and the wide extent to which they are used has not been realised, so plagiarism of such a subtle kind is precluded. Secondly, an image cluster of a Shakespearean type might appear in work which was not his through the influence of a common source such as the utilisation of some current expression or proverbial phrase. While coincidence and the incorporation of borrowed material might account for an occasional Shakespearean cluster in the verse of another, it is not possible thus to account for the appearance of several characteristic image clusters in the space of a score of lines or the intersection of two or more in a context. There are always marginal cases of such a kind that a sceptic could argue that the associations are not sufficiently constant, definite or unusual to constitute an image cluster in the sense of a linkage peculiar to one author. For example, the screeching owl in literature and folk-lore is commonly associated with tragic events and it might be argued, though not very convincingly, that there is nothing distinctive about its frequent connexion with loud noises and madness in Shakespeare's pages. But his image clusters are much more than an association between two images. They are not static, and their peculiar modes of changing and evolving are characteristically Shakespearean. They behave according to certain identifiable principles and though at first glance the connexion between the images may be obscure it can usually be traced and the association is then seen to be simple and natural. Thus "kite" and "warming pan" might seem to have no reasonable connexion in thought until "bed" is discovered as an intermediate link and the associated images are revealed as : kite—carrion—corpse—death—

death-bed—sheets—warming pan. Although these associations are “natural,” nevertheless they are also essentially Shakespearean, and if they and, say, the crow-beetle linkage were to be found in some newly discovered play of Elizabethan times there would be cogent reasons for attributing it to Shakespeare on these grounds alone, although, of course, it would be unwise to use a single technique or isolated criterion for the authentication of an unknown work.

The application of cluster criticism to disputed passages is a task which would require a volume to itself, and I can do no more here than call attention to its possibilities. The reader may be interested to notice, for example, that the occurrence of typically Shakespearean clusters in the *Henry VI* plays which have been mentioned in the earlier part of this discussion suggests that we should be suspicious of the radical opinions which dismiss these plays as by another hand. Indeed, my study of the imagery of the plays has convinced me that Shakespeare wrote much more of the work traditionally attributed to him than many of the more extreme critics maintain. No student who ventures an opinion on the authenticity of contexts can afford to neglect the evidence of image linkages. Cluster criticism provides a more accurate and objective means of determining authorship than some of the methods which have been used. Personal predilections have sometimes been allowed more latitude than they deserve. Critics who do not boggle at the blinding of Gloucester on the stage are revolted at the suggestion that Shakespeare had any part in *Titus Andronicus*, although Heminge and Condell as well as Francis Meres testify to his authorship.

From time to time the claims of various writers or groups of writers to be “Shakespeare” have been urged. Recently the Baconians have been less vocal and the claims of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, to be the foremost of the group of writers who wrote the plays have been urged here and in the United States. Distinguished men of letters, such as Mr. H. G. Wells, have lent their support to the theory that Shakespeare’s works were written by a “Globe Theatre syndicate.” All such opinions lose plausibility when considered in relationship to the facts revealed by cluster criticism. Undoubtedly Shakespeare occasionally collaborated to some extent with others, as in *Henry VIII*, and when it suited his purpose adapted another writer’s material, but cluster criticism shows that those great plays which are “Shakespeare” to the ordinary man were not written by a group of co-workers. Their homogeneity is beyond question and it is of a kind which a

more carefully the soliloquy is scrutinised the more incomprehensible does it become that anyone should ever have questioned its authenticity.

If the presence of typical clusters can be used as evidence of a play's authenticity, the converse is also true to a considerable extent. Their absence increases suspicions that we are dealing with someone else's work. After tracing many linked images through the plays, including a large number not mentioned here, I found that almost without exception they stopped at *The Tempest*. The inference is clear that Shakespeare had no great part in *King Henry VIII*.

It is hardly necessary to emphasise that there are limitations to the usefulness of cluster criticism in determining the authenticity of passages attributed to Shakespeare. As we have seen, in some instances we may reasonably claim that a distinctive image cluster is in itself sufficient proof that Shakespeare was the author of the context in question, but there are others such that no certainty can be attained by this technique alone. Cluster criticism provides a powerful auxiliary weapon for the critic's armoury, but like every weapon it has to be used with discretion. Stage craftsmanship, construction of the plot, versification and style are no less useful as furnishing criteria of authenticity than they ever were. It would be deplorable if cluster criticism were to be regarded as in any way superseding other techniques or if its possibilities were to be so exaggerated as to bring its legitimate applications into discredit.

These possibilities, however, deserve exploration and the results consequent on working systematically through a disputed play would be very interesting. Writers such as the Poet Laureate and Mr. Middleton Murry have reiterated the ancient claim that Shakespeare was responsible for parts of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, but examination of a few clusters is so far from giving any conclusive support that it seems more probable that Shakespeare's influence rather than his handiwork is perceptible in it.

Cluster criticism as a technique for probing the working of the imagination has itself to be used with imagination. It is not the least of its advantages that it enables the lover of Shakespeare to appreciate more fully the rationale of his style by disclosing some of the psychological principles by which it may be interpreted.

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