

Happiness: Early Modernity and Shakespearean Comedy

Kathleen French

Faculty of Arts

The University of Sydney

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Abstract

This thesis investigates attitudes to happiness in the early modern period and literary representations of positive emotion. It is situated methodologically at the nexus of a number of interconnected approaches. Against a background of body studies and Freudian psychology, it engages with current research in the history of the emotions and work being done in the field of positive psychology. The insights provided by positive psychology into the power of positive emotions, such as optimism, resilience and emotional intelligence, open up a way to access the originality of Shakespeare's understanding of the emotions and their power in people's lives. An interdisciplinary approach provides a methodology that can incorporate analysis of imaginative and non-fiction texts with research into the historical, cultural, religious and political influences that shaped how people might have thought and felt about happiness. It considers the extent to which people could be happy in the context of religious beliefs that emphasised the fallen nature of man. As a result of increasing political absolutism and the failure of political theory to provide for societal or personal happiness, people engaged in a process of myth making. They imagined utopian societies, and they imposed their beliefs in the possibility of discovering a lost paradise on the new worlds they discovered in the Americas. More realistically, they accommodated themselves to the conditions of their lives by searching for happiness through forming meaningful personal relationships. Ethical theories about happiness formulated by Aristotle in *The Nicomachean Ethics* were influential, but came into conflict with theology, especially Augustine's emphasis on original sin. Aquinas attempted to reconcile philosophy with theology, offering hope that a limited form of happiness might be found in this life. Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas were formative influences on the ways in which Shakespeare dramatizes the search for happiness in his comedies, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. He

reflects the influence of Aristotle in his representation and evaluation of different types of happiness in the comedies. He also creates fallen political and religious worlds in which his characters must grapple with adversity. Aristotle believed that happiness was dependent on living in a benign political state. Living in fallen worlds, some of Shakespeare's characters demonstrate an aspect of happiness that Aristotle did not address, that it is a condition that can be achieved through adversity.

Statement of originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work.
This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all
the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

Signature: 

Name: Kathleen French

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Introduction.

My thesis investigates attitudes to happiness in the early modern period and the literary representation of positive emotion. It is based on the presumption that the desire for happiness is pan-cultural, but the ways in which happiness is expressed will be culturally constructed.¹ Consideration of a wide range of texts from diverse time periods and cultures draws attention to the enduring nature of the desire for happiness; influential figures like Aristotle, Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas thought that it was important to discuss the nature of the emotion. Their views were formative in shaping how subsequent thinkers and writers represented happiness, but they were also subject to reinterpretation and challenge as they were read in different cultural contexts. In the early modern period some people conformed to ways of thinking that were perceived to be orthodox in their particular environment. Other writers reveal a tension between the views they felt obliged to express and the desire for more individual opinions. More radically, writing might constitute sites of resistance as men and women challenged expectations and beliefs that they considered repressive.

In the last twenty years scholarly research into the early modern period has focused on cultural constructions of the human body, on how representations of the body were shaped by theories about the humours, and how an understanding of these emotions illuminates our response to literary characters. Whilst I engage with early modern and contemporary

¹ My presumption has similarities with the views of Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson. They accept that similarities in emotional experience support claims for the biological basis of emotion, but believe that an insistence on universality is too dismissive of the variety of emotional experience and expression to be found in differing times and cultures. They reach a compromise position that “some emotions are probably pan-cultural and some are highly determinate.” Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson, ed., *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 9.

discourses that relate to this research, my focus on happiness opens up new possibilities for analysing the philosophical and theological influences on attitudes in the sixteenth century. The central argument of my thesis is that recent critical focus on negative emotions has failed to recognise the part played by positive emotions in peoples' lives. In considering the importance and power of positive emotions I draw on the twenty-first-century discipline of positive psychology and the ways in which it deals with the complexities of human emotion. The connections I make to positive psychology will be particularly pertinent to my discussion of Shakespeare's comedies, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, in the second half of my thesis.

Positive psychology has its roots in late twentieth century humanistic psychology, which emphasises the importance of a philosophical, as well as a scientific, understanding of human existence and the need to do justice to human potential and achievement.² Humanistic and positive psychology both look back to the humanism in the cultures of Classical Greece and Renaissance Europe when belief in the value and dignity of man was affirmed.³ Positive psychology acknowledges its debt to the writings of Aristotle, who represented happiness as activity of the soul in accordance with virtue.⁴ Aristotle's exploration of the ethical nature of happiness in *The Nicomachean Ethics* is of particular importance to positive psychology in guiding its research and practice and making distinctions between hedonic and *eudaimonic* interpretations of happiness. Positive psychologists believe that an alliance with Aristotelian philosophy provides an enriched understanding of life as meaningful, one requiring "using your signature strengths in the service of something larger than you are."⁵ As self-confessed heirs to Aristotle, they set themselves in opposition to a negative view of human nature and

² Brent Dean Robbins, "What is the Good Life? Positive Psychology and the Renaissance of Humanistic Psychology," *The Humanistic Psychologist* 36, no. 2 (2008): 96-112.

³ Frederick, J. Wertz, "Humanistic Psychology and the Qualitative Research Tradition," in *The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology. Leading Edges in Theory, Research and Practice*, ed. Kirk J. Schneider, James F.T. Bugental and J. Fraser Pierson (London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001).

⁴ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁵ Martin.E.P. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness* (Milsons Point: Random House, 2002), 249.

the pathologies which arise from what they label a “disease model of human functioning.”⁶ They emphasise the importance of character strengths and virtues such as resilience, optimism, emotional intelligence, courage and perseverance. They believe that demonstrating these strengths enables people to counter adversity and achieve happiness. In doing so, they show awareness that there is more than one way to search for an understanding of human nature and that the combination of scientific analysis with a reflective philosophical approach can provide a more profound insight.

Positive psychologists believe in taking an interdisciplinary approach that unites previously scattered and disparate lines of theory and research about what makes life most worth living. As a result, their research involves a methodology that synthesises psychology, medicine and philosophy.⁷ They see positive psychology as more than just a branch of medicine concerned with health or illness, but as being about positive individual traits, and about civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals towards better citizenship. Martin Seligman claims, “Positive emotions … set up an action repertoire and a mindset that broadens and builds abiding intellectual and social resources. Positive emotions, in short, build the cathedrals of our lives.”⁸ Individuals have choices, preferences and the possibility of taking charge of the way they live.

As I foreground the need to place more emphasis on positive emotion, my main preoccupation differs from those of other researchers. Positive emotion is an area of investigation that has received very little attention, either in the field of body studies or in more interdisciplinary approaches, where there has been a focus on negative emotions. To the best of my knowledge there has, to date, been no comprehensive analysis of attitudes to

⁶ Martin E. P. Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, “Positive Psychology: An Introduction,” *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000), 5. DOI: 10.1037/0003-066x. 55.1.5.

⁷ Christopher Peterson and Nansook Park, “Positive Psychology as the evenhanded Positive Psychologist views it,” *Psychological Inquiry* 14, no. 2, (2003): 143-147. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu/stable/1449822>.

⁸ Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, 257.

happiness in the early modern period. A more balanced knowledge of the period can be gained when we acknowledge the importance of positive emotion in shaping how people thought about themselves and their relationship with the paradigms of the world they lived in. This enables us to understand what was important to them, why they behaved as they did, and how they might have thought and felt about themselves and other people with whom they came into contact. We can recognise that their responses were not always negative and that they often desired to be happy. Kevin Laam's 2010 article acknowledges that Shakespearean drama explores the search for happiness, but it is a lead that has not been followed up.⁹

Moving beyond analysis of Shakespeare to consider other writings, there is a similar absence of sustained research into what was being written about happiness in the early modern period. This is evident in the 2015 collection of essays on the emotions, edited by Susan Broomhall, in which there is no specific discussion of happiness.¹⁰ The website posted by the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions offers fifteen articles in 2016, ten for 2015 and sixty-one for 2014. None of them deals with happiness.¹¹ I believe that my thesis makes an important contribution in drawing attention to, and researching, an aspect of the early modern period that has, to date, been virtually ignored. It considers the extent to which people, both real and imagined, might think about the possibility of achieving happiness, even when circumstances seemed to militate against this.

Although they have not investigated the ways in which people might have thought about happiness, scholars working in the field of the history of the emotions provide a methodology to examine the impact of cultural expectations on how people thought and felt in the early modern period. Jan Plamper claims that, in the future, the history of emotions will cease to be a specialised area of enquiry and will provide a way of integrating emotions into

⁹ Kevin Laam, "Shakespeare and Happiness," *Literature Compass* 7, no. 6 (2010). 10.1111/j.1741-4113.2010.00711.x.

¹⁰ Susan Broomhall, ed., *Ordering Emotions in Europe 1100-1800* (Boston: Brill, 2015).

¹¹ www.historyofemotions.org.au/publication-resources/publications/

cultural, political and social history.¹² Researchers consider the extent to which cultural expectations impinged on people's behaviour and the extent to which they modified their thoughts and actions in order to conform. Thus an investigation of happiness in the early modern period involves an exploration of theories about the nature of happiness. It considers, especially, those proposed by Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, and locates them within the wider parameters of their understanding of what it means to be human. Ideas about human nature and its potential to achieve happiness affected responses to interpersonal relationships, especially relationships of friendship, sexuality, and marriage. How people thought about happiness also shaped responses to authority and to law.

By considering a wide range of texts my thesis points to the diversity of attitudes and the varied contexts in which people sought to achieve a form of happiness. The first three chapters consider the extent to which people could be happy whilst living under increasing political absolutism, and whilst religious beliefs that emphasised man's fallen state continued to flourish. Aristotle shaped early modern ideas of what constituted happiness, but Aristotle's theories came into conflict with the theology of Augustine and Aquinas. The influence of these three key figures can be traced in the work of early modern writers and the lives of people educated enough to have left a record of their thoughts and feelings. Through analysis of treatises, diaries and letters, and imaginative texts I examine how people gave expression to, and reflected on, the dominant paradigms of their world. Perceptions that religion and government failed to provide for personal happiness in this life encouraged a longing for an ideal alternative that was expressed in the genre of utopian literature, in the myth of Venice, and the initial belief that travellers had discovered a prelapsarian Eden in the New World. However, beneath the surface, apparently utopian societies were characterised by

¹² Jan Plamper, "The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns," *History and Theory*, 49 (2010).
<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/40864443>.

authoritarian rule. In the New World Europeans, paradoxically, felt the need to destroy what they most admired in the name of religion and the pursuit of economic profit. As the longing for an ideal proved to be an illusion, people turned to interpersonal relationships, to friendship and the developing concept of the companionate marriage, as a source of happiness. In the second half of the thesis I investigate the application of these issues to *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*.¹³ In ways that link him to Aristotle, Shakespeare evaluates the moral worth of the different types of happiness he represents; he also reveals an Augustinian pessimism about the fallen political and social worlds he creates. Despite this pessimism, he reflects Aquinas in his belief that some people can transcend their sinful natures and find happiness. As his heroines counter adversity, demonstrating resilience, optimism and emotional intelligence, Shakespeare challenges a dominant ideology that women are sexual temptresses who should be blamed for the Fall. In showing the men they love the right way to live, they become representative of Shakespeare's optimism about human potential and the possibility of finding happiness in a fallen world.

Studies of the emotions

In the last twenty years scholars working in the field of body studies have shown particular interest in the impact of Galenism, not only on medical and psychological thinking, but on literary representation. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson have been influential in drawing attention to the porous nature of the humoral body, which was vulnerable to fluid fluctuation as a result of temperament and the influence of the environment. They remind us that "early modern Europeans had not yet separated the mind from this changeable body" and that this body was characterised by its "emotional instability

¹³ All quotations from Shakespeare's plays in this thesis are from the Oxford edition.

and volatility".¹⁴ Paster refers to "the intellectual dominance of psychophysiology in the early modern period" and the belief that "affective life was constituted by the humors coursing through the bloodstream and saturating the flesh."¹⁵ Michael Schoenfeldt believes that the medical theory derived from Galen gave poets and dramatists the means with which to diagnose human motives and the therapies that could be used to alter them. Katharine Eisaman Maus and Paster have explored the ways in which the humours helped shape dramatic representations of character.¹⁶ Adopting the terminology of the humours is one technique that Shakespeare uses to create a language of psychological inwardness, particularly in dramatizing melancholic characters. However, as Michael Schoenfeldt acknowledges, the Galenic discourse is potentially limiting as a means of representing character.¹⁷ In the early modern period, it was used to validate misogyny through the gendering of emotions. It relegated women to an inferior biological and social position in which they are believed to be less capable of rational thinking than men. Even their emotions were considered to have less value and to be more uncontrollable.¹⁸ In his comedies, Shakespeare challenges the preconceptions of his society by representing women who demonstrate strengths of character superior to those of their male counterparts. As the later chapters in the thesis will demonstrate, in *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It* Portia and Rosalind recover from their melancholy; Antonio and Jaques do not. A psychophysiological approach provides a limited response to the originality of Shakespeare's

¹⁴ Paster, Rowe and Floyd-Wilson, ed., *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, 16. Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and Shakespearean Stage*, 19.

¹⁵ Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body*, 20, 22.

¹⁶ Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 20. Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995). Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson, ed. *Reading the Early Modern Passion*.

¹⁷ Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*. David Houston Wood, *Time, Narrative and Emotion in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

¹⁸ Lynn Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholy and Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995). Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis and the Symbolism of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

representation of character. He often appropriated, but also moved beyond, the Galenic explanation of the relationship between emotion, behaviour and gender to develop a more complex understanding of human motivation.

Scholars researching the history of the emotions provide an alternative understanding of the function of the emotions in the early modern period. This is “a relatively new frame of critical inquiry”, as Stephanie Trigg points out, and offers opportunities for an interdisciplinary approach.¹⁹ Trigg refers to philosophy, literature, psychology, psychoanalysis, history, cultural studies and political science as some of the scholarly fields that now concern themselves with emotion. She believes that the phrase, “‘the history of emotions’, suggests a complex and productively layered sense of inquiry into historical change, historical emotions, and the history of the term and concept of the ‘emotions’ themselves.”²⁰ Similarly, Susan Matt proposes that studying the emotions broadens the field of history, that “politics, religion, economics, labor, and family life all look different when explored with an eye to emotion.”²¹ She suggests that emotions research uncovers links between power and emotion in public … [and] private life.”²² William Reddy and Barbara Rosenwein are interested in the role of institutions in peoples’ lives, and the extent to which they were able to give expression to alternative viewpoints. Reddy describes a nested hierarchy of social structures consisting of “emotional regimes” (the codes of expression and repression that societies and governments create and enforce), “emotional refuges” (spaces, both social and physical, that provide opportunities for people to express emotions not legitimised by a dominant regime), and “emotional liberty” (the freedom to choose different

¹⁹ Stephanie Trigg, “Introduction: Emotional Histories: Beyond the Personalization of the Past and the Abstraction of Affect Theory,” *Exemplaria* 26, no.1 (2014), 4. DOI:10.1179/1041257313Z.00000000043.

²⁰ Ibid., 8.

²¹ Susan J. Matt, “Current Emotion Research in History: Or Doing History from the Inside Out,” *Emotion Review* 3, no. 1 (2013), 120. DOI: 10.1177/1754073910384416.

²² Ibid., 122.

goals).²³ In slightly different ways Rosenwein proposes that people lived in “emotional communities” that were the same as social communities, and that they constantly moved from one community to another, adjusting their displays of emotion and their judgements in keeping with these different environments. Each of these societies evoked, shaped, constrained and expressed emotions differently, allowing for the expression of numerous voices and even within them “deviant individuals” articulated contradictory opinions and were able to find a place.²⁴ Rosenwein’s model provides an important reminder that most cultures are not monolithic, and this allows her to express some optimism about cultural tolerance. However, this is not always justified by the historical facts or literary representations that will be discussed in later chapters.

The interdisciplinary approach of the history of the emotions provides me with a methodology that can incorporate analysis of imaginative and non-fiction texts. It also validates research into the historical, cultural, religious and political influences that shaped the ways in which people might have thought and felt about happiness. Susan Broomhall believes that there was an important, symbiotic interrelationship between individuals and their worlds. She recommends that we should consider both the ways in which people’s emotions shaped their systems of thought and how these were ordered by their experiences.²⁵ In addition to studying prescriptive texts that articulate emotional standards, and writing intended for publication or performance, William Reddy recommends the study of sources like memoirs, letters and diaries in an attempt to access how people in the past might have actually felt and to try to determine how their emotions differed from social norms.²⁶ Susan

²³ William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of the Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 105, 128-9.

²⁴ Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Review Essay: Worrying about Emotions in History* (2002): 843. <http://ahr.oxfordjournals.org>.

²⁵ Susan Broomhall, “Introduction: Hearts and Minds: Ordering Emotions in Europe, 1100-1800,” in *Ordering Emotions in Europe, 1100-1800*, ed. Susan Broomhall (Boston: Brill, 2015).

²⁶ William M. Reddy, “Historical Research on the Self and Emotions,” *Emotion Review* 1, no. 4 (2009). DOI: 10.1177/1754073909338306.

Matt believes that this involves a process of getting inside the heads of earlier generations and writing history “from the inside out”.²⁷ Reflecting on the ways in which people might have responded, Trigg speculates about the possible differences between emotional behaviour as prescribed in conduct books, actual behaviour that was recorded by people living at the time, and that represented in imaginative texts.²⁸ She is also interested in the potential of emotions and passions to be “governed or manipulated, whether individually or collectively”.²⁹ This is significant when considering the extent to which groups and individuals felt pressured to conform, and the extent to which they were able to give expression to alternative viewpoints about the nature of happiness. Adopting ideas that were not legitimised by the dominant regime could be dangerous, but could also provide opportunities to choose different goals and paths to personal fulfilment. A key concern in my thesis is the disparity that existed between ideas about how the world should be and the recognition that it did not correspond to the ideal. My first chapter considers ways in which people’s writing might be shaped by an awareness of audience and suggests a comparison between the orthodoxy of texts produced for publication and private diaries that provided a much greater freedom for heterodox expression. Alternative responses in which political treatises and imaginative texts created idealised worlds sometimes bore little relationship to the lived experiences of their readers.

In the early modern period, when the institutions of Church and State often failed to provide for the well-being of the individual, friendship was an important, and culturally recognised, source of emotional fulfilment. The concept of emotional communities and emotional refuges, suggested by Rosenwein, is useful in chapter three in my analysis of friendship networks among women who attempted to forge meaningful relationships in a patriarchal culture. Aristotelian and Ciceronian theories of friendship between men influenced the early modern discourse of amity, which was represented on the stage and in other literary

²⁷ Susan J. Matt, “Current Emotion Research in History,” 123.

²⁸ Stephanie Trigg, “Introduction: Emotional Histories”, 8.

²⁹ Ibid., 4.

works. Evidence of strong personal friendships in real life can be found in the correspondence between members of the *Respublica literarum*, the “cosmopolitan virtual community” of humanist scholars that Vanessa Smith and Richard Yeo describe.³⁰ Friendships between women lacked the rhetoric of the discourse of amity that validated friendship between men, but women’s letters reveal the relationships that they formed gave meaning to their lives and support in a patriarchal world. Changing attitudes to marriage and the evolution of the concept of the companionate marriage also opened up spaces where men and women might work out new understandings of intimacy; letters between married couples express their love and desire to be together when circumstances have parted them. As discussed in chapters four, five and six, Shakespeare’s comedies, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, engage with these cultural influences. He represents friendships between men and between women, and he shows how his heroines work to develop relationships with the men they love that will be based on mutual understanding and knowledge of each other’s character. The plays also celebrate the power of friendship to provide women with emotional support, often in the face of adverse circumstances. Although these relationships lack the cultural approval given to the classical discourse of amity between men, they appear to outlast the competing emotional demands of marriage in ways that the friendships of men do not.

The use of a cross disciplinary approach to the study of emotions to enrich an understanding of Shakespeare is demonstrated in a recent article on *The Winter’s Tale* co-authored by Louis Charland, who has academic appointments in philosophy and psychiatry, and R. S. White, who is a literary historian associated with The Australian Research Centre of Excellence for the History of the Emotions.³¹ These mixed affiliations reflect an increasing interest in adopting a cross disciplinary approach, both to studies of the emotions and analysis

³⁰ Vanessa Smith and Richard Yeo, “Friendship in Early Modern Philosophy and Science,” *Parergon* 26, no. 2 (2009), 5. <http://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.0.0151>.

³¹ Louis C. Charland and R. S. White, “Anatomy of a Passion: Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* as Case Study,” in ed. Susan Broomhall, *Ordering Emotions in Europe, 1100-1800* (Boston: Brill, 2015).

of Shakespeare's plays. Charland and White use the early modern terminology of Thomas Wright, in his *The Passions of the Minde in Generall*, and the writing of late nineteenth, early twentieth-century psychologist, Théodule Ribot, in his *Psychologie des sentiments* and *Essai sur les passions*, as an explanatory model in a case study of Shakespeare's representation of jealousy in Leontes. They believe that this formulation, that involves translating early modern conceptions of the passions into more modern terminology, "seems to offer both a clue to interpreting early literature in its own medical context, and also the possibility of fresh insight into the nature of complex affective syndromes and pathologies today."³² In such an analysis Charland and White appropriate modern terminology, as when they refer to the children becoming "part of the psychodrama", the "trauma" for Leontes of losing his son, and the "long-term affective orientation" he undergoes.³³ The use of modern terminology from clinical psychiatry becomes more frequent as the article progresses – sub-headings refer to "Fixed, possibly obsessive or delusional, ideational forces", "Morbidity and psychopathology", and "Refusal of treatment, advice or relinquishing agency".³⁴ Charland and White see their article as shedding light on psychological problems that were "anticipated" in early modern thinking and drama.³⁵ In this way they validate the practice of reading Shakespeare through the insights provided by our twenty-first-century context.

Psychological approaches

The cross-disciplinary approach recommended by Charland and White has similarities with the methodology I adopt. My thesis proposes that the study of early modern emotions can be enriched by reading them in terms of the fields of Freudian and positive psychology in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In establishing positive psychology as my primary

³² Ibid., 198.

³³ Ibid., 219, 220, 222.

³⁴ Ibid., 222, 223.

³⁵ Ibid., 224.

methodology for analysis of *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* I consider how it might intersect with key philosophical and psychological precedents. In the last twenty years, literary criticism that discusses representations of the humours in the early modern period has focused almost exclusively on negative emotions.³⁶ Under the influence of Christianity and its emphasis on the sinfulness of man, many early modern writers ignored happiness; even when practising physician, Christopher Langton, acknowledged the existence of joy, he warned that it might have a disadvantageous impact.³⁷ The preoccupation of literary critics with negative emotion, especially with melancholy, is partly a response to the concerns

³⁶ In criticism of literary representations of the humours, melancholy has received the most attention. Recent writing includes: Lynn Enterline's *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing*; Carol Thomas Neely's *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Jennifer Radden's *The Nature of Melancholia: From Aristotle to Kristeva* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Juliana Schiesari's *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature*; Winfried Schleiner's *Melancholy, Genius and Utopia in the Renaissance* (Wiesbaden: In Kommission bei Otto Harrassowitz, 1991) and Douglas Trevor's *The Poetics of Melancholy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). These build on the seminal work by Lawrence Babb *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951) and earlier works by Stanley Jackson "Melancholia and the Waning of the Humoral Theory" (*Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 33, 1978); Melanie Klein's "Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States" (Selected Melanie Klein, ed. Juliet Mitchell, New York: The Free Press, 1986); Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl's *Saturn and Melancholy* (London: Nelson, 1964); Julia Kristeva's *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989) and Bridget Gellert Lyons' *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (New York: Norton, 1971). In addition Schoenfeldt focuses on the Shakespearean sonnets that deal with negative emotion, Daniel Gil concentrates predominantly on fear, pride, shame and anger, and Douglas Trevor analyses *The Faerie Queene* in terms of rage, despair, confusion, sadness and melancholy. David Wood in his discussion of Sidney's *Old Arcadia* mentions the emotions of desire, guilt, love, and jealousy, joy and sadness in his opening but then goes on to focus on extremes of violent emotion, while Jennifer Vaught refers to "grief, sadness, melancholy, anger, despair, patience and joy" (p.1) and then ignores the joy. Cynthia Marshall details the rapes, dismemberment and gory deaths that are a feature of many early modern plays and raises interesting questions about audience response to what she calls the erotics of violence, which she links to Freud's attempts to explain the psychology of masochism. Daniel Juan Gil, *Before Intimacy: Asocial Sexuality in Early Modern England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006). Jennifer C. Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008). Marshall, Cynthia, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). In an electronic search of psychological abstracts since 1887, David Myers found that the ratio of articles on negative emotion to those on positive emotion was fourteen to one. He found that 8,072 articles had been written on anger, 57,800 on anxiety and 70,856 on depression. In contrast, he only found 851 articles on joy, 2,958 on happiness and 5,701 on life satisfaction. In this way, psychological research can be seen to inform the trends in literary research in paying limited attention to happiness. David G. Myers, "The funds, friends and faith of happy people," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1(2000): 56.

³⁷ "Joy is a sudden motion, with the whiche ye harte rejoysing dilateth hym selfe, and suddenly sendeth furth al hys naturall heat and spirites, wherby sumtyme it chaunseth that a weake body dieth in Joy, because for lacke of strength the hart can not call in agayne his naturall heat and spirites." Christopher Langton. *A very brefe treatise, orderly declaring the principal partes of physick, that is to saye: thynges natural. Thynges not natural. Thynges against nature* (London, Whitechurch, 1547) in *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry 1533-1860*, ed. Richard Hunter and Ida Macalpine (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 10.

of early modernity, but it is also a reflection of the long engagement with Freud in early modern criticism. In considering the differences and connections between early modern ideas about the self and psychoanalysis, Schoenfeldt compares the Galenic belief that illness is caused by humoral excess with the Freudian theory that repressed memory is the source of illness. The aim of both regimes, Schoenfeldt claims, is to “scour the subject of deleterious inwardness.”³⁸ Freud was pessimistic about the possibility of achieving enduring happiness. Happiness in the strictest sense, he wrote, comes from the satisfaction of needs and is only temporary; it is threatened by the body, which is doomed to decay, by the external world and by our relations with others. In *Civilisation and its Discontents* he recognises that people strive for happiness – what he calls the pleasure principle – but believes that “all the regulations of the universe run counter to it.”³⁹ Freud has been influential in foregrounding the negative effects of religion; he wrote about the sense of guilt which is inextricably linked to the development of civilisation and the resulting loss of happiness.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Debora Shuger has pointed out that, despite Freud’s disavowal of religion, its influence still lingers in Freudian psychology as the theory of the id, the ego and the superego is informed by Calvinistic beliefs about the mind.⁴¹ Although Freud’s comments on Shakespeare’s plays do not represent a systematic analysis, and their application has been subjected to criticism, Philip Armstrong believes that psychoanalytical categories are now “thoroughly disseminated within” and “constitutive of our reading practices.”⁴² The influence of Freud helps shape the way modern readers and audiences recognise that Shakespeare’s understanding of human

³⁸ Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*, 16.

³⁹ Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1962), 23.

⁴⁰ Freud claims, “... the price we pay for our advance in civilisation is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt ... religions, at any rate, have never overlooked the part played in civilisation by a sense of guilt. Furthermore ... they claim to redeem mankind from this sense of guilt, which they call sin.” Ibid., 81, 83.

⁴¹ Debora Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice and Subjectivity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

⁴² Philip Armstrong, *Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 2001), 225.

behaviour was not limited to a humoral interpretation. Literary criticism shaped by Freudian psychology emphasises the dark forces within the psyche that prevent people from attaining happiness.

In order to access the complexity of Shakespeare's dramatization of character, my thesis acknowledges, but moves beyond, the Freudian model that foregrounds negative emotion. It incorporates the insights provided by late twentieth-century psychological work in the field of trauma therapy and research in the twenty-first century by positive psychologists. My use of positive psychology is, in part, a recognition of how important positive emotions are in Shakespeare's romantic comedies. As I focus on his representations of happiness, I consider the strengths that enable some of his characters, especially his heroines, to achieve fulfilment. Positive psychologists Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi raise the question, "Is the world simply too full of tragedy to allow a wise person to be happy?"⁴³ This was influential in shaping the direction of my research in the early stages, and provided a link to my later reading of Augustinian theology that attributes the miseries afflicting mankind to original sin. Seligman initially rejected the pessimism and focus on human weaknesses and neuroses that he identified in Freudian psychology which, he claimed, had dragged the doctrine of original sin into twentieth-century psychology. He made a clear distinction between the Judeo-Christian tradition, with its emphasis on the sinfulness of humanity, which he saw as the inheritance of Freud, and the secular Hellenic legacy, particularly the influence of Aristotle, which informs positive psychology.⁴⁴ In *Authentic Happiness* he represented the alternatives as irrevocably polarised, but later, in a joint article (written in collaboration with Tracy Steen, Nansook Park and Christopher Peterson), he modified his position, acknowledging the debt of positive psychology to Freud's work:

⁴³ Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, "Positive Psychology: An Introduction," 13.

⁴⁴ Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*.

Research findings from positive psychology are intended to supplement, not remotely to replace, what is known about human suffering, weakness and disorder ... we believe that a complete science and a complete practice of psychology should include an understanding of suffering and happiness, as well as their interaction.⁴⁵

This retraction is significant in recognising that a study of happiness must take place within the context of human suffering and weaknesses, and it suggests a way to access Shakespeare's representation of characters who attempt to find happiness within the context of fallen worlds where characters behave with cruelty and intolerance, an issue not addressed by Aristotle.

Combining the insights of Freudian psychology with more recent theories from positive psychology opens up the possibility of identifying a more complex response to the plays. Shakespeare's belief that people can achieve happiness as a result of experiencing adverse events is central to my thesis. Some critical responses to his late romantic comedies have been polarised in their approach. The festive nature of the plays is foregrounded by C. L. Barber, and Northrop Frye has identified a pattern of retreat and reengagement in which people learn from immersion in the healing powers of the green world.⁴⁶ In contrast, Freud's theories of the subconscious underpin the visions of the dark forces of the psyche identified in these plays by Thad Logan, Jan Kott, Heather Hirschfeld and Drew Daniel.⁴⁷ Acknowledging the insights provided by these readings of the plays, I consider an alternative response that

⁴⁵ Martin. E. P Seligman, Tracy A. Steen, Nansook Park, and Christopher Peterson, "Positive Psychology Progress: Empirical Validation of Interventions," *American Psychologist* 60 no. 5 (2005), 410. Ovid Online 00000487-200507000-0002.

⁴⁶ C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), 10, 16. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (New York: Atheneum, 1969).

⁴⁷ Thad Jenkins Logan, "Twelfth Night: The Limits of Festivity" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 22, no. 2 (1982): 226. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/450337>. Jan Kott, *Shakespeare our Contemporary*, trans. Boleslaw Taberski (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1963), 229, 230. Heather Hirschfield, "Hamlet's 'First Corse': Repetition, Trauma and the Displacement of Redemptive Typology" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2003): 73. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable.3844057>. Drew Daniel, "Let me have judgement, and the Jew his will: Melancholy Epistemology and Masochistic Fantasy in The Merchant of Venice," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2010): 228, 229-230, 233, 234. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/40731156>.

focuses on the strengths of character that enable some people to achieve happiness in adverse conditions and the wisdom they gain in the process. Ronnie Janoff-Bulman has researched the effects of traumatic events on individuals as they are forced to re-evaluate their assumptions about the meaning of life.⁴⁸ His observations about the effects of traumatic life events apply particularly to Viola, who has been washed up on a foreign shore, believing that her brother has drowned. I extend Janoff-Bulman's comments on traumatic life events to apply to other characters who have suffered familial loss, and to Rosalind and Orlando who have been deprived of their rightful position in the world:

Survivors ... know the pain of shattered assumptions and the jarring awareness of their own vulnerability; they know human outcomes can be random and meaningless. Yet they also experience the pleasure of a newfound appreciation of life and sense of value in their daily existence. *These positive reappraisals of their life do not occur in spite of the negative consequences of their victimization, but rather because of them* (my emphasis). It is through knowing the fragility of human existence and the real possibility of loss that survivors arrive at a new understanding of life's value ... suddenly living is precious, and survivors strive to create value and worth in their daily existence.⁴⁹

As survivors recognise that life has value and can provide pleasure, they come to consider what is important to them, make choices and commitments, and value connections and other people. They see a new meaning in life, one that is "associated with significance and worth", as the experience of loss makes them more aware of the value of life.⁵⁰ In *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* Shakespeare anticipates the work of Janoff-Bulman in showing an intuitive understanding of the importance of coming to terms with grief and loss. He dramatizes aspects of Augustinian pessimism in representing fallen worlds in the plays as he criticises the political and social structures that people construct out of their sinful natures. He also reflects aspects of Aristotelian optimism in his belief that some people, at

⁴⁸ Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, "Rebuilding shattered assumptions after traumatic life outcomes. Coping processes and outcomes," in *Coping*, ed. C. R. Snyder (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁴⁹ Ibid., 318-319.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 320-321.

least, have the potential to achieve happiness in this life as a result of making the right moral choices. However, he differs from Aristotle who assumes that happiness is a condition that depends on favourable circumstances, which he situates within the benign political context of the *polis*. Shakespeare's conception of happiness goes further than Aristotle's; he shows that happiness can be achieved by encountering adversity and using it to develop a more profound understanding of the meaning of life and the possibilities of positive inter-personal relationships. Shakespeare's heroines demonstrate that it is possible for a wise person to be happy in a world full of tragedy. They learn from their experiences and discover that happiness can be most fully savoured when it is contrasted to suffering, melancholy and grief.

The role of resilience in enabling people to recover from loss has been researched by George Bonanno, who links it to the belief that "one can learn and grow from both positive and negative life experiences."⁵¹ Positive psychologists endorse the Aristotelian virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance, asserting that individuals have choices, preferences and the possibility of taking charge of their own lives.⁵² Research has also discovered that mental illness can be counteracted by human strengths, such as optimism, courage, faith, hope, perseverance, interpersonal skills, honesty, and the capacity for insight. Positive psychologists emphasise the importance of identifying and building on character strengths and virtues to overcome personal neuroses and environmental challenges.⁵³ They believe in the value of "emotional intelligence", which they link to Aristotle's injunction to

⁵¹ George Bonanno, "Loss, Trauma, and Human Resilience: Have We Underestimated the Human Capacity to Thrive After Extremely Adverse Events?" *American Psychologist* 59, no. 1 (2004): 47. DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.59.1.20.

⁵² Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1097b1-5, 1099a18-22, 1117b 22-35, 1129b25-113a. Positive psychology is a twenty-first-century phenomenon, which has its roots in twentieth-century humanist psychology. In the journal, *American Psychologist*, which devoted its 2000 January edition to articles on the emerging discipline of positive psychology, Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi wrote: "Psychology has, since World War II, become a science largely about healing. It concentrates on repairing damage within a disease model of human functioning. This almost exclusive attention to pathology neglects the fulfilled individual and the thriving community. The aim of positive psychology is to begin to catalyse a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities." Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, "Positive Psychology: An Introduction", 2.

⁵³ Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, "Positive Psychology: An Introduction".

“know thyself”. Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity to understand emotions in others and oneself, and the ability to guide action and interpersonal relationships.⁵⁴ Shakespeare’s heroines, Rosalind, Viola and Portia demonstrate these strengths in their own lives and teach other characters how to cope and change. Through grappling with, and triumphing over, adversity they are able to achieve happiness, and their development shows how Shakespeare goes beyond Aristotelian concepts of *eudaimonia* (perfect happiness).

The discourse of varying schools of psychology is, in a sense, anachronistic and David Wood warns about the tendency of scholars to read emotions “through their own intellectual paradigms”.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, they enable us to recognise that Shakespeare’s understanding of motivation extends beyond the explanations provided by the Galenic model, especially in his representations of melancholy that will be discussed later. Freud focused on how the mind controls the body; positive psychology sees itself as closing the post-Cartesian split between mind and body and emphasising the importance of the inter-connection between the two. Recent medical research has examined the links between mental and physical health. The early modern period saw the state of being sanguine as affected by the operation of the blood, in the twenty-first century scientists are exploring the effects of oxytocin on the brain and behaviour. Barbara Fredrickson writes about research into the effects of oxytocin on the ways in which we think and feel about love, how we act, and what we become. She refers to attempts “to chart the ways that oxytocin and other ingredients that make up love’s biochemistry trigger healthy change in gene expression that may foster physical and mental well-being.”⁵⁶ Recognising how the body shapes emotions brings us closer to the ways in which emotion was conceptualised in the early modern period and makes the application of modern medical and psychological terminology more relevant. It offers new possibilities for

⁵⁴ John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey and David R. Caruso, “Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Findings, and Implications,” *Psychological Inquiry* 15, no. 3 (2004). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2044.7229>.

⁵⁵ Wood, *Time, Narrative and Emotion*, 17.

⁵⁶ Barbara Fredrickson, *Love 2.0: How our supreme emotion affects everything we feel, think, do, and become* (New York: Hudson Street Press, 2013), 60.

how we might think about love in Shakespeare's romantic comedies, and about how it shapes the ways in which lovers think, feel, relate to others and change as a result of experiencing this emotion.

Positive psychology gives cross-cultural application to its findings by situating itself philosophically within the theories of Aristotle. It can provide us with a terminology, relevant to the twenty-first century, to access Shakespeare's representation of virtuous behaviour as attainable through making the right moral choices. It can foreground the ways in which Shakespeare presents heroines who face and overcome the impediments to their personal happiness, emphasising the character strengths of resilience, optimism and emotional intelligence that empower people to overcome adversity. Aristotle assumed that the citizen's pursuit of happiness was located within the democratic context of the *polis*; positive psychology raises the question of whether it is possible to be happy when the social context militates against personal fulfilment. Conflict is an essential component of drama. Shakespeare represents his heroines engaging in conflict with their social and political worlds, extending his exploration of happiness beyond the theories offered by Aristotle. Positive psychology recognises that the search for happiness takes place in a world characterised by war and injustice; Shakespeare saw his heroines striving for happiness in worlds that were a representation of the Augustinian theology of original sin. Thus, although Shakespeare reflects many aspects of Aristotelian philosophy in the comedies, especially in his exploration of the moral value of different types of happiness, as his characters engage in conflict he moves beyond classical paradigms, locating the search for personal fulfilment within the context of wider social issues. His heroines, particularly, demonstrate strengths and virtues, including those identified by Aristotle, to confront their pain, overcome difficulties, and achieve happiness within the theological context of a fallen world.

The influence of Aristotle on conceptions of happiness

The philosophy of Aristotle is central to my analysis of ways in which some early modern people thought about happiness. A significant contribution to scholarly investigation of the importance of Aristotle in early modern England is provided by Unhae Park Langis as she links virtue, moderation, the passions and the humours.⁵⁷ She sees Renaissance writers as working within the tradition of Aristotelian psychology and philosophy as well as Galenic physiology, locating her exploration of the passions “in the context of moral action in the secular world rather than Christian piety”.⁵⁸ She refers to her work as a “virtue-based study” and it is significant in confirming the importance of Aristotelian concepts of virtue, but her focus on moderation does not engage specifically with the ways in which Aristotelian ideas about virtuous living might be relevant to a study of happiness.⁵⁹ Langis foregrounds the secular impact of Aristotle, emphasising the importance of human reason in the search for happiness on earth, rather than the grace of God. There is room to extend her analysis of the secular influence of Aristotle by locating responses to his philosophy within the context of religious beliefs, especially the theology of Augustine. Augustinian theology provided a competing and often negative way of viewing the world, and Shakespearean comedies reflect a tension between Aristotelian optimism about man’s capacity to strive after virtue and the pessimism that saw him as blighted by inherited sin in a postlapsarian world.

Aristotle’s treatise, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, has been a formative influence on subsequent attitudes to happiness. His approach is moral as well as philosophical, as he links happiness to virtuous living and the potential of man to strive after perfection. He defines virtue as “a state of character concerned with choice” and proposes that human good is

⁵⁷ Unhae Park Langis, *Passion, Prudence, and Virtue in Shakespearean Drama* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011).

⁵⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 14.

“activity of soul exhibiting virtue”.⁶⁰ Virtue is concerned with passions and actions, and virtuous behaviour is a skill learned by experience and developed as a result of habit, since the moral virtues do not arise in us by nature.⁶¹ Happiness involves deliberation and making choices, because it is in our power to do noble or base acts.⁶² Since happiness is rational activity in accordance with virtue, Aristotle believes that we must make the right choices to realise our full potential in the community.⁶³ The emphasis on virtue involves the construction of hierarchies as he evaluates the legitimacy of different types of happiness, distinguishing between hedonistic pleasures and *eudaimonia*. These hierarchies provide a useful epistemological approach to Shakespeare’s exploration of happiness in *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, as discussed in chapter four. Aristotle identifies virtues of character or moral virtues, which include courage, temperance, justice and liberality, and virtues of intellect, which are characterised by philosophical wisdom and understanding.⁶⁴ He sees practical wisdom or *phronesis* as the link between the two types of virtue, since people cannot possess moral virtue unless reason guides their emotional development. Although he acknowledges the legitimacy of pleasure, he proposes that one of the purposes of *phronesis* is to control the appetites in the interests of self-management; it strives for the mean. Right action is the product of philosophical wisdom, which provides the knowledge of what makes a good life, and practical wisdom, which is the knowledge of how to achieve that end. Aristotle’s foregrounding of courage, temperance, justice and liberality was adopted by Cicero and, through the writings of both thinkers, was formative on early modern conceptions of virtue.

Aristotle’s philosophy focuses on the perfectibility of man and how to achieve happiness in this life; as a result, his ideas were problematic for subsequent generations of

⁶⁰ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, I.7.1098a. 16-17, II.6.11074a.

⁶¹ Ibid., 1103a.17-20, 1099b. 9-10

⁶² Ibid., 1111b. 1-10, 1112a 18-32, 1113b. 1-14.

⁶³ Ibid., I.7.1098a.16-17.

⁶⁴ Ibid., I.13.1103a.4-7.

scholars writing out of the Christian tradition. The legitimacy of studying Aristotle at all could be suspect in the light of his failure to assert belief in an immortal soul. Augustine considered, and then rejected, Aristotle's beliefs as pagan and contrary to theological doctrine that happiness could only be achieved in the afterlife. In contrast, in his commentary on *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aquinas sought to validate the study of Aristotle by connecting his concept of the intellective soul to Christianity.⁶⁵ The continuing influence of Aquinas is reflected in John Wilkinson's 1547 English translation of *The Nicomachean Ethics*.⁶⁶ The Wilkinson version is, in all respects, a medieval text, since it is a translation from a section of the mid-thirteenth-century *Li Livres dou Tresor* by Brunetto Latini, which is itself a translation of *Compendium Alexandrinum*, published by Marchesi.⁶⁷ In Book II Latini summarises, restates and translates into French the main ideas of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.⁶⁸ Wilkinson follows Latini in focusing on Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue as he distinguishes between necessary delectations, which "satisfie but little", since they are satisfaction of the senses, and the "most perfithe delectations" that are connected to "felicite".⁶⁹ Both translations are reflective of the Thomistic influence as they link happiness to the beatific vision of God. When referring to this sort of happiness Wilkinson uses the words "beatitude" and "felicite". Beatitude is the "greatest wealth a man can have", since it consists in the obtaining and using of virtues and is "a gift from the glorious god" and, as

⁶⁵ "Now of the faculties of the soul, some living things have all those that we talked of, as we said, some have some of them, and some only one. The faculties we spoke of were the nutritive, perceptive, desiderative, locomotive and intellective, plants having only the nutritive, other living things both this and the perceptive ... And some animals have also in addition to these faculties that of locomotion, still others also the thinking faculty and intellect, such as man and any other creature there may be like him or superior to him." Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin, 1986), II.3.414b.

⁶⁶ John Wilkinson, *The Ethics of Aristotle, that is to saye, preceptes of good behauoure and perfithe honestie, now newly translated into English* (London: Richard Grafton, 1547, 1999), Electronic reproduction Ann Arbor. Mich:UMI..

⁶⁷ Brunetto Latini, *Li Livres dou Tresor*. Édition critique par Francis J. Carmody (Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948).

⁶⁸ Cary J. Nederman, "The Meaning of 'Aristotelianism' in Medieval Moral and Political Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57, no.4 (1996): 566.

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.Library.usyd.edu.au/stable/3654082>.

⁶⁹ John Wilkinson, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, 26.

such, is above the pleasures of the body, it is “the fulnes of virtue”. Felicity is linked to beatitude and both connect man to the divine.⁷⁰ Latini claimed that his teachings were based on *The Nicomachean Ethics*, but he extended this with reference to Christian theology, and Wilkinson follows him in providing a synthesis of classicism and Christianity in his reflections on happiness.

Aristotle’s ideas about friendship, filtered through the writing of Cicero, made a significant contribution to understanding conceptions of happiness in the sixteenth century. As with his discussion of happiness, Aristotle’s conception of friendship, developed in Books 8 and 9 of *The Nicomachean Ethics*, is hierarchical and therefore reflects moral evaluation. He divides friendship into three types – the pleasurable, the useful and the good.⁷¹ He believes that the happy man needs friends and the “supremely happy man” will need virtuous friends, “since his purpose is to contemplate worthy actions and actions that are his own, and the actions of a good man who is his friend have both these qualities”.⁷² Friendship, like happiness, is a virtue and it stimulates men to noble action.⁷³ In the best friendships individuals do not seek to gain from each other, and each can feel trust and a belief that he will never be wronged.⁷⁴ Perfect friendship develops between equals, men who are both good and alike in virtue, “for these wish well alike to each other *qua* good, and they are good in themselves … therefore their friendship lasts as long as they are good – and goodness is an enduring thing”.⁷⁵ Aristotle’s ideas about friendship underpin Cicero’s concept of *amicitia* that contrasts true friendship with political greed for wealth and power.⁷⁶ In the early modern period, when institutions so often failed to provide for the well-being of the individual,

⁷⁰ Ibid., 29.

⁷¹ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1158a28-30.

⁷² Ibid., 1170a 2-4.

⁷³ Ibid., 1155a 1-12, 15-16

⁷⁴ Ibid., 1157a 23-4

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1156b 7-13

⁷⁶ Daniel T. Lochman and Maritere Lopez, “Introduction: The Emergence of Discourses: Early Modern Friendship” in *Discourses and Representations of Friendship in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700* ed. Daniel T. Lochman, Maritere Lopez and Lorna Hutson (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 6.

friendship was an important, and culturally recognised, source of emotional fulfilment. The relationship of friendship to happiness is discussed in chapters three and six.

Aristotelian and Ciceronian theories of friendship between men influenced the early modern discourse of amity, creating expectations about how friends might negotiate their relationships. Evidence of strong personal friendships in real life can be found in the correspondence between members of the *Respublica literarum*, a network of humanist scholars. They also played a significant role in some early modern drama. Richard Edwards' play, *Damon and Pithias*, represents the problems of maintaining friendship in a political tyranny and its power to defeat a tyrant.⁷⁷ However, when Aristotelian and Ciceronian concepts of amity were appropriated in England, they could come into conflict with an incompatible political theory that was articulated in Tudor attitudes to kingship. Laurie Shannon has analysed the ways in which Marlowe's *Edward II* explores the consequences when the friendship of the sovereign is interpreted as *mignonnerie* and becomes an aspect of political misrule.⁷⁸ Close friendships between men are represented in Shakespeare's romantic comedies *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night* and in his later collaboration with Fletcher, the tragicomedy *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Chapter three considers how in these plays Shakespeare subjects the concept of amity to scrutiny, evaluating the extent to which the ideal can withstand pressures that threaten to destabilise it.

Since Aristotle was writing in the patriarchal culture of Athens his discussion of friendship does not include friendships between women. Early modern Europe was also patriarchal and the adoption of classical concepts of amity meant that there was no equivalent socially acceptable discourse for the expression of happiness and friendship between women. In his middle comedies and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* Shakespeare raises the question, not addressed by Aristotle or Cicero, of the ways in which the language of amity might be

⁷⁷ Richard Edwards, *Daman and Pithias* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1980).

⁷⁸ Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

transferred to apply to relationships between women. Dialogue between Helena and Hermia in a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, between Celia and Rosalind, and Emilia's recollections of Flavina, appear to appropriate the discourse of amity in suggesting a unity of the soul through a replication of the body, but these descriptions are distanced to the past. In the tragic-comedy *The Two Noble Kinsmen* Emilia resists the changes brought by time but, in the romantic comedies, Shakespeare's heroines move on to an understanding of the unreality of this concept. As he represents close relationships between men, Shakespeare explores the tensions that can arise between the emotional, and perhaps physical, demands of amity and the conflicting allegiances of alternative relationships, especially in the context of the emerging influence of companionate marriages. In contrast, his heroines come to accept the need to complement each other, and in doing so they forge alliances that will not compete with the happy resolution they find in marriage.

In the lower levels of Aristotle's hierarchy are friendships that are pleasurable and useful. He believes that bad men will be friends "either for the sake of pleasure or utility" since it is difficult to combine both.⁷⁹ Friendships formed for the sake of pleasure will not last, because no-one is continuously pleased.⁸⁰ Men, who are friends for reasons of utility, part when the advantage of their friendship ends, since their chief motivation is profit.⁸¹ This is particularly the case in the political world, where "People in positions of authority seem to have friends who fall into distinct classes; some people are useful to them and others are pleasant, but the same people are rarely both".⁸² Aristotle's pessimism about the integrity of political friendship is reflected in early modern treatises, letters and literary representation that reflected on the unreliability of friendships forged in a political context. Writers recognised the self-serving nature of these relationships that were designed primarily to

⁷⁹ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1157b 1-2

⁸⁰ Ibid., 1175a3.

⁸¹ Ibid., 1157a 5-15.

⁸² Ibid., 1158a.28-30

promote advancement. Robert Sidney wrote to his wife, Barbara, about his unhappiness with life at court, and letters exchanged between Machiavelli and Francesco Vettori reveal a wariness about politically motivated friendships.⁸³ Sir Francis Bacon wrote an essay on the topic and Shakespeare returns to the idea repeatedly in his history plays, especially in the second tetralogy.⁸⁴

For Aristotle, the truly virtuous person is one who experiences *eudaimonia* on a personal level and, in the wider world, contributes to the welfare of the *polis*. His attitude to politics is optimistic, he believes that an interaction between personal virtue and the values of the wider society is conducive to individual happiness and the common good. When virtue is the foundation of individual character strengths and civic virtue, it enables the citizen of the *polis* to construct systems of government and justice that will provide for personal and communal happiness. Despite his distrust of utilitarian friendships, his belief in the integrity of the political system is reflective of his faith in the perfectibility of man; imperfect individuals will strive after virtue and help others to achieve it. Aristotle has faith in the power of political organisations to create an environment where everyone can be at his best and live happily.⁸⁵ He tells us, “The task of a good lawgiver is to see how any city or race of men or society with which he is concerned may share in a good life and whatever form of happiness is available to them.”⁸⁶ Good laws result in good public control and legislators thus make citizens good by forming good habits in them.⁸⁷ He believes that Justice is the greatest virtue and the magistrate is the guardian of justice.⁸⁸ This is reflective of his conviction that Athenian democracy is a positive institution.

⁸³ James B. Atkinson and David Sices, ed. *Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 240.

⁸⁴ Sir Francis Bacon, *The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1985), 81-81.

⁸⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Ernest Barker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1324a19.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 1325a5.

⁸⁷ *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1180a 34-5.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 1129b 26-30, 1134b37-8.

Aristotle's focus on the social nature of man is significant in its promotion of the citizen as a member of the *polis*, working for the common good, but his understanding of *eudaimonia* has political and moral limitations, since it does not apply equally to all. Aristotle was a man of his time, who did not include women, slaves or resident foreigners in his vision of the good life, maintaining that "we cannot include as citizens all who are necessary to the city's existence."⁸⁹ He follows his statement that justice means equality with the qualifier, "but equality for those who are equal and not for all."⁹⁰ Since the good life requires freedom from manual labour, the leisured and happy life style of male citizens is hierarchical and dependent on the exclusion and subordination of others. As the early modern period was also hierarchical in terms of social structure and patriarchal in its attitudes to women, Aristotle's theories of government could be accommodated into political treatises that reflected an Aristotelian interest in the relationship of politics to happiness. Political treatises, such as Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Book Named the Governor*, John Barston's *The safegarde of societie* and Gasparo Contarini's *De magistratibus et republica Venetorum*, which was translated into English by Lewis Lewkenor, presented Christianised versions of Aristotelian and Ciceronian theories of civil rule.⁹¹ These treatises, discussed in chapters one and two, promoted the virtues of stable government, reminded rulers that they should be guided by concern for the welfare of their subjects and urged citizens to demonstrate the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, courage and perseverance. They represent an ideal of the relationship of the citizen to the state that was often not matched by the reality of life in the early modern period.

⁸⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1277b33.

⁹⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1280a7.

⁹¹ Lewkenor makes a number of references to Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics* to support his points. Although he does not refer specifically to happiness, he reflects Aristotle's concern that government should provide for the common good. Gasparo Contarini, *The commonwealth and government of Venice. VWritten by the Cardinall Gasper Contareno, and translated out of Italian into English, by Lewes Lewkenor Esquire. VVith sundry other collections, annexed by the translator for the more cleere and exact satisfaction of the reader. With a short chronicle in the end, of the liues and raignes of the Venetian dukes, from the very beginnings of their citie* (London: Imprinted by Iohn Windet for Edmund Mattes, and are to be sold at his shop, at the signe of the Hand and Plow in Fleetstreet, 1599). EEBO.

The significance of Aristotle in the Renaissance is emphasised in the work of historians Paul Oskar Kristeller, Edward Crantz, Charles Schmitt, and Charles Lohr.⁹² The bibliography of editions of Aristotle's works, compiled by Crantz and Schmitt, shows that, in addition to Greek and Latin versions, vernacular translations were made in England, France, Italy and Spain.⁹³ Schmitt points out that the various editions of Aristotle catered for different levels of the reading public and he was available to "people of many different intellectual capacities".⁹⁴ Sandra Clark refers to the growing middle class of merchants, tradesmen, bankers, manufacturers and ship owners who would know about Aristotle, even if they could not read him in Latin.⁹⁵ At the mass culture level, the pamphleteers were anxious to create the impression that they were aware of literary fashion and part of the tradition of men of letters. Writing with varying degrees of sophistication, they presupposed a readership knowledgeable of Aristotle and appreciative of references to the classics.⁹⁶ Thus, as Langis points out, the question of whether Shakespeare had actually read Aristotle is less important than the fact that he was working in a humanist culture in which Aristotelian concepts played an influential role.⁹⁷ The moral value of reading Aristotle was asserted by scholastic and humanist professors in the early modern period. They claimed that public lectures on texts like the *Nicomachean Ethics* could work positive social change and that study could make people more virtuous and worthy to exercise power.⁹⁸

⁹² Paul Oskar Kristeller. *Renaissance thought and its sources*. F. Edward Cranz, and Charles B. Schmitt, *A Bibliography of Aristotle Editions 1501-1600* (Baden-Baden: V. Koerner, 1984). Charles Lohr, Latin Aristotle Commentaries (Firenze: L. S. Olschi, <1988-1995>).

⁹³ Cranz, and Schmitt, *A Bibliography of Aristotle Editions. 1501-1600*.

⁹⁴ Charles B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 63.

⁹⁵ Sandra Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers: Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580-1640* (London: The Athlone Press, 1983).

⁹⁶ Ibid., 21.

⁹⁷ Langis, *Passion, Prudence and Virtue*, 19, 16.

⁹⁸ Paul Oscar Kristeller, *Renaissance thought and the arts*.

The influence of Augustine

Despite the formative influence of Aristotle on ideas about human virtue and personal interrelationships, his theories of happiness provided a challenge to the Christian church. The writings of Augustine reveal a conflict between Christian and pagan views of the world and man's capacity to achieve happiness. He increasingly represents a break from an Aristotelian eudaemonist response when he claims that even a virtuous person cannot be truly happy in this world. The discordance between the philosophy of Aristotle and the theology of Augustine would be a significant feature of early modern thinking about happiness. It was particularly influential on beliefs about the function of government and the possibilities of achieving meaningful inter-personal relationships. Although Augustine's Greek was limited, and he was not able to access directly the text of *The Nicomachean Ethics*, its core philosophy was available to him through its incorporation into various Latin sources, especially Cicero's *Hortensius*.⁹⁹ There are significant differences between Aristotle and Augustine in their attitudes to human nature. In *The Poetics* Aristotle had proposed that the tragic hero is “a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty.”¹⁰⁰ In the processes of translation and changing views of human nature shaped by Christianity, the Greek word “*hamartia*”, with its connotations of error and frailty rather than vice or depravity, was transformed into the Latin “*peccatio*” and “*peccatum*”, a concept of sinfulness that did not exist in classical Latin.¹⁰¹ Over the course of his life Augustine became increasingly preoccupied with human sinfulness and it was his later writings that were particularly influential on the Christian church. In the early part of his *Confessions* he records the happiness of his friendship with Alypius, but after his conversion

⁹⁹ Michael W. Tkacz, “St Augustine’s appropriation and transformation of Aristotelian Eudaimonia” in *The Reception of Aristotle’s Ethics* ed. Jon Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 71, 68, 82.

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Aristotle’s Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, trans. S. H. Butcher (United States of America: Dover Publications, Inc., 1951), XIII. 1453a.

¹⁰¹ Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture 13th-18th Centuries*, trans. Eric Nicholson (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1990), 189-190.

he distances himself from Aristotelian and Ciceronian concepts of friendship, turning instead to a focus on friendship with God as the only meaningful relationship.¹⁰² In the process he makes a clear distinction between classical ideas of virtue and his Christian faith. He increasingly rejects the value of pagan philosophy, including the work of Aristotle, condemning the “marvellous shallowness” of people who attempt to “find their blessedness in this life and in themselves”, dismissing the attempt as “empty dreams”.¹⁰³ In *The City of God Against the Pagans* Augustine discusses Christianity in terms of the citizenship of man in the city of God. He begins by pronouncing, “the glorious city of God is my theme … I have undertaken its defence against those who prefer their own gods to the Founder of the city”.¹⁰⁴ Later in the book, he refutes the belief that pagan philosophy can provide a path to happiness:

Prudence shall provide nothing, Justice distribute nothing, Temperance moderate nothing, except to the end that men may be pleased and vainglory served. For their virtue – if, indeed it is virtue at all, – is only in another way subjected to human praise; for he who seeks to please himself seeks still to please man.¹⁰⁵

Here Augustine focuses particularly on identifying Aristotelian / Ciceronian virtues of prudence, justice and temperance, and then distinguishing them from the Christian virtue of

¹⁰² Saint Augustine, *St Augustine's Confessions. Vol. I*, trans. William Watts (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, MCMXLVI).

¹⁰³ He refers to people who have “with a marvellous shallowness, sought to find their blessedness in this life and in themselves … For what flood of eloquence can suffice to detail the miseries of this life?” He also tells us, “I shall discuss … the reasonings by which men have attempted to make for themselves a happiness in this unhappy life, in order that it may be evident, not only from divine authority, but also from such reasons as can be adduced to unbelievers, how the empty dreams of the philosophers differ from the hope which God gives to us, and from the substantial fulfilment of it which He will give us as our blessedness. Philosophers have expressed a great variety of diverse opinions regarding the ends of goods and of evils, and this question they have eagerly canvassed, that they might, if possible, discover what makes a man happy.” Saint Augustine, *The Works of Aurelius Augustine Bishop of Hippo: The City of God Against the Pagans Vol. II*, ed. Rev. Marcus Dods (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, MDCCCLXXI), XIX.4, 302 and XIX.1, 293.

¹⁰⁴ He continues, “… a city surpassing glorious, whether we view it as it still lives by faith in this fleeting course of time, and sojourns as a stranger in the midst of the ungodly, or as it shall dwell in the fixed stability of its eternal seat”. *The City of God Vol I*. Book I Preface, 1.

¹⁰⁵ Augustine, *The City of God Vol I*. V 20, 218.

piety, telling us that “God should be worshipped in faith, hope and love.”¹⁰⁶ Salvation in the world to come is our final happiness; philosophers who refuse to believe in this “attempt to fabricate for themselves a happiness in this life, based upon a virtue which is as deceitful as it is proud.”¹⁰⁷ In *The City of God*, after discussion of the beliefs of a variety of philosophers, including Aristotle, Augustine immediately turns to the contrary Christian belief; that eternal life is the supreme good, and eternal death the supreme evil.¹⁰⁸ Although Augustine reflects Aristotle’s conclusion at the end of *The Nicomachean Ethics* that the love of wisdom is the highest human activity, he finally asserts that true wisdom is contemplation of the divine.

Augustine did not believe in the possibility of achieving earthly happiness, since he saw human nature as blighted by the Fall. Although the Christian concept of original sin did not originate with Augustine, he was influential in articulating it as a doctrine and towards the end of his life the Council of Carthage (411-418 C.E.) incorporated it into the official lexicon of the church.¹⁰⁹ In *The City of God* Augustine explains how the sin of eating the forbidden fruit out of pride and disobedience resulted in the lasting condition of human depravity, “For, as soon as our first parents had transgressed the commandment, divine grace forsook them, and they were confounded in their wickedness.”¹¹⁰ In sinning, Adam and Eve brought death into the world, a punishment that they bequeathed to the rest of humanity.¹¹¹ Augustine details the miseries that afflict mankind; since prudence and justice cannot remove evil and fortitude is evidence of the ills in life, it is “stupid pride” to believe that “the supreme good can be found in this life” or that people can “become happy by their own resources.”¹¹² In his later work, *Enchiridion*, Augustine explains that God placed Adam in “the happiness of

¹⁰⁶ Augustine, *Enchiridion: On Faith, Hope, and Love*, trans. and ed. Albert C. Outler (Dallas: Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 55-5021, first published MCMLV), Chapter 1, 2.

¹⁰⁷ Augustine, *The City of God Vol II*, XIX 4, 307.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 301.

¹⁰⁹ Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin: Origins, Developments, Contemporary Meanings* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 72.

¹¹⁰ Augustine, *The City of God Vol. I*, XIII.13, 534.

¹¹¹ “... having become sinners, they were so punished with death, that whatsoever sprung from their stock should also be punished with the same death.” *The City of God Vol. I Book XIII.3*, 523.

¹¹² Augustine, *The City of God Vol. II Book XIX.4*, 305.

paradise”, from which he was banished, so that “the human race was bound in a just doom and all men were children of wrath”.¹¹³ Although Augustine encourages people to worship God in faith, hope and love, promoting faith as the most important of these theological virtues, his optimism is qualified. On the one hand he promises redemption through the sacrament of baptism, on the other he recognises that the rite does not prevent subsequent sin.¹¹⁴ When discussing the issue of man’s happiness in *The City of God*, Augustine’s use of the Latin words “*beatus*” and “*beatitudo*”, with their connotations of divine blessedness, precludes the possibility that these words can be legitimately applied to earthly happiness.¹¹⁵ Salvation in the world to come will be our final happiness.¹¹⁶

Belief in original sin raised questions about the power of sexual desire and generated a focus on the importance of chastity. Sexuality was a disturbing concept for people in the early modern period; as discussed in chapter three, poems, stories and plays tried to grapple with its manifestations in personal interactions. In religious terms, sexual passion could override reason, evidence of the concupiscence which resulted from the Fall. It was therefore debatable whether love could be considered a legitimate source of happiness. In *Marriage and Virginity: The Excellence of Marriage* Augustine represents marriage as a sacramental bond of mutual fidelity in which the prime aim is the procreation of children, but he regards marriage as inferior to chastity, a safety net for those unable to curb their lust. Although he

¹¹³ Augustine, *Enchiridion: On Faith, Hope, and Love*, trans. and ed. Albert C. Outler (Dallas: Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 55-5021, first published MCMLV), Chapter V.5, Chapter X, 3.

¹¹⁴ Baptism “is an antidote given us against original sin, so that what is contracted by birth is removed by the new birth though it also takes away actual sins as well, whether of heart, word, or deed. But except for this great remission the beginning point of a man’s renewal, in which all guilt, inherited and acquired, is washed away the rest of life, from the age of accountability (and no matter how vigorously we progress in righteousness), is not without the need for the forgiveness of sins. This is the case because the sons of God, as long as they live this mortal life, are in conflict with death. And although it is truly said of them, ‘As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God’, yet even as they are being led by the Spirit of God and, as sons of God, advance toward God, they are also being led by their own spirits so that, weighed down by the corruptible body and influenced by certain human feelings, they thus fall away from themselves and commit sin.” Saint Augustine, *Enchiridion: On Faith, Hope, and Love* Chapter XVII.64.

¹¹⁵ Augustine. *The City of God Against the Pagans* Vol. XIX, trans. William Chase Greene (London: William Heinemann Ltd, MCMLX), 122, 128. This is a parallel Latin / English edition.

¹¹⁶ Augustine, *The City of God* Vol. I, Book XIII, trans. and ed., Marcus Dods 13, 534.

endorses the Pauline pronouncement that it is better to marry than burn (1 Corinthians 7.9), he believes that the only ones who should marry are those who cannot be continent, since “the chastity of celibacy is superior to the chastity of marriage”.¹¹⁷ In *The City of God* he links sexual desire to the first sin. He decides that Adam and Eve would have engaged in sexual activity before the Fall, but sin introduced “concupiscence of the flesh”, making an irrevocable connection between sexual desire and original sin.¹¹⁸ It was this connection of sexuality to original sin that would have a profound influence on later Church attitudes, especially those that placed the blame for the Fall on Eve and warned of the tempting allures of women. It is an attitude rejected by Shakespeare in his representation of women in his romantic comedies.

Differing heuristic approaches to happiness and human nature shaped the expression of conflicting views of the role of government. Aristotle’s theories were dependent on the virtuous citizen’s place in the benign environment of Athenian democracy. In contrast, in *The City of God* Augustine considers the ways in which original sin adversely impacts on human society and governments so that coercive authority is needed. He suggests that humans would have lived a social life even if the Fall had not occurred, but in the state of prelapsarian innocence there would have been no need of political control. Political authority only developed as the necessary result of postlapsarian sin.¹¹⁹ Augustine emphasises the idea of original sin as he writes that the citizens of the City of Man are “begotten to the earthly city by nature vitiated by sin.”¹²⁰ This city “is often divided against itself by litigations, wars, quarrels, and such victories as are either life-destroying or short-lived”¹²¹ Disordered ideas are rampant because individuals love power, and men suffer from stupid pride in fancying

¹¹⁷ *Marriage and Virginity: The Excellence of Marriage*, trans. Ray Kearney (New York: New City Press, 1999), 4.4, 35; 24.32, 56; 4.4, 35 and 24.32, 56; 10.10, 41; 23.28 and 54.

¹¹⁸ Augustine, *The City of God* XIV10.

¹¹⁹ Augustine, *The City of God*.

¹²⁰ Ibid., XV2.

¹²¹ Ibid., XV4.

that they can become happy by their own resources.¹²² As he draws distinctions between the City of Man and the City of God he is pessimistic about the integrity of the law. He acknowledges that it is possible to achieve a degree of goodness in the political world, but true justice is never possible in the City of Man, since only God is the author of good. “The founder of the earthly city was a fraticide” and what happened between Cain and Abel “illustrated the hatred that subsists between the two cities, that of God and that of men”.¹²³ Government must be coercive because social life will be intolerable if human beings are unrestrained and able to act on their desire for power, their avarice, and their lust. The law must prevent this:

Surely it is not in vain that we have the institution of the power of kings; the judge’s right to put to the sword; the executioner’s hooks; the soldier’s arms, the master’s discipline; even the severity of the good father: all of these things have their methods, their causes, their reasons, their uses. For as long as they are feared, the wicked are coerced and the good live peacefully among the wicked.”¹²⁴

In the early modern period, ideas about government that drew on Augustinian theology tended to emphasise its punitive role. This point is discussed in chapters one and five. Robert Bolton, in an early sixteenth century treatise that demonstrates the continuing influence of Augustine writes, “Lawe and constitutions of States and kingdoms are bridles to curbe and moderate our corruption, that wee become sociable and peaceable”.¹²⁵ Political authority may be draconian, but it is necessary to restrain man’s fallen nature. The influence of Augustinian attitudes on Shakespeare is most clearly discernible in his representation of governments and political control, especially his representation of authority in *The Merchant of Venice* and As

¹²² Ibid., XIX25.

¹²³ Ibid., XV5.

¹²⁴ Augustine, *Complete Letters of Saint Augustine*, ed. Boniface Ramsey and John E. Rotelle (New York: New City Press, 2003), Letter 153:6:16.

¹²⁵ Robert Bolton, *A discourse about the state of true happiness: deliuered in certaine sermons in Oxford, and at Pauls Crosse* (London : Imprinted by Felix Kyngston, for Edmund Weaver, and are to be sold at his shop, at the great north-gate of Pauls Church, 1618. The fourth edition, corrected and amended), L2^V. EEBO.

You Like It discusse in chapter five. In showing political rule as discriminatory and often corrupt and the justice system as flawed, Shakespeare demonstrates an Augustinian pessimism. If man is a fallen creature, then the systems of government he constructs will be a reflection of his sinful nature.

In Protestant Europe the Augustinian doctrine of original sin was central to the theology of Calvin. Calvin draws attention to the Augustinian influence on his theology when he writes, “Therefore good men trauailed in this point, & aboue all other *Augustine*, to show that we are corrupted not by forreine wickedness, but that we bring with vs from the wombe of our mother a viciousnesse planted in our begetting.”¹²⁶ Both doctrines have their roots in Pauline theology, in pronouncements such as, “In Adam we all die, because through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus it has passed unto all men” (Romans 5:12). Calvin echoes Paul explicitly when he writes, “sinne passed from the first man into all his posteritie”.¹²⁷ The reformed church in Elizabethan England was Calvinist and his theology was a significant influence on its official doctrine pronounced in the *Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England*, in the *Homilies*, which were read regularly in services, and in the Baptism liturgy.¹²⁸ Sixteenth-century theologian, Richard Sibbes, warned, “it is not a

¹²⁶ Jean Calvin, *The institution of Christian religion, written in Latine by M. Iohn Caluine, translated into English according to the authors last edition; with sundry tables to finde the principall matters intreated of in this booke, and also the declaration of places of Scripture therein expounded: by Thomas Norton. Whereunto there are newly added in the margin of the booke, notes conteining in briefe the substance of the matter handled in each section.* (London: Iohn Norton, 1611). Chapter I, The Second Booke, 5, 106. EEBO.

¹²⁷ Ibid., Chapter I, The Second Booke, 5, 106.

¹²⁸ Article IX “Of Original or Birth-Sin” states, “Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam ... but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth god’s wrath and damnation.” Church of England, *The Thirty Nine Articles of Religion 1571*. http://www.msgr-3/thirty_nine_articles_of_religion.htm. In the Baptism service the priest says that all men are “conceived and born in sin”. *The Book of Common Prayer 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book*, ed. John E. Booty (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1976), 270. “The Homily on the Misery of Mankind” reinforces the same message, “Thvs we haue heard howe euil we be of our selues, howe of oure selues and by our selues, we haue no goodnes, helpe, nor saluacion, but contrarywise, synne, damnation, and death euerlastyng: which yf we deeplye weigh & consider, we shall the better understand the great mercye of God, and howe our saluacio commeth onely by Christe.” *Certayne sermons, or homilies, appointed by the Kynges Maiestie, to be declared and redde, by all*

small thing that will work sin out of the soul, it must be the spirit of burning, the fire of afflictions sanctified.”¹²⁹ The doctrine persuaded people that they could not expect to achieve happiness in this life and was a formative influence in arousing feelings of melancholy and guilt. It was, thus, a formidable opponent to Aristotle’s philosophy of happiness.

The influence of Aquinas

Pagan philosophy constituted a challenge to the authority of the Christian church that attempted to control, not only the ways in which people behaved, but also what they believed and thought. This authority had been endorsed by Augustine:

Times of repentance have been rightly established by those set over the churches, that satisfaction may also be made in the Church, in which sins are forgiven. For, of course, outside her they are not forgiven. For she alone has received the pledge of the Holy Spirit, without whom there is no forgiveness of sins. Those forgiven thus obtain life everlasting.¹³⁰

In the thirteenth century, the rediscovery of Aristotle precipitated a number of crises as the Church attempted to repress pagan philosophy, at times threatening perceived dissidents with excommunication. When scholars tried to reconcile theological authority with their own desire for intellectual autonomy, they sometimes found themselves in conflict with authorities who were not prepared to compromise.¹³¹ One of the issues debated in universities was the

persones, vycares, or curates, euery Sonday in their churches, where they haue cure (London: Edward Whitchurche, 1547), Cii^R.

¹²⁹ Richard Sibbes, *Divine meditations and holy contemplations. By that Reverend divine R. Sibbes, D.D. Master of Catharine Hall, Cambridge, and Preacher of Grays* (London, MDCCCLXXV, 1775), 22. EEBO.

¹³⁰ Saint Augustine, *Enchiridion: On Faith, Hope, and Love*, Chapter XVII, 138.

¹³¹ Hugh Lawson-Tancred explains that the situation was complicated by the influence of Islamic scholars on the study of Aristotle. The two great thinkers of the Arab world, Avicenna and Averroes, adopted and variously interpreted the writings of Aristotle and the nature of the soul became redefined as they argued over the issue of its immortality. Avicenna maintained that the individual soul is immortal, although he put the intellect rather than the soul at the centre of the debate about man’s nature. Averroes, on the other hand, thought it impossible that the soul should survive after the death of the body, since personal awareness is dependent on the body. Aristotelianism, in the form interpreted by Averroes, was repeatedly the subject of papal disapproval.

concept of happiness as the highest good. However, the study of the classics was problematized by their perceived incompatibility with Christian theology when scholars debated about whether or not it is possible to achieve happiness in this life.¹³² Aquinas provided the most significant contribution to the validation of the study of Aristotle in the thirteenth century. He reconciled it with Christian theology by imposing on Aristotle's writings the concept of the immortal soul.¹³³ Aquinas' recognition of Christian difference from, and his desire to create a harmony with, Aristotle can be seen in his commentary on *The Nicomachean Ethics*. In the *Ethics* Aristotle writes: "If anything is the gift of the gods to men it is reasonable to think that happiness, the best by far of all human goods, is the gift of God".¹³⁴ Commenting on this extract, Aquinas makes a clear distinction between what he considers the false beliefs of Greek religion and the truth of Christianity:

He says first that if the gods (i.e., beings called gods by the ancients) make gifts to men, it is reasonable that happiness be the gift of the supreme God because it is the most excellent of human good ... Hence it is reasonable that the ultimate end, happiness, should come to man from the highest power of all, that of the supreme God."¹³⁵

Aristotle sees virtue as achieved by human effort, whereas, writing from a theological rather than a philosophical viewpoint, Aquinas believes that virtue is a gift of the grace of God,

Hugh Lawson-Tancred, trans. Aristotle *De Anima* (London: Penguin Group, 1986), 98-99.

¹³² As early as 1210 it was forbidden in Paris to teach Aristotle's books on natural philosophy, or the commentaries on them, and disobedience was punishable by excommunication. Masters of Arts at the University of Paris distinguished between philosophy and religion, but whilst they were allowed to ask philosophical questions, they were not allowed to provide their own solutions, and so they provided both philosophical and theological answers without resolving the debate. On the other hand, when theologians in Paris read philosophy, particularly the *Ethics*, they began to make distinctions between philosophy and religion and to reach religious conclusions which were different from those of philosophers. Valeria Buffon, "Philosophers and Theologians on Happiness: An analysis of early Latin commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 60, no.3 (2004): 450-1, 449. <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/011360ar>.

¹³³ Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance thought and its sources* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

¹³⁴ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1099b11-14 and 167-168.

¹³⁵ St Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. I. Litzinger (Notre Dame Indiana: Dumbox Books, 1964), 54.

although he accepts that humans can cooperate with God in acquiring specific moral virtues. For Aquinas, man naturally desires the good to be permanent, but since the happiness attained in this life is transitory, the desire for good cannot be fully satisfied in this life; here again he differs from Aristotle. In his *Treatise on Happiness* Aquinas explains that since “God alone is truth by essence … contemplation of Him makes man perfectly happy … Ultimate and perfect happiness can only be in a vision of the divine essence.”¹³⁶ Aquinas sought to reinterpret Aristotle to make him acceptable to Church doctrine, not to adapt theology to philosophy. Nevertheless, the fact that he attempted to legitimise Aristotle’s pagan philosophy showed an awareness of its intellectual significance, and also an understanding of the importance of happiness to the human condition. Paul Kristeller believes that Aquinas went furthest among his contemporaries in his attempt to reconcile Christian theology with Aristotelian philosophy.¹³⁷ His influence transcended the Middle Ages and between 1516 and 1636 there were six printings of his commentary on *The Nicomachean Ethics*.¹³⁸

In contrast to Augustine, who became increasingly critical of the value of human relationships, Aquinas allowed that friendship could be a constituent of earthly happiness; friends do good things for each other and delight in seeing them do good.¹³⁹ In this way they mirror in earthly form the friendship of God for humans, promised by Jesus in St John’s Gospel (15. 14-15). The Aristotelian concept of *philia*, or *amicitia* as it was translated into Latin, provided a model to explain Aquinas’ conception of *caritas* or Christian love. Marko Fuchs explains that Aquinas used the Aristotelian theory of friendship “to interpret the central features of his genuine conception of Christian love (*caritas*), namely love of God (*dilectio Dei*) and of neighbours (*delictio proximi*), as friendship in the highest sense (*maxime*

¹³⁶ St Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s The Nicomachean Ethics*, 38-9.

¹³⁷ Paul Oskar Kristeller. *Renaissance thought and its sources* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 44.

¹³⁸ David N. Beauregard, *Virtue’s Own Face: Shakespeare and the Virtue Ethics Tradition* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), 40.

¹³⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Vol. 16, ed. Thomas Gilby (New York: Image Books, 1969).

*amicitia).*¹⁴⁰ The highest form of friendship includes not only friendship with God, but also with others who are lovers of God.¹⁴¹

The contrast of Thomistic optimism with Augustinian pessimism was further reflected in differing attitudes to the function of government and its relationship to happiness. The release of a complete translation of Aristotle's *Politics*, sometime between 1260 and 1265, provided an analysis that challenged traditional Patristic beliefs about government and exacerbated the tensions between orthodox Christianity and the classics.¹⁴² Access to *Politics*, which expanded on the ideas Aristotle had started to develop in *The Nicomachean Ethics*, provided Aquinas with the resources to break away from Augustinian political thought and propose a less coercive role for government. It would have significant implications for the early modern period in providing a more secular interpretation of the relationship between political authority and individual happiness. Aquinas took from Aristotle the theory that living in a well-functioning *polis* enables people to flourish. He shares Aristotle's faith in the power of a rightly organised community in which citizens can develop intellectually and morally, as well as materially.¹⁴³ He makes specific links to Aristotle:

... the ultimate end of human life is happiness or blessedness ... And so law especially needs to regard the order of things to blessedness ... And so also the Philosopher ... says in the *Ethics* that "we call those laws just that constitute and preserve happiness and its particulars by citizens; sharing in a political community ... For the political community is the perfect community, as he says in the *Politics*.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Marko Fuchs, "Philia and Caritas: Some aspects of Aquinas's reception of Aristotle's theory of friendship", in ed. Tobias Hoffmann, Jörn Müller, and Matthias Perkams, *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 201-214. 203.

¹⁴¹ Marko Fuchs, "Philia and Caritas", 212.

¹⁴² The first, rather unreliable, Latin translation of *Politics* by William of Moerbeke was finished soon after 1250. David Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought* (London: Longmans, 1962), 189.

¹⁴³ Thomas Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics*, trans. Richard J. Regan ed. William P. Baumgarth and Richard J. Regan (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), ST I-II.Q90.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., ST I-II Question 90, 13.

Aquinas mirrors Aristotle and Cicero in advocating the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and wisdom, which enable the citizen to contribute to the common good, whereas Augustine had rejected these in favour of the Pauline praise for true piety.¹⁴⁵ Aquinas cites Aristotle as an authority to reinforce his belief in the interrelationship between the law and universal happiness, a condition made possible by the responsibility of the state to promote the common good.¹⁴⁶ The proper function of the law is to lead subjects to their proper virtue, since virtue is what makes them good.¹⁴⁷ He differs from Aristotle, however, in his focus on religion. Whereas Aristotle accepts that religion is a part of civic life that requires only ritual observance, Aquinas believes that civil law must be supplemented by divine law that directs humans to their end of eternal blessedness.¹⁴⁸

Aquinas makes connections to the political writings of Augustine in distinguishing between just rulers and tyrants. A tyrant seeks his own benefit, rather than the welfare of his people, and he will not experience happiness:

For, as Augustine says, we do not call Christian princes happy merely because they have reigned a long time ... Rather do we call them happy if they rule justly, if they prefer to rule their passions rather than nations, and if they do all things not for the love of vainglory but for the love of eternal happiness.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Augustine, *The City of God*.

¹⁴⁶ “Consequently the law must needs regard principally the relationship to happiness. Moreover, since every part is ordained to the whole, as imperfect to perfect; and since one man is a part of the perfect community, the law must needs regard properly the relationship to universal happiness. Wherefore the Philosopher, in the above definition of legal matters mentions both happiness and the body politic: for he says (*Ethic*, v. 1) that we call those legal matters *just*, *which are adapted to produce and preserve happiness and its parts for the body politic*: since the state is the perfect community, as he says in *Polit.* i. I. Thomas Aquinas, *The “Summa Theologica” of St Thomas Aquinas Third Number QQXC-CXIV*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1927), Question XC, Second Article, 5.

¹⁴⁷ “... and accordingly the virtue of every subject consists in his being well subjected to his ruler, as the Philosopher says, (*Polit.* i.). But every law aims at being obeyed by those who are subject to it. Consequently it is evident that the proper effect of law is to lead its subjects to their proper virtue: and since virtue is *that which makes its subjects good*, it follows that the proper effect of law is to make those to whom it is given, good”. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *The “Summa Theologica” of St Thomas Aquinas Q. XCII, First Article*, 23.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics*, ST I-II Question 90, 21.

¹⁴⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *De regno ad regem Cypri: On kingship to the king of Cyprus*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1949), Chapter 9.64.

However, Aquinas reflects the influence of Aristotle in believing that enlightened leaders will demonstrate political prudence and practical wisdom and will guide the community by creating laws that encourage virtuous behaviour and discourage vice. He believes that it is natural for man to be a social and political animal and that if a “multitude of free men is ordered by the ruler towards the common good of the multitude, that rulership will be right and just”.¹⁵⁰ He demonstrates his faith in the integrity of political leaders when he writes, “law is an order of reason for the common good by one who has the care of the community”.¹⁵¹ More than Augustine, he emphasises the possibility of achieving some earthly happiness through virtuous rule. Aquinas distinguishes between power itself and the virtuous use of power that can bring “some happiness”. Happiness is not derived from political power; power is “related both to good and evil”, but happiness “is the proper and perfect good of man.”¹⁵² In the end, what makes a prince happy is heavenly happiness, which he gains from discharging his office worthily. Aquinas’ emphasis on the importance of ruling justly to promote the common good is an important contribution to medieval and early modern political theory. In connecting authority to a life of virtue Aquinas differs significantly from Augustine. The tensions caused by these radically different interpretations of political authority provided a continuing source of controversy in the early modern period. Chapter two discusses these tensions that were foregrounded in disputes about the rights of the indigenous inhabitants of the New World and the relevance of theories of natural law.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., Chapter 1.4 and Chapter 2.10.

¹⁵¹ Thomas Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics*, trans. Richard J. Regan ed. William P. Baumgarth and Richard J. Regan (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), ST I-II Question 90, 15.

¹⁵² Thomas Aquinas, *Treatise on Happiness*, trans. John A. Oesterle (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), Question II Fourth Article, 19.

Interdisciplinary approaches in recent literary criticism

In the twenty-first century the importance of an ethical / philosophical approach to Aristotle is foregrounded by Langis in her study of the importance of prudence in his philosophy and its relevance to Shakespearean drama. She sees her work as exploring the “complexity of situational ethics as richly dramatized through the psycho-physiological actions” of his characters and she points out how the theatre “presents itself as the special arena dramatizing the interactivity between the passions and moral action”.¹⁵³ In an analysis that has similarities with the approach of scholars working in the field of the history of the emotions she locates her examination heuristically, “at the nexus of diverse but interrelated approaches: ethical and character studies, historical phenomenology and body studies, cognitive and psychological perspectives.”¹⁵⁴ Her recognition of the rich variety of possible responses to Shakespeare, and her readiness to synthesise apparently disparate critical approaches, offers a fruitful way forward for a study of the emotions. Her coupling of ethics with psychology and politics provides interesting links with the article by Laam that reviews the field of “Shakespeare and Happiness”.¹⁵⁵ Laam points out that, “Although there has been no shortage of research approaching Shakespeare from the perspectives of psychoanalysis and moral philosophy, Shakespeare studies has been slow to acknowledge the important and timely work on happiness emerging from both fields.”¹⁵⁶ He identifies “an intellectual divide” that has characterised scholarly approaches between “ethical and psychological approaches to happiness – the one concerned with right action, the other with positive affects”, and recommends a consideration of “how the dynamic between ethical and psychological understandings of happiness plays out in Shakespeare.”¹⁵⁷ He believes that Shakespeare is

¹⁵³ Langis, *Passion, Prudence and Virtue*, 14, 19.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. 24.

¹⁵⁵ Laam, “Shakespeare and Happiness”.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 441.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 441.

concerned with human happiness, “both as an affective state and an ethical ideal”.¹⁵⁸ The perspectives of Langis and Laam accord with my approach to happiness. I combine the interdisciplinary influences of body studies and research in the field of the history of the emotions, Freudian and positive psychology, the ethical components of Aristotelian philosophy, and the additional influences of the theology of Augustine and Aquinas. In foregrounding the methodology of positive psychology, which synthesises psychology, philosophy and medicine, I emphasise the importance of positive emotions in creating meaning, purpose and fulfilment in real lives and in imagined worlds.

Despite the increasing amount of work that has been done in the field of the history of the emotions, very little attention has been paid to the positive effects of happiness. Laam does discuss this in his article on Shakespeare, but he does so initially in terms of the way in which Richard III manipulates the discourse of happiness for his own political ends. Later, in considering *Troilus and Cressida*, he acknowledges that “amid vast moral uncertainty the need for psychological happiness continues to lend crucial guidance and meaning to activities.”¹⁵⁹ However, he also recognises that “the ethics of personal happiness” come into conflict with “the manifestly impersonal tides of fortune.”¹⁶⁰ In this much darker play, Laam does not find the pattern that I observe in the more optimistic late romantic comedies – the belief that people can encounter the impersonal tides of fortune and emerge from the experience stronger and more able to find meaning and purpose in their lives.

The absence of sustained discussion of happiness is evident in a comprehensive collection of articles on the emotions in Europe between 1100 and 1800.¹⁶¹ Spencer Young focuses on avarice, Han Baltussen on grief, Danijela Kambaskovic on anxiety about sensory challenges to religious thinking, and Charland and White analyse *The Winter’s Tale*

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 449.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 446.

¹⁶¹ Broomhall, Ed. *Ordering Emotions in Europe, 1100-1800*.

predominantly in terms of jealousy and grief, although they also refer to the power of love.¹⁶² More positively, Raphaële Garrod explores the role of maternal love, and Broomhall considers the practical benefits of compassion and love aimed to invoke charity in the king and his fellow citizens, but they do not relate this specifically to happiness.¹⁶³ The chapter that pays the most attention to positive emotion is Louise D'Arcens' study of Christine de Pizan's *The City of Ladies*. She observes, "From the male humanist readership of her milieu, she [Pizan] solicits admiration for women rather than derision through her recollection of a redemptive feminine history; from a female readership she solicits pride, safety and sociability instead of shame, fear, and isolation".¹⁶⁴ D'Arcens' approach is refreshing in its foregrounding of the value of positive emotion, especially the part that this might have played in women's desire for autonomy in a patriarchal world. In my chapter on positive relationships I also consider how Pizan champions autonomy as she creates a sheltered space in her city, what Reddy refers to as an emotional refuge, where women can achieve happiness by becoming independent of men. The choice of emotions focused on in this very recent publication indicates that there are aspects of the emotions that still need to be explored. In foregrounding the importance of happiness, my thesis engages in research that will broaden

¹⁶² Spencer E. Young, "Avarice, Emotions, and the Family in Thirteenth-Century Moral Discourse," in ed. Susan Broomhall, *Ordering Emotions in Europe, 1100-1800* (Boston: Brill, 2015). Han Baltussen, "Nicolas Modrus's *De consolatione* (1465-1466): A New Approach to Grief Management," in Susan Broomhall, ed. *Ordering Emotions in Europe*. Danijela Kambaskovic, "Living Anxiously: The Senses, Society and Morality in Pre-Modern England," in Susan Broomhall, ed. *Ordering Emotions in Europe*. Louise C. Charland and R. S. White, "Anatomy of a Passion," in Susan Broomhall, ed. *Ordering Emotions in Europe*.

¹⁶³ Raphaële Garrod, "Conceptual Eclecticism and Ethical Prescription in Early Modern Jesuit Discourses about Affects: Suárez and Caussin on Maternal Love," in Susan Broomhall, ed. *Ordering Emotions in Europe*. Susan Broomhall, "Hearts on Fire: Compassion and Love in Nicolas Houel's *Traité de la Charité Chrestienne*," in Susan Broomhall, ed. *Ordering Emotions in Europe*.

¹⁶⁴ Louise D' Arcens, "Affective Memory across time: The Emotive City of Christine de Pizan," in Susan Broomhall, ed. *Ordering Emotions in Europe*.

¹⁶⁵ Paster, Rowe, and Floyd-Wilson, ed., *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, 16. Paster, *Humoring the Body*, 9.

our understanding of the emotions in the early modern period and the part they played in people's lives.

Concepts of happiness and word usage

The study of happiness in the sixteenth-century is problematized by the fact that ideas about the nature of happiness and the language used to describe it were in a state of flux and do not always equate to modern conceptions. Paster, Rowe and Floyd-Wilson provide an overview of the controversy about whether emotions are biological universals or cultural constructs, concluding that “some emotions are probably pan-cultural and some are highly determinate.”¹⁶⁵ Evolutionary psychologists argue that basic emotions like fear, anger and jealousy are universals that had an evolutionary function in promoting survival and mate retention, and that positive emotions enabled our ancestors to develop cooperative alliances which would have increased the odds of living long enough to reproduce.¹⁶⁶ This belief in universals draws attention to the fact that the search for happiness is a cross-cultural phenomenon.

Despite accepting the probability that some basic emotions are pan-cultural, Paster, Rowe and Floyd-Wilson raise the issue of whether we think about them today in the same way as people who lived in the early modern period. They ask, “How translatable is the language of emotions?”¹⁶⁷ Writing about Shakespeare, White warns that words like “happy” and “happiness” are misleading, “most if not all words used by Shakespeare to describe states of mood and emotions are false friends in carrying meanings or at least connotations differing

¹⁶⁶ David M. Buss, “The Evolution of Happiness,” *American Psychologist* 55, no.1 (2000). DOI: 10.1037//0003-066x55.1.15. Barbara L. Fredrickson, “What good are positive emotions?” *Review of General Psychology* 2, no. 3 (1998). DOI: 10.1037/gpr0000077.

¹⁶⁷ Paster, Rowe, and Floyd-Wilson, ed., *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, 16. Paster, *Humoring the Body*, 2.

from those we use today.”¹⁶⁸ However, elsewhere, he acknowledges that Shakespeare represents emotions that we today would categorise as happiness. He sees, for example, the complex conclusion of *Cymbeline* as “forging settled feelings of happiness out of negative emotional states, weaving joy from suffering.”¹⁶⁹ The apparent difference between the two statements is an indication of the problems we encounter in visiting the foreign country of the past. We recognise that language may be misleading, that it is “affect laden and highly variant”, but at the same time language is the only means through which we can conceptualise how people might have thought.¹⁷⁰

Over the course of the sixteenth century the words “happy” and “happiness” underwent a process of transition. The *Oxford English Dictionary* records the fifteenth-century meaning of “happy” as “having good hap or fortune” and this meaning persisted well into the sixteenth century. However by the time of the Tyndale Bible in 1526 it was acquiring religious associations of blessed or beatified.¹⁷¹ In 1603, Richard Barckley wrote, “And because there seemeth to be a kind of happinesse in the world & men are said to live happily, we called the happinesse of this life felicitie; and that of the heauenly life, beatitude or blessednesse, and soueraigne good”.¹⁷² Clearly to refer to happiness in the afterlife as good fortune would be inappropriate, so use of the word to apply to the beatitude and blessedness of heaven seems to approximate modern usage of the word.

In looking at sixteenth-century concepts, it is possible to construct a hierarchy of synonyms for happiness, some of which overlap. At the top of the hierarchy are “beatitude” and “blessedness”, both of which have religious connotations of Divine favour. Below this

¹⁶⁸ R. S. White, “False Friends”: Affective Semantics in Shakespeare,” *Shakespeare*, 8, no. 3 (2012): 288. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450918.2012.696277>.

¹⁶⁹ R. S. White and Clara Rawnsley, “Discrepant emotional awareness in Shakespeare,” *The Renaissance of Emotion*, ed. Richard Meek and Erin Sullivan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 252. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1729w4d.16>.

¹⁷⁰ Paster, Rowe, and Floyd-Wilson, ed., *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, 4.

¹⁷¹ *OED online*. “He shal be happi in his dede”.

¹⁷² Barckley, *A discourse of the felicitie of man. Or his summum bonum*, Rr7^R.

comes “felicity” which, depending on the occasion, can apply either to earthly life or to the hereafter, as when Hamlet entreats Horatio, “Absent thee from felicity awhile” (5.2.289). “Joy”, “delight” and “delectation” could be used interchangeably to suggest exultation and gratification felt to a high degree. “Pleasure” seems to have covered a wider spectrum of meanings; whilst it might suggest delight and gratification, it could also be used to refer to “the indulgence of physical, esp. sexual, desires or appetites, sensual or sexual gratification”.¹⁷³ When referring to these sorts of happiness in his 1547 translation of *The Nicomachean Ethics* John Wilkinson uses the words “beatitude” and “felicité”, which he translates literally from “*beatitude*” and “*felicité*” in his source, *Li Livres dou Tresor*.¹⁷⁴ In Wilkinson’s hierarchy, the highest form of happiness is beatitude, which is “a gift from the glorious god”.¹⁷⁵ As he synthesises Christianity with Aristotelian philosophy he writes that “beatitude is the fulnes of virtue”¹⁷⁶. Beatitude is superior to felicity which seems to be more closely connected to earthly happiness and to acts that a man comes to by himself. Felicity is also linked to Aristotelian happiness as it is the product of virtue, but the ability to achieve it is seen in Christian terms as something God given.¹⁷⁷ Wilkinson clearly reflects Aristotle in his chapter title (lii), “Of the morall virtue and of the happie manne” where the use of “happie” seems to reflect an emotional state, rather than the older meaning of fortunate.¹⁷⁸ However, at other times Wilkinson uses “felicity” in more specifically religious terms, making distinctions from the felicity of virtuous living as he says, “And when a man cometh to this degree of felicite, he liueth not by the life of man, but liueth by that deuine thing which is in man. Then the life that aperteineth to this acte is deuine life. But the life that aperteineth

¹⁷³ *OED online*.

¹⁷⁴ Brunetto Latini, *Li Livres dou Tresor*.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 29

¹⁷⁷ “the best ma worketh the best worke, by y whence it is worthy thing that felicite be operacion of the most noble virtue whence is naturally purposed to al thinges y bee geuen of God to man.” Ibid., 29.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

to y actes of other vertues, is human.”¹⁷⁹ When he considers the worth of delectations and delight Wilkinson continues to make distinctions; delectations can be sensible and intellectual, and when they are connected to moral virtue can be a form of beatitude, but they can also be a manifestation of the pleasures of the body when they take the form of eating, drinking and lechery.¹⁸⁰ In 1603, Richard Barckley takes a more specifically religious approach as he distinguishes between earthly and heavenly happiness, between felicity and blessedness, between “the happinesse of this life, and the life to come.”¹⁸¹ Barckley is less Aristotelian in his consideration of the role of virtue, he acknowledges that we must endeavour to live a godly life, but he attributes the ability to do so to the grace of God. Thus, it is clear that the connotations of these words were not rigidly fixed and could be used to convey different concepts in varying situations. Nevertheless, a pattern emerges that shows an interest in emotional fulfilment, either in this life or the next.

In representing happiness, Shakespeare covers the entire spectrum of connotations. He uses it in religious terms as Queen Katherine in *Henry VIII* speaks of the afterlife when angels “promised me eternal happiness” (4.2.90), but his references are more often secular in nature. He makes connections between happiness and Aristotle in speeches by Nerissa in *The Merchant of Venice* and Lucentio in *The Taming of the Shrew*.¹⁸² When characters, like Orlando in *As You Like It* (4.1.27), salute others the reference to happiness can be taken to constitute a wish for good fortune, and a soldier in *Antony and Cleopatra* hopes, “the gods make this a happy day to Antony!” (4.5.1). At other times the meaning is more ambiguous, as at the end of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, where Valentine concludes triumphantly, “One feast,

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 29.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 20.

¹⁸¹ “and because there is a great difference not onely in continuance, but also in greatness between the happinesse of this life, and the life to come, wee will distinguish betwenee the words, and call the happinesse of this life felicitie, and that of the heauenly life beatitude, or blessednes, and *Summum bonum*, or soueraigne good. Sir Richard Barckley, *A discourse of the felicitie of man. Or his summum bonum* (London: William Ponsonby, 1603), N4^v.

¹⁸² Nerissa, “It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean” (1.2.6-7). Lucentio, “for the time I study, / Virtue and that part of philosophy / Will I apply that treats of happiness” (1.1.17-19).

one house, one mutual happiness” (5.2.170); here is it unclear whether he is referring to an emotional state of joy, or to the good fortune of the marriages, or perhaps both. In a similarly ambiguous way Portia expresses herself as an unlessoned girl:

Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed. (3.2.160-164).

Shakespeare has earlier been clear about Portia’s emotions as she refers to the joy she feels at the possibility of a successful outcome to the casket test, so it is possible to read her speech to Bassanio as a further indication of the pleasure she will experience in committing herself to his guidance. It is also possible that she means that she is fortunate to be able to receive it. In *As You Like It* when Corin says that he envies “no man’s happiness” (3.2.64) he probably means good fortune, but when Orlando laments, “O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man’s eyes” (5.2.38-39) there is a much greater sense that he is bewailing his own emotional deprivation. In discussing alternatives in Shakespeare’s usages of “passion” White acknowledges that the word seems “capable of bearing either or both meanings, suggesting that the word was in transition”, and it can be argued that the same holds true for his references to “happy” and “happiness”.¹⁸³ In addition, Shakespeare employs many synonyms; in *As You Like It* he uses merry (2.5.3, 2.7.4) mirth (5.4.1), pleasure (1.2.7), joy (3.3.42, 4.1.82, 5.4.176), delight (1.2.150), content (1.3.134, 2.3.68, 2.4.16, 3.2.72, 3.3.3), blessed (3.3.53, 5.4.140) and gladness (3.5.99). This varied word usage indicates that he was considering the concept of happiness, even when he was not using the word in its modern sense.

¹⁸³ White, “‘False Friends’: Affective Semantics in Shakespeare”, 294.

The changing connotations of the words “happy” and “happiness” point to the need for caution. Early modern texts may not conceive of happiness in ways that are congruent with twenty-first-century attitudes and the reservations expressed by Paster, Rowe and Floyd-Wilson and by White must be born in mind. At the same time the ways in which writers constructed a hierarchy of synonyms for positive emotions points to a widespread desire to experience positive emotion.

My exploration of representations of happiness in the early modern period acknowledges that people in widely different contexts desire to be happy, but that the ways in which they conceptualise this will vary. Ideas about happiness were shaped by Galenic understandings of embodied emotions, but also by the conflicting influences of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian theology. The Church asserted that it was the custodian of the spiritual well-being of its members and the State often claimed to be concerned for the common good of its citizens. In reality, these claims often did not translate into an interest in personal happiness, as institutions limited the freedom of individuals and restricted their ability to make choices that would be conducive to well-being. In the face of this oppression people often turned to meaningful interpersonal relationships as a source of happiness. I focus on just three Shakespearean comedies – *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* – because they reveal tensions between pessimistic and optimistic approaches to people’s capacities for happiness. Shakespeare is Augustinian in his representation of the fallen nature of the world and critical of the institutions that sinful people construct, but he is more Thomistic than Augustinian in his faith that some people will have the ability to transcend their sinful natures as they reflect the virtues of faith, hope and charity. In addition he endorses the Aristotelian belief in virtuous living which will enable individuals to achieve happiness in this life. In emphasising the importance of choice he challenges the Calvinist

theology of predestination and foregrounds the role of free will, a significant element in dramatic representation.

Chapter 1

The Relationship of Religious Belief and Political Theory to Happiness

Writing about religion and politics in the early modern period is characterised by diversity. There were tensions between religious belief and philosophy as some writers tried to legitimise their interest in pagan texts. In *The City of God Against the Pagans* Augustine rejected Aristotle's ethical exploration of happiness and his political theories of government. He asserted that, as a result of original sin, happiness could not be achieved on earth, but could only be aspired to in the after-life, and that a good government would be one that restrained man's fallen nature. However, in the wake of renewed interest in Aristotle in the thirteenth century Augustinian pessimism came into conflict with Aristotelian philosophy. It was sometimes mediated through the more liberal Thomistic theology, which taught that through virtuous living man is able to attain happiness in the world.

The impact of religion on people's lives created tensions between the expectations of official doctrine and the realities of lived experience. These are reflected in a variety of personal reflections. In the Introduction I referred to Broomhall's belief in the important interrelationship between individuals and their worlds. She recommends that we should consider the ways in which people's emotions shaped their systems of thought and how these were ordered by their experiences.¹ Trigg – also thinking about the disjunction between sanctioned ways of living and actual lives – considers the differences that might have existed between the emotional behaviour that was prescribed in conduct books and actual behaviour that was recorded by people living at the time.² In the field of religion the religious treatise

¹ Susan Broomhall, "Introduction: Hearts and Minds: Ordering Emotions in Europe, 1100-1800," in ed. Susan Broomhall, *Ordering Emotions in Europe, 1100-1800* (Boston: Brill, 2015).

² Stephanie Trigg, "Introduction: Emotional Histories," 8.

was intended, like the conduct book, to give expression to orthodox sentiments in an effort to instruct people on how to live. Treatises, such as those by Robert Bolton, Richard Rogers, Sir Richard Barckley and Thomas Nashe, provide an indication of how the writers reflected on their sinful natures, and considered whether people might hope to be happy. However, even when they acknowledged the legitimacy of earthly happiness they emphasised its inferiority to heavenly bliss.³ Some writers seemed consciously to accept the Church doctrine of *contemptus mundi*, but still managed to leave personal records of their attraction to worldly pleasures and the spiritual conflicts they experienced as a result. People looked for evidence of the hand of God in shaping their destinies. The account of the death of Katherine Stubbes, and the writings of Lady Mildmay and Lady Hoby reveal how these three women attempted to find a meaningful life in a Puritan world.⁴ Beneath the conscious acceptance of orthodoxy in the reflections of these women, there are also suggestions that they experienced more heterodox emotions that they may not themselves have fully understood. These may have had a negative effect, as seen in the possibility that Lady Hoby's illnesses were psychosomatic.

³ Robert Bolton, *A discourse about the state of true happiness: deliuere in certaine sermons in Oxford, and at Pauls Crosse London: Imprinted by Felix Kyngston, fro Edmund Weaver, and are to be sold at his shop, at the great north-gate of Pauls Church, 1618*. The fourth edition, corrected and amended. EEBO. Richard Rogers, *Seven treatises: containing sch direction as is gathered out of the Holy Scriptures, leading and guiding to true happiness, both in this life, and in the life to come: and may be called the practice of Christianity. Profitable for all such as heartily desire the same: in the which, more particularly true Christians may learne a godly and comfortable life every day, notwithstanding their tribulation. First penned, and now set forth the fifth time, corrected and enlarged by Richard Rogers, preacher of the word of God at Wethersfield in Essex*. (London: Printed by the assignes of Thomas Man for Richard Thrale, and to be sold at the Crosse-Keys at Pauls Gate, 1630). EEBO. Sir Richard Barckley, *A discourse of the felicitie of man. Or his sumnum bonum*. (London: William Ponsonby, 1603). EEBO. Thomas Nashe, *Quaternio or a fourefold way to a happie life: set forth in a dialogue betweene a countryman and a citizen, a divine and a lawyer* (London: Iohn Davvson, 1633). EEBO.

⁴ Phillip Stubbes, *A chrisyal glasse for christian vvomen: containing, a most excellent discourse, of the godly life and Christian death of Mistresse Katherine Stubs, who departed this life in Burton vpon Trent, in Staffordshire the 14. day of December. 1590. With a most heauenly confession of the Christian faith, which shee made a little before her departure: as also a wonderfull combate betwixt Sathan and her soule: worthie to be imprinted in letters of golde, and are to be engrauen in the tables of euery Christian heart. Set downe word for word, as she spake it, as neere as could be gathered: by Phillip Stubbes Gent*. (Imprinted at London: By [T.Orwin for] Richard Ihones, at the sign of the Rose and Crowne, neere Holborne bridge, 1592), 20. Electronic reproduction, Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI (1999). Linda Pollock, *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman Lady Grace Mildmay 1552-1620* (London: Collins and Brown Limited, 1993). Lady Margaret Hoby, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599-1605*, ed. Joanna Moody (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1998). : describing the institution of laves and policies, to preserue euery fellowship of people by degrees of ciuill gouernments: gathered by the moralles and policies of philosophie

Alternatively, in the case of Katherine Stubbes and Lady Mildmay, they may have provided a source of emotional strength in the context of emotionally unfulfilling marriages.

In contrast to the pessimism of Augustinian theology that shaped the Calvinist Church in England, the classical tradition, expressed in the writing of Aristotle and Cicero, was optimistic. Aristotelian belief in the importance of happiness achieved by making contributions to a benign *polis* and Ciceronian concern for exhibiting *virtus* in the service of the state influenced political treatises, like those written by John Barston and Lodowick Bryskett, in which they promoted the responsibility of government to provide for the common good.⁵ However, understandably, they did not overtly challenge Elizabeth's rule. Classical thinking was at odds with the Augustinian and punitive attitude of authorities that law is necessary to restrain the inherent depravity of man. These differences underpin the distinctions between the moral, and idealised, view that the function of government is to provide for the common good (and perhaps for happiness), and the reality acknowledged by Machiavelli, that the main concern of the prince is not the well-being of his subjects, but the self-interested maintainance of power. Despite the optimism of these kinds of political treatise, the reality of politics in the sixteenth century was more Augustinian than Aristotelian, as life in the Elizabethan state demonstrated.

Differing views about the desire for happiness in this life

The differences between emotional behaviour that was prescribed in conduct books and actual behaviour, discussed by Trigg, are significant when considering the extent to which people in the sixteenth century believed in the possibility of achieving happiness in this life.⁶ The religious treatise is a valuable resource for accessing the ways in which some

⁵ John Barston, *The safegarde of societie: describing the institution of laves and policies, to preserue euery fellowship of people by degrees of ciuill gouernements: gathered of the moralles and policies of philosophie*. (London: Iohn shepperde, 1576). EEBO.

⁶ Trigg, "Introduction: Emotional Histories".

writers chose to represent views about happiness, choosing a medium of publication intended to teach and edify. As Broomhall argues, we need to consider how people's emotions and ways of thinking might be ordered by their experiences – in this case the reading of didactic texts.⁷ Treatises by Bolton, Rogers, Barckley and Nashe include happiness in their titles and foreground its importance in repeated references in the body of the text, but they question its attainability on earth. Reading or listening to these texts would have persuaded people that they should not expect to be happy in this life. It could also have been productive of guilt if the experience did not totally correspond to their personal desires. However, even within orthodox responses there was room for flexibility, as Rogers and Barckley are more prepared than Bolton to accept the possibility of achieving some degree of happiness in this life. Rogers and Barckley recognise that there is a value in endeavouring to lead a good life, whereas Bolton places increased emphasis on the dangers of worldly temptations. More personal texts like diaries provide evidence of a gap between prescription and the realities of lived experiences, between how people felt they should behave and how they actually thought and felt when they were tempted by the attractions of earthly pleasures. In this way it is possible to read history from the inside out, as Matt recommends, getting inside the heads of earlier generations.⁸ In doing so, we become aware of the limitations of didacticism in the face of the very human desire to achieve a degree of personal autonomy and even happiness. It also raises the question of how people accommodated this desire (an issue discussed in chapters two and three).

English Protestantism in the sixteenth century was significantly shaped by Calvinist theology, and the influence of Augustine.⁹ A wide range of sources attests to the belief that in

⁷ Broomhall, "Introduction: Hearts and Minds: Ordering Emotions in Europe, 1100-1800".

⁸ Susan J. Matt, "Current Emotion Research in History: Or Doing History from the Inside Out." *Emotion Review* 3, no. 1 (2011): 118. DOI:10.1177/1754073910384416.

⁹ English Catholicism was also shaped by this doctrine which had been officially endorsed by Innocent III, in his treatise, *On contempt for the World, or the Misery of the Human Condition* (1195). Bernard Murchland, *Two Views of Man* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing co., 1966).

a postlapsarian world man was deprived of the possibility of attaining earthly happiness by his sinful nature; true happiness could only be achieved in the after-life. Rogers reflects the influence of Augustine in opening his first treatise with a discussion of the impact of original sin, which has resulted in “that infection of all the powers and members both of the soule and body.”¹⁰ At the beginning he warns about the “wrath and anger of God”, and the need to avoid his vengeance, “For though sinne be sweet in the committing of it, yet it will be bitter, when it comes to be repented of: and most bitter, when without repentance it must be accounted for.”¹¹ He emphasises the necessity of cleansing and sanctifying the heart and renouncing sin.¹² Similarly, in *A discourse about the state of true happiness* Bolton reveals an Augustinian approach as he focuses on the happiness to be gained in heaven as a result of pious living in this life.¹³ Reflecting the conflict that was often experienced in the early modern period between theology and secular Aristotelianism, Bolton sets himself in opposition to the “vaine felicities, which ancient Philosophers deuised out of their deepe speculations”, and especially to the philosophy of Aristotle.¹⁴ He refers to Aristotelian virtues of *Sapientia* and *Prudentia* and, like Augustine, replaces them with “heauenly wisdom, and spiritual prudence; by the first man may see the mystery of salvation, and by the second he can deliberate and determine in cases of conscience.”¹⁵ Although people may demonstrate Aristotelian moral virtues in “ciuill honesty”, these have no value unless accompanied by “supernaturall illumination, and the diuine graces, of faith, loue, zeale, sincerity, spirutuall wisdom, a sanctified contention of spirit, in making towards god in all kind of duties, which only put a man into possession of true happiness”.¹⁶ Because man has been justly disinherited by God as a result of Adam’s rebellion, the “glimmerings of happiness” of the worldly man

¹⁰ Rogers, *Seven treatises*, C^{3V}.

¹¹ Ibid., C^{4V}, B^{3R}.

¹² Ibid., Aab^{2V}.

¹³ Bolton, *A discourse about the state of true happiness*.

¹⁴ Ibid., D^{3R}.

¹⁵ Ibid., P^{1R}.

¹⁶ Ibid., F^{2R}-F^{3V}.

are no better than “a broken staffe or reed”.¹⁷ If he allows worldliness to take possession of his heart it will drive him away from heavenly joys. It is therefore essential that he should continually engage in a process of self-examination to determine “whether his joy bee inward and spirituall … in praier, and a continuall practise of godlinesse; or outwars and carnall, that is, in the increase of his corne and wine, and oile.”¹⁸ In addition to rejecting Aristotle, Bolton refuses to acknowledge that worldly prosperity and the profits of mercantilism could be a valid source of happiness.

Bolton’s rejection of earthly happiness finds particular expression in early modern preoccupation with renouncing the world and making a good death. Louis Wright cites the increasing readership of pious works – meditations, books of prayers and devotional books containing advice on how to die well.¹⁹ John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* was the most read book in England after the Bible.²⁰ Foxe emphasises the fortitude with which the victims of the Marian persecutions encountered their punishment, often including their dialogue so that their deaths become dramatic and personal. Dr Taylor approaching his execution was “joyful and happy” and caused his guards to wonder at his “constancy of mind” in the face of the cruel death that awaited him.²¹ The influence of Foxe on ordinary people is reported in the diary of Rogers in which he describes his encounter with a sixty year old woman who “with earnest protest[ations]” affirmed that, “if she shoulde be burned at a stake, she should set light by it, for the hope and glory which was sett before her.”²² In *A Christal Glasse for Christian*

¹⁷ Ibid., E^{3R}.

¹⁸ Ibid., N^{2R}.

¹⁹ Louis B. Wright, *Middle-class Culture in Elizabethan England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1958), 229.

²⁰ Its popularity is indicated by its appearance in twenty eight editions before 1650. Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas B. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: the Making of Foxe’s ‘Book of Martyrs’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²¹ John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments*, ed. M. Hobart Seymour (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1855), 736.

²² Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward, *Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries*, ed. M. M. Knappen (Chicago: The American Society of Church History, 1993), February 28, 1588/9, 83.

Women (1591) Philip Stubbes records the dying meditations of his wife, Katherine.²³ As a devout Christian, Katherine would also have been familiar with Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and she envisages her death in terms that Foxe applies to some of the martyrs. One of the most celebrated figures in Foxe's book is Archbishop Cranmer. In a sermon delivered before his martyrdom he pronounced the words of the Apostle's Creed, "First, I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth".²⁴ Like Cranmer, Katherine asserts her faith through referencing the Creed, "I believe that GOD the father, the first person in this blessed Trinitie, is from everlasting". She also echoes phrases from the Nicene Creed, "not made nor created, nor begotten of any". She then acknowledges both creeds, referring to her belief in Jesus Christ, "the Sonne of God ... not created nor made of any, but begotten of his father before all eternitie" and in the "holy spirit ... the third person in the sacred Trinitie, not created nor made of any ...but proceedeth from the Father and the Sonne".²⁵ Her death thus becomes an opportunity to make a triumphant declaration of faith, formulated for Christians in both creeds.

Katherine's life and death demonstrate the doctrine of *contemptus mundi* that rejected the ephemeral ties of this world. Stubbes praises her piety, as she constantly had the Bible or some other good book in her hand and declared to her friends that Christ told her that, if she loved the world, she could not love God.²⁶ Katherine was only twenty when she died after her second child was born but, apparently without regret, she bequeathed it to her husband as no longer hers. She then rejected the well-loved puppy lying on the bed, calling it

²³ Stubbes, *A christal glasse for christian vvomen*.

²⁴ John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments*, 88.

²⁵ The Nicene Creed: "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made." [Anglicansonline.org/basics/Nicene.html](http://www.anglicansonline.org/basics/Nicene.html).

²⁶ "And also little given was shee to this world, that some of her neighbors marvailing why she was no moer careful of it, would ask her sometimes, saying: 'Mistress Stubbes, why are you no moer careful for the thinges of this life, but sitte always poaring upon a book, and reading?' To whom she would answere: 'If I should be a friend unto this world, I should be an enemy unto God: for God and the world are two contraries. Christ biddeth me Loue no the world, nor anything in the world; affirming that if I loued the world, the loue of the Father is not in me.'" Stubbes, *A christal glasse for christian vvomen*. A^{4v}

a “filthy curre”.²⁷ Stubbes describes her demeanour as joyful as she dies convinced of the rewards of the after-life:

Now am I happy & blessed for euer, for I haue fought the good fight, and by the might of Christ haue won the victory … From henceforth is layd up for me a crowne of life, which Christ shall giue to those that loue him. And as I am nowe in possession thereof by hope, so shall I be anon in ful fruition thereof by preference of my soule.”²⁸

The belief in the happiness she will gain by union with God in the next life provides her with a sense that there has been a meaning and purpose in the struggles she has experienced in the world so that she can approach death with confidence. When Katherine says that she feels happy and blessed her use of the word “happy” in combination with “blessed” is an instance of the gradual shift in meaning from “fortunate” to something more approximating our modern understanding of the word. When her husband asks her why she suddenly smiles and laughs, she tells him that she sees “a vision of the ioyes of heauen, and of the glory that I shall go unto.”²⁹ Nevertheless, she regards the devil as a real presence in her life. In the Bible, when Jesus is tempted in the wilderness, he engages in personal conversation in which the devil tempts him and he triumphs over temptation. On her deathbed Katherine enters into dramatic dialogue with Satan, although we only hear her voice. She announces triumphantly, “I confesse indeede that I am a sinner, and a greiuous sinner, both by original sin and actual sin, and that I may thank thee for: and therefore Sathan I bequeath my sinne to thee from whence it first came; and I appeal to the mercy of God in Christ.”³⁰ Like Jesus, she defeats Satan, to become an exemplar of making a godly death.

²⁷ Ibid., B1^R.

²⁸ Ibid., C4^R.

²⁹ Ibid., B1^V.

³⁰ Ibid., C3^R.

In contrast to Katherine Stubbes and Bolton, other writers were prepared to allow for the possibility of attaining a degree of happiness in this life and to see religious belief as contributing to this. Although earthly existence is a “vale of miseries”, Rogers promises that by labouring in spiritual work and serving God, “thou maiest make thy soule as joyfull every day, and at as great peace with God, as sometimes thou scarcely haddest obtained in the weeke or month.”³¹ The love of God makes men joyful, they have “blessed experiences” of his promises and the certainty of salvation provides peace and joy.³² They will be able to avoid the “plagues and calamities” that afflict other men.³³ References to joy, delight, pleasure and happiness recur frequently throughout the treatise. Rejection of Aristotle is a feature of Barckley’s *A discourse of the felicitie of man. Or his summum bonum* but, like Rogers, he is more prepared than Bolton to allow for an inferior kind of happiness in this life. In his title he makes distinctions between different types of happiness. He equates *felicitie* with happiness on earth and *summum bonum* with the blessedness of union with God, but he points out that mortal man does not have the power in himself to achieve even earthly happiness, since it is dependent on the grace of God. Therefore he warns the reader “how little the study of Phylosophy serueth to the finding out or attaining of the Felicitie of man.”³⁴ Philosophers are Heathens who have “no great regard” for God’s grace.³⁵ The worldly vanities of “pleasures, riches, honor and glory” are a hindrance to achieving felicity; happiness comes from “a contented and quiet mind”.³⁶ Whilst this last statement might seem to make common ground with Aristotle, Barckley later separates himself from the “morally good” views of the Heathen, asserting that they are not capable of achieving “that great

³¹ Rogers, *Seven treatises*, C1^V, C2^V.

³² Ibid., Xy4^R, Fff2^V, 786, Yy1^V.

³³ Ibid., Aab2^V, 714.

³⁴ Barckley, *A discourse of the felicitie of man*, A1^V.

³⁵ Ibid., A1^V.

³⁶ Ibid., A2^V.

blessing which he [God] hath reserued to his elect".³⁷ However he does accept that whilst felicity does not consist in virtue, "virtue may be a helpe in attaying of felicitie".³⁸ In this way he acknowledges the role of human endeavour in creating the possibility of a degree of happiness in this life.

Acceptance of the importance of virtue as a path to happiness informs Nashe's *Quaternio or a fourefold way to a happie life*, although he does not directly cite Aristotle. After starting with a theologically conventional discussion of the fall of man and original sin, he turns to more secular matters in a dialogue between a countryman, a citizen of the city, a divine and a lawyer. The countryman claims that he enjoys his simple life since he is "not much troubled with cares of building, nor terrified with feares of loosing what he hath builded".³⁹ However, unlike Bolton, who criticises the desire to achieve an increase of corn, wine, and oil, Nashe gives legitimacy to "labour and industrie" as a path to virtue, since it is "industrie that hath raised the most famous flourishing Commonwealths out of the dusts and idleness which have levelled them with the dust".⁴⁰ In this way he can be seen as representative of sixteenth century attempts to reconcile the values of a burgeoning proto-capitalist economy with religious belief. Nevertheless, despite praise for the life of commerce, in the end Nashe allows the lawyer to conclude that "the chief happiness is to enjoy god", to deal fairly with all men and to live contentedly in the condition of life to which a man is called.⁴¹

The dialogue genre, in which different voices represent alternative attitudes to happiness, is also adopted by Lodowick Bryskett in his *A Discourse of Civill Life*. In Bryskett's approach, Aristotelian ideas about happiness, which assume the potential perfectibility of man, initially come into conflict with the Christian doctrines of original sin.

³⁷ Ibid., B2^V.

³⁸ Ibid., Se3^R.

³⁹ Nash, *Quaternio or a fourefold way to a happie life*, C2^V.

⁴⁰ Ibid., A3^R.

⁴¹ Ibid., Ii4^V.

The discourse is based on the second part of the Italian philosophical treatise, *De gli hecatommithi* by G.B. Giraldi (published originally in 1565).⁴² Giraldi's treatise consists of a dialogue between three gentlemen from Rome and a nobleman from Genoa, and Bryskett follows this formula when he describes a meeting of friends at his cottage near Dublin.⁴³ The friends include Dr John Long, the Archbishop of Armagh (whom he refers to as the Primate), and the poet Edmund Spenser, figures representative of the different approaches of religion and humanism.⁴⁴ Bryskett constructs a dialogue between the Primate and himself, in which the Primate criticises Bryskett for pressing forward presumptuously in shooting “at such a marke as humane felicitie”.⁴⁵ Citing the results of original sin caused by the disobedience of Adam, the Primate affirms that man’s happiness can only be found in heaven and that he is deceived if he hopes to find it on earth.⁴⁶ Bryskett, however, takes issue with the Primate and, since his voice predominates in the dialogue, his argument is seen to be validated. Rejecting Augustinian pessimism about man’s sinfulness, he adopts a Thomistic synthesis of classical theory and Christian theology. As he endorses the philosophy of Aristotle he expresses a humanist faith in the potential of man, who is “the perfection of all creatures vnder heauen”⁴⁷ He asserts that “particular persons might in this life attaine to liue happily” and that “The end of man in this life, is happiness or felicitie”.⁴⁸ Since man has free choice between good and evil, it is important that he focuses on the moral virtues that will enable him to live well. Bryskett believes that philosophy guides man towards wisdom and virtue, these are “the

⁴² Lodowick Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life: Containing the Ethike part of Morall Philosophie* (London: VVilliam Aspley, 1606). EEBO.

⁴³ The Discourse was probably written in 1582, but parts may have been composed as early as 1567. David N. Beauregard, *Virtue's Own Feature: Shakespeare and the Virtue Ethics Tradition* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), 46.

⁴⁴ Henry R. Plomer and Tom Peete Cross, *The Life and Correspondence of Lodowick Bryskett* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927).

⁴⁵ Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life*, 21.

⁴⁶ “man’s felicity is placed only in heauie, [sic] where God of his mercie hath appointed it for him to be found, and not here on earth Whosoeuer therefore shall seeke to get his felicitie here in this world, will find himself deceiued.” Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life*, 21, 22.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 257.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 23, 22, 40. Bryskett’s treatise represents an example of the changing meaning of the word “happiness” since here it is used as a synonym for the more traditional word “felicity”.

greatest gift that God giueth to man in this transitory life". He reflects, and repeatedly refers to, Aristotle in asserting the importance of virtuous living and developing the understanding as a path to earthly happiness. His approach is teleological, since he sees earthly happiness and virtue as a path to "the height of that heauenly felicitie" which he also refers to as "*summum bonum*".⁴⁹ Although he admits that Greek philosophy is a product of "that darkness of ancient superstition", he can be seen as writing within the tradition of Aristotle in adopting his theory of the tripartite soul.⁵⁰ He quotes Aristotle's belief in the superiority of the intellective soul over the vegetative and sensitive souls. Aristotle teaches that man was created upright because his substance is divine and his nature is designed so that he may know and understand. Bryskett then goes on to identify the intellective soul with a Christian belief in the immortal soul, reflecting the influence of Aquinas as he says that the intellective soul "dieth not with the body, but remaineth immortal and euerlasting".⁵¹ However, his rejection of wealth is more specifically Christian. Like Barckley, he warns against the baser pleasure of searching after profit, equating this with a "disordinate appetite to pleasure" and advising that the way to quieten the mind is not to attempt to increase wealth.⁵² Those who seek after pleasure make the body rule the mind, a process that will "end with bitter paine".⁵³ The *Discourse* is interesting in the ways in which it gives expression to a number of conflicting ideas about happiness, taking issue with the belief that happiness is not possible in this life, attempting to synthesise the philosophy of Aristotle with Christianity, but at times subjecting it to religious evaluation. The popularity of religious treatises, that may have

⁴⁹ Ibid., 208.

⁵⁰Ibid., 260. "For the moment we may be taken to have made the following claim, that the soul is the principle of these things we have mentioned and is defined by these things, the nutritive, perceptive and intellective faculties and movement." Aristotle, *De Anima*, 413b. 13ff.

⁵¹ This is a gift "giuen vs by the maker and gouernour of all things, because we might know our selues to be a nature most perfect among earthly things, and not farre inferiour to the diuine." Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life*, 45.

⁵² Ibid., 193.

⁵³ Ibid., 199.

contained an element of speculation but were ultimately orthodox, attests to the appetite of early modern readers for instructive texts telling them how they should live.

Treatises like those published by Bryskett, Bolton, Rogers and Barckley and the account of the death of Katherine Stubbes were designed to edify the reader, and the certainty of the writing reflects this moral purpose. They do not consider the tensions that might arise for the individual between the desire for salvation and the temptations of worldly life. It is only by turning to more personal texts, composed with less deliberate address to a wide audience, that the psychological pressures created by a sense of sin can be evaluated. The differences between the confident approach of the preacher and the uncertainty of the sinner can be gauged by comparing Rogers' *Seven Treatises* with his diary.⁵⁴ In his treatise Rogers distinguishes between lawful and vain pleasures, implying that the ability to discriminate will mark out the godly from the sinner. Early in his diary he expresses his "sensible contempt of this worlde and ioufull expectation of departure from hence", but this is followed by a desire for enjoyment in this life, "I love and wish allwayes to be free and at liberty to delight in that wherin I may boldly delight with out repente[nce], and that is, to be allwayes doeing or seekeing occasion to doe some good."⁵⁵ In this reference, he equates delight with virtuous and charitable behaviour, but on other occasions the diary reveals that Rogers did not always find the ways of godliness easy to follow. He refers to an episode when he and his wife were travelling to London. Before they set out they prayed, but Rogers records with shame that on the journey they did not "passe the time profitabely ... we wandering by little and little in needless speech".⁵⁶ He laments that "we loose many happy and good dayes in familiarity and neere communion with the lorde for the momentary inioyinge of our fond desires", and he feels "the vehemency of zeale and of my heavenly affection to slake".⁵⁷ The diary reveals

⁵⁴ Rogers and Ward, *Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries*, February 28, 1588/9, 83

⁵⁵ Ibid., March 31, 1587, 54 and May 20, 1587, 54.

⁵⁶ Ibid., August 30, 1587, 58.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1587, 68.

the emotional torture he experiences – his heart is grieved and he groans with pain as he confesses, “it was my chiefest delight to be thinking upon any profit or vaine pleasure.”⁵⁸ He attempts to wean himself from the “licentiousness” of “thinges unlawful” and to restrain his mind from things it “was wont to delight in”, but he is frequently carried into “lighthart[edness]”.⁵⁹ In his defensive attempts to shake off love of the world he resorts to the physically punitive practice of fasting and on one occasion he records the satisfaction he experiences as a result of this exercise, which arms him against worldly pleasure.⁶⁰ Although Protestants did not believe that fasting was essential for salvation, they cited biblical precedent of it as a voluntary form of penance.⁶¹ Calvin emphasised the connection between fasting and self-abnegation to a punitive God, “God sets no value on fasting, unless it be accompanied with a correspondent disposition of the heart, a real displeasure against sin, sincere self-abhorrence, true humiliation, and unfeigned grief arising from a fear of God.”⁶² Rogers’ diary provides insight into fasting as a masochistic defence mechanism against sin as he writes of the satisfaction he gains from self-punishment.⁶³

The experiences of women: Katherine Stubbes, Lady Mildmay and Lady Hoby

For women there could be additional tensions as they attempted to navigate a path to salvation in a patriarchal religion. The record of the death of Katherine Stubbes, and the writings of Lady Mildmay and Lady Hoby reveal the psychological defensive mechanisms

⁵⁸ Ibid., November 29, 1587, 68 and July 22, 1587, 55.

⁵⁹ Ibid., August 18, 1587, 57 and September 12, 1587, 64.

⁶⁰ Ibid., July 30, 1588, 79.

⁶¹ Ken Albala, “the Ideology of Fasting in the Reformation Era,” in *Food and Faith in Christian Culture*, ed. Ken Albala and Trudy Eden (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 50.

⁶² Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. by John Allen (Philadelphia: William Fry Printer, 1816), 262.

⁶³ Chapter five will explore Shakespeare’s insight into the connections between religion and masochism that have been identified in Freudian readings of *The Merchant of Venice*. Drew Daniel finds evidence of religious masochism in Antonio’s self-punishment for his sinful nature in the trial scene. Drew Daniel, “Let me have judgement, and the Jew his will’: Melancholy Epistemology and Masochistic Fantasy in *The Merchant of Venice*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2010): 206-234. <http://www.jstor.org.exproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable.4073456>.

they employed as they attempted subconsciously to reconcile personal desires with religious expectations. The voice of Katherine is filtered through the narrative of her husband, but the other two speak to us directly. They were all women of strong Puritan conviction and they give expression to sentiments conventional to Puritan theology. Nevertheless, as with the diary of Rogers, there are suggestions of more individual thoughts and emotions. In his account of Katherine's dying meditations Stubbes constructs her as having been obedient to male authority; she was merry when he was merry, and endeavoured to make him glad when he was sad. As a dutiful wife she asked her husband to explain the meaning of passages and "obeyed the commandment of the apostle, who biddeth womē to be silent, & to learne of their husbands at home".⁶⁴ However, paradoxically, adopting the role of a spokesperson for doctrinal orthodoxy could provide opportunities for personal empowerment. Reading beneath the surface of Stubbes' account it is possible to see that Katherine found ways around her subjugation – and that confident expression of religious belief could enable women to circumvent the Pauline injunction to silence. Stubbes is approving of the way Katherine testifies to her beliefs, if she heard Papists or Atheists talk of religion she would testify "the truth of God against their blasphemous untruths" and "confound them".⁶⁵ She reproved people who engaged in bawdy talk or swore and blasphemed, warning them of the vengeance of God, and using her speeches to glorify God and "minister grace to the hearers".⁶⁶ In this way she gained a degree of authority in the limited social world her husband allowed her to participate in. Protestantism encouraged individual access to the scriptures. Mary Ellen Lamb suggests that there was "a thin line between the education of women readers to be passive recipients of the authority of texts written by men and the authorization of women as active readers empowered by their religious fervour for the correct doctrine necessary for

⁶⁴ Stubbes, *A christal glasse for christian vvomen*, A2.

⁶⁵ Ibid., A3^V.

⁶⁶ Ibid., A3^R.

election".⁶⁷ She believes that the privatization of reading enabled women to cultivate an inner life and speculates about how they might have defined themselves to themselves as they read.⁶⁸ It is possible that Katherine Stubbes, considering the doctrine of original sin, was more capable of making independent conclusions than her husband realised. Her interpretations of "Genesis" work against what might be taken as a more conventional, patriarchal reading of the text. An example of the latter can be seen in Du Bartas's *La Semaine ou Cr  ation du monde*. Although this poem postdates Katherine's death, it is representative of attitudes with which she would have been familiar.⁶⁹ After describing the happiness of Eden before the Fall, Du Bartas attributes the main blame for sinning to Eve, who is not only frail, but also tempts Adam with "her quaint smiling glances, / Her witty speech, and pretty countenances".⁷⁰ In contrast to the attitude of Du Bartas' poem depicting Eve as a sexual temptress, Katherine attributes the sin of listening to the serpent to Adam. Stubbes reports her as saying, "by harkening to the poisoned suggestions of the wicked serpent, and by obeying of his persuasions he lost his free will, his integritie and perfection, and us all his posteritie to the end of the world".⁷¹ She does not blame, or even mention, Eve. Michael Mascuch concludes that the true subject of the narrative "is not self-authorization, but the annihilation of the self."⁷² It is possible to consider that it might, in fact, be both. Lamb's point about the empowerment of women as readers can be extended to consider their role in testifying to their beliefs, a form of self-actualisation. Paradoxically, in the tradition of the Marian martyrs,

⁶⁷ Mary Ellen Lamb, "Inventing the Early Modern Woman Reader through the World of Goods: Llyl's Gentlewoman Reader and Katherine Stubbes," in *Reading Women: Literacy, Authorship, and Culture in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. Heidi Brayman Hackel and Catherine E. Kelly (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 29.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 31.

⁶⁹ The representation of women as sexual temptresses is discussed in chapter six where I refer to medieval and Renaissance paintings in which the snake has the face of a woman.

⁷⁰ Guillaume de Salluste Sieur du Bartas, *The Divine Weeks and Works of Guillaume de Salluste Sieur du Bartas. Vol.1. "The Imposture: The II Part of the I Day of the II Week,"* trans. Josuah Sylvester, ed. Susan Snyder (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), ll. 351-2.

⁷¹ Stubbes, *A christal glasse for christian vvomen*, B2^R.

⁷² Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individual Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591-1791*(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 60.

Katherine reaches the apex of her spiritual authority through the annihilation of the body in death.

For other women, reading the scriptures could provide alternative ways to self-actualisation. Lady Mildmay's *Autobiography* and *Spiritual Meditations* offer insight into the authentic voice of a woman, unmediated by a male scribe.⁷³ Her *Autobiography* is set down for her daughter and children and conforms to patriarchal expectation.⁷⁴ Reflecting conventional admonitions to women to be subservient she cites Paul's letter to Timothy (2. 11-14):

Let wives be subject to their husbands ... Let women learn with silence, with all subjection. Let not a woman teach, neither usurp authority over the man, but be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and was in the transgression.⁷⁵

However, elsewhere in her *Autobiography* she refers to her meditations, in which she appears to express a more personal reflection. She sees them as approved by the word of God, who is her delight and counsellor, they are "the consolation of my soul, the joy of my heart, and the stability of my mind."⁷⁶ Many of the meditations are doctrinally orthodox reflections in which direct quotations from the Bible comprise a significant proportion of the entries, but some reveal a more interesting psychological aspect of her thinking. Lady Mildmay appears to have been rather unhappily married in a union arranged by her parents when she was about fifteen. Her husband opposed the alliance and spent little time with his bride; in the first twenty years

⁷³ Kate Narveson, "Authority, Scripture, and Typography in Lady Grace Mildmay's Manuscript *Meditations*" *English Women, Religion, and Textual Production, 1500-1625*, ed. Micheline White Farnham, (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 168-9.

⁷⁴ Linda Pollock, *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman Lady Grace Mildmay 1552-1620*, 24.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 44-45.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 42, 25.

he was absent for approximately half the time.⁷⁷ On one occasion, Lady Mildmay meditates specifically on “The Song of Solomon”:

My beloved is as a bundle of myrrh unto me, he shall lie between my breasts. My beloved is as a cluster of camphor unto me. His lips are like lilies, dropping down pure myrrh. His mouth is as sweet things and he is wholly delectable. His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars (which signify and offer unto us all good things above the capacity of man to desire), until the day break and the shadows fly away. Return my welbeloved and be like a roe or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether. Go from me but come again quickly and tarry not. In my bed let me seek my welbeloved. Yea, let me arise early to seek thee in all places, in all companies, in all opportunities and above all things, until I find thee and then let me take fast hold on thee and never leave thee.⁷⁸

“The Song of Solomon” was a contentious section of the Bible, due to the overtly erotic nature of the writing. It is almost certain that, at a conscious level, Lady Mildmay would have read it in the Church-approved way – as an allegory of the love of Christ for his Church. In the medieval world of Christianity, nuns were regarded as the Brides of Christ and it is probable that in post-Reformation England there were women who still internalised this concept. Lady Mildmay directly quotes from “The Song of Solomon” in referring to her beloved as myrrh and lying between her breasts (Chapter 1,13 and 14), in comparing him to a young hart (Chapter 2, 17), and in seeking him in her bed (Chapter 3,1), but her concluding desire to never leave him is less textually specific. Elsewhere in her meditations Lady Mildmay refers to herself as the “dear beloved” of Christ, to the increase of her desire, the sweet sense of his favour and of being incorporated with him.⁷⁹ Sharon Achinstein proposes that “religious desire is one significant strain of discourse in early modern England that is ripe

⁷⁷ Ibid., 7-11.

⁷⁸ Ibid., [f.216], 79.

⁷⁹ Ibid., [f.694-5] 87 and [f.680] 87.

for analysis in terms of agency.”⁸⁰ In Freudian psychology sublimation is defined as the process by which “the ego achieves its purpose of diverting the instinctual impulses from their purely sexual goal to an aim which society holds to be higher.”⁸¹ It is possible that Lady Mildmay was subconsciously sublimating the lack of sexual and emotional fulfilment in her marriage by transferring her repressed desires into a religiously acceptable channel that enabled her to experience moments of erotic bliss. In imagining herself as a Bride of Christ, Lady Mildmay would have been able to experience a type of happiness not available to men.

The emotional experiences of a woman attempting to reconcile Calvinist theology with a desire to achieve fulfilment in this life are recorded in more detail in the diary of Lady Hoby. As with the reflections of Lady Mildmay, the voice of Lady Hoby comes to us directly. She records the struggles she experiences between a desire to achieve earthly happiness through honest work and her sense of her sinfulness.⁸² Heiress to a considerable fortune in land in Yorkshire, Lady Hoby was, by her three marriages, connected to some of the most powerful and influential people in England, including the Earl of Essex, the Sidney family and Lord Burghley. She reports her interactions with some of these significant figures, tells us that she kissed the queen’s hand, and distances herself carefully from Essex’s disastrous career. Her second marriage to Thomas Sidney was apparently a love match, but her decision to accept Sir Thomas Hoby as her third husband seems to have been for convenience rather than affection. The diary shows her as unwaveringly loyal, but it does not record her personal feelings for her husband. Apart from one report of a bout of ill humour on his part, her references to him are neutral and non-judgemental. She attends church and family prayers with him, but she seems to have found greater intellectual stimulation and emotional support

⁸⁰ Sharon Achinstein, “Romance of the Spirit: Female Sexuality and Religious Desire in Early Modern England.” *ELH* 69 no. 2 (summer, 2002): 417. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30032026>.

⁸¹ Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, 175.

⁸² Hoby, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady*, 18.

in her conferences with her chaplain, Mr Rhodes, and in her interactions with friends and other members of her family.

Was Lady Hoby happy? Her diary makes clear distinctions between hedonistic pleasures, which were forbidden to Puritans, and legitimate activities, both religious and secular. A long tradition in England celebrated Christmas with festivities that lasted for twelve days, culminating in the feast of the Epiphany. In keeping with Puritan practice, the Hoby household did not acknowledge the significance of Christmas, which was considered both pagan and popish. In 1599 Lady Hoby refers to 25 December as “Christes day”, but she does not distinguish it from other days in terms of her activities.⁸³ Since in the later years of her diary she does not even make an entry for the event, she clearly did not regard it as an occasion for pleasurable activities. In October 1600 she went to London where, in addition to visiting friends and taking walks with them, she continued to pray, read her bible, attend church and religious lectures. There is not a single reference to the entertainments the city had to offer – the playhouses and bear baiting – of which, as a Puritan, she would have disapproved. Nevertheless, she reports buying black satin to make clothes for Sir Thomas to wear to the Court. The reference to the colour black reflects Puritan disdain for worldly show, but the satin fabric acknowledges Sir Thomas’ social standing that entitled him, under the sumptuary laws, to rich attire. Restraint and indulgence are, in this case, successfully combined. Puritan theology allowed Lady Hoby to accept the possession of wealth, since it was interpreted as a mark of God’s favour. In his treatise, *The pathvway to prayer, and pietie*, Robert Hill admits that one should not pray to be rich, since riches are a snare. However, his interpretation of the daily bread that the Lord’s Prayer encourages one to pray for is extended to include all riches, which are the gift of God. He regards being rich as a mark of God’s favour. In return for God’s beneficence a man has an obligation to use his wealth morally –

⁸³ Ibid., 39.

he must work honestly, be generous to others and refrain from hurting them; his specific list of directions, supported by quotations from the Bible, emphasises his mercantile concerns.⁸⁴

On 25 January, 1603 Lady Hoby records that a ship has been wrecked on Sir Thomas' land and that they are therefore entitled to the profits of the salvage, "and thus, at all times, god bestowed benefittes vpon us: god make vs thankfull."⁸⁵ Her satisfaction at her unexpected fortune is not marred by any reflection on the tragic nature of the event, or awareness of the suffering of the families whose breadwinners perished in the wreck.

The Hoby Puritan piety set them at odds with some of the other families in their neighbourhood. Some boorish members of the Eure family took advantage of social expectations of hospitality to invade the household and express their contempt for godly Puritan practices. They disrupted the customary communal prayers, drinking and playing cards into the early hours of the morning. At the time Lady Hoby briefly recorded retreating to her chamber without passing judgement but, in the aftermath, she joined with her husband in lodging an official complaint about the intrusion. At first this was to the Council of the North and, failing to gain satisfaction, they took their complaint to the Privy Council in London. After lengthy legal proceedings the case was settled in favour of the Hobys. Lady Hoby sees this outcome as evidence of the justice and mercy of God and his readiness to bring down his enemies as she comments, "w^{ch} I note, as seeing the Istuice and mercie of god to his seruants in manifesting to the world, who little regardes them, that he will bringe downe his enemes vnto them."⁸⁶ She also detects the judgement of God in the accidental

⁸⁴ "That I get my wealth by honest labor ... That in buying and selling, I defraud no man That I enrich not my selfe by the labour of the poore ... That to get, I leaue not Gods seruice ... That I lie not, nor forswearre my selfe ... That my weights, wares, and measures bee good That I consider, that it is hard to bee rich and religious." Robert Hill, *The pathvway to prayer, and pietie: containing, 1 an exposition of the Lords Prayer. 2 a preparation of the Lords Supper. 3 A direction to a Christian life. 4 An instruction to a Christian death. With diuers prayers, fit for this treatise.* (London: Printed by F[elix] K[yngston] for Edward Blount and William Barret, 1610), 168. EEBO.

⁸⁵ Hoby, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady*, 186.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 29 May 1602, 180.

death of a young man. His death is explained as the Lord's revenge for a "horrible blasphemie", since he had earlier ridden his horse into a church and christened it.⁸⁷

Whilst Lady Hoby rejected all forms of hedonistic pleasure she does seem to have attained a degree of content from her position as mistress of a large household and farming estate. In the twenty-first century, management of a major organisation is regarded as a career choice, often requiring studies at tertiary level. For a woman of gentle birth in Elizabethan England, training in running a large household was a traditional part of her upbringing and a skill she brought to marriage. Positive psychologists, Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, see the fulfilment of the desire for autonomy as a basic psychological need.⁸⁸ In a patriarchal Puritan environment it is probable that Lady Hoby found a degree of content in the autonomy she exercised in running a large establishment, apparently without interference from her husband. She tells us almost every day that she "went about the house". On occasions she refers to specific activities – she walked to the barns and the fields, inspected the granaries, gathered in apples, preserved quinces, collected honey, and engaged in financial transactions. Lady Hoby extended her industry in the running of the house to engage actively in the needs of the wider community. In proposing a hierarchy of happiness, Martin Seligman, Acacia Parks and Tracy Steen equate the morally superior "meaningful life" with the tendency to pursue happiness by using our strengths towards something larger than ourselves, which includes contributing to family and community.⁸⁹ Lady Hoby fulfils their criteria for the meaningful life of service to others. She visited the sick and frequently applied her medical skills to treating and dressing injuries, she counselled others, including giving advice to a woman who was getting a divorce

⁸⁷ Ibid., 26 December 1601, 174.

⁸⁸ "The findings have led to the postulate of three innate psychological needs--competence, autonomy, and relatedness-- which when satisfied yield enhanced self-motivation and mental health and when thwarted lead to diminished motivation and well-being." Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being" *American Psychologist* 55 no.1 (2000): 68. DOI: 10.1007/s10902-006-9023-4.

⁸⁹ Martin E. P. Seligman, Acacia C. Parks and Tracy Steen, "A Balanced Psychology and a Full Life" *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* 359, no. 1449 (2004): 1380.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4142141>.

as a result of living incestuously. She also assisted at lyings-in, a contribution that must have caused her personal grief in the light of her own failure to conceive. In Puritan theology, industry was equated with godliness. On one level Lady Hoby's religion gave shape and meaning to her day's activities; her diary records her search for spiritual peace as it reflects the belief that the best way to please God and attain earthly happiness is to work honestly.

Involvement in community affairs brought Lady Hoby into contact with some disturbing events. On one occasion she records going to see a calf that had been born with two heads and the unusual detail with which she recounts the event indicates her intense interest in this freakish birth.⁹⁰ The only speculation she makes about the cause of the aberration is a medical one – perhaps the hole in the body of the calf was a result of a blow received when it was in its mother's belly. A little later she operates (unsuccessfully) on a baby that was born without a fundament “and had no passage for excrements but att the Mouth”⁹¹. Jean Delumeau has researched the increased interest in prodigies and monsters in the middle of the sixteenth century. Many of the accounts were clearly apocryphal, such as women giving birth to piglets and donkeys, others were a form of propaganda about heresy, such as Luther's descriptions of pigs with priests' faces.⁹² The natural disorder demonstrated in the appearance of prodigies and monsters was conventionally interpreted as a sign of moral disorder and could be regarded as both a punishment and a warning from God. Writing a little later than Lady Hoby, Robert Bolton refers to a number of prodigious events that he saw as judgements of God for sinful living:

⁹⁰ “after I went to see a calfe at Munckmans, which had :2: great heads, 4 ears, and to ether head a throte pipe besides: the heads had long heares like brissels about the mouths, such as n'other Cow hath: the hinder legges had no partinge from the rumpe, but grewe backward, and were no longer but from the first Ioynte: also, the backe bone was parted about the midest bicke, and a rowne howle was in the midest into the bodie of the Calfe: but one would haue thought that to haue comed of some strocke it might get in the Cowes belly.”
Ibid., 5 May 1601, 146.

⁹¹ Ibid., 26 August 1601, 161.

⁹² Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture 13th-18th Centuries*, 136-140.

... the iudgements vpon this land haue beene many and fearefull ... We haue seene strange and prodigious apparitions in the ayre; we haue had vnheard-of plots and practises against our State ... The sea hath broke out of her bounds, and swept away many as righteous as our selues ... so certaine is it that the finger of God hath beene in them.⁹³

Whilst Bolton clearly sees the hand of God in causing unnatural events, Lady Hoby does not interpret the aberrant births as God's punishment on the farmer or the parents of the deformed baby. This may be an indication of the difference between a treatise intended for publication and communal edification and the expression of personal reflections that allowed Lady Hoby greater latitude for independent thought. She takes a medical, rather than theological, interest in the events she describes and tries hard to provide help to the baby. She records, "I was earnestly intreated to Cutt the place to se if any passhage could be made, but, although I Cutt deepe and searched, there was none to be found."⁹⁴ However, on 4 February 1602 she writes in the margin of her diary, "this day I had a fotherly warning of god". The actual entries for the day record the successful delivery of a daughter to a relative and a report "of a fish that was taken vp att Yarmouth, 53 foot Long and 23 broade".⁹⁵ This coupling of the natural and the unnatural has no apparent connection to the marginal note; it is tempting to speculate that she interprets the appearance of the fish as an omen connected with the long running court case that she and her husband were currently embroiled in against the Eure family. Lady Hoby is on more conventional theological ground when she writes about the plague. In 1603 a serious outbreak decimated London and spread to the provinces. Lady Hoby records that 3200 people died in London in one week, by which time she and her husband had removed to a safer location in Kent.⁹⁶ In the absence of a medical explanation, the plague was generally seen as inflicted by God and Lady Hoby records that a fast "was appointed by the Kinge to be

⁹³ Bolton, *A discourse about the state of true happinesse*, N^{4R}.

⁹⁴ Hoby, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady*, 26 August 1601, 161.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 4 February, 1602, 177.

⁹⁶ Ibid., August 4 and June 7, 191, 189.

heald thorow out the wholl Realme in regard of the generall mortalitie.”⁹⁷ Later she prays, “Lord graunt that these Iudgements may Cause England w^t speed to tourne to the Lord”, a clear indication that, in this case, she sees God as punitive and repentance as essential.⁹⁸ For Lady Hoby the only recourse in a time of national calamity is belief in the mercy of God, and she reports, “we Returned the same night to Newton againe, wher we remaine vntill god shall please, in mercie, to deal w^t vs.”⁹⁹ Like Lady Hoby, Bolton would record that the land “hath long and extraordinarily groaned vnder a sore and durable plague, which hath stuke close to the bowels of this City”, recommending self-examination and repentance as a way to appease God.¹⁰⁰ In reflecting on the wider social disaster of the plague, Lady Hoby is more inclined to give expression to orthodox theology that God is punitive and requires repentance and self-abasement.

Nevertheless, her faith offers her the promise of happiness in the afterlife as it assures her of salvation as one of the elect. Growing up in a family strongly influenced by Calvin, Lady Hoby believed in inward piety and the importance of a close study of the Scriptures as a way of overcoming human sin to access God’s grace. Although they were not able to study at universities, women in pious Protestant families were encouraged to write as part of their performance of worship.¹⁰¹ Lady Hoby read widely among religious and devotional texts and was concerned to apply theology to her everyday life. She engages in godly exercises of public and private prayer, singing of psalms, self-examination, reading of the Bible and writing in her testament, fasting, and discussion on religious matters with like-minded people. On rare occasions she records details of the theological discussions in which she participated,

⁹⁷ Ibid., 4 October 1603, 194.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 23 October 1603, 195.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 8 September, 1603, 192.

¹⁰⁰ “Let vs then examine our selues in this point … if hee hath smitten vs, and we haue not sorrowed; if he hath corrected vs for amendment”. Bolton, N^{4R}.

¹⁰¹ Mascuch, *Origins of the Individual Self*.

such as a discussion about justification by faith or good works.¹⁰² An unusual entry provides a more detailed account of a talk with her chaplain, Mr Rhodes:

and, in talke with Mr Rhodes, I understood thus much, that, wher as graces are of 2 sortes, some general, belonging to euerie christian, others special, as Contenancie and [indecipherable], for the better preuailinge against a temptation, it is not sufficient only to haue faith, whereby I know that I shall nether yeald vnto it, nor be ouer come by it: but I must Likewise pray especially for that virtue which is opposed to the vise wher vnto I am then tempted, because, though faith be the Fondamentall Cause of ouercoming sinne, yet oppretively the seuerall graces of god work.¹⁰³

She defers to Mr Rhodes' authority as her chaplain, accepting his advice that faith must be reinforced by determined resistance to the temptations of sin.

Whilst Lady Hoby's religious beliefs provided her with doctrinal certainty, there is evidence in the diary that they were also the source of internal conflict. Her writing reveals tensions between the confidence derived from conviction of being a member of the godly elite and an awareness of the theological doctrine of original sin. As a result she struggles to reconcile her certainty of salvation with a personal sense of sinfulness, referring to the need to overcome "disordered affection".¹⁰⁴ The doctrine of original sin and the belief that it was not possible to achieve happiness in this life were formative influences in arousing feelings of melancholy and guilt. The widespread religious emphasis on the sinfulness of man may help to explain the early modern focus in medical and psychological thinking on the negative emotions experienced by the humoral body.¹⁰⁵ Thus the classical Galenic theory about the workings of the physical body and the dangers of positive emotion was combined with

¹⁰² Hoby, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady*, 16 April 1600, 75.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 20 December 1599, 45-6.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 15 August 1601.

¹⁰⁵ Maus, *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995). Paster, Rowe and Floyd-Wilson, eds. *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*.

religious theology about man's benighted spiritual condition which denied him access to happiness in this life. In *Civilisation and its Discontents* Freud writes about the negative effects of religion, asserting that it creates a sense of guilt that inevitably results in the loss of happiness.¹⁰⁶ Using terminology that links him to Freudian psychology, Reddy refers to the repressions created by "emotional regimes".¹⁰⁷ Although it seems clear that Lady Hoby desired to achieve earthly happiness through honest work, this came into conflict with her sense of her sinfulness and she laments the difference between her "temporall prosperitie" and her "inward Corruption".¹⁰⁸ She was often unwell; she had read Timothy Bright's book on melancholy and frequently records her recurring ill health. On one occasion she reflects, "after that I wrought a little, and neglected my custom of praier, for which, as for many other sinnes, it pleased the Lord to punishe me with an inward assalte".¹⁰⁹ Another time she writes, "and, hauing supped, I was at publeck prars very sicke: the Lord pardon the sinne for which I was so punished, it beinge the will of god often to punishe one sinne with another, for I had little proffet by that praier, by reasone of my sickness".¹¹⁰ She prays that the Lord "pardon my seuerall defectes and restore me to my former life", seeing the restoration of health as a sign of God's mercy.¹¹¹ At the beginning of April 1601 she praises God on several occasions for her good health. Joanna Moody suggests it is possible that some of Lady Hoby's complaints were psychosomatic, and links her illness to self-doubt, anxiety and guilt.¹¹² To a modern reader, the diary may reveal the psychological repressions caused by intense religious practice. It also provides material that can enable the twenty-first-century researcher to

¹⁰⁶ "... the price we pay for our advance in civilisation is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt ... religions, at any rate, have never overlooked the part played in civilisation by a sense of guilt. Furthermore ... they claim to redeem mankind from this sense of guilt, which they call sin." Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, 81, 83.

¹⁰⁷ Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of the Emotion*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 105,128-9.

¹⁰⁸ Hoby, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady*, 27 June 1605, 219.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 12 October 1599, 28 and 10September 1599, 16.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 19 September, 1599, 20.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 15 November 1599, 36.

¹¹² Joanna Moody, ed., *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady*, xlvi-xlv.

establish links between the humoral body, the effects of religious belief and Freudian psychology.

The keeping of a diary was, as Ian Mortimer points out, an unusual activity in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the use of a diary to record personal emotions even rarer. Most diaries in this period were simply a record of events.¹¹³ For this reason the diaries of Rogers and Lady Hoby (and to a lesser extent the meditations of Lady Mildmay) enable us to read history from the inside out. Modern understanding of psychological conditions such as masochism, repression and sublimation provide us with a terminology to analyse the subconscious accommodations these Puritans made as they attempted to reconcile orthodox theology with their personal wish for happiness. It is one manifestation of a much wider phenomenon – the discordance between what people (consciously or subconsciously) desired and the realities of what their lives provided in the early modern period.

Differing attitudes to government

The differences between religious doctrine and the realities of lived experiences are tantalisingly hinted at in the personal writings of Rogers, Lady Hoby and Lady Mildmay. The work of Broomhall and Trigg on the interrelationships of individuals and their worlds (discussed at the beginning of this chapter in connection with religion), also has application to a consideration of attitudes to government, as well as to religion. Once again the literature is characterised by diversity and tensions. Differences can be seen between the kinds of conduct that are prescribed in political treatises and the reality of the effects of government on people's lives. In the sixteenth century a number of political treatises written by humanists seemed to promise that an ideal government was attainable. As they attempted to fashion the theories of Aristotle and Cicero to their own time, they emphasised that republican virtues

¹¹³ Ian Mortimer, "Tudor Chronicler or Sixteenth-Century Diarist? Henry Machyn and the Nature of His Manuscript," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 33, no. 4 (2002): 981-998 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4144118>.

should be applied to monarchical states. For Aristotle and Cicero faith in the benign effects of the state rest on two major assumptions – they believe that the state is a political context that will provide for the common good (and in the case of Aristotle happiness) of its citizens, and they envisage the citizen contributing to this ideal through virtuous living. However, there was discordance between the republican ideal and the reality of increasing absolutism in the early modern period. Tensions between optimism and pessimism indicate the incompatibility of Aristotelian and Augustinian views of government and disagreement about whether it could provide for the happiness of its citizens or was necessarily punitive to restrain the results of sin. They also reflect differing views of human nature and man's ability to find happiness. The difference between the ideal and reality was recognised by Machiavelli when he referred to the gulf that exists between how people should live and how they actually do.¹¹⁴ He refers to men as “wretched creatures” who will not keep their word to the prince.¹¹⁵ Machiavelli's approach to politics is secular and pragmatic, but the reference to men as “wretched creatures” reflects a pessimism about human nature that indicates the prevailing influence of Augustine in early modern thought.

In contrast to the cynicism of Machiavelli, John Barston invokes Aristotelian ideas about happiness in his treatise, *The safegarde of societie*, published in 1576.¹¹⁶ He uses the word “pleasure” to equate to the modern translation of the Aristotelian concept of happiness, validating “all honest pleasure, which may any ways agree with laudable mirth, according to the capacitie of euery one.”¹¹⁷ He references Aristotle in praising “the cardinall and chiefest virtues in philosophie, prudence, iustice, fortitude and temperance” which he sees as so

¹¹⁴ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Translated by George Bull. London: Penguin, 2003, 50.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 57.

¹¹⁶ John Barston, *The safegarde of societie: describing the institution of lasses and policies, to preserue euery fellowship of people by degrees of ciuill gouernements: / gathered of the moralles and policies of philosophie*. (London: John Shepperde, 1576). EEBO.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., Hi^R.

interconnected that anyone who “lacketh one, is maimed in the reste.”¹¹⁸ In repeated references to Aristotle and Cicero, Barston emphasises the connection between virtuous behaviour and responsible rule; he maintains that virtue is “the fountain and root” of all that can be called honest and true and virtue draws man towards reason and felicity.¹¹⁹ The establishment of the “common weal” by lawful government “bringeth felicities vnto all people”.¹²⁰ Markku Peltonen describes Barston as “using classical urban humanist vocabulary to extol the civic values of the community.”¹²¹ Barston represents the incorporated town, Tewkesbury, as a microcosm of a commonwealth that upholds liberty and provides peace for its citizens. As some writers of political treatises attempted to apply the republican ideal to the realities of increasing absolutism, they foregrounded the importance of virtuous princely rule. Barston emphasises the moral responsibility of the prince, who must rule according to the law; since the prince is only the minister of the law, if he does not respect it “then might authoritie be doubted lawfull”.¹²² Barston claims, optimistically, that in England “wholesome lawes haue reformed our age aboue others” and established tranquillity and virtuous manners.¹²³ In this way he avoids overt criticism of Elizabeth, but his treatise is, nevertheless, a reminder that sovereignty must remain subject to the pre-existing processes of law.

Barston’s belief that the prince should rule according to the law is also expressed in much better known treatises by Erasmus, Castiglione and Sir Thomas Elyot. They also provide advice about how a prince should act morally, believing that this will counter a political climate of increasing absolutism. Erasmus, for example, writes that a prince must always be alert while others sleep, he must toil that they may rest, and he should demonstrate the qualities of wisdom, magnanimity, temperance and integrity; Castiglione catalogues the

¹¹⁸ Ibid., Giii^R-Giiii^V.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., Cii^V, Cv^R.

¹²⁰ Ibid., Bi^V.

¹²¹ Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 59.

¹²² Ibid., Eiii^R.

¹²³ Ibid., Fi^R.

Aristotelian virtues in recommending that a prince should behave with “justice, liberality, magnanimity and gentleness”; and Elyot believes that “the best and most sure governace is by one king or prince: which ruleth only for the weal of his people to him subject.”¹²⁴ Elyot reflects the influence of Cicero in describing the “public weal” as a living body, promoting equity and governed by reason, called in Latin *Respublica*.¹²⁵ Like Aristotle and Cicero, Elyot foregrounds the importance of the virtues of benevolence, beneficence and liberality.¹²⁶ He cites Tully in referencing how those in authority must be like the laws, “which in correcting be led only by equity and not by wrath or displeasure.”¹²⁷ In this way he sets himself in opposition to the Augustinian belief in the need for punitive authority. These writers all express belief in the ideal of government that will provide conditions conducive to the common good.

Elizabethan propaganda tapped into these theories of government, promoting the image of Elizabeth as an enlightened monarch, who was influenced by the humanist tradition of advice to princes. In pageants and poems she was mythologised as Astraea, the goddess of justice.¹²⁸ In her Golden Speech of November 30, 1601 she maintains that God has made her queen, that she sets the Last Judgement Day before her eyes as she rules, that she has only thought of her people’s good and that, above all else, she treasures their love. She asserts her willingness to lay down her life for their welfare and safety.¹²⁹ Her image was also disseminated through portraits that were intended to offer assurance of political stability, creating iconic images of justice, virtue and peace. So, for example, in the “Rainbow Portrait”

¹²⁴ Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, trans. Lester K Born (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), 182. Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. and intr. George Bull (London: Penguin, 1967), 285. Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Book named the Governor*, ed. S. E. Lehmburg (London: Everyman’s Library, 1962), 7.

¹²⁵ Elyot, *The Book named the Governor*, 1.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 121.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 123.

¹²⁸ Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles : University of California Press, 1977), 47.

¹²⁹ Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

the serpent on the queen's sleeve is a representation of the wisdom that would shape effective policy and the rainbow is a symbol of peace.¹³⁰ The success of the strategy is evidenced in the diary entry of Baron Waldstein, who visited England in 1600 and described her as "the most high, mightie, and magnificent Empresse, renowned for Pietie, Vertue, and all gratiouſe government".¹³¹ However, beneath the courtly, extravagant praise of the queen, Elizabethan government was less benevolent.

The differences between the humanist ideal of government that authorities might promote to their citizens and the reality were clear in Elizabethan England. In practice, Elizabethan government reflected an Augustinian belief in the necessity of coercive rule to restrain potential opposition. Augustine had recognised the fallibility of the human justice system, which contrasts with the eternal justice of God. He admitted that since judges are not able to read the consciences of the men they try they are often forced to resort to torture, not only of the accused, but also of innocent witnesses, and they may unwittingly put an innocent man to death.¹³² The punitive nature of the law and the continuing influence of Augustine are referenced in Bolton's treatise on happiness in which he writes, "lawe and constitutions of States and kingdoms are bridles to curbe and moderate our corruption, that wee become sociable and peaceable."¹³³ For Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's chief minister, Augustinian theology was reinforced by a Machiavellian pragmatism that saw cruelty as legitimate in the pursuit of the safety and good of all. He reflects the views of Machiavelli that men are more likely to do injury to a prince who makes himself loved than to one who is feared.¹³⁴ In administering an efficient spy system to protect England from the anarchy which would result from Elizabeth's assassination, Burghley justified the use of extreme methods to preserve the

¹³⁰ Roy Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Sydney: Pimlico, 2003), 158-159.

¹³¹ Valdštejna, Zdeněk Brtnický z, Baron, *The Diary of Baron Waldstein: A Traveller in Elizabethan England*, trans. G. W. Groos (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), 151.

¹³² Augustine, *The City of God* Book XIX.6, 309.

¹³³ Bolton, *A discourse about the state of true happiness*, L^{2v}.

¹³⁴ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 54.

common good against the “vermin” who “spread their poison”, claiming that otherwise “there had followed imminent dangers of horrible warres in the realms and a manifest bloody destruction of great multitudes of Christians.”¹³⁵ Burghley’s belief in, and condemnation of, the depravity of his political opponents is evident in his use of the word “vermin” to describe them. In the wake of the papal bull, *Regnans in Excelsis*, in which Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth and declared her a heretic bastard, instances of torture as a method of interrogation in England increased.¹³⁶ Elizabeth Hanson labels this as “official terrorism used to crush perceived dangers to the Elizabethan state”.¹³⁷ Augustine had referred to the need for the state to make use of “the executioner’s hooks”; Burghley’s justification of the punitive function of the law is reflective of Augustinian belief that government must be coercive to restrain man’s fallen nature.¹³⁸

In his political treatise, Barston appears at times to represent contemporary Augustinian pessimism about politics as he acknowledges that man is a fallen creature. He repeatedly refers to the fact that God planted the law in man, but his nature has been corrupted as a result of the loss of his original righteousness. The treatise exhibits tensions that are symptomatic of differences between the theology of Augustine and Aquinas (discussed in my Introduction). His pessimism about human nature is reflected particularly in his distrust of the political wisdom of the common people, he refers to them as a hydra, “a monstrous beast with manye heads”.¹³⁹ However, despite his mistrust of the ordinary people, he also reflects Aristotle and Aquinas in his optimism that man still has the ability to strive

¹³⁵ Baron William Cecil Burghley, *The execution of iustice in England for maintenaunce of publique and Christian peace, against certeine stirrers of sedition, and adherents to the traytors and enemies of the realme, without any persecution of them for questions of religion, as is falsely reported and published by the fautors and fosterers of their treasons* (London: Christopher Barker, 1593), 6, 4. EEBO.

¹³⁶ Stephen Alford, *The Watchers: A Secret History of the Reign of Elizabeth I* (London : Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012).

¹³⁷ Elizabeth Hanson, “Torture and Truth in Renaissance England” *Representations* 34 (1991): 53. Accessed February 19, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928770>.

¹³⁸ Augustine, *Complete Letters of Saint Augustine*, ed. Boniface Ramsey and John E. Rotelle (New York: New City Press, 2003), Letter 153:6:16.

¹³⁹ Barston, *The safegarde of societie*, Liii^v.

after virtue; despite his sinfulness he retains “the tender seeds of the original goodness”.¹⁴⁰

For Aquinas, the proper function of the law is to lead subjects to their proper virtue, and, more than Augustine, he emphasises the possibility of achieving some earthly happiness through virtuous rule. In a synthesis of theology with the writings from “heathen nations”, Barston claims that philosophy teaches us how a man’s life may be directed to virtue.¹⁴¹

Conflicting ideas about the function of government are also represented in Lodowick Bryskett’s *A Discourse of Civill Life*. On the title page he writes that his chief interest is in “the instructing of a Gentleman in the course of a virtuous life”, and he equates this with “ciuill felicitie”.¹⁴² Bryskett encourages the citizen to believe that he will be rewarded in the life to come if he treats others virtuously. He reflects optimism through the dialogue of Spenser, who is the spokesman for humanism. Spenser expresses faith in the guiding power of philosophy to direct families and commonwealths to the making of laws that will “set men free in their way to their felicitie”.¹⁴³ Taking issue with Spenser, Bryskett is more pessimistic. In places he reflects Augustinian pessimism about man’s fallen nature that must be restrained:

for the wickednesse of men hath caused lawes to be deuised and established for the conseruation of honest and virtuous soccietie, and ciuil life, whereunto man is borne; which lawes haue appointed penalties for the offenders, to the end that for feare thereof ... men might flie from ill-doing ... lawes therefore haue appointed punishments, that virtue might be defended and maintained, ciuill societie and humane right preserued.¹⁴⁴

He acknowledges regretfully that a man who is subject to his own appetite is not fit to be king, and that there are princes who think only of their own pleasures, causing misery to the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., B1^R.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., Ciii^R, Bii^V.

¹⁴² Lodowick Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life*, 41.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 166.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 38.

people over whom they rule.¹⁴⁵ Bryskett demonstrates that “lawes not tempered by discreet Judges, are like tyrants ouer men”, although he does also provide models for benevolent rule when he refers to wise and virtuous men from the past who were fit to be rulers.¹⁴⁶

Bryskett’s treatise was written against the background of the Desmond and Tyrone rebellions in Ireland. It reflects tensions between religion and humanist philosophy, between his desire to believe that benevolent rule is possible and his acknowledgement that man is a fallen creature and political tyranny a likely outcome. Andrew Wadoski believes that the dialogue between Bryskett and Spenser “offers an extended meditation on the collisions of humanist theory and government practice within the New English policy in Ireland.”¹⁴⁷ In the cottage “creative acts of literary humanism”, such as translating continental texts and engaging in philosophical discussions, can provide an imaginative escape from the reality of daily living. Images of the cottage garden act as a contrast to the “perhaps ungovernable world outside its protective walls.”¹⁴⁸ The dialogue imagines, as Wadoski points out, “human actions’ poetic capacity to fashion ideal forms of life in an otherwise inhospitable environment.”¹⁴⁹ The cottage and the garden can be seen as a *locus amoenus*, a sheltered space that retreats from engagement with the wider world of discordant politics. Wadoski believes that Bryskett reaches a point of closure and a sense of “moral and political certainty” through acceptance of divine providence.¹⁵⁰ However, what is interesting about the treatise is the expression of tensions that are not really resolved by the imposition of theological orthodoxy. Bryskett’s treatise provides an example of a wider trend in early modern thinking about government, recognition of the discordance between the ideal of benevolent rule and the reality of tyranny. It also reflects a desire (discussed more fully in chapters two, three and

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 86, 203.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 249.

¹⁴⁷ Andrew Wadoski, “Framing civil life in Elizabethan Ireland: Bryskett, Spenser and The discourse of Civil Life,” *Renaissance Studies* 30 no. 3 (2016):351. DOI: 10.1111/rest.12150.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 353.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 365.

five) to retreat to a *locus amoenus* and the consolations of friendship. This is an expression of the belief that finding happiness is difficult or impossible in worlds of political absolutism and injustice.

Current researchers into happiness note the links between faith in justice and well-being, as a belief in a just world provides a sense of order and meaning in life. The term “justice climate” refers to the social creation of perceptions of justice. It highlights the ways in which the individual’s belief about justice for the self and personal sense of well-being “may depend on the overarching justice climate in which this belief is held.”¹⁵¹ Barston cites Aristotle in recommending that the Magistrates should not neglect the common people, but win their favour by “honeste entreatie … to fortifie good gouernment by their necesssararie ayde” which will “worke muche in the hartes of simple people.”¹⁵² In such a state wholesome laws ensure that the simplest people receive their rights, the ministers of the law are not merchants to buy and sell the law, offenders are corrected and all receive justice “without respect or partialitie.”¹⁵³ Despite the advice about good government and the common good expressed in political treatises, the reality of peoples’ access to justice, one of the key components of the common good, was often compromised in the sixteenth century. Trigg refers to the gap between the way people believed they should think and the truth that might be represented in imaginative texts. This has particular application to dramatic representations of justice. It is the reality of systems of justice in Elizabethan England, rather than the ideal promoted in classical and humanist texts, that shapes the representation of political and judicial worlds in a number of Shakespeare’s plays. As he dramatizes fallen political worlds, where access to justice is compromised or impossible, he reveals an Augustinian, rather than an Aristotelian or Thomistic, view of postlapsarian man and the systems of government he

¹⁵¹ Todd Lucas, Ludmilla Zhdanova, Craig A. Wendorf and Sheldon Alexander, “Procedural and Distributive Justice Beliefs for Self and Others: Multilevel Associations with Life Satisfaction and Self-Rated Health,” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 14 (2013). DOI10. 1007/s10902- 012 -9387-6.

¹⁵² Barston, *The safegarde of societie*, Niiii^R.

¹⁵³ Ibid., Fi^R.

constructs that reflect his sinful nature. Across a wide range of plays Shakespeare represents characters who represent the inequitable justice systems that fallen man creates. In *Hamlet* the Machiavellian Claudius acknowledges:

In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law. (3.3.57-60)

In *Henry IV Part 2* Falstaff takes bribes from men who are anxious to avoid being pressed into military service. The names of the justices who assist him, Shallow and Silence, attest to the ways in which they pervert the law. Duke Frederick's political court in *As You Like It* reveals the ambition of the usurping ruler and the tyranny that accompanies acts of dispossession, whilst in *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare takes issue with the myth of Venice (discussed in chapters two and five), showing how the decisions made in the legal court are motivated by political expediency and political and religious intolerance. As he creates fallen worlds, the plays suggest that the structures of these worlds do not produce political and judicial systems that cater for individual happiness – if people are to find personal fulfilment it will be in spite of, rather than because of, the world they live in.

For some people in the early modern period religion provided consolation, fulfilment and even empowerment. For others it failed to contribute to personal happiness as they experienced inner conflict and a sense of failure to live up to their own expectations of pious behaviour. In the political sphere there was discordance between the republican ideal, derived from Aristotle and Cicero and promoted in some political treatises, and perceptions that increasing absolutism was ignoring the common good. Nevertheless, as Stephen Alford points out, even in the shadow of the Tower life went on.¹⁵⁴ People still wanted to believe that happiness could be attained, and in the face of everyday hardships they looked to alternatives

¹⁵⁴ Alford, *The Watchers*, 324.

– to the possibility that imaginative texts might offer a utopian escape, to the myth of Venice, and to the search for an ideal in the New World across the seas. It is to these dreams of an ideal that I turn in my next chapter.

Chapter 2

Searching for the Ideal: Utopian Fiction, the Myth of Venice and the New World

Perceptions that the institutions of Church and State had failed to exert a benevolent influence encouraged people to look for alternative sources of happiness. Here, again, the search is characterised by diversity. The development of utopian literature was one way in which this longing for the ideal was expressed. This genre explored the possibility of creating a society that would be an improvement on the realities of early modern authoritarianism and inequality. Another area of literature that often encapsulated this longing for the ideal was work devoted to the “myth of Venice”. As articulated by Contarini, this myth appeared to represent an ideal republic that survived and flourished in the context of increasing despotism, but revisionist accounts at the time questioned the accuracy of the myth.¹ Utopian societies both real and imagined were, however, often revealed to be flawed. They repressed the very civil liberties that would have made their vision a reality. In contrast to the failure of idealism in Europe, encapsulated by these two strands of early modern literature, the new cultural landscapes encountered in the Americas seemed to offer the possibility of discovering an Eden that had somehow escaped from the consequences of original sin or that was the very image of a lost golden age. Travellers expressed a sense of wonder at a world that appeared to be so different from their own. Inevitably the search for the ideal failed as, paradoxically, the Europeans destroyed what they most admired. Many were unable to understand the potential for happiness in the culture of some of the Indian societies they

¹ Donald E. Queller, *The Venetian Patriciate: Reality versus Myth* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986). James S. Grubb, “When Myths Lose Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography,” *The Journal of Modern History* 58, no. 1 (1986).
<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/1881564>.

encountered. Their experiences revealed the limitations and detrimental effects of Aristotelian philosophy when it was applied to very different concepts of happiness and to foreign social and political structures. The initial sense of wonder and happiness experienced by Europeans succumbed to the imperatives of economic gain, territorial expansion and religious conversion that had motivated the expeditions. At the same time, threaded through the narrative of exploitation and dispossession, there remains a haunting awareness of innocence and the loss of an ideal, a sense of how history could have been, as opposed to how it really was. All three of these areas of early modern literature – utopian fictions, descriptions of the Venetian republic, and accounts of New World societies – offer a window into the ways people in the early modern period longed for an ideal society that offered the possibility of achieving happiness.

The construction and failure of the Utopian vision

More's *Utopia* is part of a tradition of the possibilities of the ideal commonwealth that dates back to Plato. However, in its exploration of the nature of happiness it draws more extensively on the philosophy of Aristotle. More would have studied Aristotle at Oxford, in both the Greek and Latin versions. *Utopia* appears to validate Aristotelian optimism about the ability of the state to provide happiness for its citizens. Raphaell Hythlodaye recounts how he took with him on his travels the texts of the classics. He reports that when the Utopians heard him speak of the Greek language and literature, "they made wonderfull earnest and importunate sute unto me, that I wolde teache and instructe them in that tonge and learnynge."² The Utopians reflect Aristotle in accepting the importance of virtue, believing that "our nature is allured and drawnen euen of virtue."³ Hythlodaye also introduces them to

² Sir Thomas More, *The Utopia of Sir Thomas More in Latin from the Edition of March 1518, and in English from the First Edition of Ralph Robynson's Translation in 1551*, ed. J. H. Lupton, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, MDCCXCV), 213.

³ Ibid., 190.

the Bible, and when he tells them about Christ “of his doctrine, lawes, myracles, and of the no lesse wonderful constancie of so many martyrs … you wyll not beleue with how gladde myndes they agreed unto the same”.⁴ More’s fiction is a Thomistic synthesis of Aristotle and Christianity in the ways in which the Utopians conceive of happiness, but ultimately, like Aquinas, More and the Utopians prioritise the happiness of the afterlife and the immortality of the soul. They believe that “the sowle ys immortall, and by the bountifull goodness of God ordeyned to felicitie”. Hythlodaye reports, “they thynke not felicitie to reste in all pleasure, but onlye in that pleasure that is good and honest; and that hereto, as to perfet blessedness, our nature is allured and drawnen euen of virtue.”⁵ Like Aquinas, More specifically foregrounds their acceptance of the joys to be found in Heaven, where “god recompenseth the gifte of a short and small pleasure with great and euerlasting ioye.”⁶ In this way the Utopians see the afterlife as promising rewards for virtuous living in this life, in contrast to Aristotelian belief that virtuous living provides its own rewards in this life.

The influence of Aquinas is apparent in the hierarchy of Latin synonyms that More employs to distinguish between different types of happiness. At the top of the hierarchy More writes about happiness in the afterlife, an eternity of perfect joy, using the Latin words *summum bonum*, which his sixteenth-century translator Ralph Robynson renders as “perfet blessedness”, and *gaudium* which is associated with the “great and euerlasting ioye” of union with God.⁷ Below these in moral worth are words that deal more specifically with human happiness in this life: *felicitas* (which Robinson translates as “felicity” and, once, as the state of being “happye”), and less frequently *suavitas* (which for Robinson becomes “elite” and “delectation”), and *delectatio* (which Robinson also translates as “delectation”). Harmless pleasures, bodily pleasures, momentary pleasures and false pleasures are referred to usually

⁴ Ibid., 268.

⁵ Ibid., 188, 190.

⁶ Ibid., 194.

⁷ Ibid., 190, 194.

by “*uoluptas*” and occasionally by “*laetitia*”. However, a closer reading reveals that the Utopian version of Christianity is not consistently Thomistic since, as Hythlodaye reports somewhat censoriously, they place too much emphasis on the importance of pleasure in this life. Despite their professed interest in the constancy of the martyrs, they regard it as “extreame madness to folowe sharpe and painful virtue”, instead they think “no kynde of pleasure forbidden wherof cummeth no harme.”⁸ In commenting on More’s use of Latin synonyms Edward Surtz writes, “Humanists, like Thomas More, were scrupulously careful about good Latinity in general and the distinction between synonyms in particular.”⁹ He cites Plato, who distinguishes between mental and bodily pleasure, attributing “joy” (*laetitia*) and “gladness” (*gaudium*) to the mind and pleasure (*voluptas*) to the senses. Cicero in *De Finibus* also makes distinctions; for Cicero “joy” (*laetitia*) and “gladness” (*gaudium*) are not applied to bodily pleasures, but “*voluptas*” has broader connotations; “speaking loosely” *uoluptas* can represent a mental as well as a physical feeling but, “according to the usage of all who speak good Latin”, *uoluptas* “consists in the enjoyment of a delightful stimulation of one of the senses”.¹⁰ Not only does More’s use of synonyms differ from those of Cicero, something which More might justify on the grounds that Cicero is a pagan writer, but there is inconsistency in More’s use of his own hierarchy of synonyms. He uses “*uoluptas*” when he refers to “trew pleasures” and applies “*felicitas*” to the happiness that is associated with the love of God. Since it is unlikely that More is being careless in his use of synonyms, this inconsistency would seem to indicate that he is making a point that people are prone to confuse the ideal with the expedient. George Logan and Robert Adams believe that the text

⁸ More, *The Utopia of Sir Thomas More in Latin*, 188,166.

⁹ Edward Surtz S. J., *Philosophy, Education, and Communism in More’s Utopia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1957), 11.

¹⁰ Ibid., 10-11.

thus raises questions about whether it is possible to design an ideal state that will always operate morally.¹¹

On the surface, both Aristotle and More appear to be asserting that happiness in this life is necessary to the full development and well-being of the individual. The ideal state should be concerned not only to provide for its citizens' material needs, but also a good and just environment in which happiness can flourish. The best commonwealth will be one that provides everything that is necessary for happiness and it will train its citizens to accept its laws and customs.¹² It is tempting to think that More was working out a new understanding of happiness that harmonised the Thomistic view of happiness as union with God with a humanist assertion of the importance of happiness in this life, as the Utopians believe that they can approach God through the senses. However, reading *Utopia* in terms of More's personal history, and consideration of the ironic nature of the text, call this interpretation into question. The tensions in the early modern period between the disciplines of the church and the writings of the classical past can be seen to be reflected in More's own life which, in many ways, represented contradictions. More habitually wore a hair shirt beneath the magnificent robes of state, and his son-in-law, Roper, recorded that he "would sometimes punish his body with whips, the cords knotted".¹³ The ingenuous tone of More's dialogue with Hythlodaeus persuaded some contemporary readers that it recorded a real voyage, and since then a number of critics have interpreted More's fantasy at face value.¹⁴ Some more recent analysis has focused on the shifting patterns of irony that contribute to the enigmatic nature of the work. The puns on More's name and some of the place names, especially the

¹¹ George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams, introduction to *More: Utopia: Latin Text and English Translation*, ed. George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), xxviii.

¹² Thomas I. White, "Aristotle and Utopia," *Renaissance Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (1976). <http://www.jstor.org.exproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/2860035>.

¹³ William Roper, *A man of singular virtue: being a life of Sir Thomas More by his son-in-law William Roper, and a selection of More's letters*, ed. A. L. Rowse (London: Folio Society, 1980), 65.

¹⁴ Dominic Baker-Smith, "Reading *Utopia*" in *Cambridge Companions Online*, ed. George M. Logan (<http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/companions/>, 2005).

contradictory meanings of Utopia as both an ideal place and no place, provide examples of this. Hanan Yoran and Dominic Baker-Smith link the work to Lucian's Greek dialogues which disguise serious intent beneath surface jokes.¹⁵ Logan attributes to More a "divided, complex mind, capable of seeing more than one side of a question and reluctant to make a definite commitment to any single position", describing *Utopia* as "a verbal hall of mirrors".¹⁶ The shifting use of synonyms is a reflection of More's complex mind that acknowledges the impossibility of constructing an inflexible hierarchy of happiness. It draws attention to the ways in which the Utopians misappropriate the teachings of Christianity in justifying a life of the senses as a path to happiness. The central irony of the analysis lies in the fact that in their attempt to synthesise the teachings of Aristotle and Christianity, the Utopians misapply both.

Utopia is not an ideal state, as a number of critics have pointed out. Some of the objections are the product of a twenty-first-century viewpoint. It is tempting to interpret More's description of the surveillance, "they be in the present sight, and vnder the iyes of euery man" in Orwellian terms. However, when combined with his description of communal living, it is more in keeping with the reality of monastic living to which More had been attracted in his youth.¹⁷ Similarly the criticism of the ways in which Utopian families are broken up reflects the practice in early modern times of sending the children of the nobility to live in other great families. Nevertheless, other aspects of Utopian society can be less easily explained away. Although Hythlodaye says that the cultivation of the mind is the secret of a happy life, most of the population seem to receive a rather rudimentary education and the intelligentsia comprise a small élite. When Hythlodaye refers to virtue, the focus is less on what constitutes virtuous living and more on the trivial pleasures that should be discouraged

¹⁵ Hanan Yoran, "More's Utopia and Erasmus' No-place," *English Literary Renaissance*, ed. George M. Logan, "Reading Utopia" *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas More* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005). Baker-Smith, "Reading *Utopia*".

¹⁶ More, *More: Utopia: Latin Text and English Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), xxv, xxvi.

¹⁷ Ibid., 169.

or forbidden. Utopos initially created his ideal state by isolating it from external influences by cutting it off from the mainland. However, the development of colonisation to solve the problems of over population, and the appropriation of lands which were considered not to be worked productively by the original inhabitants, reflects the real life practice of invasion of the New World. In addition, the policy of employing violent mercenaries demonstrates the impossibility of self-sufficiency and reveals dystopic elements of the republic.

More's supposedly ideal state is dependent on oppression and authoritarian rule. Although he foregrounds the philosophy of Aristotle and the theology of Aquinas, an Augustinian sense of man's sinful nature underlies his work. Augustine believed that governments must be coercive in order to restrain human beings' desire for power, and their avarice and lust. As referenced in my Introduction, he wrote that the operation of the law should be feared so that the wicked can be coerced and the good "live peacefully among the wicked."¹⁸ Since man is a fallen creature it becomes questionable whether an ideal commonwealth is possible. Machiavelli thought not. In *The Prince* he states, "Many have dreamed up republics and principalities which have never in truth been known to exist".¹⁹ For Machiavelli, the concept of an ideal commonwealth is not only an illusion, but a dangerous fantasy, since it encourages people to ignore political realities. His educational advice to a prince is an exercise in political pragmatism and the antithesis of the faith in human potential that apparently underpins Utopian fiction. He cynically warns that a man who is virtuous will come to grief because the majority are not virtuous; practising virtue can bring a prince to ruin, whereas exercising a propensity to vice will bring him security and prosperity. This places Machiavelli in opposition to more idealistic humanists like Erasmus, Castiglione and Elyot, who reflected the influence of Aristotle in promoting the importance of education to fit

¹⁸ Augustine, *Complete Letters of Saint Augustine*, ed. Boniface Ramsey and John E. Rotelle (New York: New City Press, 2003), Letter 153:6:16.

¹⁹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 50.

the prince to rule.²⁰ Education is central to Aristotle's concept of civic virtue and reflected in *Utopia*, but in ways that cast doubt on Aristotle's belief in man's power to reason as a means of attaining virtue. Children are trained to despise outward displays of wealth, and adults associate gold with slaves and bodily excretion. Frivolous behaviour is pre-empted by the banning of gambling, hunting and hawking; there are no wine taverns, ale houses or brothels. Coercive laws and excommunication keep the populace in check. Arguably, if coercive laws are necessary, the society is not ideal. If the society is not ideal, it is questionable whether it can provide the conditions necessary for human happiness.

A number of European writers imitated More's *Utopia* in creating apparently ideal societies designed to cater for the happiness of their citizens.²¹ In *The City of the Sun*, Tommaso Campanella reflects a debt to More in his depiction of a society in which private property has been abolished, communal living established, and citizens receive what they need from the community.²² Campanella describes people "learning joyously" (1602 version) or "learning through playing games, taking part in discussions, reading, teaching and walking, and always doing these things with enjoyment" (1611 version) since they do not need to work for more than four hours a day.²³ Maria Perissinotto has, however, pointed out that Italian humanists tended to ignore the irony in More's work whilst, nevertheless, being influenced by

²⁰ Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, trans. Lester K Born (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), 182. Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. and intr. George Bull (London: Penguin, 1967), 285. Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Book named the Governor*, ed. S. E. Lehmburg (London: Everyman's Library, 1962), 7.

²¹ Italian writers were the most prolific. Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Maria Cristina Perissinotto reference Francesco Patrizi da Cherso, *La Città felice* (1551); Anton Francesco Doni, *Il Mondo Savio e Pazzo* (1552); Ludovico Agostini, *Repubblica Immaginaria* (1585-90) and Tommaso Campanella, *La Città del Sole* (1602). Eliav-Feldon also cites Johan Eberlin von Günzburg, *Wolfraria* (1521); François Rabelais, *L'Abbaye des Thélémites* (1534) and Gasparus Stiblinus, *De Eudaemonensium Republica* (1553). Miriam Eliav-Feldon, *Realistic Utopias: The Ideal Imaginary Societies of the Renaissance 1516-1630* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). Maria Cristina Perissinotto, *Utopian Times: The Quest for the Perfect Society in Renaissance Italy and the New World* (Ph.D. Diss. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2000). *ProQuest*.

²² "Arts and honors and pleasures are common, and are held in such a manner that no one can appropriate anything to himself ... Yet nothing necessary is denied to anyone". Tommaso Campanella, *The City of the Sun: A Poetical Dialogue* (Mt View Calif.: Wiretap; Boulder, Colo:NetLibrary), 5.

²³ Tommaso Campanella, *The City of the Sun: A Poetical Dialogue*. There are about ten manuscript versions of the work [Morton]. I will refer to the original 1602 version and a later 1611 edition. Brother Thomas Campanella, *The City of the Sun. A poetic dialogue, in which there is outlined the idea for a reform of the Christian state, between a Knight Hospitaller and a Genoese mariner, a helmsman of Columbus*.

its political program.²⁴ For Campanella, private property is associated with home ownership, a wife and children; he sees this as the cause of self-love, which must be eliminated so that only love for the commonwealth remains.²⁵ To discourage sexual love, women are forbidden to beautify their faces with cosmetics, to wear high-heeled boots or garments with trains, on pain of death. Love of children is prevented by removing them from their parents and rearing them in communal places. In fact, the breeding of children is seen to be a matter of State control rather than individual choice, since “children are bred for the preservation of the species and not for individual pleasure.”²⁶ In the 1611 version Campanella expands on the details of his eugenics programme, describing the rules that govern sexual intercourse and the selection of mating partners. Despite the pleasure that the Captain (or Genoese Mariner) evinces in observing life in the city, he places a disturbing emphasis on the extent of surveillance and punishment needed to ensure conformity. Cripples become spies, telling officials what they have heard and, although Hoh is able to pardon, justice is mostly punitive rather than redemptive.²⁷ Perissinotto argues that, in Italian utopian fictions, the characters are “reduced to mere functions of the system”, spokespeople for the ideas of the community and deprived of individual rights and personalities.²⁸ In an analysis of patterns of word usage in her four chosen accounts, she notes the repeated use of words such as “*omnes*” and “*tutti*”, which puts emphasis on totalitarianism and a rejection of difference. This aspect of utopian fiction is especially foregrounded in Anton Doni’s *Il Mondo Savio e Pazzo*, which takes the form of a dialogue between a wise man (il Savio) and a madman (il Pazzo). Savio recounts a dream, describing how someone took him by the hand and led him to a star-shaped city where

²⁴ Perissinotto, “Utopian Times.”

²⁵ “They say that all private property is acquired and improved for the reason that each one of us by himself has his own home and wife and children. From this self-love springs. But when we have taken away self-love, there remains only love for the State.” Tommaso Campanella, *The City of the Sun: A Poetical Dialogue* (Mt View Calif.), 6.

²⁶ Campanella, *The City of the Sun: A Poetical Dialogue*, 11.

²⁷ “When there is a case in which great injury has been done, it is punished with death, and they repay an eye with an eye, a nose for a nose, a tooth for a tooth, and so on, according to the law of retaliation.” Offenders can also be stoned to death, the choice about the manner of death being given to the people”, 21.

²⁸ Perissinotto, “Utopian Times”, 42.

life was characterised by a high degree of uniformity.²⁹ Winfried Schleiner believes that, in his emphasis on equality, Doni takes other utopian fictions to their logical conclusion; Savio says, “It suffices that this is dream, wisdom, opinion of humans, this is madness.”³⁰ For Perissinotto, the loss of personal freedom makes these imagined cities a “detestable state”, one in which no reader would really want to live.³¹ No matter how democratic the state may appear to be, freedom does not play a part in the search for happiness. These dystopian characteristics seem to prove the wisdom of Aristotle’s belief in the importance of diversity when he says that a city should be a plurality, since to impose unity is the equivalent of reducing musical harmony to a single beat.³²

The myth of Venice

Imagined utopias often resemble the society in which the writer lives and Italian utopian fiction was written against the background of oligarchic city states. In her study of Italian utopian fiction, Perissinotto observes that Doni and Ludovico Agostini, who wrote *Repubblica Immaginaria*, were inspired by the myth of Venice, which they reflect in the architecture and political structure of their imagined worlds. The creation of the myth of Venice was part of the longing for an ideal society that provided the conditions in which people might be happy. In Italy by the first half of the fifteenth century, earlier experiments in republicanism were capitulating to renewed despotism. Whilst some believed that an alternative could be attained through reform or revolution, others engaged in a process of myth making. In Italy, the Republic of Venice came closest to representing an exemplary

²⁹ Paul Grendler explains that in this utopian society people eat the same food, wear uniform clothing and share goods. Women are also held in common so that children never know who their parents are, family feuding does not occur and men avoid the heartbreak of unrequited love. The aged and sick are cared for but deformed babies are thrown down a well. Paul F. Grendler, “Utopia in Renaissance Italy: Doni’s ‘New World,’” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 26, no. 4 (1965). [Http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.edu.au/stable/2708495](http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.edu.au/stable/2708495).

³⁰ Translated by Winfried Schleiner from the Italian edition of Venice, 1575 in *Melancholy, Genius and Utopia in the Renaissance*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 199). There does not appear to be a published English translation of *Il Mondo Savio e Pazzo* available.

³¹ Perissinotto, “Utopian Times, 43.

³² Aristotle, *Politics*, 123b29.

state, and it aroused the admiration of other Italian cities and members of the wider European community.³³ By providing a mixed constitution with three levels of government, monarchical, aristocratic and democratic, which had resisted the forces of change, it appeared to offer a stable commonwealth that represented an alternative possibility for civic life. David Rosand explores the ways in which the myth of Venice was propagated in its art.³⁴ At the southeast corner of the Ducal Palace in Venice, above the figures of Adam and Eve, stands the Archangel Michael, with a sword in one hand and a scroll in the other, showing his intention to protect the good and punish the wicked. Rosand explains that the city's reputation for justice is glorified in the figure of Michael. Original sin caused the Fall of Man, but the creation of Venice will provide man's political salvation and Paradise may be reclaimed through the republic's laws. This is an expression of humanist optimism about the power of man's reason, revealed in the administration of justice, but inspired by God, to restrain baser human appetites and create a postlapsarian society in which people can be happy.

One of the most influential texts to promulgate the myth of Venice was Gasparo Contarini's *De magistratibus et republica Venetorum* which was translated into English by Lewis Lewkenor in 1599. David McPherson acknowledges that there "has never been a thorough study" of Lewkenor's work, but suggests that it must have been well received at Court, since James knighted him in 1603.³⁵ In a Christianised version of Aristotle's philosophy, Lewkenor presents government as an act of wisdom designed to provide a constitution in which the framework creates the rationality that individuals might lack. Decision-making is controlled by institutions which ensure the virtue of every decision-maker. Lewkenor, sees the institutions of Venice as reconciling security and liberty, order and

³³ The enduring power of the myth is revealed in Donald Queller's study of recent scholars who still uncritically accept it. Donald E. Queller, *The Venetian Patriciate: Reality versus Myth* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

³⁴ David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 100

³⁵ David McPherson, "Lewkenor's Venice and its Sources," *Renaissance Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (1988):459. <http://www.jstor.org/ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/2861757>.

justice, and founded on the collective gatherings of patricians, who are willing to sacrifice self-interest and personal ambition, having instead “an especiall care to conserue the common good.”³⁶ The Duke also, is represented as caring for the common good, ensuring “that euerything may with an excellent harmony seeme to tune to the common good & ciuil vniion”.³⁷ Lewkenor records aspects of the Venetian provisions for the poor that have similarities to Utopian fiction. People who have in the past employed themselves in honest trade and service to the commonwealth and become too weak or old to continue are given free housing and a stipend or allowance. In addition, from all buying and selling of merchandise a certain sum is set aside to be divided among poor, aged mariners. Venetians may not be inherently more virtuous than other men, but their government makes them so, and the patriciate’s provision of justice creates domestic peace.

The myth of Venice was influential on writers interested in the political and ethical ideas associated with republicanism, seeming to offer an alternative that they might seek to emulate. However, revisionist accounts of Venice, both at the time and in historical analysis, have called into question the accuracy of the myth. As James Grubb points out, “more candid contemporaries of Contarini … testified to the widening ideological gulf between rulers and subjects”, the myth of a homogenous and harmonious patriciate was inaccurate and, in reality, Venice was controlled by “a restricted oligarchy”.³⁸ Lewkenor was forced to admit that it was the exclusion of the common people from the Great Council that guaranteed its success, since

³⁶ Robert Finlay, “The Immortal Republic: The Myth of Venice during the Italian Wars (1494-1530),” *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30, no. 4 (1999).

<http://www.jstor.org.exproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/2544605>. Lewis Lewkenor, *The commonwealth and gouernment of Venice* 38. Referring to Venice as a commonwealth, Lewkenor writes, “The offices are so diuided among the citizens, that inso much as may be, euery family & kindred may be pertaker of the publike honors and offices, and yet in that measure, that not euery one do gourne, but those onely that doe excel the rest in honestie and wisdom, and are deemed to be such men, as will more regard the publike, then the priuate commoditie”, 33.

³⁷ Lewkenor, *The commonwealth and gouernment of Venice*, 41. In speaking of the common good in terms of harmony, Lewkenor is adopting a particularly Aristotelian concept. In *Politics* Aristotle connects musical harmony to the soul, but he also applies it to the running of the city. As musical harmony would cease to exist if music were turned into a single beat, so the city “is a plurality” and will cease to function as a city if unity is imposed. (*Politics*, 123b29). Not everyone in Venice, according to Lewkenor, needs to be treated in the same way and its constitution makes it clear that they are not.

³⁸ James S. Grubb, “When Myths Lose Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography, 51-53.

“it was wisely ordained of our ancestors, that the whole people should not haue power in the commonwealth, which they desired to fashion in the highest degree of perfection.”³⁹ An important aspect of the myth of Venice was the readiness of the patriciate to subordinate their self-interest and personal ambition to the common good, but Robert Finlay believes that, in reality, they were “rarely so self-sacrificing and compliant.”⁴⁰ Sixteenth-century jurist, Jean Bodin, questioned the extent to which the system of mixed government provided stability, and the English ambassador to Venice, Sir Henry Wotton, attested to the punitive nature of the justice system, claiming that he frequently used his influence to mitigate the severity of Venetian law.⁴¹ Grubb concludes that the myth of Venice is, in fact, “a many layered confection … an accumulation of historical explanation and contingent propaganda.”⁴² Donald Queller’s balanced evaluation criticises the political reality that lies beneath the myth, but at the same time pays tribute to its enduring power. In political terms the myth functioned to sanction the control of the patriciate. However, it also represented an ideal which was effective in encouraging behaviour that promoted the common good, even though the ideal itself was unattainable.⁴³

The myth of Venice flourished, in part, because it challenged orthodox ideas about civic rule, seemed to come closer to Aristotelian theories about the city state, and provided an alternative to the perceived absolutism of other governments. Whilst it was doubtless used as political propaganda, it also functioned to persuade people from all walks of life that the ideal could become a reality. Despite the importance of images of religion, seen especially in the association of Venice with the Virgin and its patron saint, St Mark, the dominant emphasis

³⁹ Lewkenor, *The commonwealth and gouernment of Venice*, 16-17. Contarini’s suspicion of the political abilities of the common people is reflected in the power structures of most Utopian fiction and in the disempowerment of the Indians in American Utopian societies.

⁴⁰ Finlay, “The Immortal Republic”, 939.

⁴¹ Richard H. Perkinson, “Volpone and the Reputation of Venetian Justice,” *The Modern Language Review* 35, no. 1 (1940). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3717404>.

⁴² Grubb, “When Myths Lose Power, 43.

⁴³ Queller, *The Venetian Patriciate: Reality versus Myth*.

was secular, reflecting the classical belief that the common good was achieved through virtuous civic institutions. However, although some provisions were made to alleviate the poverty of the working people, the government reflected the hierarchical nature of Greek and early modern societies. Lewkenor's approval of the policy of excluding the "common people" from the process of decision making indicates their marginal importance in policies designed to promote the civic common good.⁴⁴ The myth of Venice did not involve any radical re-evaluation of either the classical tradition or human nature, but it did constitute a challenge to contemporary concepts of political rule.

The search for the ideal in the New World

The search for an ideal in the myth of Venice and utopian fiction envisioned it in terms of a city state. In the early modern period there was a competing longing for an ideal world that imagined achieving happiness very differently, by turning time back to a distant past. This was conceptualised in the search for Paradise and the hope of recovering a classical golden age. The search for Paradise has a long tradition in the European imagination.

Alessandro Scarfi points out that for more than a thousand years theologians and map-makers wondered about where the Garden of Eden was located and, from the eight-century onwards, map makers placed it in the physical world, usually somewhere considered to be geographically inaccessible.⁴⁵ Richard Grove refers to "the Edenic island discourse":

During the fifteenth century the task of locating Eden ... had already been served by the appropriation of the newly discovered and colonised islands as paradises. [They] offered the possibility of redemption, a realm in which Paradise might be recreated or realised on earth.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Lewkenor, *The commonwealth and gouernment of Venice*, 16.

⁴⁵ Alessandro Scarfi, *Mapping Paradise: A History of Heaven on Earth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

⁴⁶ Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial expansion, tropical island Edens and the origins of environmentalism 1600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 38.

Viewed in this light, the Americas seemed briefly to offer the possibility that the dream world we create out of our own desires could actually exist.⁴⁷ When Europeans discovered this new world, populated by Indians who were unashamedly naked, they equated them with the innocence of Adam and Eve before the Fall. In a letter to Ferdinand and Isabella, King Manuel of Portugal, referring to Pedro Vaz de Caminha's report on the Tupinamba Indians, emphasised the religious significance of their nakedness when he wrote, "he found the people nude as in the first innocence, gentle and peaceable".⁴⁸ Viewing the Indians through the lens of Christian theology, Europeans initially expressed excitement at the idea that a prelapsarian world might exist, where people lived in a sinless state of happiness. In *The City of God* Augustine had suggested that humans would have lived a social life even if the Fall had not occurred, but in the state of prelapsarian innocence there would have been no need of political authority.⁴⁹ Peter Martyr's account in *De Orbe Novo* of the communal way of life of the Tainos in Cuba seemed to be a living proof of Augustine's theory of prelapsarian innocence.⁵⁰

The hope of finding an unfallen world in the Americas linked conceptually with the classical myth of a golden age. Italian humanists, fascinated by Boccaccio's account of the discovery of the Canary Islands, thought it provided evidence that a society existed which seemed to live out the reality of pastoral idylls described in classical texts. In these accounts the inhabitants existed happily in a pure state of nature, free from care and engaged in honest toil.⁵¹ In his record of the voyages of Columbus in *De Orbe Novo* Peter Martyr can be seen as writing within this tradition when he compares Indian women dancing to "shapely Dryads or

⁴⁷ Northrop Frye actually makes this comment about the "green world" in some of Shakespeare's comedies in *Anatomy of Criticism* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 183.

⁴⁸ William Brooks Greenlee, ed., *The Voyage of Pedro Álvares Cabral to Brazil and India* (London: Hakluyt Society, MCMXXVIII), 43.

⁴⁹ Augustine, *The City of God* Vol. 1, XIII.13.

⁵⁰ Peter Martyr, *Columbianum Vol. V: Selections from Peter Martyr*, ed. Geoffrey Eatough (Brepolis, Belgium: Brepolis, 1998).

⁵¹ David Abulafia, *The discovery of mankind: Atlantic encounters in the age of Columbus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

nymphs, the natives of fountains, about whom the stories of antiquity are told.”⁵²

Commenting on the life of the Tainos he theorises, “Theirs is a golden age: they do not hedge their estates with ditches, walls or hedges; they live with open gardens; without laws, without books, without judges, of their own nature, they cultivate what is right.”⁵³ In a similar vein, the account of the first English voyage to Virginia records, “We found the people most gentle, loving, and faithful, void of all guile and treason, and such as live after the manner of the golden age.”⁵⁴ The concept of Indians as survivors of a golden age in which people coexisted without laws connected the classical tradition to religion, as it seemed to correspond to Augustine’s theory that political authority only developed as the necessary result of postlapsarian sin.⁵⁵ In his collection of engravings that accompanied Hariot’s account of his time in Virginia, Theodore de Bry included an allegorical engraving of the Fall. He contrasted a wretched Adam and Eve in the foreground with a background representation of a woman contentedly holding a child and a man productively working the soil. The implication is that the Algonquians are still prelapsarian and, in comparison with Adam and Eve, happy.⁵⁶ De Bry’s engravings give the proportions of Greek statues to his Indian subjects, so his religious message is overlaid with a classical interpretation of a golden age that the Indians seem to represent.⁵⁷ Belief in the possible existence of such a world was attractive to Europeans coming from societies that were far from ideal, and in broader terms initially seemed to offer the possibilities of constructing new, but understandable, cultural landscapes.

⁵² Martyr, *Columbianum Vol. V: Selections from Peter Martyr*, 77.

⁵³ Ibid., 69.

⁵⁴ A. L. Rowse, *The First Colonists: Hakluyt’s Voyages to North America* (London: The Folio Society, 1986), 59.

⁵⁵ Augustine, *The City of God*.

⁵⁶ De Bry, Theodor, “Engraving of Adam and Eve,” in Thomas Hariot, *A brief and true report of the new found land of Virginia: of the commodities and of the nature and manners of the natural inhabitants*. (Francoforti ad Moenum: Typis Ioannis Wechelli, sumtibus vero Theodori de Bry anno M D XC, Venales reperiuntur in officina Sigismundi Feirabendii, 1590), 36.

⁵⁷ Patricia Gravatt, “Rereading Theodore De Bry’s Black Legend,” in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empire*, ed. Margaret R Greer, Walter D. Mignolo and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 227-228.

Early responses of wonder and awe

The quest for the ideal is an important aspect of early modern thinking about happiness, and formed part of a wider, early modern interest in wonder. Stephen Greenblatt has pointed out the radical break from the known that occurred on these voyages and the significance of the reactions of wonder as the early travellers responded with emotional intensity to their experience of the marvellous.⁵⁸ In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle theorises that wonder is generated by consideration of a difficult problem, but dissipates when a solution is found.⁵⁹ Wonder is, therefore distinguished from rational knowledge; rational knowledge involves more than mere sense perception, which is available to all.⁶⁰ Aristotelian theory does not seem completely adequate to account for the intensity of some reactions to the New World, or to provide an explanation for the positive emotions that many early travellers experienced. A more useful explanation of the experience of wonder and awe is provided by modern psychologists, who link it with positive emotions and happiness. Abraham Maslow writes about “peak experiences”, which are associated with wonder and make people feel differently, “the person is flooded with feelings of wonder, awe, joy, love and gratitude.”⁶¹ Dacher Keltner and Jonathan Haidt’s analysis of awe and elevation provides a useful model to evaluate the response of Europeans to the Americas. Keltner and Haidt point to the often contradictory elements in these emotions. They result from an attempt to understand

⁵⁸ Greenblatt refers to, “the marvellous gestures toward the world by registering an overpowering intensity of response ... deep within, at the vital, emotional center of the witness.” Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, 16.

⁵⁹ “For all men begin, as we have said, by being amazed that things are as they are, as puppets are amazing to those who have not yet understood how they work ... Finally, however, in the progress of our science, the directly contrary and, as the proverb has it, the better state, is reached, the state reached by those who, as in the cases mentioned, have accepted instruction.” Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Hope (New York: The University of Michigan Press, 1975), 983a12-19.

⁶⁰ “... he is wise who understands difficult matters ... whereas sense perception is common to all, and therefore easy and not the mark of a wise man.” Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 982a 9-13.

⁶¹ Maslow is a humanistic psychologist, but his work was very influential on the development of positive psychology. Maslow wrote about “those extraordinary self-transcendent moments that feel qualitatively different from ordinary life”. Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, values and peak experiences* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1964), 205.

something outside the normal experience and can be frightening, but they can also enlighten and lead to mental growth as the observer comes to terms with challenging ideas and accommodates truths never before known.⁶² Some Europeans responded to their experiences with awe and elevation, but they were often less successful in coming to terms with the challenges these experiences provided, and lacked the conceptual flexibility to accommodate new truths.

Reports of the early encounters focus primarily on the marvels seen by the travellers; when these early voyagers observed the landscape, they must have felt that they had truly discovered an ideal world. Their amazement is reflected in the language of the written accounts, which testify to the abundance and fertility of nature. Peter Martyr records Columbus' report of palm groves and fruit trees on Santo Domingo, where branches were "laden with flowers and fruit constantly drooped over their heads."⁶³ Ribaut describes Florida as "aboundyng in honye, venison, wylde foule, forestes, woods of al sorts", and Laudonnière writes enthusiastically about "great store of mulbeary trees" with "an infinite number of silke wormes".⁶⁴ Similarly, in Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, Virginia appears to be a land of plenty, "full of Deere, Conies, Hares, and Fowle, even in the middest of Summer in incredible abundance".⁶⁵ The listing of the wonders of the vegetation and the wild life creates a cumulative sense of the excitement that underpins the records; on less frequent occasions the writers refer specifically to their emotions. Laudonnière is "delighted" with Florida and

⁶² "... awe involves a challenge to or negation of mental structures when they fail to make sense of an experience of something vast. Such experiences can be disorienting or even frightening ... They also involve feelings of enlightenment ... when mental structures expand to accommodate truths never before known." Dacher Keltner and Jonathan Haidt, "Approaching awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion," *Cognition and Emotion* 17, no. 2 (2003): 304. DOI: 10.1080/02699930302297.

⁶³ Martyr, *Columbianum Vol. V: Selections from Peter Martyr*, 76.

⁶⁴ Jean Ribaut, *The whole and true discouerye of Terra Florida: conteyning as well the wonderfull straunge natures and maners of the people, with the merueylyous commodities and treasures of the country: as also the pleasaunt portes, hauens, and ways therevnto neuer founde out before the last yere 1562. Written in French by Captaine Ribauld the first that whollye discoursed the same. And nowe newly set for the in Englishe the xxx of May. 1563.* (London: Rouland Hall, for Thomas Hacket, 1563), 11. EEBO. René Goulaine de Laudonnière, *Histoire de la Floride. Selections* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1587), 6.

⁶⁵ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation. In Twelve Volumes Vol. VIII* (Glasgow: James Mac Lehose and Sons, MCMIV), 299.

feels “ioyfull”, and on his second voyage he comments, “briefly the place is so pleasant, that those which are melancholic would be enforced to change their humour.”⁶⁶ In a similar fashion, Ribaut responds “with unspeakable pleasure” to “the odorous smel & beautie” of the coast and feels “a pleasure not able to be expressed in tongue” at “the sight of the fayre medowes”.⁶⁷ For some, this happiness translated into a religious experience – Ribaut describes the “woods wherewith god hath decked euery way the fayre lande” and Léry, is moved to quote Psalm 104, which tells us that the earth is full of God’s riches, foreshadowing Romanticism in seeing Nature as attesting to the power of the divine.⁶⁸

The happiness and excitement the travellers experienced as they witnessed the prodigality of Nature were shaped by the context of demographic changes in Europe. The first half of the sixteenth century witnessed a decline in intensive agriculture in England and Spain and a move towards intensive farming, especially sheep farming. In Spain, rural poverty caused people to migrate to the cities and to the New World; in England practices of enclosure lead to unemployment and dispossession, a development that More criticises in Utopia through the character of Raphaell Hythlodaye.⁶⁹ To travellers coming from a society in which an increasing number of people were being cut off from contact with sources of production, the prodigality of the Americas must have seemed to offer an ideal alternative. In *A briefe and true report*, Thomas Harriot describes how the soil and climate enable the

⁶⁶ Laudonnière, *Histoire de la Floride*, 7, 22.

⁶⁷ Ribaut, *The whole and true discouerye of Terra Florida*, 9, 11.

⁶⁸ Ribaut, *The whole and true discouerye of Terra Florida*, 9. “il se puisse trouuer oyseaux de plus esmerueillable beauté, aussi en les considerant y a-il bien dequoy, non pas magnifier nature comme sont les prophanes, mais l’excellent & admirable Createur d’iceux.” (“But as for the plumage (as you will judge for yourselves after hearing about it), you could hardly believe that there exist in the whole world birds of more marvellous beauty: in contemplating them, one is moved not to glorify nature, as do the profane, but rather their great and wonderful Creator”, 87. Jean de Léry, *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, ed. Jean-Claude Morisot (Genéve: Librairie Droz, 1975), 150. Jean de Léry, *History of a voyage to the land of Brazil, otherwise called America*, trans. Janet Whatley (Berkely, California: University of California Press, 1992).

⁶⁹ Wilhelm Abel, *Agricultural fluctuations in Europe: from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries*, trans. Olive Ordish (London: Methuen, 1980). Hythlodaye says that sheep farmers “leauue no grounde for tillage: they enclose all in pasture … throw down hoyses; they plucke down townes”. They also “compasse abowte and inclose many thousand acres of grounde to gather within one pale or hedge”. As a result “the husbandmen be thrust owte of their owne … awaye they trudge, I say, fyndyng no places to rest in.” More, *The Utopia of Sir Thomas More: In Latin from the edition of March 1518*, 52, 53.

Indians in the town of Secota to grow three varieties of maize that ripen at different times, enough to last for whole year.⁷⁰ Beneath the engraving “Storing their crops in the public granary”, that illustrates the Ribaut account of his voyage to Florida, Theodor de Bry refers to the “abundance of fruits” which are stored and which the Indians can access whenever they need to do so, so that “no-one fears being cheated”⁷¹ When Ribaut, planning to return to France, asked for volunteers to stay and hold Florida for France, all the soldiers expressed a wish to stay.⁷²

Despite initial enthusiasm, the radical break from the known caused by the discovery of the New World confronted Europeans with ways of life and systems of values that they had not hitherto imagined and challenged their preconceptions about the nature of happiness. Richard Grove believes that after the fifteenth century, tropical environments were increasingly being used as “the symbolic landscapes and aspirations of the western imagination”.⁷³ Janet Whatley focuses on the significance of the Tupinamba for the Western imagination, claiming that out of all the peoples encountered in the Americas, “the Tupinamba entered the most freely into the European imagination … they were the all-purpose allegorical figure of America”.⁷⁴ She refers to European “experiments in epistemology”, citing the significance of reports of the Tupinambas, who lived happily in the natural world, as providing a laboratory for experiments.⁷⁵ The culture of the Tupinamba was recorded in detail by the Calvinist missionary, Jean de Léry, who lived with them for a

⁷⁰ Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New found Land of Virginia, directed to the investors, farmers and well-wishers of the project of colonising and planting there* (Imprinted at London in 1588).

⁷¹ Stefan Lorant, ed. *The New World: The first Pictures of America: Made by John White and Jacques le Moyne and Engraved by Theodor de Bry* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946), Plate 22.

⁷² “I had not so soone set forth this to our company, but many of them assayed to tary there, yet wyth suche a good wyll and iolye corage, that suche a number dyd thus offer themselues, as we had muche to doe to staye theyr importunitie.” Ribaut, *The whole and true discouerye of Terra Florida*, 22.

⁷³ Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 3

⁷⁴ Janet Whatley, Introduction to Léry, *History of a voyage to the land of Brazil*, xxiv.

⁷⁵ Janet Whatley, “Savage Hierarchies: French Catholic Observers of the New World,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 17, no. 3 (1986): 320. <http://www.jstor.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/2540324>. The Tupinamba were observed by Hans Staden, André Thevet and Jean de Léry (and later by Claude d’Abbeville).

number of months. Léry writes of the happiness he experienced from this encounter. He describes his enjoyment as he watches their infantry in battle, and the marvel of their arrows flying in the air and sparkling in the sun, explaining that he had never felt so much pleasure in watching the European infantry with their gilded helmets and shining arms. Whatley believes that in Europe, where chivalry was dying out, readers saw in the plumed costumes a comparison to the knights of Agincourt. They would have responded with a nostalgic longing for the past, another example of the desire to wind time back to an earlier existence that was perceived to be an ideal.⁷⁶ Léry responded personally with awe and admiration to the exuberance and spectacle of the Tupinamba. He refers to his amazement at the marvellous harmony of their singing, to the joy he felt at listening to the measured harmonies, and to being transported with delight.⁷⁷ When he recounts how his heart trembles, he describes the symptoms that positive psychologist, Haidt, observed in people experiencing awe and elevation. Haidt records, “People talked about an open, warm, or glowing feeling. Some specifically mentioned the heart”.⁷⁸ Léry uses the French word, *ioye*, for joy several times, to express his own feelings; he refers to the “happiness of his spirit” (“*contentement en mon esprit*”) and he also uses *ravi* for being transported or rapt. Léry’s journal attempted to persuade his European readers of the value of the Tupinamba way of life. He saw this exotic culture as one that promoted the happiness of its members. He writes of the Tupinamba in all

⁷⁶ “... nevertheless I have never taken so much pleasure in seeing the infantry, with their gilded helmets and shining arms, as I delighted then in seeing those savages do battle.” “... it was also a marvel to see so many arrows fly in the air and sparkle in the sunbeams”. Léry, *History of a voyage to the land of Brazil*, 120.

⁷⁷ “i’eu lors en recompense vne telle ioye ... i’en demeuray tout rauï: mais aussi toutes les fois qu’il m’en ressouuiét, le Coeur m’en tressaillant, il me semble que ie les aye encore aux oreilles”, 147 (“I received in recompense such joy, hearing the measured harmonies of such a multitude ... I stood there transported with delight. Whenever I remember it my heart trembles, and it seem their voices are still in my ears”), 144. “... faisans resoner leur voix d’vn accord si mereilleux, que m'estant vn peu raffeuré”, 243 (“... making their voices resound in a harmony so marvellous”), 141. Quotations in French (here and elsewhere) are from Jean de Léry, *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, ed. Jean-Claude Morisot (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1975). Quotations in English (here and elsewhere) are from Jean de Léry, *History of a voyage to the land of Brazil, otherwise called America*, trans. Janet Whatley (Berkely, Calif.: University of California Press, 1992).

⁷⁸ Richard Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 194.

their magnificence, frolicking and enjoying the good times that they know so well how to have. He reports that they never feel melancholy, but are accustomed to assemble every day to dance and make merry in their village and he observes that they love people who are gay, joyful, and liberal, and hate those who are taciturn, stingy, and melancholy.⁷⁹ In a significant example of word choice, Léry uses the same words to describe his own feelings and the emotions he observes in the Tupinamba, revealing his instinctive understanding of their shared humanity.

The challenge to accepted ideologies

Not surprisingly, as Europeans attempted to comprehend the new and unfamiliar, there could be significant failures of understanding in their relationships with the people they encountered. Léry records a telling incident that reveals the cultural misunderstandings that complicated so many of the early encounters. The French see a canoe overturn and attempt to rescue its occupants, only to find the Tupinamba laughing at their ignorance in supposing that they are drowning, since they are perfectly at home in the sea. Léry had come to Brazil as a member of a Protestant mission. Whatley sees the canoe incident as a symbolic representation of the Tupinambas' self-sufficiency and joy in living, and their resistance to the happiness of spiritual salvation which, Calvinist Léry believed, could only be attained through the grace of God. For Whatley the vitality of Léry's text is a product of a "tension between disapproval and delight."⁸⁰ Although he wrote about his experiences twenty years later, when his identity

⁷⁹ "... en leur magnificence, gandir & iouir du bon téps qu'ils se seauent bié donner", 108. ("The Tupi in all their magnificence, frolicking and enjoying the good times that they know so well how to have"), 64. "... qu'eux n'engendrans iamis melancolie, ont ceste coustume de s'assembler tous les iours pour danser & s'esiouir en leur villages", 119. ("... they never breed melancholy, but rather assemble every day to dance and make merry in their village"), 76. "Mais quoy qu'il en fait i'ay obserué, que comme ils ayment les homes gays, ioyeux, & liberaux, par le contraire ils haissent tellement les taciturnes, chiches & melancholiques", 172 ("I have observed among them that just as they love those who are gay, joyful, and liberal, on the contrary they so hate those who are taciturn, stingy, and melancholy"), 99.

⁸⁰ Whately, in Léry, *History of a voyage to the land of Brazil, otherwise called America*, xxxvi.

as a Calvinist pastor was more definitively established, his account provides a record of the resilience of a culture that was so different from his own.⁸¹ Léry failed to convert his hosts, but he celebrates the beauty of the people and the exuberance of their way of life. His *History* suggests the inadequacy of the European belief that man can only reach perfection through religious salvation or participation in the right form of civil society. This represents the genesis of a radically different understanding of human nature, one in which people like Léry focused on the innocence of the Indians, and defenders of their life style, like Bartolomé de Casas, emphasised the corrupting effects of Spanish civilisation. Montaigne would adopt it in his essay about the cannibals, and later Locke would develop in greater detail the theory that man is born innocent and corrupted by society.

Faced with such a different way of life, Europeans often found that their religious, philosophical and political assumptions were called into question as they encountered problems for which there was often no easy solution. Exposure to the culture of the Tupinamba, for example, provided a radical challenge to Aristotelian ideas of happiness. Aristotle had distinguished between the moral worth of *hedonia* and *eudaimonia*, concluding that the life of the senses was an inferior type of happiness. The Tupinamba do not fulfil Aristotle's criterion of contributing to the life of the *polis*. Rather, Léry acknowledges that their pleasure-loving culture incorporates a social ritual that binds their society and seems to offer an alternative to early modernity's Aristotelian inheritances. He recognises that they were enacting the political norms of their society when they gathered joyfully round the *boucan* in which human flesh was cooked. This interpretation accords with the belief by positive psychologists, Peterson and Seligman, that a sense of integration into the community

⁸¹ Villegagnon, the leader of the French expedition, proved to be a threat to Léry and his friends; for two months, while they waited for passage back to France, they depended on the Tupinamba for their survival. Although they made some attempts to preach the Gospel, "the reflectiveness and intimacy of this account may be due in part to a kind of detachment concomitant with the status of a refugee". Léry, *History of a voyage to the land of Brazil*, xxi-xxii.

is an important component of happiness.⁸² Carol Ryff and Burton Singer develop this concept as they distinguish between deontological and consequentialist theories in moral philosophy – “deontological theories rest on principles of obligation”, whilst consequentialist theories “focus on the outcome or consequences to define right moral action.”⁸³ Their argument that “some kinds of human goods are perhaps better than others” focuses on defining morality by the outcomes it produces. Right living is connected to positive health and to flourishing, which are associated with “high levels of purpose, growth, and quality ties to others”.⁸⁴ This theory provides a useful lens through which to assess the happiness of the Tupinamba, since it offers a broader understanding of happiness, one that is rooted in the realities of social living rather than the ideals of philosophy.

In the process of encountering the New World, Eurocentric theories about the relationship of the citizen to government and conceptions of the common good were contested. The Europeans, not surprisingly, attempted to understand the new in terms of the known, especially Aristotelian preconceptions about human nature and the teleological view of man being directed to the good in political terms. Ultimately, Aristotle does not provide a moral standard against which the experience of colonisation can be tested. Whilst his theory made happiness available selectively to Athenian citizens, its application to the Indians denied it to all. In addition, his specific identification of happiness with the political association of the *polis* provides no guide to explaining the happiness of the Indians, living in a state of nature. The discovery of people like the Tupinamba challenged European conceptions of political and social order. André Thevet condemned them unreservedly, describing them as “violent brute[s], without faith, without law, without religion, without any

⁸² Christopher Peterson and Martin E. P. Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁸³ Carol D. Ryff and Burton H. Singer, “Know thyself and become what you are: A eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being,” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 9 (2006): 30. 2013. DOI 10.1007/s10902-006-9019-0.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 31.

civilised behaviour".⁸⁵ The most confrontational aspect of their life was the practice of cannibalism. As popularised by the shipwrecked Hessian, Hans Staden, and later by Léry, the Tupinamba became the prototype of cannibalism in the Western imagination and provided the source for Montaigne's later essay "On the cannibals".⁸⁶ Both Staden and Léry were fascinated by the paradoxical nature of Tupi cannibalism. When Léry describes the cultural practice of cannibalism among the Tupinamba, he shows an understanding that what is abhorrent in one culture may have legitimacy in another, and that the judgement is formed by the moral values of the beholder.⁸⁷ Although he expresses his horror, exclaiming, "O more than prodigious cruelty", he goes on to show an awareness of cultural relativism in arguing that their behaviour is no worse than that of the French usurers who, in a different way, eat everyone alive.⁸⁸ On the one hand Léry gives expression to a "civilised" response, labelling the actions as murder, on the other hand he sees it as part of a ritual act, carried out on an enemy, providing honour and glory to the perpetrators.⁸⁹ His response must be seen in terms of the context in which he was writing; during the religious wars in France, specifically the Massacre of St Bartholomew's Day, Léry tells us, people were seen roasting and eating their

⁸⁵ "... bête brute, sans foi, sans loi, sans religion, sans civilité aucune", my translation. André Thevet, *Les Singulitez de la France antarctique autrement nommée Amerique: Le Brézil de cannibals au XVIe siècle* (Paris: La Découverte/Maspero, 1983), 51. EEBO.

⁸⁶ The crude woodcuts that accompanied Staden's narrative *The Captivity of Hans Staden of Hesse, in A.D. 1547-1555, Among the Wild Tribes of Eastern Brazil* are the earliest images published of interactions with the Indians and provided the source for de Bry's later, more sophisticated engravings. Harry J. Brown. "Hans Staden Among the Tupinambas. Grand Voyages to America (1593) Theodor de Bry". <http://www.lehigh.edu/~ejg1/natimag?Harry.html>.

⁸⁷ This understanding is developed in more detail in Montaigne's essay "Of custom, and not easily changing an accepted law". Montaigne asks, "Is there any opinion so bizarre ... that habit has not planted and established it by law in the regions where she saw fit to do so?" Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1957), 79.

⁸⁸ Léry, *History of a voyage to the land of Brazil*, 126. "... think more carefully about the things that go on every day over here among us: In the first place, if you consider in all candor what our big usurers do, sucking blood and marrow, and eating everyone alive – widows, orphans, and other poor people, whose throats it would be better to cut once and for all, than to make them linger in misery – you will say that they are even more cruel than the savages I speak of", 132.

⁸⁹ "... ô cruté plus que prodigieuse", 218 ("oh more than prodigious cruelty"), 126; "Quant à celuy qui ont commis ces muertes reputans cela à grand gloire & honneur", 221 ("As for those who have committed these murders, they think that it is to their great glory and honor", 128); "... estans dereches resiouis à l'entour des boucans", 220 ("When the flesh of a prisoner is cooked, they "gather again joyfully around the boucans", 127). Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, ed. Jean-Claude Morisot (Genéve: Librairie Droz, 1975). Léry *History of a voyage to the land of Brazil*.

enemies' hearts, and in the siege and famine of Sancerre starving defenders of the city ate each other. The breakdown of political, religious and social order in Europe showed the monstrous and cruel things that apparently civilised people were capable of doing, and contrasted unfavourably with the ritual nature of cannibalism that unites the community to maintain social cohesion.⁹⁰ Janet Whatley believes that Europeans were ready to hear two apparently contradictory messages: that the New World, with its "raw abundance" was waiting to receive the benefits of Christianity and European civilisation, and that the "vigor and natural virtue" of the people who populated this world "put Europeans to shame".⁹¹ For Léry, the Tupinamba were not merely a *tabula rasa* awaiting the benefits of civilisation, but a people whose capacity for happiness and social cohesion challenged European ideas about order, both religious and secular. They refused to convert and attain the happiness of the afterlife, and they lived an exuberant cannibalistic life that had little in common with Aristotelian theories of happiness. They raised questions about whether centralised authority and a recognisable state provided for human happiness, and whether people might be happier in an alternative system.⁹²

Aristotelian theories of happiness, which involved contributions to the life of the *polis*, and early modern concern for the common good in cities and towns, did not equip Europeans to sympathise with the Indian way of life, which was lived in harmony with the natural world. Aristotle believed that residence in the city is necessary for a civilised life. Since "man is by nature a political animal", the city is "the final and perfect association", the only place in which he can pursue his *telos* by practising virtue and pursuing happiness.⁹³ This belief was reinforced by the Christian inheritance from Augustine, who conceived of

⁹⁰ "... d'une façon plus barbare & cruelle que celles des sauvages", 229.

⁹¹ Janet Whatley, "Impression and Initiation: Jean de Lery's Brazil Voyage," *Modern Languages Study* 19, no. 3 (1989): 15. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/3195100>.

⁹² Harry Liebersohn, "Discovering Indigenous Nobility: Tocqueville, Chamisso and Romantic Travel Writing," *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 3 (1994).

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/2167768>.

⁹³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a 2ff, 1252b27.

earthly and heavenly realms as cities. There were no cities in the Caribbean islands or on the east coast of North America – the engravings by Theodor de Bry of the towns of Pomeiooc and Secota in Virginia represent settlements no larger than a medieval village.⁹⁴ Within the context of the city, Aristotle limits the value of bodily pleasures, which can be experienced by anyone, even a slave, asserting that happiness is rational activity in accordance with virtue and that reason and practical wisdom determine what the virtuous action is in a given situation.⁹⁵ The paintings of John White, which were designed to accompany the narrative of Thomas Harriot's discoveries in North America, suggest an understanding of happiness that is radically different from the Aristotelian concept. In White's paintings the natural environment abounds in fish and game, and the fertile soil produces three crops planted in sequence. Depleted land is set aside to be reused when it has regained its fertility. Paul Hulton believes that, in his picture of Indians fishing, White "succeeds in planting in our minds an unforgettable image of shallow waters teeming with life, human and animal, against the low hills of this New World the English were experiencing for the first time."⁹⁶ The picture is a composite, since it includes some deep water fish that would not normally have been found in the shallows, but it creates a powerful image of peace and natural abundance. This painting captures the wonder White felt at observing the scene; it is a practical example of Keltner and Haidt's definition of elevation as an emotional response to moral beauty or human goodness.⁹⁷ It also conveys some understanding that the Indians lived in harmony with a natural world that sustained them, and that there was a value in the happiness of such a life,

⁹⁴ Paul Hulton, *America 1585. The Complete Drawings of John White* (Milan, Italy: University of North Carolina Press and British Museum Publications, 1984), Figure 23.

⁹⁵ "And any chance person – even a slave – can enjoy the bodily pleasures no less than the best man; but no one assigns to a slave a share in happiness – unless he assigns to him also a share in human life. For happiness does not lie in such occupations, but, as we have said before, in virtuous activities." Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177a, 6-11.

⁹⁶ Hulton, *America 1585*, 37.

⁹⁷ Dacher Keltner and Jonathan Haidt, "Approaching awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion," *Cognition and Emotion* 17, no. 2 (2003): 30. DOI: 10.1080/0269930302297.

which should be observed and accepted rather than changed.⁹⁸ Hulton claims that, in representing the Carolina Algonquins before they were affected by contact with Europeans, White records their way of life with a clarity that has no equal in the art of the time.⁹⁹ This would have come into conflict with the English tradition of associating improvement of the land with clearing it, and with the developing practice of enclosures, which imposed control over the natural environment and appropriation of its profits by the few.¹⁰⁰

Eurocentric ideas about human nature were challenged by the encounters of early voyagers with people who seemed to be so different. This had implications for both religious doctrine and political theory. As Europeans observed ways of behaviour that were foreign to them, such as the Indian relationship with the land and practices of cannibalism, they grappled with the question of whether humanity was an absolute concept, and whether the Indians were as human as the Europeans and therefore entitled to happiness. The theological significance of this issue caused Pope Paul III to issue a Papal Bull, “*Sublimus Dei*”, in which he asserted that the Indians were human – and therefore entitled to the benefits of conversion to Catholicism (and, by implication, to the happiness of an afterlife).¹⁰¹ If the Indians were

⁹⁸ Haidt has addressed the concept of elevation in more detail. In a controlled scientific study he found that it is linked to the production of the hormone oxytocin which causes bonding and feelings of love, trust and openness. Making philosophical connections to the Greek concept of *agape*, he also observes that church attendance can cause collective elevation, which he identifies with a love of all humankind and a belief that God resides in all people. He also acknowledges that although elevation in some cases brings out the “higher, nobler self”, in other cases it does not. He concludes, “...some people see tolerance and acceptance as part of their nobler selves; others feel that they can best honor God by working to change society and its laws to conform to the ethic of divinity, even if that means imposing religious laws on people of other faiths.” Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis. Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 199-200.

⁹⁹ Hulton, *America* 1585.

¹⁰⁰ Patricia Seed has described how English settlers imposed “their own powerful cultural symbols of ownership – houses and fences – upon the landscape”. They believed that subduing and replenishing the land, practices that the Indians did not employ, fulfilled the Biblical injunction (Genesis 1:28) to “multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it” and justified their appropriation of Indian territories. Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 25.

¹⁰¹ “We, who, though unworthy, exercise on earth the power of our Lord and seek with all our might to bring those sheep of His flock who are outside into the fold committed to our charge, consider, however, that the Indians are truly men and that they are not only capable of understanding the Catholic Faith but, according to our information, they desire exceedingly to receive it.” Pope Paul III, “*Sublimus Dei*” 1537 (Papal Encyclicals Online). <http://www.papalencyclicals.net.Paul03/p3subli.htm>. Bartolomé de Las Casas reports that the Cuban cacique, Hatuey, rejected the happiness of a Christian afterlife if it involved an eternity in the company of the

fully human, they could also be considered in terms of the Aristotelian concept of natural law, which Aristotle believed was a universal phenomenon binding on all men.¹⁰² In *The Nicomachean Ethics* he distinguishes between laws enacted by humans, which are not everywhere the same, since they may vary with custom, and natural law “which everywhere has the same force and does not exist by people’s thinking this or that”.¹⁰³ This concept was sometimes appropriated by defenders of the Indian way of life, who focused on how they lived in accordance with natural law. In describing Tainos society as operating “without laws ... without judges”, Peter Martyr seemed to be implying that it followed natural law. Martyr’s description of the communal life of the Tainos is not representative of many of the groups encountered in the Americas; it was recognised that other Indians lived in well-ordered societies. Some were hierarchically structured and ruled over by chieftains whom Martyr describes, in Eurocentric terms, as kings, using the Latin “*rex*”, and Hariot, in a more culturally sensitive approach, as “*wiroans*”.¹⁰⁴ Later discoveries in Mexico and Peru revealed the existence of politically complex societies, which more closely resembled those in Europe. The concept of natural law could also be applied to these hierarchical societies. Pope Innocent IV and Aquinas, influenced by Aristotle, had asserted that pagan rulers had the right to their dominions if they ruled according to natural law in a society that had a system of justice, a horror of incest and an understanding of a Creator God.¹⁰⁵ However, Aristotle had seen government as comprising both natural law and political justice. For those with less sympathy

Spaniards, preferring to go to Hell. Bartolomé de Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account*, trans. Herma Briffault (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).

¹⁰² “Universal law is the law of Nature. For there really is, as every one to some extent divines, a natural justice and injustice that is binding on all men.” Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2010). 1.13.1373b.6-17.

¹⁰³ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, V.7.1134b.18-20, 1135a 1-4, 6-8.

¹⁰⁴ Describing his encounters Hariot writes, “In some places of the countree, one onely towne belongeth to the government of a *wiroans* or chiefe Lord; in others two or three, in some sixe, eight, and more: The greatest *wiroans* that yet wee had dealing with has but eightene townes in his government, and able to make not above seven or eight hundred fighting men at the most.” Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation: In Twelve Volumes* Vol. VIII (Glasgow: James Mac Lehose and Sons, MCMIV), 375.

¹⁰⁵ Abulafia, *The discovery of mankind*.

for the Indian way of life, their perceived barbarity seemed to violate this conception, since they were not considered to be behaving justly. Thus the philosophy of Aristotle that was used by some to defend the Indians could be reinterpreted to condemn them. In the face of this criticism Las Casas defended the alleged barbarism of the Indians by referring to a different aspect of Aristotle's political theory, the distinction between two types of barbarian. Las Casas linked the Indians to the barbarians that Aristotle acknowledges "have a lawful, just, and natural government."¹⁰⁶ He combined the classical inheritance with theology as he also gave religious validation to his argument by citing the authority of his fellow Dominican, Aquinas. In his *In Defense of the Indians* he observes, "All of this is in agreement with what Saint Thomas writes: that 'the Church does not have the right to pass spiritual judgement on unbelievers who have in no way whatever accepted the Christian faith.'"¹⁰⁷ According to Aquinas, natural law is the rational creature's participation in the eternal law. This interpretation is teleological, since Aquinas believed that when God willed existence to creatures he directed them to an end, which involves a life of virtue.¹⁰⁸ For many theologians, however, the fact that Indian laws in their barbarity seemed to violate natural law meant that it would not lead them to their end, which for Christians was the happiness of salvation.

Early interactions with the Indians were characterised by a belief in their ripeness for conversion, but these initial hopes proved to be an illusion.¹⁰⁹ Léry records that, in addition to refusing to adopt Christianity, the Tupinamba resolutely refused to put on clothes, or give up their practice of cannibalism, and other missionaries and explorers experienced a similar

¹⁰⁶ Bartolomé de Las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians*, trans. Stafford Poole (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1967), 42.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 151.

¹⁰⁸ "Now God, by His wisdom, is the Creator of all things ... Moreover He governs all the acts and movements that are to be found in each single creature ... so the type of Divine Wisdom, as moving all things to their due end, bears the character of law. Accordingly the eternal law is nothing else than the type of Divine Wisdom, as directing all actions and movements." Thomas Aquinas, *The "Summa Theologica"*, Question XCIII, First Article, 28.

¹⁰⁹ When Columbus arrived in Hispaniola the inhabitants, believing that the newcomers were "people sent down from the sky", swam out to the ships. In the evening, when the Europeans knelt down for the angelus, the Indians copied them and "paid homage to the cross in precisely the same way they saw the Christians worship it". *Selections from Peter Martyr*, 45.

response in other parts of the Americas. The darkening of European responses can be traced in the changes in the engravings of de Bry. His early work celebrates the happiness of the Indian way of life, but in his later engravings he chronicles his growing disillusionment with the impact of Spanish colonisation on the Americas and the ways in which the Indian culture was being destroyed in the process of imposing religious, political and economic hegemony.¹¹⁰ He moves from representing the almost idyllic lifestyle of the British and French colonies to create images that have come to form the foundation of the Black Legend. In the engraving, “Balboa orders Indians accused of sodomy to be eaten alive by dogs”, he depicts a scene of violence in which armed Spaniards are slaughtering helpless victims.¹¹¹ Although de Bry has been accused of being an apologist for Protestant colonialism in his attacks on the atrocities of the Spaniards, his accusation is reinforced by the account of the Catholic writer, Bartolomé de Las Casas, who also records incidents of the Spaniards executing people “by flinging them to the fierce dogs”.¹¹² Las Casas describes regretfully how Venezuela had previously consisted of “dominions … that has been supremely happy and admirable provinces”, “the land was once a happy one” and had been filled with a happy people.¹¹³

As religious intolerance and economic greed soured relationships, another aspect of Aristotle’s political theory that had not, until then, been significantly foregrounded, was used to justify the exploitation of the Indians. This was the concept of natural slavery. Apologists for Spain emphasise the goodness of Isabella, who recognised the humanity of the Indians and “desired with all her fervent Catholic spirit the material and spiritual welfare of her new

¹¹⁰ Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Brevisima relacion de la destrucción de las Indias; gravures de Theodore de Bry* (Paris: Editions Chadeigne, 1995).

¹¹¹ Patricia Gravatt, “Rereading Theodore De Bry’s Black Legend,” in *Rereading the Black Legend : The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empire*, ed. Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 234.

¹¹² Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies*, 43.

¹¹³ “tierras felicíssimas”, 102 and “y admirables provincias”, 76. “porque la tierra es felicíssima”, 100 and “felicíssima”, 79. Las Casas, *Brevisima relación de la destruction de las Indias*.

subjects.”¹¹⁴ In law, Isabella insisted, the conquered people were subjects of Spain, not slaves, but after her death the Doctrine of Submission established the authority of Ferdinand and Juana to subdue the barbarous nations.¹¹⁵ Aristotle makes a clear distinction between the civil slave and the natural slave. Civil slavery is a social institution; Aristotle’s belief that man is by nature made to live in the *polis* is dependent on the labour of slaves and resident foreigners, who would create the leisured existence necessary to achieve *eudaimonia*. Civil slaves are people who are being punished for committing a crime or have been captured in a just war. His theory of natural slavery is based on the assumption that men can also be natural slaves, since nature is organised hierarchically, with the lower elements existing for the sake of the higher.¹¹⁶ In *The Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle says explicitly, “no one assigns to a slave a share in happiness – unless he assigns to him also a share in human life”.¹¹⁷ Since the slave is entirely without the faculty of deliberation Aristotle says, “It is thus clear that, just as some are by nature free, so others are by nature slaves, and for these latter the condition of slavery is both beneficial and just”. He then continues, “slaves and animals do not share in happiness nor in living according to their own choice”, since “the slave is an animate article of property.”¹¹⁸ Anthony Pagden explains the attractiveness of such a theory to the European colonisers – by classifying the Indians as people who were intellectually unequipped to live

¹¹⁴ Venancio D. Carro, “The Spanish Theological-Juridical Renaissance and the Ideology of Bartolomé de Las Casas”, in *Bartolomé de Las Casas in History: Toward an Understanding of the Man and His Work*, ed. Juan Free and Benjamin Keen (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971), 243. Las Casas quotes from Isabella’s will - “I very earnestly entreat My Lord, the King, and I charge and command the said Princess, my daughter, and the said Prince, her husband, that they … neither consent nor yield to any action whereby the Indians, natives and inhabitants of the said Indies and continent, either already acquired or to be acquired, suffer any harm in their persons or goods. Rather, they should command that they be treated well and justly. And if they have suffered any harm, they should remedy and correct it in such a way that they do not exceed in any way what has been enjoined on and commanded us in the letters of the said commission.” Las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians*, 357.

¹¹⁵ Abulafia, *The discovery of mankind*.

¹¹⁶ “We may thus conclude that all men who differ from others as much as the body differs from the soul, or an animal from a man … all such are by nature slaves, In their case, as in the other cases just mentioned, it is better to be ruled by a master. Someone is thus a slave by nature if he is capable of becoming the property of another (and for this reason does actually become another’s property) and if he participates in reason to the extent of apprehending it in another, though destitute of it himself.” Aristotle, *Politics*, 1254b16.

¹¹⁷ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177a 8-10.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 1260a4, 1254b39, 1280a25, 1253b23.

“rational” lives, they found an explanation for behaviour that they considered so deviant that they could find no place for it in their epistemology.¹¹⁹ This also had advantages from an economic point of view. If Aristotle argued that some people are natural slaves, then the Indians could be considered slaves by disposition (even if they were legally free), and thus their exploitation in the heavy labour of the sugar mills, and the destruction of their apparently idyllic way of life, could be justified.¹²⁰

It is one of the paradoxes of the colonisation of the New World that Spain, which has been so extensively criticised for its barbarity, was the only country in Europe to initiate an official philosophical, theological and legal debate about the legitimacy of its actions and the rights of the Indians. The Spanish Crown was concerned about the legality of its occupation and conquest of the Indies and its enslavement of the inhabitants of lands to which it could make no claim validated by history.¹²¹ In the debate at Valladolid between Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de Las Casas, the philosophical problems raised by the concept of a just war and the theory of natural slavery were scrutinised. Sepúlveda argued that war against the Indians was justified on the grounds that they were “barbarous, uncivilised, unteachable, and lacking civil government,” that they committed crimes against natural law, especially idolatry and human sacrifice, that war would free the innocent and extend the boundaries of the Christian religion.¹²² Las Casas refuted this. His *In Defense of the Indians* adopts Aristotelian ideas about the function of the state to provide for the happiness of its citizens, asserting that the common good is not achieved by the slaying of many people to preserve a

¹¹⁹ Anthony Pagden, *The fall of natural man: The American Indian and the origins of ethnology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 47.

¹²⁰ Elliott refers to attempts to apply biological theory to support Aristotle’s theory of natural servitude. He cites the writing of Fernández de Oviedo who believed that the size and thickness of the Indians’ skulls indicated a deformity that diminished their ability to reason. J. H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New: 1492-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

¹²¹ Pagden, *The fall of natural man*.

¹²² Casas, *In Defense of the Indians*, 20.

few from human sacrifice.¹²³ However, the limitations of Aristotle's ideas about happiness when applied in the Americas are emphasised by his belief that the slave, whether civil or natural, is not a citizen and cannot even participate in happiness. Las Casas points out that adherence to Aristotle clashes with Christian theology – if the Indians are natural slaves and lacking in reason, then they cannot attain their teleological end of salvation. Las Casas claims that the Indians "are our brothers, redeemed by Christ's most precious blood" and that they must be gently persuaded, since it is difficult for a man to abandon his religion.¹²⁴ Because they do not live within the borders of the universal Church, the Indians do not fall under the authority of the Pope and cannot be forcibly converted, they only become subject to Christian authority when they accept baptism. Despite his belief in the brotherhood of man, Las Casas nevertheless believes in the superiority of Christianity and the importance of conversion "by appropriate teaching of the gospel", which will enable the Indians to achieve truly virtuous living and, by implication, happiness.¹²⁵ He seems to have been ambivalent about Aristotle; at one point he says that the Philosopher is "ignorant of Christian truth and love" and concludes "good-bye Aristotle".¹²⁶ He cites Aquinas as an alternative authority. Aquinas points out that since all people are created in God's image, "to argue that a large part of mankind is barbaric is to believe that God's design was ineffective."¹²⁷ Elsewhere, however, Las Casas accuses Sepúlveda of misrepresenting Aristotelian ideas about barbarians, saying that the Indians are not barbarians, and he labels Sepúlveda's argument as "deadly poison".¹²⁸ He castigates the inhumanity and cruelty of the treatment of the Indians and fears that, by alienating them from

¹²³ "However, since the office of ruler has been established especially that its holder might be diligently concerned with the good of the state, so that the state may enjoy true happiness, it follows that the ruler must set the public interest before the private interest, and also that of each citizen, and even more so if what is in the interest of the state is harmful to the judge or the ruler. Indeed, whoever undertakes the duty of governing is by that very fact obliged to set the public interest before his own." Las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians*, 246.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 39.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 69.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 40.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 39.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 18.

the Spaniards, it has caused the loss of their souls. Las Casas' defence of the Indians pointed to an incompatibility between Aristotelian theory and Christian theology and called into question his philosophical theories.

The discoveries in the New World occurred within the context of, and contributed to, massive social change. The expansion of merchant capitalism was driven partly by the demand for sugar and tobacco and the emergence of a market for luxury goods.¹²⁹ Bill Donovan has raised the question, "To what extent did the eradication of non-Western populations and cultures corrupt Western values?"¹³⁰ Aristotle's distinction between *hedonia* and *eudaimonia* loses its impact in the paintings of John White, where a life of the senses no longer has the pejorative connotations it acquires for Aristotle. Nevertheless the distinction remained a significant issue for European society, where great profits were made from trade. As vast wealth poured into the burgeoning mercantile economies of Europe, it improved the status of merchant families and enabled them to ape the life style of the nobility, contributing to an increasingly hedonistic lifestyle. From a moral perspective the source of this wealth raises questions about the validity of happiness that is dependent on the exploitation of others and the responsibility of governing bodies to legislate for the common good.

The attempt to construct real life utopias

In reaction against the exploitation of the Indians, there were some attempts to protect them. Miriam Eliav-Feldon observes that Spain did not produce any utopian fiction, and she theorises that this may have been because the attention of Spanish humanists was diverted to the real life experiments which resulted from the policies of colonisation.¹³¹ She cites the

¹²⁹ One of the consequences of the influx of silver on to European money markets was that it enabled people to buy more Far Eastern luxury goods which could only be exchanged for silver. Elliott, *The Old World and the New: 1492-1650*.

¹³⁰ Donovan, introduction to *Bartolomé de las Casas: The Devastation of the Indies*, 3.

¹³¹ Miriam Eliav-Feldon, *Realistic Utopias: the ideal imaginary societies of the Renaissance, 1516-1630* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

formation of “theocratic millennial kingdoms” in which members of monastic orders attempted to establish ideal societies in Mexico and Paraguay.¹³² Silvio Zavala has established the connections between Spanish humanism and More through researching the life of Vasco de Quiroga, who spent about forty years in Mexico, where he founded the Pueblo-Hospitals of Santa Fe de la Laguna and Santa Fe de Mexico according to More’s Utopian principles.¹³³ Earlier, in a letter addressed to the Spanish king, Quiroga had outlined a plan, which he claimed was based on More’s *Utopia*, to establish a new community for the native population. In the tradition of utopian reflection, Quiroga used the simplicity of the Indian lifestyle to comment on the flaws in his own world, with its “greed, ambition, arrogance, ostentation, boasting, its toil and anxiety”.¹³⁴ Quiroga’s proposal for the wider society was not welcomed by the Royal Council in Spain, but at some time between 1532 and 1565 he established the ordinances for the Pueblo-Hospitals and their associated villages, in which he planned to provide care for destitute and sick Indians. There are many similarities to *Utopia*: Zavala mentions the practice of common labour and the distribution of resulting resources, the six hour working day and the inclusion of women in production, the communal ownership of property and the integration of families, abstention from luxuries and the election of the judiciary.¹³⁵ M. M. Lacas refers also to the formation of groups called *familias*, living in spacious corporate housing, surrounded by plots of land where flowers and vegetables could be cultivated. Surplus goods were stored for distribution to the poor, people

¹³² Ibid., 4.

¹³³ Zavala traced a copy of *Utopia*, dated 1518, to Mexico where, according to a handwritten note on the title page, it belonged to the Bishop of Mexico, indicating that the writing of More was known in Mexico in the early part of the sixteenth century. Zavala believes that some of the marginal notes may have been written by Vasco de Quiroga himself. Silvio Zavala, “Sir Thomas More in Spain”, in *Essential Articles for the study of Thomas More* ed. R. S. Sylvester and G. P. Marc’hadour (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1977), 303.

¹³⁴ “... in this New World, one may see these natives, with their disregard and scorn for everything superfluous, existing in the same contentment and enjoying the same great freedom and liberty in their tranquil lives, seemingly immune from the hazards of fortune, pure and wise in their carefree simplicity ... in this golden world of theirs”, living in “what is to them a golden world, but with us already one of iron and steel and worse.” *Colección de Documentos Inéditos del Archivo de Indias* (Madrid, (1864-89), x, 482-483), trans. Silvio Zavala and quoted in “Sir Thomas More in Spain”, ed. R. S. Sylvester and G. P. Marc’hadour, in *Essential Articles for the study of Thomas More*, 305.

¹³⁵ Zavala developed this comparison in more detail in *La Utopia de Tomás Moro en la Nueva España* (Mexico, 1937), apparently not available in English translation.

wore uniform clothes, and dissident members were expelled from the community. Lacas believes that Quiroga sought to alleviate the plight of “the poor and helpless Indians”, seeing them as God’s children, and trying to protect them from slavery.¹³⁶ Both Zavala and Lacas praise Quiroga uncritically. Zavala refers to his “enthusiastic task of bettering mankind”, his “apostolic zeal”, and the way in which his programme “ennobled, for a time, the relations between the Europeans and the aborigines”.¹³⁷ Lacas also approves his “generous heart”, his “high ideals” and his unremitting work “to improve the situation of the Indians and to bring them to a state of civilisation, which would have made their life both happy and useful.”¹³⁸ Zavala, Lacas and Perissinotto all acknowledge that Quiroga and his communities are still remembered fondly, despite the fact that the experiment disintegrated after his death. It probably represents the most successful attempt to construct a real life utopian society and to protect the Indians from exploitation by surrounding landowners. There was, however, a price to be paid for the happiness of living in a real life utopia; a postcolonial response to Lacas’ endorsement of a policy of bringing the Guarini to the benefits of “civilisation” would focus on the paternalism of this attitude. Perissinotto develops this criticism, pointing out that Quiroga regarded the Indians as “infants who would never reach adulthood”, and who therefore “could not be left to their own devices, nor could they be trusted”.¹³⁹ She admits that much of the traditional way of life had already been destroyed by the earlier conquistadors and that the hospitals provided a refuge for the Guarini who had been culturally displaced. Nevertheless, she believes that protecting them from the depredations of the outside world came at a cost. The Indians were regarded as *tabulae rasae* to be instructed in Christianity while they were being sheltered. In addition to conversion, they were expected to

¹³⁶ M. M. Lacas, “A Social Welfare Organiser in Sixteenth Century New Spain: Don Vasco de Quiroga, First Bishop of Michoacán,” *The Americas* 14, no. 1(1957), 85.
<http://jstor.org.exproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/2167768>.

¹³⁷ Silvio Zavala quoted in “Sir Thomas More in Spain”, ed. R. S. Sylvester and G. P. Marc’hadour in *Essential Articles for the study of Thomas More*, 310-311.

¹³⁸ Lacas, “A Social Welfare Organiser, 85.

¹³⁹ Perissinotto, “Utopian Times”, 100.

abandon the remains of their culture and to be subject to constant supervision to ensure conformity. They constituted an underclass in a hierarchically constructed society, where the Spanish priests were the supervisors.

In Paraguay, the Jesuits established missions among the Guarani with the similar intention of converting them to Christianity, whilst protecting them from slavers. The Jesuits imposed an urbanised lifestyle, work was strictly organised, there was time left over for education, communal living was adopted, and the priests took a serious interest in the Indians' procreation so that numbers would increase. Goods were held in common, community assistance was given to the needy, and there was sufficient revenue to care for the sick and support artisans and the militia.¹⁴⁰ R. B. Cunningham argues that this regime did indeed provide for the happiness of the Indians:

My only interest in the matter is how the Jesuits' rule acted upon the Indians themselves, and if it made them happy – more happy or less happy than those Indians who were directly ruled from Spain, or through the Spanish governors of the viceroyalties ... holding that the best right that a man can have is to be happy after the way that pleases him the most. And that the Jesuits rendered the Indians happy is certain.¹⁴¹

He takes issue with the belief that all Spanish colonies were conquered by bloodthirsty butchers, claiming that the Jesuits treated the Indians with kindness, providing a way of life that was "half-Arcadian, half-monastic" in a "commonwealth where money was unknown".¹⁴² He praises the priests for protecting the Guarani from contact with

¹⁴⁰ Rosario Romero has challenged the earlier belief that the Jesuits were influence by Doni's, *City of the Sun* "for chronological reasons". Nevertheless, the similarities between utopian fiction and real life experiments point to common concerns that apply to both. Rosario Romeo, "The Jesuit. Sources and the Italian Political Utopia in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century," in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, Vol.1, ed. Fredi Chiapelli (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 184.

¹⁴¹ R. B. Cunningham Graham, *A Vanished Arcadia: Being Some Account of the Jesuits in Paraguay 1607 to 1767* (Champaign, Ill: Project Guttenberg; Boulder, Colo: NetLibrary), 2.

¹⁴² Ibid., 4.

commercialism, and from the exploitation of the settlers who would have reduced them to slavery. Nevertheless, writing in 1901, Cunningham Graham has much in common with the paternalism of Lacas' later response to Quiroga. He believes that the Jesuits tried to teach the Indians about European progress and that they treated them like "grown-up children".¹⁴³ A more critical evaluation is expressed recently by John Crocitti, who refers to the "oppressive nature of Jesuit authority", which he sees as being "part of the same conquest mentality that employed the *encomienda, repartimiento*, and slavery as methods to organise labor in the New World."¹⁴⁴ He refers to the fact that children from the age of six worked in the fields, and to the rigidity with which the overseers supervised agricultural work, reporting idleness and punishing with the whip. The Jesuits limited the extent of the Indians' contacts with the settlers on the grounds that they were protecting them from unscrupulous traders, but Crocitti believes that the motives were not entirely altruistic, since limiting the Guarani's business dealings enabled the Jesuits to establish a trading monopoly. Considered evaluation of the morality of the utopian experiment recognises the moral complexity of the attempt to create a society where people could be happy. Crocitti and Perissinotto both acknowledge that the Jesuits were motivated by a genuine desire to promote the happiness of the Indians. Crocitti writes that the missions "successfully provided sanctuary and sustenance for thousands of Guarani" and Perissinotto recognises that their implementation "represented a small oasis in a desert of destruction, genocide, and desolation that the 'discovery' of the American continent had generated."¹⁴⁵ Crocitti reaches a balanced conclusion – "the Jesuits created neither a communal utopia nor a society in which the desire and the opportunity for economic freedom were totally eliminated".¹⁴⁶ Perissinotto is more negative, she believes that "the human price

¹⁴³ Ibid., 4-5.

¹⁴⁴ John J. Crocitti, "The Internal Economic Organisation of the Jesuit Missions Among the Guarani," *International Social Science Review* 77, no. 1/2 (2002), 3.

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/41887086>.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 117.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 11.

that they extracted was immense”, and she reiterates the comments she made about Quiroga’s settlements.¹⁴⁷ When Quiroga died and the Jesuits were expelled from Paraguay, people returned to their old way of life. As Perissinotto points out, living in a utopia requires self-restraint, but the motivation for this was based on Western values, which were not shared by the people for whom the utopia was designed.

The experiments with utopian societies in Mexico and Paraguay demonstrate the failure of well-intentioned, but misguided and paternalistic attempts to bring some happiness to people living in an overall context of misery and suffering. This failure points to the importance of culture in shaping happiness. The concept that social contexts cause differences in personal growth and motivation is expressed by positive psychologists Ryan and Deci, who believe that people are “more self-motivated, energised and integrated in some situations, domains and cultures than in others.”¹⁴⁸ The imposition of rewards for appropriate behaviour and threats to prevent inappropriate behaviour provides a form of external regulation of conduct; recalcitrant inhabitants of More’s Utopia were threatened with banishment or forced labour and members of Quiroga’s pueblo were expelled. Environmental mastery and the ability to choose and create environments that are suitable for the individual’s psychic condition are requisites of well-being and a key condition for mental health. Ryff and Singer define this as “being able to manipulate and control complex environments … as well as the capacity to act on and change surrounding world [*sic*] through mental and physical activities”.¹⁴⁹ People living in utopian societies, whether real or imagined, are deprived of this possibility, since the society represses individuality and is resistant to change. In being forced to abandon their traditional way of life, the Indians lost any sense of environmental mastery and purpose. For people to be intrinsically motivated they must be free from negative

¹⁴⁷ Perissinotto, *Utopian Times*, 117.

¹⁴⁸ Ryan and Deci, “Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being,” 2.

¹⁴⁹ Ryff, and Singer, “Know thyself and become what you are, 22.

evaluations, but the Indians' culture was consistently demeaned by the Spaniards. On a personal level, individuals need to be free to explore and learn, to look for novelty and challenge.¹⁵⁰ Utopias, on the other hand, depend for their survival on the repression of these characteristics, on regimentation and stasis. Eurocentric attempts to improve the quality of the Indians' lives did not succeed, because they did not take into account the specifics of local culture, and because they were based on an inherently flawed belief that it was possible to create a utopian world. At both the imagined and literal level, a utopian society fails because of its conceptual rigidity and its inability to fulfil its primary purpose – to provide a context in which its inhabitants can be happy.

The search for an ideal world reveals the disillusionment people felt with the institutions of Church and State. The longing that some expressed for an alternative where they could be happy manifested itself in a process of myth making, particularly about the republic of Venice and the possibilities of finding Paradise in the New World.¹⁵¹ At the same time the search for the ideal draws attention to the complex nature of life and promotes recognition that self-interest and ambition lurk beneath the surface of an apparently ideal world. Societies (both real and imagined) constructed to provide improved living conditions deprived their inhabitants of freedom. In the Americas, particularly, religious and philosophical ideas about the nature of man were tested and their limitations exposed. The life style of the Indians suggested a different way in which happiness might be conceptualised, but although there were some Europeans who showed an understanding of this, the majority judged the New World by the paradigms of the Old. Aristotle's theories of happiness, based on virtuous life in the *polis*, seemed to have little relevance to the cultures of the Indians, and his theories about human nature and politics became a justification for exploitation. The hope of finding a prelapsarian world was shown to be an illusion and, paradoxically, the

¹⁵⁰ Ryan and Deci, "Self-Determination Theory", 2.

¹⁵¹ A further example of the process of myth making in the pastoral will be discussed in Chapter 5.

preoccupation with converting the Indians to Christianity helped to destroy the simplicity of the life-style that had been initially admired by some explorers. The failure of the utopian vision in fiction and in the myth of Venice, and the destruction of the Edenic discourse in the New World, pointed to the problems people faced when they tried to find fulfilment. The inability to achieve the dream world we create out of our own desires encouraged many to turn instead to the possibility of forming meaningful interpersonal relationships as an alternative source of happiness.

Chapter 3

The importance of interpersonal relationships as a source of happiness

When Erasmus heard of the execution of Sir Thomas More he wrote to his friend, Peter Tomiczki, “In More I feel as if I had died myself, there was but one soul between us”.¹ In a climate of increasing political absolutism and the progressive loss of faith in the possibility of an ideal world, Erasmus is expressing the early modern belief in the importance of amity. He emphasises that a friend is another self, that friends are alike, the same, doubles of each other.² The concept has its roots in the writings of Aristotle and Cicero, who were formative influences on the understanding of friendship as a source of happiness. In the early modern period people looked to relationships with others as a source of fulfilment and consolation that could counteract the pessimistic vision of earthly life offered by religion and the failure of governments to pay more than lip-service to the political ideal of the common good. The historical record attests to the difficulty of establishing close and happy relationships in the hothouse environment of royal and ducal courts, where people competed for personal advantage through networks of alliance and patronage, and where More experienced the perfidy of princes.³ People considered whether friendship based on utility could, in fact, be considered genuine friendship, and a body of literature, which had its origins in classical writings, warned of the danger of self-serving friends. In a wider context, personal reflections

¹ Desiderius Erasmus, *Erasmus and His Age: Selected Letters of Desiderius Erasmus*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand, trans. Marcus A. Haworth (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 288.

² Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus: Adages IiI to Iv100*, trans. Margaret Mann Phillips (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 29-30.

³ More confided to his son-in-law, Roper, “I find his grace my very good lord indeed, and I believe he doth as singularly favour me as any subject within his realm. Howbeit, son Roper, I may tell thee I have no cause to be proud thereof, for if my head could win him a castle in France (for then there was a war between us) it should not fail to go.” William Roper, *A Man of Singular Virtue being A Life of Sir Thomas More by his son-in-law William Roper and a selection of More's Letters*, ed. A. L. Rowse (London: The Folio Society, 1980), 44.

and letters reveal that people were able to establish close relationships that could, indeed, be a source of happiness and provide consolation in times of trouble. Twenty-first-century research into the role of intimacy in personal relationships draws attention to the benefits that such close relationships could bring. Of particular interest is the existence of communities of friendship that were not necessarily sanctioned by the authorities of Church and State or by dominant social ideologies. These sheltered spaces offered opportunities for people to develop connections that enabled them to achieve personal happiness. Although the discourse of amity tended to exclude women, there were networks of women who also managed to develop meaningful relationships. Often maintaining contact through correspondence, they aspired to achieve the happiness of fulfilment of their intellectual abilities by becoming members of a circle of female scholars. In addition, the emergence of companionate marriage allowed for increasing intimacy, based on a friendship and mutual understanding that combined with sexual fulfilment.

Happiness and intimacy

When reflecting on what constitutes happiness today, many people see close personal relationships as providing meaning and emotional fulfilment. There is disagreement about whether the word “intimacy” can be applied appropriately to relationships in the early modern period. The term did not enter the English language until 1641, when it referred to friendship; it was first used to describe a sexual relationship in 1676.⁴ Niklas Luhmann has claimed that motives do not occur independently from semantics. This is because semantics describe both how motives can exist and, also, how they can be represented and understood.⁵ However, a study of writings of the early modern period, especially personal correspondence between friends and married couples, suggests that people could conceive of intimacy, even when

⁴ Oxford English Dictionary Online.

⁵ Niklas Luhmann, *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Doris L. Jones (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

there were no words to identify it. They give expression to personal feelings and interact in ways that reflect modern ideas of intimacy.

Some of the emotions that early modern writers reveal correspond to what positive psychologists identify as specific communication styles linked to intimacy. Although Karen Praeger acknowledges that intimacy is, in fact, a “fuzzy” concept, characterised by a shifting template of features, it has come to be associated with sustained affection, mutual trust, talking and acting together, sharing time, making joint decisions and even arguing.⁶ Such relationships can include spoken language and the non-verbal interaction of bodily connection.⁷ In recognising the importance of communication as a key aspect of intimate relationships, psychologists assign a significant role to the other, who should respond warmly and sensitively to intimate revelations, giving as well as receiving support.⁸ As Karen Praeger and Linda Roberts conclude, “Through the process of intimate interaction, an intimate relationship comes to be distinguished from a casual … relationship by virtue of … mutual, accommodated, shared personal knowledge.”⁹ Intimacy is the result of a process in which the self comes to know and understand the innermost, most personal aspects of the other self, and is known in the same way.¹⁰

An understanding of the “self” and the “other” is central to the Greek and Roman philosophy of friendship, and the characteristics that positive psychologists associate with intimacy were originally identified by Aristotle and Cicero. In *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle explains that “in loving a friend men love what is good in themselves”.¹¹ In a similar vein, in *De Amicitia* Cicero tells us that “he who looks upon a true friend, looks, as it were,

⁶ Karen J. Praeger, *The Psychology of Intimacy* (New York: Guilford Press, 1995).

⁷ Praeger, *The Psychology of Intimacy*. Steve Duck and Kris Pond, “Friends, Romans, Countrymen, Lend Me Your Retrospections: Rhetoric and Reality in Personal Relationships,” in *Close Relationships*, ed. Clyde Hendrick (London: Sage Publications, 1989).

⁸ Steve Duck and Kris Pond, “Friends, Romans, Countrymen, Lend Me Your Retrospections”, 17-38.

⁹ Karen J. Praeger and Linda J. Roberts, “Deep intimate connections: Self and intimacy in couple relationships,” in *The Handbook of Closeness and Intimacy*, ed. Debra J. Mashek and Arthur Aron (Mahwah N.J.: Erlbaum, 2004), 45.

¹⁰ Praeger, *The Psychology of Intimacy*, 14-22.

¹¹ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1157b 33.

upon a sort of image of himself" because "the whole essence of friendship" is "the most complete agreement in policy, in pursuits, and in opinions."¹² Smith and Yeo refer to this as a form of mirroring, the two subjects are identical, "Friendship may be defined as a complete identity of feeling about all things in heaven and earth: an identity which is strengthened by mutual goodwill and affection."¹³ Aristotle believes in the importance of trust, a warm and supportive response, and reassurance of caring, and Cicero, like contemporary practicing psychologists, such as Praeger and Roberts, advocates the need for self-disclosure, honesty and talk.¹⁴ Ronna Burger has developed the idea of talk, claiming that for Aristotle the self becomes the other voice in a dialogue. The friend who was originally a replication of the self as the other, an *allos autos*, becomes *heteros autos*, forming a pair with the self, "Dialogue requires and allows movement in two directions – not only an extension from self to other but also the ongoing constituting of the self through the relation to the other."¹⁵ The transformative power of opening the heart to positive emotions can create moments of transcendence; when Cicero associates friendship with transcendence, he sees it as "an accord in all things, human and divine", and he believes that it is given to man by the gods.¹⁶

Although Cicero identifies a transcendental element in friendship, the rediscovery of classical writers resulted in a conflict between religion and philosophy that is reflected in differing responses to inter-personal relationships in the early modern period. Aristotelian and Ciceronian models of friendship had been challenged by Augustine's Christian re-reading of

¹² Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De senectute*, *De amicitia*, *De divitiatione*, trans. William Armitage Falconer (London: W Heineman, 1923), VI 22-23, IV 14-16.

¹³ Smith and Yeo, "Friendship in Early Modern Philosophy and Science," *Parergon* 26, no. 2 (2009), 4.

¹⁴ Aristotle tell us, "nor can they admit each other to friendship or be friends till each has been found lovable and been trusted by each." Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1156b 24-32. Cicero writes about intimacy, "it is among good men that trust and the feeling that 'he would never wrong me' and all the other things that are demanded in true friendship are found." Ibid., 1157a 23-24. "Now those who wish well to their friends for their sake are most truly friends" Ibid., 1156b 7-13. "What is certainly necessary as the first and most vital prerequisite is to have faithful intimacy of friends who love us and who admire our qualities." Cicero, *De senectute*, 64.

¹⁵ Ronna Burger, *Aristotle's Dialogue with Socrates: On the "Nicomachean Ethics"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 182.

¹⁶ Cicero, *De Amicitia*, VI. 20-22.

friendship. In *The City of God* he expresses his initial faith in the power of human friendship as a source of happiness when he asks, “what consolation have we in this human society, full of mistakes and distresses, save the unfeigned faith and mutual affection of true and good friends?”¹⁷ In the early part of his *Confessions* he records the intensity of his friendship with Alypius. Augustine and Alypius were well aware of each other’s faults. Alypius was attracted to the violence of the gladiatorial games and Augustine to concupiscence, nevertheless, they built a relationship based on self-disclosure and mutual support as each tried to help the other overcome his weakness. Augustine reflects, “He loved me very much, because I seemed to be of a good disposition to him, and well learned: and I loved him again, for his great towardness to virtue, which was eminent enough for one of no years.”¹⁸ The friends converted to Christianity together and, from that moment, Alypius ceases to occupy a central place in Augustine’s writings. Albrecht Classen observes that after his conversion Augustine sought to distance himself from a Ciceronian concept of friendship, turning instead to recognition that friendship reflects “the workings of the Holy Spirit in human life” as humans become friends of God.¹⁹ True friendship thus becomes God-centred and humans can only practise a limited friendship with other humans.²⁰ In replacing *amicitia* with Christian *caritas* Augustine indicates that earthly friendship is something that may be enjoyed for a time but must be transcended.²¹ In contrast, Aquinas acknowledges that friends are necessary for earthly happiness, and here he reflects the classical influence as he recognises that friends do good things for each other to help them, and delight in seeing them do good. In this way he

¹⁷ Augustine, *The City of God* Vol. VI, trans. William Chase Greene (London: William Heinemann Ltd., MCMLX), 153.

¹⁸ Augustine, *St Augustine’s Confessions* Vol. 1, trans. William Watts (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard U. P., MCMXLVI), 293.

¹⁹ Albrecht Classen, Introduction to *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 15.

²⁰ Jennifer Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians: Correction and Community in Augustine’s Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

²¹ C. Stephen Jaeger, “Friendship of Mutual Perfecting in Augustine’s *Confessions* and the Failure of Classical *Amicitia*,” in *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 185-200.

recognises the ethical component of friendship which motivates the individual towards goodness. Despite this, when he divides happiness into three classes – external good, good of the body and good of the soul – he denies that the first two actually constitute happiness. The only perfect happiness is “for the soul without the body” since in the afterlife friends will no longer be necessary; man will be “wholly and completely fulfilled in God.” In this way Augustine prioritises theology over philosophy. In the early modern period, Christianity continued to mount a challenge to classical ideas about friendship and happiness. The influence of Augustine lived on in emphasis on the doctrine of original sin, which encouraged the expression of the negative emotions of guilt, shame and melancholy that have been identified in so much of the writing of the early modern period. Nevertheless, the early modern interest in amity indicates that this was one area where the conflict between religion and philosophy could be at least partly resolved. Erasmus wrote to, and about, friends like Tomoczki, More and Servatius Rogerus in terms that express the discourse of amity in which the friend is the counterpart of the soul.

There is debate about whether intimacy can be considered to exist in the early modern period. In *Before Intimacy*, Daniel Juan Gil believes that intimacies occurred more frequently between men or between women, rather than between men and women.²² Bray is also referring to close friendships between men when he implies the existence of intimacy in the statement that beds are where people talk.²³ Surviving letters between marital couples suggest that at least some marriages also included an exchange of confidences. The importance of talk as an essential part of close relationships has been emphasised by Steve Duck and Kris Pond, who refer to the emotional tone of relationships. They see “talk and relationship characteristics” as “nondetachable” and believe that relationships are found “partly in the

²² Daniel Juan Gil, *Before Intimacy: Asocial Sexuality in Early Modern England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), x.

²³ Alan Bray, “Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship in Elizabethan England,” in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durban and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 42.

discourse and communicational styles that partners adopt over and above the feelings that they express about one another.”²⁴ Duck and Pond’s emphasis on the significance of communicational styles applies to the letters Sir Robert Sidney wrote to his wife. Sidney uses a more informal and affectionate style in writing to Barbara than the one he employs in his political or business correspondence.²⁵ He writes to her, “Tomorrow, god willing, I will not fail you betimes. I have been so vilely used as I grow more and more weary of the Court. I dare not write you the particulars but I will tell you them at my coming to you.”²⁶ It is tempting to think that when he imparted this information, which he saw as potentially too dangerous to discuss in a letter, he did so in the relative privacy of the marital bed.²⁷

Friendship and politics

The disillusionment with Court life that Robert Sidney confided to Barbara reflects a wider societal concern about the possibilities of finding genuine friendship in a political context. In addition, some writers considered the relationship of friendship to tyranny, asking whether it could survive in such a context and, if it did, whether it could constitute a challenge to tyrannical rule. At the beginning of his essay “Of friendship”, Montaigne says that Etienne la Boétie wrote his treatise “A discourse of voluntary servitude” in honour of liberty against tyrants.²⁸ Writers like la Boétie and Montaigne considered the subject’s response to a ruler who was tyrannical and whether friendship could provide an effective

²⁴ Duck and Pond, “Friends, Romans, Countrymen”, 27.

²⁵ Margaret P. Hannay, Noel J. Kinnaman and Michael G. Brennan, ed., *Domestic Politics and Family Absence: The Correspondence (1588-1621) of Robert Sidney, First Earl of Leicester and Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

²⁶ Ibid., 54.

²⁷ Brenda Marina Henry-Offor suggests that while intimacy may be a modern concept, people in the early modern period did envisage domestic areas such as the walled garden, the study and the bedroom as sites of privacy. In some aristocratic homes there were private rooms that were regarded as exclusive to the master and could not be entered without an invitation. Brenda Marina Henry-Offor, “The Paradoxes of Intimacy in Early Modern Drama” (Ph. D. thesis, City University of New York, 2007).

²⁸ Montaigne says that it has been brought to light by those who seek to disturb and change the state of our government without worrying whether they will improve it, and because they have mixed his work up with some of their own concoctions.” Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), 144.

challenge. In la Boétie's treatise he accuses tyrants of gilding over evil with a pretence of friendship and concern for the common good; he says that when people cease to obey a tyrant they can be free and that, by accepting him, they are complicit in their enslavement. Even animals bewail the loss of happiness that accompanies the loss of freedom, since liberty is natural. In a tyranny they cannot say anything is their own. "Does it seems [sic] so great a happiness," he asks, "henceforth to possess by Halves only your Good, your Families and your Lives."²⁹ This seems revolutionary, but he then retreats from his radical attitude to the tyrant, conceding, "I do not advise you to shake or overturn him, forbear only to support him and you will see him like a great Colossus ... fall with his own weight and be broken in pieces."³⁰ In his tragi-comedy, *Damon and Pithias*, Richard Edwards gives dramatic representation to the relationship of friendship to tyranny in his characterisation of Dionisius, a tyrant who openly despises friendship. According to Stephano, he rages with a bloody hand, every day showing evidence of his cruelty. Dionisius' first speech asserts his determination to execute Damon, not because he has conspired against him, but simply because he has viewed the city and is therefore suspected of being a spy. Edwards explores the transformative power of friendship to create a revolutionary effect in ethical terms. Dionisius condemns both Damon and Pithias to death, but he is then unexpectedly so moved by their constancy that he pardons them. He asks in astonishment, "Were there ever such friends on earth as were these two?"³¹ As Dionisius promises to honour friendship till his life's end, Edwards is able to end his play with the exclamation of Stephano, "O most happie, pleasant, joyfull, and triumphant day."³² Ullrich Langer raises the question of the connections between the literary world and ethics, of whether in fictional worlds the choices the characters make "that define their

²⁹ Etienne de La Boetie, *A discourse of voluntary servitude*. Wrote in French by Stephen de la Boetie (London: Printed for T. Smith, and sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1735), 15. Gale Eighteenth Century Collections Online.

³⁰ La Boetie, *A discourse of voluntary servitude*. 17.

³¹ D. Jerry White, *Richard Edward's Damon and Pithias: A Critical Old-Spelling Edition* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1980), l.1663.

³² White, *Richard Edward's Damon and Pithias*, l.1717.

relationship to other characters” can successfully “bridge the literary and the ethical.”³³ In retelling a traditional story, Edwards is affirming the triumph of classical conceptions of amity to make a clear ethical point about the importance of virtuous friendship, not only to the individual, but also as a source of social order.

Discussion of attitudes to political friendship in the early modern period is complicated by the fact that there was no one universally accepted discourse to express it. In considering the influence of the classical tradition it becomes clear that the lessons derived from Aristotle and Cicero were not uniform. Although Aristotle believed that perfect friendship “is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in virtue”, he was aware that civic friendship is linked to self-interest.³⁴ He recognised that “men apply the name of friends even to those whose motive is utility” and that “bad men will be friends for the sake of pleasure or utility.”³⁵ Suzanne Stern-Gillet proposes that the differing opinions of commentators indicate Aristotle himself was undecided about civic friendship, which he does not identify with virtuous living and true happiness.³⁶ Cicero’s interpretation of Roman *amicitia* had a more formative influence on how early modern people thought about friendship. Smith and Yeo point out that, in contrast to the Greek concept of *philia*, Roman *amicitia* has been understood in terms of its political significance, it involved forming alliances in ways that had nothing to do with genuine affection.³⁷ Cicero wrote about the difficulties of forming friendships in a political context:

³³ Ullrich Langer, *Perfect Friendship: Studies in Literature and Moral Philosophy from Boccaccio to Cornelle* (Geneva: Librairie droz, 1994), 9.

³⁴ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1156b 7-8.

³⁵ Ibid., 1157a 26, 1157b 1-2.

³⁶ Suzanne Stern-Gillet, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Friendship* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995). “For men apply the name of friends even to those whose motive is utility” Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1157a 26-7. Aristotle writes, “Now those who love each other because of utility do not love each other for themselves but in virtue of some good which they get from each other.” Ibid., 1156a 10-12. Friendships of utility also fail to demonstrate the characteristics of intimacy identified by positive psychologists.

³⁷ *Philia* translates as friendship. One’s *philoī* included family, business partners and fellow citizens as well as those more naturally labelled as friends. Ross, Introduction to *The Nicomachean Ethics*, xxv.

True friendships are very hard to find among those whose time is spent in office or in business of a public kind. For where can you find a man so high-minded as to prefer his friend's advancement to his own?³⁸

Smith and Yeo see Cicero as attempting to define true friendship in opposition to this scepticism.³⁹ Daniel Lochman believes that, in the context of the Roman Republic, Cicero contrasted true *amicitia* with the calculating concern for power and wealth of the politicians, who used the concept of friendship to further their political ambitions and greed for wealth.⁴⁰ It is the discourse of Ciceronian *amicitia* that Edwards adopts when he shows its power to resist tyranny.

When ideas about *amicitia* were appropriated in early modern England, they came into conflict with an incompatible political theory that was articulated in Tudor attitudes to kingship. Shannon has pointed out the different elements in these discourses, “while friendship celebrated the doctrine of ‘one soul in two bodies’, Tudor kingship theory traced a parallel formulation and imagined kings as ‘one Person in two Bodies.’”⁴¹ This made the formation of acceptable affective ties between ruler and subject difficult and, at times, impossible. Although *amicitia* became a culturally acceptable expression of friendship between male subjects, it ran “afoul of the monarch’s proverbial and mythic singularity ... and his duty to sublimate his affective life to the good of the realm.”⁴² Francis Bacon writes about the tendency of princes to form friendships by raising subjects to make them “almost Equals to themselves”, commenting dismissively, “The Modern Languages give unto such Persons, the Name of *Favorites*, or *Privadoes*.⁴³ In Shannon’s analysis of Marlowe’s

³⁸ Cicero, *De Amicitia*, XVII, 63-65.

³⁹ Smith and Yeo, “Friendship in Early Modern Philosophy and Science”.

⁴⁰ Daniel T. Lochman and Maritere Lopez, “Introduction: The Emergence of Discourses: Early Modern Friendship,” in *Discourses and Representations of Friendship in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700*, ed. Daniel T. Lochman, Maritere Lopez and Lorna Hutson (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011).

⁴¹ Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts*, 126.

⁴² Ibid., 126.

⁴³ Sir Francis Bacon, *The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, 81.

Edward II she focuses on the inability of kings to “enact friendship according to its classically derived script”, emphasising that Edward’s nobles interpret his relationship with Gaveston as *mignonnerie*. This is a concept in which the ideal of parity in friendship and the construction of the monarch as a singular being “converge to bar the monarch from friendship in its utopian form.”⁴⁴ Although Edward longs for the happiness of a relationship with Gaveston, his position as king militates against it and his refusal to accept this destroys them both. A possible alternative for the monarch existed in the systems of patronage that, instead of making the friend an equal, represented the continuation of an older feudal system, a hierarchical relationship between a lord and his fee’d man.⁴⁵ Bacon refers to such friendships between the superior and the inferior, whose fortunes are interrelated, as the best relationship.⁴⁶ Despite Bacon’s approval, the patronage system was complicated as a letter from Erasmus to Henry VIII reveals. Erasmus warns the king of the importance of selecting “prudent and loyal friends” and of the difficulties a ruler encounters in “distinguishing a true friend from a counterfeit.”⁴⁷ However, as well as offering sincere advice to an inexperienced king, the letter reflects Erasmus’ desire to secure patronage for himself. He praises Henry’s “approachable person” and “dazzling splendour” and informs him that he intends to dedicate his edition of Petrarch’s *De discriminae adulatoris et amici* to him. William Cecil more successfully negotiated a patronage relationship with Elizabeth. His grandfather was the younger son of an impoverished Welsh squire, but the family rose to importance under the Tudors. Although Cecil established a connection with Elizabeth that both enriched and ennobled him, the queen never forgot their difference of rank and never tried to raise him to a

⁴⁴ Erasmus writes, “... none stand more sorely in need of this important constituent of happiness than princes, happy as they may be in other respects; for a prince more than any others requires both many friends and right loyal ones too.” Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, trans. R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 250-252.

⁴⁵ Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer’s Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1994), 3.

⁴⁶ Sir Francis Bacon, “Of Followers and Frends,” in *The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, 149.

⁴⁷ Erasmus observes, “... one stand more sorely in need of this important constituent of happiness than princes, happy as they may be on other respects, for a prince more than any others requires both many friends and right loyal ones too.” Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, 250-252.

position of equality. Within the system of patronage they were able to form a genuine friendship that lasted for forty years, based on a similarity of political beliefs,. When he was dying she visited him and personally fed him soup; faced with the prospect of his death she said, “I do not want to live longer than I have you with me.”⁴⁸ Their political partnership provided her with some of the characteristics of an intimate relationship, sustained affection and mutual trust, in a world where the possibilities of genuine intimacy were rare.

People in the early modern period were also aware of the threats to the integrity of interpersonal relationships between subjects living in a political context. Writing to Machiavelli, Francesco Vettori confides, “I have thought about you several times, when we spoke of a friend whom you urged me not to trust in and to steer clear of as much as I could, and perhaps it would have been to my advantage to have done so.”⁴⁹ Later, he reflects on the ways in which people use friendship networks to solicit personal favours, telling Machiavelli, “I returned the silver plates to those who had lent them to me, both so that I would not have to watch over them and also because they would often request me to speak to O[ur] Lordship about some need of theirs.”⁵⁰ In *Damon and Pithias*, the lackey Aristippus and the parasite Carisophus represent a friendship successfully founded on mutual self-interest. Carisophus proposes that the two should combine to help each other in a world where favour is uncertain and changeable. He suggests, “So we two linked in friendshipe brother and brother, / Full well in the Courte may helpe one another.”⁵¹ Condemnation of the sycophantic and self-serving nature of court life was a recurring theme for writers. In *Damon and Pithias*, for example, Grimme the Colyer declares, “Friendship is dead in Courte, Hipocrisie doth reigne, /

⁴⁸ David Cecil, *The Cecils of Hatfield House: An English Ruling Family* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), 89.

⁴⁹ Niccolo Machiavelli, *Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence*, ed. James B. Atkinson and David Sices (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 240.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 261.

⁵¹ Edwards, *Daman and Pithias*, 11.71-2.

who is in favour now, to morrow is out agayne.”⁵² In Surrey’s poem, “The courtier’s life”, he explicitly expresses what seems to be a personal disillusionment with court life. The “sugred meates”, the “sweete repast” and the “bankets” are accompanied by “such bitter taste” that whoever takes pleasure in moving “amid the presse of worldly looks” and “ioyes” will find that he is in “prison ioies fettered with chaines of gold.”⁵³ Shakespeare makes a similar criticism through Hamlet who says with disgust, “let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp, / And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee / Where thrift may follow feigning” (3.2.53-5). When people in the early modern period were exposed to the political world they discovered that true friendships were hard to find.

Private friendship between men and amity’s utopian discourse

Recognition that true friendships in the political world were rare placed increased emphasis on the importance of more private relationships. Recent critical responses to the early modern period have focused on the nature of close same-sex friendships, both in real life and in literary representation. Eve Kosofsky Sedwick has applied the word “homosocial” to describe male relationships that were based on a sense of shared identity, often manifested in physical activities like hugging and kissing and extravagant protestations of affection.⁵⁴ Forrest Tyler Stevens believes that it was often the accepted classical discourse of amity that legitimised these – in many cases sexualised friendships came “precariously close” to sodomy, the “physical actions are the same; the language mediates the propriety.”⁵⁵ Stevens’ recognition of the role of language in determining the nature of a relationship has particular

⁵² Ibid., 11. 1219-1220.

⁵³ Henry Haward, *Totel’s miscellany: Songes and sonnets, written by the Right honourable Lord Henry Haward late Earle of Surrey, and others* (Imprinted at London: By Iohn Windet, 1585), fol. 45^V.

⁵⁴ Eve Kosofsky Sedwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 1.

⁵⁵ Forrest Tyler Stevens, “Erasmus’s Tigress: The Language of Friendship, Pleasure, and the Renaissance Letter,” in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durban and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 137.

relevance to Marlowe's *Edward II*, in which Edward and Gaveston use the language of amity to express a friendship that other characters in the play regard with disapproval. The play slips among conflicting responses – the traditional homosocial concept of amity, the cultural condemnation of sodomy when it was associated with social climbing or treason, and the suggestion that a homoerotic relationship can be a source of pleasure and, perhaps, happiness. In places, Edward and Gaveston converse in terms that reflect the discourse of amity. Gaveston speaks of surfeiting with delight and greater bliss at being recalled to Edward's court and Edward refers to himself as "Thy friend, they selfe, another *Gaveston*".⁵⁶ When Gaveston is banished again they exchange pictures, Edward addresses him as "sweet", lamenting, "I from myself am banished". In referring to the torments he is experiencing at the prospect of being parted, he echoes the language used by Cicero and Erasmus to describe friendships between men.⁵⁷ The play as a whole, however, demonstrates the ways in which language can be used to create different interpretations of the same actions when the classical discourse of amity comes into conflict with early modern political discourse about kingship. As Shannon points out, Edward interprets his relationship as *amicitia*, but *amicitia* is only available to private people, since the monarch has a duty to sublimate his private affections to the public good. The classical ideal of friendship is impossible for a king and "*amicitia* can only default to *mignonnerie*" when Edward transfers the allegiance he should express to the crown to a subject.⁵⁸ Thus, "while Edward speaks virtuous friendship's idiom, those around him consistently refer to Gaveston as the king's 'minion'".⁵⁹ The king's use of the language of amity describes his happiness at the elevation of a favourite who is clearly self-serving and encourages the king to neglect his responsibilities and bankrupt the treasury. When Edward's

⁵⁶ Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), Sc.1. l.143.

⁵⁷ Ibid., sc.4. l.118.

⁵⁸ Shannon, *Sovereign Amity*, 142.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 163.

insistence that his relationship can be seen as *amicitia* comes into conflict with the perception of it as *mignonnerie*, political realities are seen to be destructive of personal happiness.

For the subject in the early modern period, the writings of Greece and Rome, especially *The Nicomachean Ethics* and *De Amicitia*, could more successfully provide a language of friendship free from pejorative connotations. Shannon refers to this as a “pre-liberal utopian discourse”, since it expresses the height of a subject’s power through “the sense of autonomy and self-disposition central to friendship” and a “strategy of private sovereignty.”⁶⁰ Her reference to friendship as a “utopian discourse” and, elsewhere as a “utopian vision”, reinforces the idea that people in the early modern period were searching for an ideal, which they located in personal relationships. Shannon describes friendship as offering “an idealised world apart” in which “utopian visions comprise private friendship’s *jouissance*.⁶¹ This classical model of friendship was adopted both by humanist scholars and writers of works intended for more popular consumption. Erasmus emphasised that a friend is another self, supporting his claim with reference to classical authorities who stressed that friends were alike, the same, doubles of each other.⁶² Elyot tells us that their parents could not tell Titus and Gisippus apart, because they “seemed to be one in form and personage”, and in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* Valentine says of Proteus, “I knew him as myself” (2.4.54).⁶³ The influence of classical attitudes is reflected in the way such fictional characters celebrate their affections, and such relationships are further legitimised by the admiring way in which other characters speak of their affection.⁶⁴ These endorsements of male friendship represent them as sources of true happiness.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 10-11, 23.

⁶¹ Ibid., 17, 125.

⁶² Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus: Adages IiI to Iv100*.

⁶³ Elyot, *The Book named the Governor*, 136.

⁶⁴ In *The Merchant of Venice* Salerio and Solanio describe Antonio’s grief on parting from Bassanio, his eyes are big with tears and “with affection wondrous sensible / He wrung Bassanio’s hand; and so they parted” (2.8.48-9).

The letter as an expression of intimacy

A study of the many letters that survive from the early modern period gives personal expression to the happiness derived from friendship and intimate relationships. James Daybell points out that the value of letters can be complicated by the circumstances of their composition and reception, since they could be intended to be circulated among a wider audience than the actual recipient.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, they provide some valuable insight into the emotions that might emerge within personal relationships. Among humanist scholars epistolary exchanges formed part of extended textual and social transactions, and as such suggest both intimacy and an awareness of a wider audience. Smith and Yeo refer to this as the *Respublica literarum*, “that cosmopolitan virtual community sustained by face to face meetings but more so by the circulation of letters, manuscripts, books and journals”.⁶⁶ The letters of Erasmus seem paradoxical in nature. They are written with a self-conscious adoption of the language of amity and of the recommendations about style in his own book of advice on letter writing. They also indicate an awareness of a future widespread readership, whilst being at times intensely personal. He saw the humanist letter, modelled on the letters of Cicero, as a form of conversation between friends, who regarded themselves as equals, and chose to emphasise friendship instead of rank.⁶⁷ Although some humanist scholars like Erasmus and Montaigne travelled extensively, travel could be slow, uncomfortable, and sometimes dangerous; in many cases the exchange of letters took the place of conversation, which is valued by Duck and Pond as an essential component of intimacy.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Cultures and Practices of Letter Writing 1512-1635* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 162.

⁶⁶ Smith and Yeo, “Friendship in Early Modern Philosophy and Science,” 5.

⁶⁷ Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb, “Form and Persuasion in Women’s Letters, 1400-1700” in *Women’s Letters Across Europe, 1400-1700: Form and Persuasion*, ed. Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

⁶⁸ More wrote to Pieter Gillis, “Friends of the commonplace and homespun sort, my open-hearted Pieter, have their idle of relationship, like their whole lives, attached to material things ... Minds can develop an even closer link, the greater the space between them.” Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus Vol. 3*, 43-4.

When considering letters from, or to, a less educated correspondent the circumstances of their composition and reception become more of an issue. Because he, but more often she, was illiterate, or could read but not write, many were scribed by an amanuensis, as Daybell explains.⁶⁹ Analysis of the correspondence between Robert Sidney and his wife, Barbara, is hampered by uncertainty about whether she was literate.⁷⁰ Given the personal nature of some of the comments interspersed among instructions for governing the family and running the estate, it is likely that Barbara could at least read, and it is hard to imagine some of the letters being shared with a wider audience. After instructing her, “send me all the deeds you have of Scampton and the acquaintance for Fitzwilliam, for without them the sale cannot go forwards”, Robert concludes intimately, “you shall ever be most dear unto me, and whilst I live I will have the same care of you as of mine own life.”⁷¹ The question of Barbara Sidney’s literacy is complicated by her silence in the historical record. The Sidney family collected and preserved Robert’s correspondence, but her letters have been lost, perhaps because her husband was constantly travelling, perhaps because her letters were not considered to have comparable importance. It is only possible to guess at her feelings as they are indicated by Robert’s responses to her letters; when he writes defensively “I am sorry to break promise with you” and later, “I can by means put off this journey”, it suggests that she has written expressing sorrow at his absence.⁷² The affectionate tone of his address, calling her “Sweet Barbara”, “My dearest Barbara”, “Mine own Barbara” and “Sweetheart”, makes it clear that he is not responding to a nagging partner and that he knows that she genuinely misses him, even though we cannot hear her voice. Despite being one-sided, the correspondence reveals the happiness that could exist in an early modern marriage.

⁶⁹ Daybell, *The Material Letter*.

⁷⁰ Margaret P. Hannay, Noel J. Kinnamon and Michael G. Brennan, ed. *Domestic Correspondence and Family Absence: The Correspondence (1588-1621) of Robert Sidney, First Earl of Leicester and Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

⁷¹ Ibid., 25.

⁷² Ibid., 35.

Intimacy and the Republic of Letters

A significant proportion of closely personal letters written in the early modern period were exchanged between men or between women. Epistolary exchanges within the *Respublica literarum* reveal the close personal friendships that developed between men of similar interests and the support they gave each other, they also provide one of the most significant examples of happiness in the early modern period. Their existence shows that the totalitarian police state was an invention of the future, that there were limits to political absolutism in the Renaissance, and that the discourse of friendship could be both empowering and rewarding. The variations in language and tone in these collections make relevant the observations of Duck and Pond that language usage and communication style “reflect, or possibly even help to create” the emotional tone of a relationship.⁷³ Erasmus wrote to Servatius Rogerius, “So impossible is it, dear Servatius, that anything should suffice to wash away the cares of my spirit and cheer my heart when I am deprived of you and you alone”.⁷⁴ In discussing whether or not this letter is homoerotic in intent, Stevens suggests that the letter, with its “ornate, intense and passionate” expression, has to be seen in the wider context of the language of amity that said that the friend was the counterpart of your soul.⁷⁵ Such language characterises a number of Erasmus’ letters and is reciprocated in replies. More refers to his “dearest Erasmus”, “his most lovable Erasmus” and Martin Dorp affirms, “your affection is my dearest object”.⁷⁶ Members of the *respublica literarum* also demonstrated their closeness by regularly exchanging copies of their work and inviting critical evaluation. The friendship between More, Erasmus and Peter Gilles provides the context for the writing of *Utopia*. More confides to Erasmus, “I send you my book on Nowhere”, and an exchange of letters between

⁷³ Duck and Pond, “Friends, Romans, Countrymen,” 27.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Stevens, “Erasmus ‘Tigress,’” 124.

⁷⁵ Stevens, “Erasmus’s ‘Tigress,’” 128.

⁷⁶ Desiderius Erasmus, ed., *The Correspondence of Erasmus* Vol. 4, 230, 147 and Vol. 3, 155, trans. R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

More, Erasmus and Gilles forms part of the paratext.⁷⁷ David Wootton believes that friendship is the subject matter of *Utopia*, but More only makes one reference to Utopians travelling to visit friends.⁷⁸ It is likely that he was aware that the political and social sameness enforced on the community is not conducive to the formation of close individual affective ties. What Shannon refers to as the utopian discourse of amity is missing from More's supposedly ideal republic.⁷⁹

The interest in the process of writing revealed in the correspondence of Erasmus is replaced by a focus on the political situation in Europe in the letters of Machiavelli and Francesco Vettori. They had a lot in common: friends, concern about the political situation that destroyed the Republic of Florence and restored the Medici, a similar education and interest in literature. Exiled in the country, Machiavelli relied on Vettori to provide a sympathetic ear. Vettori also encouraged him to think and write with greater precision; he judged and he approved, he forced Machiavelli to defend his opinions.⁸⁰ As Najemy expresses it, Machiavelli “needed an interlocutor in order to hear himself.”⁸¹ There was another aspect of the correspondence, denied to Erasmus, the interest they showed in each other’s love lives. Vettori sends information about his relationship with “a Roman widow lady of good family” who has almost made him a prisoner and Machiavelli replies, “You ... have kept me in good spirits, and lifted countless burdens from my mind as I read on your pleasures and torments.”⁸² In return Machiavelli confides details of his own romantic exploits.⁸³ Letters of friendship could also discuss much more trivial matters – Vettori

⁷⁷ More writes, “I guessed that this flight of fancy might find especial favour in your eyes”, saying defensively that his aim is to amuse and not criticise. Mynors and Thomson, *The Correspondence of Erasmus* Vol. 2, 161, 164 and Vol. 4, 66.

⁷⁸ David Wootton, “Friendship Portrayed: A New Account of *Utopia*”.

⁷⁹ Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity*.

⁸⁰ Machiavelli, *Machiavelli and His Friends*. John M. Najemy, *Between Friends: Discourses of Power and Desire in the Machiavelli-Vettori Letters of 1513-1515* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁸¹ Najemy, *Between Friends*, 9.

⁸² Machiavelli, *Machiavelli and His Friends*, 274, 292.

⁸³ Machiavelli recounts, “while in the country I have met a creature so gracious, so refined, so noble – both in nature and in circumstance – that never could my praise or my love for her be as much as she deserves

promises to send Machiavelli the “blue woollen yarn for a pair of hose” that he has requested, Erasmus asks Andrew Ammonius to arrange to send him a cask of the best Greek wine, and More writes to Erasmus about his horse.⁸⁴ Erasmus playfully describes a fictional dream in which he was the king of Utopia and Vettori reveals a wry amusement as he describes the efforts of a dinner guest to attract a younger man.⁸⁵ In commenting on the correspondence of Machiavelli and Vettori, Najemy observes that it “engages, re-enacts, and problematizes” the notion of letters “as written speech transmitting and preserving the voices of absent friends.”⁸⁶ In this way it foreshadows the later research by Duck and Pond about the significance of the language of intimacy.

Happiness and women

For women living in a patriarchal society the possibilities of achieving happiness in personal relationships were more problematic than for men. When Reddy proposes a nested hierarchy of emotional regimes, emotional refuges and emotional liberty, he suggests that people needed to retreat from dominant ideologies to find individual autonomy within emotional refuges.⁸⁷ The concept of refuges and alternative communities is particularly relevant to women as they searched for independence, fulfilment and personal happiness in societies where dominant ideologies may have militated against these desires. Jonathan Goldberg reaches a similar conclusion to Reddy through his study of early modern women’s

... No longer do I delight in reading about the deeds of the ancients or in discussing those of the moderns: everything has been transformed into tender thoughts, for which I thank Venus.” Ibid., 293.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 302. Mynors and Thomson, ed., *The Correspondence of Erasmus Vol. 2, 169 and Vol. 4, 162*.

⁸⁵ Erasmus confides, “I see myself crowned with that distinguished diadem of corn-ears, a splendid sight in my Franciscan robe, bearing the venerable sceptre consisting of a sheaf of corn”. Mynors and Thomson, ed., *The Correspondence of Erasmus Vol. 4, 163*. Vettori writes to Machiavelli, “Filippo also, with the son, did not stop at certain little expressions suited to the occasion, asking whether he was a student, whether he had a tutor, and to go into it further, he questioned him as to whether he slept with him, so that the bashful boy would often lower his eyes without answering him.” Machiavelli replies that he can “... see him talking to the boy, playing now the role of father, now of tutor, now of lover ... and everyone happy, or rather, exuding happiness: eventually everybody is drowned in a flood of good cheer.” Machiavelli, *Machiavelli and His Friends*, 277.

⁸⁶ Najemy, *Between Friends*, 22.

⁸⁷ Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 105, 128-9.

sexuality. Within the dominant ideology of repression and exclusion he locates “sites of resistance” and areas where the system failed to achieve its purpose.⁸⁸ The experiences of Laura Cereta demonstrate the difficulties that learned women encountered when they tried to achieve happiness by fulfilling their intellectual aspirations. Although Cereta included eminent professors and teachers among her friends, she positioned herself as an outsider to the community of humanist male scholars, in which influential figures like Leonardo Bruni and Francesco Barbaro stated that a virtuous woman would not express her views in the public arena, or seek to have her work published.⁸⁹ In a letter to Cardinal Ascanio Mario Sforza, Cereta writes self-deprecatingly, “And so I, who have hardly acquired even the first rudiments of learning, am a small chattering woodpecker among poetic swans.”⁹⁰ Both the classical tradition and biblical teaching connected female verbal fluency with uncontrollable sexuality, and provided restrictive models that shaped attitudes to women’s discourse and to the ways in which women viewed language.⁹¹ Writing to Pietro Zecchi, Cereta makes clear her frustrations in encountering cultural attempts to silence women, lamenting, “A woman rolls herself over like a dog begging and, while she longs for a word of praise, she talks about whips.”⁹² Similarly, Marie le Jars de Gournay observes that a woman’s happiness depends on the approbation of popular opinion that demands she renounce freedom of speech, conduct and even judgement. Her writing increasingly provoked hostility and scorn from male intellectual adversaries.⁹³

⁸⁸ Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 58.

⁸⁹ Diana Robin, introduction to *Laura Cereta, Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist*, trans. and ed. Diana Robin (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 7.

⁹⁰ *Laura Cereta, Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist*, 40.

⁹¹ Danielle Clarke, “Speaking women: Rhetoric and the construction of female talk,” in *Rhetoric, Women and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. Jennifer Richards and Alison Thorne, (London: Routledge, 2007). Boccaccio’s *De claris mulieribus* was particularly influential in using the exceptional examples of a few women to argue for the inferiority, both intellectual and moral, of the majority. Robin, *Laura Cereta*, 10.

⁹² *Laura Cereta, Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist*, 72.

⁹³ De Gournay writes, “For to be a modest woman, in the world’s view, means not preserving modesty but rather putting off candor, renouncing freedom of speech, of conduct, and even of judgement, giving strict religious observance to the myriad ceremonies that human fantasy is capable of inventing to this end, and not

Despite the cultural admonitions to women to observe decorum and silence, there are dangers in viewing prescriptive writings as uniformly representative of their actual experiences. Jennifer Richards and Alison Thorne believe that the behaviour of women often diverged “quite dramatically” as they negotiated cultural constraints.⁹⁴ Katherine Rebecca Larson has studied the radical ways in which sixteenth and seventeenth-century Englishwomen across all classes “were engaged in a rich spectrum of rhetorical practices, whether preaching, petitioning, gossiping, slandering, or penning poems, letters, and plays.”⁹⁵ Less visibly, women formed strong emotional relationships with other women in their families and beyond as they participated in lying-ins, chose influential godparents, placed daughters in other significant households and even manoeuvred to secure places at court. In a world dominated by relationships with men, these networks functioned as emotional refuges, providing women with the freedom and female solidarity that enabled them to endure, and even flourish, in a patriarchal culture.⁹⁶

A surprising number of letters written by women in the early modern period have survived, and some of them attest to the support and even happiness they found in their relationships. The letters of Cereta express the joy she experienced from interactions with members of her family. She wrote to her mother, Veronica di Leno, recalling the memory of a perfect day the two of them had passed in the countryside:

The day we spent at the property boundary was so happy that it ought to be commemorated with a special token. We gazed at meadows blooming with flowers

having any other rule for living well but popular opinion (even though it imposes vices and forbids virtue), nor other happiness than its approbation.” Marie le Jars de Gournay, *Apology for the Woman Writing and other works* ed. and trans. Richard Hillman and Colette Quesnel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 38.

⁹⁴ Jennifer Richards and Alison Thorne, introduction to *Rhetoric, Women and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. Jennifer Richards and Alison Thorne (London: Routledge, 2007), 13.

⁹⁵ Larson believes that the “authoritative and transformative conversational practices of early modern women exist in dynamic tension with the gendered contexts and codes governing interaction and linguistic and spatial self-positioning in the period.” Katherine Rebecca Larson, *Early modern women in conversation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 10, 11.

⁹⁶ Barbara J. Harris, “Sisterhood, Friendship and the Power of English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550 in *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700*, ed. James Daybell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

and glistening with small stones and winding streams, and we felt full of contentment.⁹⁷

The specific references to being happy and full of contentment reflect the importance of engaging in an intimate relationship, experienced in this case by escaping from the patriarchal world of the city to the freedom of country life. The rewards of being part of a family are particularly evident in the extensive correspondence of the Nassau family as they struggled to deal with the consequences of the assassination of their patriarch, William the Silent. William's fourth wife, Louise de Coligny, played a significant role in developing a sense of community among women, many of whom were separated by international marriages. A large volume of correspondence has survived, nearly a third of the letters written by Louise were sent to her step-daughter, Charlotte-Brabantine, and they contain intimate details about the family. When Charlotte-Brabantine was confined Louise expressed her sadness at missing the delivery, assuring her of her maternal love, and she wrote to another step-daughter, Anna, "It gives me great contentment to know that it pleases you to keep me in your good graces, which I hold infinitely dear."⁹⁸ The relationship between the sisters was also close and affectionate. Shortly after her marriage Elizabeth wrote to Charlotte-Brabantine, "I must confess, dear sister, that I will never love you so much", and Amelia wrote to Charlotte-Brabantine, "I am very happy, dear sister, of the assurance you give me that the distance will not cause you to forget your sister Amelia who loves you with all her heart."⁹⁹ Susan

⁹⁷ Cereta, *Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist*, 35.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Susan Broomhall, "Letters Make the Family: Nassau Family Correspondence at the Turn of the Seventeenth Century," in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, ed. Julie D. Campbell and Anne R. Larsen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 35. Louise wrote to Charlotte-Brabantine, "Dear daughter, I am in despair not to be able to be there for your delivery, which I think should be in about a week, and I imagine that you will present a fine son to Monsieur de la Tremoille as New Year's gift ... As for me, I assure you that I am always your mother who loves you as herself, and who is continually praying that God will give you a happy delivery." Quoted in Jane Couchman, "'Give birth quickly and then send me your good husband': Informal Political Influence in the Letters of Louise de Coligny," in *Women's Letters Across Europe*, ed. Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 177.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Broomhall, "Letters Make the Family," 33.

Broomhall points out the informality of the correspondence, it includes in-jokes and pet names and Amelia concludes with scribblings of practice Italian to create a playful and informal atmosphere. Broomhall believes that the writers were seeking subconsciously to recreate the happiness of their earlier life and to suggest that, although apart geographically, they were still together.¹⁰⁰ Their correspondence is an indication of how women maintained close affective ties that compensated for the separation caused by political marriages.

At times women were able to develop “sheltered female spaces” into which men would not intrude.¹⁰¹ One apparently sheltered space was the convent, where women might retreat to a society ruled by a woman, but this became a less attractive option as the Council of Trent imposed increased patriarchal control over its government and introduced mandatory *clausura*. These changes made letters an important source of connection with the outside world, especially for nuns who had not entered the religious life with a strong sense of vocation. This was particularly the case in Venice. In *The Hell of Nuns* the radical nun, Arcangela Tarbotti, criticised what she regarded as the criminal practice of forcing nuns to take the veil; this dark underside to the myth of Venice developed earlier in the sixteenth century as the result of “dowry inflation” which threatened family patrimonies.¹⁰² In 1619 Patriarch Giovanni Tiepolo, the head of the Venetian church, wrote to the Senate, “More than two thousand patrician women … live in this city locked up as if in a public tomb … not out of piety, but obedience to their family.”¹⁰³ Attempting to resist male control, nuns replicated family networks, taking in young girls to be educated and maintaining contact with them

¹⁰⁰ Broomhall, “Letters Make the Family”, 32.

¹⁰¹ Louise Schleiner, *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 1.

¹⁰² Jutta Sperling, “The Paradox of Perfection: Reproducing the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 1 (1999), 26. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/i209374>.

¹⁰³ Scriptura R. mi. D.i Patriarchae, “Museo Civico Correr, Codex Cicogna, 2570, 299-304. Quoted in Sperling, “The Paradox of Perfection”, 26.

through letters when they left.¹⁰⁴ Despite being unwillingly confined by social and religious forces in sheltered spaces that they might not have chosen, these women participated in networks of influence to benefit their community and to provide themselves with emotional support. For some, at least, this must have provided a form of happiness.

For women in the secular world the prospect of a sheltered female space could also be attractive, although often elusive. Anne Larsen refers to the “stark realities of women’s lives” as they dealt with external influences like religious persecution, plagues and wars, as well as their obligations to their family and friends and the lack of a “room of one’s own”.¹⁰⁵ The demands of marriage and family often made the lack of privacy a pressing concern and Antoinette de Loynes, the mother of Diane de Morel, describes in her letters the conflicts she experiences as she tries to follow her scholarly interests.¹⁰⁶ Cereta wrote to Sigismodo de Bucci about how she was only able to steal a space from the rest of the day by staying up and working for most of the night, depriving herself of sleep so that she might pursue her studies and writing.¹⁰⁷ She employs the metaphor of a family tree of women scholars, possibly connecting to the metaphor of the City of Ladies used by Christine de Pizan, to claim that women have a literary tradition of their own.¹⁰⁸ More radically, Pizan had earlier proposed the vision of an exclusive secular community of women that provided an alternative to marriage or the convent. Alluding in her title to St Augustine’s *City of God*, Pizan is inspired by Reason, Rectitude and Justice to go to the Field of Letters to found the City of Ladies,

¹⁰⁴ Alison Weber, “‘Dear Daughter’: Reform and Persuasion in St Teresa’s Letters to her Prioresses” in *Women’s Letters Across Europe, 1400-1700: Form and Persuasion*, edited by Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 241-261.

¹⁰⁵ Anne R. Larsen, “Journeymen Across Borders: Catherine de Roches’s Catalog of Modern Women Intellectuals” in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, 249.

¹⁰⁶ Marie le Jars de Gournay, *Apology for the Woman Writing and other works*, ed. and trans. Richard Hillman and Colette Quesnel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

¹⁰⁷ Cereta laments, “I have no leisure time for my own writing and studies unless I use the nights as productively as I can. I sleep very little. Time is a terribly scarce commodity for those of us who spend our skills and labor equally on our families and our own work. But by staying up all night, I have become a thief of time, sequestering a space from the rest of the day, so that after working by lamplight for much of the night, I can go back to work in the morning.” Cereta, *Collected Letters*, 31-2.

¹⁰⁸ Robin, Introduction to *Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist*.

taking the trowel of her pen and laying down bricks and mortar, to create a haven from assailants. Examples of other virtuous women provide the building blocks of the city as Pizan takes issue with the misogyny of the *Romance of the Rose*.¹⁰⁹ Even the teaching of Aristotle “which has been of great profit to human intelligence” will not equal the benefit that will accrue through the works which these ladies will accomplish through their knowledge.¹¹⁰ Pizan promises that the inhabitants of her city will be happy and she uses emotive words to validate her proposal. She asserts that the city will be “extremely beautiful, without equal, and of perpetual duration in the world”, it will be inhabited by “ladies of fame”, who are “worthy of praise”, and a defence against the “enormous ingratitude” and “ignorance” of men who defame women.¹¹¹ In this way she creates her city as a sheltered space in which women could achieve independence from men.

Cereta also aspired to achieve the happiness of fulfilment of her intellectual abilities by becoming a member of a circle of female scholars. She replaced the male humanist metaphor of a *respublica literarum* with a republic of women (a *respublica mulierum*) in which women had a right to education. Writing in defence of women to Biboli Semproni she asserts, “And I shall strive in a war of vengeance against … certain insane and infamous men [who] bark and bare their teeth in vicious wrath at the republic of women so worthy of veneration.”¹¹² Julie Campbell believes that literary circles “offered to intellectual women border spaces between private and public life that provide the developmental grounds for their inclusion in literary society in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries”, and helped women to pursue their

¹⁰⁹ “It is therefore right that we start to people this noble City now, so that it does not remain vacant or empty, but instead is wholly populated with ladies of great excellence, for we do not want any others here. How happy will be the citizens of our edifice, for they will not need to fear or worry about being evicted by foreign armies. Now a new kingdom of femininity is begun, and it is far better than the earlier kingdoms of the Amazons.” Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York: Persea Books, 1982), 116-7.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 81.

¹¹¹ “How happy will be the citizens of our edifice.” Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, 116.

¹¹² Cereta, *Collected Letters*, 80.

intellectual and cultural ambitions.¹¹³ The dialogues of Catherine Des Roches assume that her readers are familiar with the writings of other women and suggest the presence of a transnational group of women who are engaged in the common pursuit of learning and writing. At the end of “The Dialogue of Iris and Pasithee” Iris seems to be attracted to Pasithee’s idea of a school where women can learn from each other and teach in safety. Anne Larsen refers to the way Des Roches depended on the support of individuals, whom she refers to as resonators, who would nurture thought in “feminocentric environments” and encourage creative output.¹¹⁴ Moderata Fonte also created a retreat from the world of men in a *locus amoenus*, a garden where seven friends gather, “safe from any fear of being spied on by men or constrained by their presence”.¹¹⁵ As they look at the garden they are filled with “rapture and wonder.” Adriana says to her hostess, “Come, Leonora, what paradise is this? You have a real paradise on earth!”, and Corinna observes that among its charms is the absence of men.¹¹⁶ In a dialogue between the friends, Corinna who is unmarried and therefore free to devote herself happily to study and writing, argues against the Aristotelian belief that men are shaped for command and women for subservience. Virginia Cox refers to the innovative device of creating exclusively female speakers in a genre traditionally appropriated by men, and to the air of “liberating transgressiveness” in the dialogue.¹¹⁷ Like the ladies in Pizan’s city, these women have been able to retreat to a sheltered space. However, as they emphasise the cruelty of men and the inequities of the Venetian dowry system, it is clear that only Corinna and the

¹¹³ Moderata Fonte, *The Worth of Women: Wherein Is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Their Superiority to Men*, ed. and trans. Virginia Cox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 45.

¹¹⁴ Anne R. Larsen, “Journeying Across Borders: Catherine de Roches’s Catalog of Modern Women Intellectuals,” in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, 249. In *From Mother to Daughter* Des Roches refers to “learned Siega”, “Laura Terracina, whose name flies from pole to pole”, “Morata, who truly earned from Heaven the name of Olympia”, “virtuous Ippolita Torella”, “sincere Proba” and “Clemence Isaure who each year rewards the best Christian hymn.” Quoted in Anne R. Larsen, “Journeying Across Borders”, 231.

¹¹⁵ Fonte, *The Worth of Women*, 45.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 53.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 18.

financially independent widow, Leonora, will be able to resist dominant cultural pressures when they return to the wider world.

An awareness of the threats to a sheltered female space occurs in a different mode in Aemelia Lanyer's poem, "The Description of Cooke-ham", as Lanyer links the estate to the Garden of Eden. Radically rewriting the story of the Fall from an early feminist perspective, Lanyer presents Cookeham as a female paradise where three women lived together "in happy intimacy".¹¹⁸ The relationship between the women and the landscape is symbiotic, nature is "joyful" and "joying his happiness" when the Countess is there, it also gives the women "delight" and "content". The focus is on the "stately tree", which Barbara Kiefer Lewalski interprets as an ideal lover for the countess, protecting her from the male sun. Danielle Clarke, on the other hand, links this poem to the overall construction of *Salve Deus Rex Iudaeorum*, making connections between the tree in the Garden of Eden, the tree of the Crucifixion and the tree of Cookham. For Clarke, the oak tree is "a redemptive gesture, as these women are not tempted, but adoring, when they kiss it".¹¹⁹ Regardless of this diversity of opinion, it seems clear that Lanyer is making links to the Garden of Eden, and Lewalksi interprets the thirteen shires that can apparently be seen from the estate as a substitute for the view of the whole world that Adam and Eve had from Paradise.¹²⁰ Susanne Woods, Clarke and Lewalski have pointed out the links between Lanyer's work and Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst" in initiating the country house poem, presenting female and male interpretations respectively of the estate as a paradise.¹²¹ However, in contrast to Jonson's poem, this is

¹¹⁸ Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), 237.

¹¹⁹ Danielle Clarke, ed. *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Aemelia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets*, xxxv.

¹²⁰ Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England*.

¹²¹ Aemelia Lanyer, *The Collected Poems of Aemelia Lanyer, Salve Deus Rex Iudaeorum* ed. Susanne Woods (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). Clarke, ed. *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Aemelia Lanyer*. Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England*. Lewalski points out that the beauty and harmony of Penshurst are centred on its Lord who is responsible for preserving them. It is "a working agricultural community of interdependent classes linked together in harmony, generosity and love, ready hospitality to all ... an integral part of the larger society as well as an idealised microcosm of it ... the ideal fusion of nature and

about to become a lost Eden as the Countess prepares to depart to join her husband. The poem begins in an elegiac tone, with repetitions of “Farewell” and the delight of the female figures of Philomela and Echo changes to grief. As the sun grows weak, the landscape also experiences sorrow and turns to winter because none of the women will return.¹²² Lewalski sees it as taking on the appearance of a “ravaged Eden” after the expulsion, an idyllic place destroyed when its lady departs. In this poem “a female Eden experiences a new Fall when a male social order forces its women inhabitants to abandon it” and leave the happiness of their sheltered space. Overall, Lanyer’s work rewrites “the fundamental Christian myths – Eden, the Passion, the Community of Saints – with women at their center.”¹²³ It also celebrates the solidarity of women’s friendship but, by superimposing the reality of women’s lives on the ideal, she exposes its vulnerability. Contemporary social and religious ideologies militate against their attempts to secure a lasting happiness.

Whilst women often attempted to gain security and happiness through networks of female friendship, they also recognised the value of courting male support. Laura Terracina addressed over one hundred poems to female patrons and writers, but De Gournay gained the patronage of Montaigne and Anne Lock engaged as an intellectual equal with John Knox, writing sonnets and translating some of Calvin’s sermons.¹²⁴ Theorising about different types of communities, Campbell and Larsen discuss a community with a common ideology, such as a convent or monastery, an academy, a literary coterie, or a court circle, where people have a feeling of “sociopsychological unity”, and where they may share a dedication to scholarly

culture”. 236. The poems’ idealising portrayal shows no awareness of the reality, revealed in Sidney’s letters to his wife, of the debts that threatened their happiness.

¹²² “Each arbour, banke, each seate, each stately tree,

Looke bare and desolate now for want of thee.” Aemelia Lanyer, “The Description of Cooke-ham” 11.191-2.

¹²³ Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England*, 241.

¹²⁴ Marie le Jars de Gournay, *Apology for the Woman Writing and other works*. Susan M. Felch, “Anne Vaughan Lock: Her reception in England and Scotland,” in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, 137-157.

pursuits.¹²⁵ The development of the salon was another such location, usually hosted by women, where intellectual conversation between both sexes occurred in a sheltered space.¹²⁶ The poems of Veronica Franco reflect both her desire for solidarity with other women and her recognition that security and fame depend on male endorsement.¹²⁷ She became a member of the Academia della Fama, a salon presided over by one of her lovers, Domenico Venier. The academy was independent of both the church and the court and provided a protected environment in which women might mingle with other humanist intellectuals.¹²⁸ As a courtesan, Franco was especially conscious of the need to justify her claims to be considered an intellectual; she appropriated male rhetoric and genres, but she also identified herself through citizenship with the myth of Venice. By drawing on associations with the female image of the city-state, and sharing its reputation for beauty commodified for visitors, she raised her status to express solidarity with the elite whose interests were served by the myth.¹²⁹

Franco's profession enabled her to identify her eloquence with her sexuality in witty ways, comparing her skills as a courtesan to her abilities as a poet, but for many women the associations of public speech with promiscuity made writing a difficult enterprise. Isabella

¹²⁵ Broomhall, *Letters Make the Family*, 4

¹²⁶ "The salon differed from the royal court in sixteenth-century Italy in its insulation from the apparatus of state or city-state. Its meetings were informal and sporadic in nature, it functioned primarily as a social and cultural assembly. The works of both new and seasoned authors were performed. Partnerships between women and men of unequal rank ... characterise sociality and discourse ... The poetry anthology, a new genre in sixteenth-century print culture, was closely related to the salon" and in 1559 the first anthology, "composed almost entirely of women's works" was published under the title 'Rime diverse d'alcune nobilissimo, et virtuosissime donne.'" Diana Robin, *Publishing Women: Salons, the Presses, and the Counter-Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), xx, xxi. Influenced by developments in Italy, and under the patronage of Catherine de Medici and Marguerite of Navarre, France also adopted the salon. Madeleine de Scudery, *Selected Letters, Orations and Rhetorical Dialogues*, ed. and trans. Jane Donawerth and Julie Strongson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

¹²⁷ Ann Rosalind Jones and Margaret E. Rosenthal, Introduction to Veronica Franco, *Poems and Selected Letters* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

¹²⁸ Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros: Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540-1620* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

¹²⁹ Franco wrote, "A truly maiden city, immaculate and never violated, free from the taints of injustice, never harmed by an enemy force through the fires of war or the world's conflagration, in every revolution uniquely, miraculously preserved, not only whole but untouched by hostile attack, as if founded alone by a miracle in the midst of the sea, and with marvellous tranquillity established and constantly increased through endless time." Veronica Franco, *Poems and Selected Letters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 29.

Whitney countered this danger by emphasising her chastity, declaring the superiority of friendship to love, and presenting herself as a member of a close community of family and friends who protected her. Adopting Cicero's description of the friend as "another self", Whitney gives advice to her family, friends and readers and, in the guise of communicating privately with a close-knit circle, she legitimises her position as a female writer. She sends poems to her brothers, sisters and cousins, telling her sisters to observe her rules so that they will find "a treble joy", speaking of the "joy" she will experience when she sees her nephews, and wishing "happy health" to her cousin.¹³⁰ Whitney was able to establish relationships with men that were based on friendship and an equality that denied them authority. She reinterpreted friendship as a more feminine representation in which she positioned herself as a "valued member of a textual community of family and friends", and in this way she succeeded in rewriting Cicero's masculine gendering of a friendship that supports the state.¹³¹

Aristotle and Cicero had interpreted friendship as male gendered. Female alliances were problematized on the whole by the absence of a cultural tradition that validated their friendship in the way that the concept of *amicitia* did for men. When women corresponded within the community of family, they appeared to write with confidence that their feelings would be understood and reciprocated. This often holds true for Campbell and Larsen's concept of a close-knit community with a common ideology providing "sociopsychological unity". In the wider arena of humanist studies women's correspondence and literary writing are often characterised by a sense of defensiveness as they justify themselves in the face of anticipated or received hostility.¹³²

¹³⁰ Isabella Whitney, "A modest meane for Maides in order prescribed by Is. W. to two of her younger sisters serving in London" 1.4. and "To her sister Misteris, A. B." 1. 20, "to her Cosen F.W." 1. 9, in Clarke ed. *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Aemelia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets*.

¹³¹ Allison Johnson, "The 'Single Lyffe' of Isabella Whitney: Love, Friendship, and the Single Woman Writer," in *Discourse and Representations of Friendship in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700*, 125.

¹³² Veronica Franco and Tullia d'Aragona wrote a number of poems defending themselves against male attacks and Isabella Whitney asserted her chastity. Marie le Jars de Gournay attracted hostility and scorn. Katharina Zell wrote her "Apologia for Matthew Zell on Clerical Marriage" to defend herself against scandalous

Whether sexual relationships could be a legitimate source of happiness

In contrast to classical validation of *amicitia*, the Church was a formative influence in questioning the legitimacy of sexual relationships as a form of happiness. Augustine had expressed disgust for the “concupiscence of the flesh”; his legacy was concern about whether sexual relationships represented an aspect of human nature that could be enjoyed, or whether they were an expression of sinful lust that should be restrained.¹³³ This was particularly the case with the issue of same-sex love, its representation in classical literature where it is validated, and its translation in early modern times. Traub points out that the *Idylls* of the Greek poet, Theocritus, and the *Eclogues* of Virgil “provided powerful inspiration for representations of male homoerotic desire via a pastoral mode”, but Erasmus objected to the homoeroticism in Virgil’s Second Eclogue, advising teachers to use it as a negative example of appropriate behaviour.¹³⁴ Despite the reservations of Erasmus, the conventions of the pastoral continued to provide an opportunity for poets to accommodate the homoeroticism that was an accepted component of their sources.

When Richard Barnfield turned to the pastoral convention in *The Affectionate Shepheard*, his choice of subject matter aroused opposition. In his Preface to the *Cynthia* poems he defended *The Affectionate Shepheard* against readers who criticised its homoerotic content, asserting that it was “but an imitation of Virgil, in the second Eclogue of *Alexis*.¹³⁵ By referring to Virgil, Barnfield is not only refuting criticism, he is also setting his poem within the classical tradition that legitimised same sex love. It is, however, characterised by a sense of ambivalence as the first stanzas reveal a tension between erotic satisfaction and an awareness of sin. The poem opens with what appears to be a recollection of the past night

rumours, Katharina Zell, *Church Mother: the writings of a Protestant reformer in sixteenth-century Germany*, ed. Elsie McKee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

¹³³ Augustine, *The City of God*, xiv.10.

¹³⁴ Valerie Traub, “The (In)Significance of ‘Lesbian’ Desire in Early Modern England”, 229. Kelly Quinn, “Mastering Complaint: Michael Drayton’s Peirs Gaveston and the Royal Mistress Complaints,” *English Literary Renaissance* 38, no. 3 (2008). <http://www.jstor.org.exproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/24463765>.

¹³⁵ Richard Barnfield, *The Poems of Richard Barnfield* (London: The Fortune Press, 1936), 46.

spent in sexual congress, associated with the sensual imagery of the “crimson Canopie” of the heavens bespangled with stars. This is followed by his reference to “a sweet-faced Boy”, where the stressed syllables suggest Daphnis’s lingering gaze on his beloved. Ganymede is associated with the richness of gold, pearls and enamel, even his hair feels joy as he touches his “louely cheeks”. Despite the elation that he feels, the word “sin” appears four times. There is tension in the ambiguity of the lines, “Cursing the Time, the sense, the sin: / I Came, I viewed, I slipped in”, which can be read as an admission of the guilt of slipping into sin, but can also echo Caesar’s triumphant “I came, I saw, I conquered” as Daphnis slips physically into love.¹³⁶

The tension in the early part of the poem seems to be reduced as it progresses and Daphnis compares his feelings with less worthy male / female relationships. Kenneth Borris points out the recognition of religious sanctions in the opening and the way in which these and “other adverse perspectives” disappear from the rest of the poem.¹³⁷ Later Daphnis is able quite openly to beg Ganymede to “be my Boy, or els my Bride”.¹³⁸ Images from the pastoral world create a cumulative impressive of lush sensuality as Daphnis tempts Ganymede with “sweet lythe honey” and “New-made Wine / Frothing at top, strawberries, bilberries, cheese, cracknels, curds and clotted cream”.¹³⁹ There is an additional erotic suggestiveness underlying many of the descriptions, conveyed by the bawdy double meanings current in Elizabethan English. Frontain locates some of these in the images of bees and honey.¹⁴⁰ He points out that

¹³⁶ Barnfield, *The Poems of Richard Barnfield*, 11.1-12.

¹³⁷ Kenneth Borris, “‘I’ll hang a bag and a bottle at thy back’: Barnfield’s Homoerotic Advocacy and the Construction of Homosexuality,” in *The Affectionate Shepherd Celebrating Richard Barnfield*, 203.

¹³⁸ Barnfield, *The Poems of Richard Barnfield*, 1.3.312.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 11.66-80.

¹⁴⁰ O would to God (so I might have my fee)

My lips were honey, and thy mouth a Bee.

Then shouldst thou sucke my sweete and my faire flower

That now is ripe, and full of honey-berries.

Then would I leade thee to my pleasant Bower

Fild full of Grapes, of Mulberries, and Cherries,

Then shouldst thou be my Waspe or else my Bee

I would thy hiue, and thou my honey bee. Barnfield, *The Poems of Richard Barnfield*, 11.95-102.

“fee” has the double meaning of sexual intercourse, “sucke” and “flower” suggests fellatio, and the wasp and the bee imply penetration. In addition, Julie Yen notes that up to this point Daphnis has been addressing Ganymede in the third person as “he”, but the intensity of his desire causes him to change to the second person and address Ganymede directly.¹⁴¹ The combination of the pastoral and the erotic, in what Borris refers to as “a playful discourse of enjoyment”, links Barnfield to the classical writers in the pastoral genre, who regarded homoerotic love as natural and a source of happiness.¹⁴² In reality, as the practice of enclosing land was increasingly cutting people off from the natural world, the pastoral convention represented a longing for an ideal relationship with nature that was as unrealistic as the genre of utopian fiction. In his personal life, Barnfield lived in a social milieu in which his family disapproved of his refusal to marry and eventually disinherited him.¹⁴³ He may well have been aware of the impossibility of his ideal, that the acceptance and overt celebration of homoerotic love, and the happiness that it could generate, could only take place within the artifice of the pastoral.

Writings in the early modern period also reflect a concern about whether sexual activity between a man and a woman could be an acceptable source of pleasure. They often reveal tensions between expressing the attractions of sexual fulfilment and the need to evaluate these in terms of moral and religious teachings. Augustine associated sexual desire with the Fall; in *The City of God* he speculated that there had been no sex or procreation in the Garden of Eden, and he raised the question of whether sexual desire is a result of, or a penalty for, the disobedience of Adam and Eve.¹⁴⁴ Later, in *Confessions*, he came to the conclusion that their sin caused unrestrained sexual desire, and that the revolt against God

¹⁴¹ Julie Yen, “If it be a sinne to love a sweet-fac’d Boy’: Rereading Homoerotic Desire in Barnfield’s *Ganymede Poems*,” in *The Affectionate Shepherd Celebrating Richard Barnfield*, 133.

¹⁴² Borris, “I’ll hang a bag and a bottle at thy back””.

¹⁴³ Andrew Worrall, “Biographical Introduction: Barnfield’s Feast of ‘all Varietie’,” in *The Affectionate Shepherd Celebrating Richard Barnfield*.

¹⁴⁴ Augustine, *The City of God*, XIV10.

was the cause of a revolt in their own members.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, towards the end of his life, reflecting back on the concupiscence of his youth, he wrote in *The City of God* that lust “convulses the whole man, so that there follows a pleasure greater than any other”, recognising the powerful attractions of sexual desire, even while criticising the way in which it caused “a man’s mind [to be] almost entirely overwhelmed.”¹⁴⁶ In contrast to the unease with which even the most tolerant theologians wrote about sexuality, early modern readers would have been exposed to the “depiction of desire’s endless variety” in Ovid’s *Amores*, *Metamorphoses*, and *Heroides* and in other works inspired by him.¹⁴⁷ The challenge for these readers was to reconcile pagan celebration of sexuality with Church teachings on sex.

The power of sexual desire provided a challenge to both Aristotelian concepts of temperance and Christian expectations of chastity. When the characters in *The Book of the Courtier* engage in a discussion of the relationship of love to happiness, Castiglione constructs a hierarchy of types of love.¹⁴⁸ Reflecting the influence of Aristotle, Signor Ottaviano promotes the importance of reason and the need for temperance to moderate the emotions.¹⁴⁹ Pietro Bembo elaborates on this point when he distinguishes between the senses (that “desire things through sensual appetite”), reason (that “desires things through rational choice”) and intellect (that “links man to the angels [and] desires things through pure will”).¹⁵⁰ He criticises “unbridled desire” which arouses a “raging and unquenchable thirst” in lovers who submit to it and are, as a result, “most unhappy”.¹⁵¹ Bembo is prepared to allow for sensual love in the young, but he asserts that those who are no longer young should abandon it, since it is merely “the lowest rung of the ladder by which we ascend to true

¹⁴⁵ David G. Hunter, “Augustinian Pessimism? A New Look at Augustine’s Teaching on Sex, Marriage and Celibacy,” in *Christianity and Society: The Social World of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson (Google Books Online, 1999).

¹⁴⁶ Augustine, *The City of God*, 614.

¹⁴⁷ Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism*, 229.

¹⁴⁸ Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 293, 295.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 325.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 326.

love.”¹⁵² For Bembo the “goal of true happiness” is “directed towards the life of the spirit”.¹⁵³ As he describes the joys that the soul can achieve he appropriates the language of sexual love (the soul is “ravished” and “begins to burn”), and transmutes it into the language of heavenly bliss in which “love gives the soul greater happiness still”.¹⁵⁴ It is by ridding ourselves of human passions that we may achieve true happiness, sexual love is at best an inferior and disturbing passion. Although Castiglione makes links with Aristotle in advocating the importance of reason, he subjects classical philosophy to the claims of religion in interpreting the superior intellect as a heavenly quality.

Aristotle, on the other hand, valorises temperance, which he contrasts with the excess of self-indulgence.¹⁵⁵ Zailig Pollock points out that in *The Faerie Queene* Spenser applies the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean to bodily behaviour in his description of Medina who, as her name suggests, is a mean between her two sisters. Elissa, who represents “defect” in Greek, threatens and scolds her lover, whilst Perissa, whose name reflects her excessive behaviour, is governed by “lawless lust” (II.ii.35-36).¹⁵⁶ Guyon, the central character in Book II is a figure of temperance, who successfully resists a number of temptations that he encounters.¹⁵⁷ However Aristotle recognises that “not every action nor every passion admits of a mean” (II.6.9-10), and Spenser shows an awareness that sexual passion cannot always be temperately contained. As Guyon approaches the Bower of Bliss, the doorway framed by the “clasping arms” and “wanton wreathings” of boughs and branches foreshadows the sexual coupling that will follow; the landscape is also described as deceptively “sweet and holesome” (II.xii.52), a place where storms and frosts do not “violate” the tender buds and leaves (II.xii.51). At this stage Guyon does not allow his mind to be affected by the fair

¹⁵² Ibid., 328.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 339.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 339, 340.

¹⁵⁵ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, II.6.1107a, II.7.60.

¹⁵⁶ Zailig Pollock, “Concupiscence and Intemperance in the Bower of Bliss,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 20, no. 1 *The English Renaissance* (1980). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/450100>.

¹⁵⁷ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (London: Longman, 1977).

aspect of the place, or the implication that, here, sexual activity is not a violation, but as he progresses the language becomes increasingly sensuous and the carved grapes seem to ask to be gathered, a “rich load” (II.xii.55) that offers the prospect of “luschious” wine (II.xii.54). There is now a tension in the verse between the erotic connotations of the landscape and the description of *Excesse*, who is wearing clothes that are “fowle disordered … vnmeet for womanhood” (II.xii.57). She is a sexual temptress, and plucking the fruit links her to Eve, but unlike Adam, Guyon resists the temptation with a determination that will manifest itself more violently in his later destruction of the Bower. As Guyon progresses, the link with Adam is intensified when the landscape is described as Paradise, a place “In which all pleasures plenteously abound / And none does others happinesse enuye” (II.xii.58). The connection to original sin, suggested by the references to Paradise and Adam and Eve, is heightened by the phallic connotations in the description of the fountain, since in Christian theology the Fall is often represented in terms of Eve’s destructive sexuality. However, the connection is complicated by Spenser’s more classical appropriation of Tasso’s pool. This point is elaborated upon by Zailig Pollock who observes, “Spenser’s damzelles are imitated from *due donzellette* (15. 58), whom Tasso describes bathing in a fountain outside Armida’s palace. Tasso’s donzellette are playing in the water, *scherzando*: they are splashing one another, racing, and diving”, but Spenser’s account has a symbolic significance as “an allegory of the concupiscent and irascible impulses in a state of intemperance.”¹⁵⁸ Despite Spenser’s moral evaluation of the Damzelles, who “wrestle wantonly” (II.xii.63), the verse lingers over their physical charms as the reader is invited to see them through Guyon’s greedy eyes. They expose their “dainty parts” when they plunge down and rise up out of the water and they are linked, not with Eve, but with pagan images of the Cyprian goddess. As one reveals her “lilly paps” she arouses Guyon’s desire, and as the other one “shewed him many sights” the

¹⁵⁸ Pollock, “Concupiscence and Intemperance,” 54.

knight's "courage cold could rear", an explicit acknowledgement by Spenser of the powerfully uncontrollable nature of sexual arousal when Guyon approaches the Bower of Bliss (II.xii.66-68).

The word "bliss" dates back to Anglo-Saxon, where it could mean "blitheness, gladness, joy, delight or enjoyment", either physical and social or mental and spiritual. Wycliffe identified two types of bliss, "blesse of þe soule and blisse of þe bodi."¹⁵⁹ "Bliss" was often used synonymously with "joy" and in 1597 was coupled by Hooker with happiness.¹⁶⁰ In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser alternates between representing bliss as an emotion that is socially cohesive and exploring the tensions created by a passion that is much more socially destabilising. When he describes the marriage of Redcross and Una, Spenser sees it as a community event that is brokered by the king and enables everyone to feel joy at the "knitting of loues band" (I.xii.40). The happiness of Redcross is described in the same terms, he is swimming in a "sea of blissful ioy" (I.xii.41), so that his personal feelings become an extension of socially acceptable emotions. We are also reminded that his happiness does not overpower his capacity for rational thought, and he is mindful of the quest to which he is still committed, which will take priority over his feelings for Una. This is contrasted with the foreshadowing description of Acrasia and the Bower of Bliss early in Book II: "Her bliss is all in pleasure and delight, / Wherewith she makes her louers drunken mad" (II.i.52). Acrasia will entice Guyon into her bower, where sexual passion is seen to be morally and socially destabilising, as men are turned into beasts in ways that recall Circe's transformation of Odysseus's sailors into swine.

Guyon, the representative of temperance, is used by Spenser to indicate the power of sexual desire, and his experience in the Bower of Bliss attests to the failure of prescriptive morality to restrain or repress one of the most powerful of human emotions. Sex is the most

¹⁵⁹ Wycliffite Serm. In *Sel. Wks.* II. 234. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*.

¹⁶⁰ "To them whose delight ... is in the law ... that happiness and blisse belongeth." R. Hooker *Of Lawes Eccl. Politie* V. xxii. 47. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*.

alluring of the temptations to which he has been exposed, and the one to which he responds most intensely. The Palmer may rebuke him, but Spenser is indicating the involuntary nature of sexual desire that often refuses to be contained by reason or the Aristotelian mean of temperance. In the description of Acrasia the tension between sexual desire and moral evaluation is most marked; she has introduced her lover, Verdant, to “wanton ioyes” (II.xii.72). Acrasia means incontinence in Greek, but the singer of the song of the rose reminds us of the shortness of mortal life, suggesting the urgency of gathering the rose of love while there is still time. There is a post-coital languor in the description of Acrasia lying on a bed of roses, wearing a silken veil that exposes her alabaster skin and her snowy breast, on which droplets of sweat attest to earlier sexual activity. After the song ends Spenser creates an apparent paradox in his reference to “pleasant sin”. Commenting on Spenser’s evaluative language, Greenblatt observes that moral judgement “is absorbed into a world in which the normal conceptual boundaries are blurred”.¹⁶¹ More explicitly responding to Spenser’s introduction of the word “crime” at the end of the song, Greenblatt believes that we are invited “to transvalue the word ‘crime’, reading it as the equivalent of ‘passion’ or ‘intensity,’ even as we continue to know that ‘crime’ cannot be so transvalued. We can master the iconography, read all the signs correctly, and still respond to the allure of the Bower”.¹⁶² Guyon is allowed simply to reject the other temptations to which he was exposed, but he destroys the Bower with an almost iconoclastic violence that suggests the intemperance of a repressed sexuality.

Whilst women are presented as sexual temptresses in some early modern writing, an alternative response places emphasis on the importance of their chastity. *The Book of the Courtier* concludes with an unresolved debate about whether women can achieve happiness in the way that Bembo has promoted, with Signor Gaspare doubting whether the souls of

¹⁶¹ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 172.

¹⁶² Ibid., 172.

women can be “purged” of passions in the same way as the souls of men. Dealing with the less worthy passion of sexuality, Bembo proposes that it is the role of men to keep women from going astray, encouraging them to be “modest, temperate and truly chaste”.¹⁶³ The woman is to be loved by the man, and when her desires accord with his they will both be truly happy. Castiglione seems genuinely to care about mutual happiness, even when he suggests the inferior potential of women, but in other works of the period this may not necessarily be the case. When women are presented as relatively passive object of male desire their right to happiness does not emerge as a major concern of the writer. Helen Hackett is representative of feminist critics who criticise the way women were subjected to moralising reflections on the value of their chastity, the silencing of their voices in representations of love, and the rejection of female agency. As she points out, ‘Renaissance texts of all kinds voiced an incessant preoccupation with feminine silence, chastity and obedience’.¹⁶⁴ Male authors were often unable to resist the temptation to impose moral judgement, even when they appeared to be acknowledging the legitimacy of female desire.

In the Prefaces to Barnabe Rich’s *Farewell to militarie profession* he encourages women to believe that they will gain pleasure from reading. He promises that the subject matter of the tales will deal with the happiness that independent female characters can achieve in their love relationships.¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, in his tale “Of Apollonius and Silla” (one of the sources for *Twelfth Night*) Rich demonstrates the tensions that he experienced between the narrative impulse to validate the happiness that can be achieved in love relationships and

¹⁶³ Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 343, 335.

¹⁶⁴ Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 30.

¹⁶⁵ In his Preface, “To the right curtoeas Gentlewomen, both of England and Ireland”, he constructs a persona for himself that reflects the overall title of his book, having apparently reached the conclusion that it is “lesse painful to folowe a Fiddle in a Gentlewoman’s chamber: then to march after a Drumme in the field.” After listing the hardships of life as a soldier he assures his women readers that “to be of Venus band, there is pleasure, sport, ioy, solace, mirth, peace, quiet, rest, dainty fare, with a thousand other delites, such as I cannot rehearse.” Barnabe Rich, *Riche his farewell to militarie profession: containing very pleasant discourses, fitte for a peaceable time* (Imprinted at London: By V. S[immes] for Thomas Adams, dwelling in Paules churchyard at the signe of the white Lion, 1594), A2^R.

an awareness of dominant social expectations of a woman's chastity and subservience. Julina, as a widow, is sexually experienced, and is the instigator of the amorous encounter with Silvio. Initially, the narrator approves of the assignation, telling us that "they passed the night with such ioy and contentation, as might be wished for", but the subsequent reflection on the resulting pregnancy reflects a more conservative, moralistic tone as Riche comments on women who "want the reason to use moderation in their diet".¹⁶⁶ Despite asserting that there was nothing evil or hurtful in an encounter that had been "done before God", Julina fears to "become quite bankerout of her honour" if she cannot produce a father for her child.¹⁶⁷ In her role as Silvio, Silla condemns "the foolish indiscretions" of another woman, referring to her "shame" and "filthiness", so that Julina laments, "O happy, and more than happy had I beene, if inconstant fortune had not deuised this treason wherein I am furnished and caught ... making mee a common fable to all posteritie".¹⁶⁸ When the misunderstandings are resolved the narrative voice changes again as Rich now celebrates the happy ending for all; Julina is "rauished with ioy", Silvio embraces her with "great ioy", and they all "passed the residue of their dayes with such delight, as those that haue accomplished the perfection of their felicities."¹⁶⁹ When Rich adopts a female voice, he allows a temporary independence to his character, but concludes by reimposing dominant male values.

A tension between desire and moral judgement also characterises the contrast of the love stories of Pamela and Philoclea in Sidney's *Old Arcadia*. Pamela, eloping with Musidorus, experiences a conflict between sexual passion and reason as she is simultaneously "transported with desire" and "troubled with fear".¹⁷⁰ Pamela's concern to preserve her chastity in this morally compromising situation is revealed in her request that their "joys" and

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., H3^R.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., II^R.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., I3^R.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., I4^V.

¹⁷⁰ Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973), 198.

“mutual happiness” should not be “stained” or “defiled”, a request that Musidorus initially accedes to.¹⁷¹ In contrast, when Sidney allows Philoclea to respond to Philocles’ advances he celebrates the “high degree of their joys”, elevating them to a spiritual plane as he speaks of their souls “lifted up with extremity of love after mutual satisfaction”.¹⁷² He condemns the cruelty of the Arcadian laws that would sentence the pair to death, defending Philoclea’s “innocent soul” and “true living virtue”.¹⁷³ Sidney, who directly addresses his female readers as he prepares them for the consummation of the love between Pyrocles and Philoclea, seems to vacillate between approval and criticism of fulfilled sexual passion, but in the final happy ending he makes no distinction between the two apparently incompatible moral attitudes of his heroines.

Despite Sidney’s address to the “fair ladies” who might read the *Old Arcadia*, his exploration of female desire is limited and male lust is excused.¹⁷⁴ Initially, Musidorus lingers over the perfections of Pamela’s physical beauty, reflecting the conventions of the blazon which emphasise her purity. However, then as he bends over her, sucking her breath “with such joy” that he is “overmastered with the fury of delight” and he plans to rape her. Yet Sidney excuses Musidorus’s conflation of happiness and rape by putting the blame on Pamela, whose beauty “did so tyrannise” over him, and Musidorus is only prevented from acting on his desires by the intervention of the clownish villains. In contrast, the consummation of love between Pyrocles and Philoclea is presented as mutually satisfying, but the encounter is viewed from a largely male perspective. As Pyrocles approaches the bed,

¹⁷¹ “... my prince Musidorus, I say, now that the vehement shows of your faithful love towards me have brought my mind to answer it in so due a proportion that, contrary to all rules of reason, I have laid my estate, my life, my honour, it is now your part to double your care ... Let me be your own (as I am), but by no unjust conquest. Let not our joys, which ever ought to last, be stained in our own consciences. Let no shadow of repentance steal into the sweet consideration of our mutual happiness. I have yielded to be your wife; stay then till the time that I may rightly be so. Let no other defiled name burden my heart.” Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, 196-7.

¹⁷² Ibid., 290.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 290.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 242.

Sidney introduces the song that Philisides addresses to his unkind mistress. Hackett suggests that the song acts as the “textual curtain of the blazon” behind which Pyrocles achieves seduction. In this case the frustration of the Petrarchan poet who can look, but not touch, is subverted, as “the eye moving lingeringly down Philoclea’s body stands for Pyrocles’s hand and other organs travelling ecstatically from encounter to encounter with her ‘each part’.”¹⁷⁵ Although Sidney may sympathise with women and their desire for happiness in love, Hackett points out that he often represents them as erotic objects.

The ambivalence of male writers is revealed particularly when they reference the genitals, which were seen as simultaneously threatening and sources of intense pleasure.¹⁷⁶ Men often feared the effeminising power of sexually assertive women. This insecurity is conveyed in Thomas Nashe’s poem “The Choise of Valentines” when Tomalin, who has followed Francis from the country to a brothel, is initially unmanned by the sight of her and later climaxes too soon, whereupon Francis reinforces his sense of failure by using a dildo to satisfy herself.¹⁷⁷ The same fears, sometimes adopted by Antony, are implied in the Roman view of Cleopatra, who plays gender-crossing games in which she wears Antony’s sword to bed in Shakespeare’s play. The considerable body of erotic writing in the early modern period varied in quality from works by Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare, and later by Donne, to poems that Ian Moulton equates with “the graffiti found on the bathroom walls of the research libraries in which they are now housed.”¹⁷⁸ Moulton points out that the bawdy wordplay that characterised slight poems like epigrams and acrostics is echoed in canonical works. Despite male fears of women’s sexuality and attempts to restrain it, there was a conflicting body of

¹⁷⁵ Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance*, 117

¹⁷⁶ Ian Frederick Moulton, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁷⁷ Thomas Nashe, *The Works of Thomas Nashe Vol. III*, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958).

¹⁷⁸ Moulton, *Before Pornography*, 45.

medical opinion that emphasised the importance of female arousal.¹⁷⁹ It was believed that female orgasm was essential to conception and books on anatomy rediscovered the clitoris although, as Traub admits, the practical knowledge was probably never lost.¹⁸⁰ Ursula Potter's study of greensickness has drawn attention to the belief that young girls, whose marriages were delayed, were prone to a potentially life-threatening disease because the womb was an unstable organ within the body. The physician Johann Lange recommended marriage and copulation as a cure, and in his colloquy "Courtship" Erasmus creates a young man who persuades a girl that sex will benefit her health.¹⁸¹

Explicit writing about the pleasures of sex by women was rare, particularly in England. In Venice two celebrated courtesans did dare to celebrate the delights of erotic activity and, even more radically, situate it outside marriage. Franco gained fame as a poet, establishing connections with important men in Venetian culture as she mixed with them in the literary salon established by Domenico Venier.¹⁸² In her writing she opposes the clichés and idealisation of Petrarchan poetry, demanding that her lovers interact with her as an intellectual, but she also openly celebrates her sexual skills and she promises to satisfy her clients with erotic pleasures. Challenging a treacherous lover to a duel, she imagines that the battlefield is her bed, where she is able to demonstrate both her sexual and verbal skills as she puns on the word "die", which had the same sexual connotations in Italian as it did in

¹⁷⁹ This found its way into erotica. An anonymous poem is explicit about the physical detail of sexual arousal:

"Their labour lasted late at night
They felt it coming with delight
There buttockes moved toe & froe
And from the hole a rich juyce did flowe" (fol. 3v in Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet 172), quoted in Moulton, *Before Pornography*, 68.

¹⁸⁰ Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism*, 87-94.

¹⁸¹ Ursula Potter, "Greensickness in *Romeo and Juliet*: Considerations of a Sixteenth-Century Disease of Virgins," in *The Premodern Teenager: Youth in Society, 1150-1650*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2002).

¹⁸² The "honoured courtesan" mixed with the elite, rivalled princesses in the luxury of her dress and palaces, studied music, read and wrote. Ann Rosalind Jones and Margaret F. Rosenthal, Introduction to Franco, *Poems and Selected Letters*. Her 'cultivated eloquence was the symbolic capital, the special luxury, offered by the *cortigiana onesta* to clients capable of paying her immense fees.' Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros: Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540-1620* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 179.

English.¹⁸³ In an earlier poem to Venier she uses the Italian word for methods, “*modi*”, to suggest sexual positions when she imagines that Phoebus comes from Venus “to reveal to my mind / the positions that Venus assumes with him / when she holds him in sweet embraces”, reversing the customary male / female roles in a sexual encounter.¹⁸⁴ In the same poem she repeats words like “delight” and “sweet” so that they have a cumulative effect, but she also includes more explicitly erotic words like “taste” and “the knot of love”, leading to the assertion that her performance in bed exceeds Apollo’s.¹⁸⁵ In *The Dialogue on the Infinity of Love* Tullia d’Aragona also praises passionate and sensual love, but she yearns for a pleasure that involves body and soul. In distinguishing between “vulgar” love and “honest” love, she sees the main goal of honest love as “the transformation of oneself into the object of one’s love, with a desire that the loved one be converted into oneself”, a transformation that takes place on the spiritual plane.¹⁸⁶ Although she understands that people are driven by instinctive sexual impulses, she believes that they should not subordinate reason to the passions of the flesh.

¹⁸³ “I would die with you, felled by the same blow.” Capitolo 13 1.85. Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros*, 137.

¹⁸⁴ Capitolo 211.163-5. Comment by Ann Jones.

¹⁸⁵ ... sweetly lying at your left side,
I will make you taste the delights of love
when they have been expertly learned;
And doing this, I could give you such pleasure
that you would say you were fully content,
and at once fall more deeply in love.
So sweet and delicious am I become,
when I am in bed with a man
who, I sense, loves and enjoys me,
that the pleasure I bring excels all delight,
so the knot of love, however tight
it seemed before, is tied tighter still.
Phoebus, who serves the goddess of love,
and obtains from her as a sweet reward
what blesses him far more than being a god,
comes from her to reveal to my mind
the positions that Venus assumes with him
when she holds him in sweet embraces,
so that I, well taught in such matters,
know how to perform so well in bed

that this art exceeds Apollo’s by far. Franco, *Poems and Selected Letters*, Capitolo 2.11.148-168.

¹⁸⁶ Tullia d’Aragona, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*, ed. and trans. Rinaldina Russell and Bruce Merry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 88-90.

Happiness in marriage

Whilst sex outside the bonds of marriage could be celebrated in erotic writing, religion placed emphasis on the importance of chastity, which included not only virginity but also chaste sex in marriage. In early modern Catholic doctrine sexual relations were limited by a list of prohibitions: sex was only acceptable within marriage, it could not be engaged in on Sundays or other church holidays, it must allow for the possibility of procreation, it must be performed with the man on top.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, attitudes were changing and the Protestant Reformation placed increased importance on personal compatibility in marriage, linking the companionate model to friendship and reducing the emphasis on gaining money and curbing lust.¹⁸⁸ In Archbishop Cranmer's *Prayer Book of 1549* he added a third reason for marriage – in addition to the traditional avoidance of fornication and the procreation of legitimate children, marriage should also provide “mutual societie, helpe and conforte, that the one ought to haue of the other, bothe in prosperitie and aduersitie.”¹⁸⁹ Despite the emphasis on chastity, opinions about what chaste sex actually involved varied.

Aristotle believed that a happiness that depended on the senses was an inferior type, but the developing concept of the companionate marriage included the belief that marriage should combine friendship with fulfilling conjugal relations. When Eleanora D'Aragona became pregnant shortly after her marriage to Ercole D'Este, her brother Alfonso, wrote to her, “... you are beginning to accept that my advice is true and good.”¹⁹⁰ Diana Rowlands Bryant believes that this advice was about the importance of making herself sexually indispensable in the marriage bed, and that the affectionate nature of the correspondence

¹⁸⁷ Merry E. Weisner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹⁸⁸ Penelope Anderson, “The Absent Female Friend: Recent Studies in Early Modern Women’s Writing,” *Literature Compass* 7, no. 4 (2010). DOI: 10.1111/j.1741-4113.2009.00693x.

¹⁸⁹ *Booke of the common praier and mistracion of the Sacramentes, and other rites and ceremonies of the Churche: after the use of the Churche of England* (Londini: In officinal Edouadri Whitchurche. 1549), Cj1^R, Cc1^R.

¹⁹⁰ Diana Rowlands Bryant, “Affection and Loyalty in a Dynastic Marriage: The Early Years of the Marriage of Eleanora D’Aragona and Ercole D’Este, 1472-1480” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Sydney, 2010), 197.

between the couple when they were parted demonstrates their compatibility. The concept of the companionate marriage exposes the gender limitations of Aristotle's philosophy, since his discussion of happiness is so clearly focused on the emotions and relationships of men, and marks the beginning of a new understanding of the possibilities of happiness for women.

The developing concept of marriage as a form of friendship foregrounded the importance of shared personal interests. Intellectual women who made successful marriages found husbands who shared these interests and supported their literary endeavours.¹⁹¹ At a political level, the arranged marriage of Eleanora D'Aragona and Ercole D'Este developed into a union of combined ambitions for the dukedom of Ferrara, and the letters they exchanged when Eleanora returned for a time to Naples testify to their closeness. Ercole wrote to his wife after they had parted that his heart was "so constricted and sad that I could not have said a single word" and later he recorded his impatience to receive a letter from her, "no horse passes by on the road without me sending someone to see if it is a courier or a messenger carrying your letters."¹⁹² Although Eleanora's handwriting skills were so poor that her surviving letters are almost illegible, she chose to send her husband autograph letters to ensure privacy. She wrote to him of her homesickness, telling him, "I've come to the conclusion that Your Lordship is one of the best husbands in Italy."¹⁹³ The Earl of Shrewsbury wrote personally to his wife, Bess, in terms that clearly attest to the happiness of their marriage in its early days:

My dear None, of all the joys I have under God the greatest is yourself. To think that I possess so faithful a one that I know loves me so dearly, is all, and the greatest

¹⁹¹ The four daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke married learned men who valued their learning, as did Sir Thomas More's daughter, Margaret. Isabella Andreini was a co-director with her husband of a theatrical company, Bartholomew Kello was the publicist and business manager for Esther Inglis and Laura Battiferra and Moderata Fonte worked collaboratively with their husbands. Sarah Gwyneth Ross, "Esther Inglis: Linguist, Calligrapher, Miniaturist, and Christian Humanist," in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, ed. Campbell and Larsen.

¹⁹² Trans. by Diana Rowlands Bryant and cited in "Affection and Loyalty in a Dynastic Marriage", 230, 234.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 245.

comfort that this earth can give ... And till I have your company I shall think long of my only joy.¹⁹⁴

They cooperated to secure advancement in Elizabeth's court, but there is also in the Earl's letter a sense of deep, personal commitment. The letters of Robert Sidney to Barbara are also filled with regret that the demands of the Court keep him from home. He refers to her as "one of the greatest joys of my life" and confesses, "I would not for anything that the ill husbands at the Court should know how fond I am grown to send you in this fashion the first dainties I can come by, lest they should think I were quite marred."¹⁹⁵ In a time before the development of the diary as a record of personal thoughts, the letter provides the best window into happy marital relationships.

In societies where the institutions of Church and State exerted a largely negative influence, positive interpersonal relationships were an important source of happiness. This chapter recognises the diversity of relationships that characterised the early modern period and explores the differing ways in which people tried to find personal fulfilment. Accessing how people established connections with others, and how they reflected on these connections, involves the process that Matt describes as writing history from the inside out. Letters can be rewarding in opening a window to ways in which people related to one another and expressed their emotions and they can reflect the existence of Rosenwein's multiple emotional communities. They often reveal how people felt about dominant ideologies and the extent to which they saw themselves as either accepting or resisting those ideologies. They also demonstrate the attempts by some, especially women, to find or participate in the alternative communities that Reddy refers to as emotional refuges and Schliener as sheltered female spaces. Correspondence circulating in the humanist republic of letters often indicates

¹⁹⁴ Quoted in Mary S. Lovell, *Bess of Hardwick: First Lady of Chatsworth 1527-1608* (London: Abacus, 2007). Folger Xd, 428 (91).

¹⁹⁵ Hannay, Kinnamon and Brennan, *Domestic Politics and Family Absence*, 51.

awareness of a wider readership and was composed with knowledge of conventional epistolary rhetoric, but it can also reveal strong personal emotions. Other letters are more personal, especially those between some married couples, and the decision to write an autograph letter can signal the intention to convey private information and intimate feelings. Because they are in the public domain, imaginative texts are more likely, at least superficially, to represent the dominant emotional attitudes and values of the society that Stearns calls emotionology. It is also likely that fictional writing will introduce Reddy's concept of emotives, which refers to ways individuals manage their emotions, seek to express how they feel and, particularly in drama, come into conflict with other characters and thought processes. It could also provide a platform from which writers might challenge dominant ideologies and sometimes even represent relationships that might be subject to criticism. The issue of whether positive relationships expressed intimacy has been contested, but classical theories of friendship, especially the belief that the friend is another self, were influential, and reflect some of the modern ideas of intimate relationships. The evolution of the concept of the companionate marriage, in which couples were partnered as friends, marks the beginning of a belief that there could also be intimacy in marriage. A consideration of friendship and the companionate marriage indicates that the formation of strong affective ties was probably the most important source of personal happiness in the early modern period.

Chapter 4

Looking for Different Types of Happiness in *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*

Through analysis of a diverse range of texts the first part of my thesis established a world in which people sought happiness, often in adverse circumstances. I now want to examine the ways in which religious, political, philosophical and cultural ideas about happiness might have impacted on Shakespeare's middle comedies, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. The plays reveal a tension between Augustinian pessimism that fallen man cannot expect to be happy in this life and Aristotelian optimism that happiness can be achieved by virtuous living. Shakespeare presents some characters whose behaviour reflects an Augustinian vision of the inherently fallen nature of man. These characters respond to each other with prejudice and cruelty, and the worlds they construct encourage, and even institutionalise, those negative qualities. However, the happy endings are imagined in terms of personal relationships that challenge the pessimism of Augustine. Shakespeare champions the behaviour of characters who demonstrate the Thomistic virtues of faith, hope and charity in their relationships. As he shows that it is possible to retain integrity in a fallen world, some of his characters become embodiments of Thomistic optimism and Aristotelian belief in man's ability to strive after virtue. Happiness in these plays may be embattled, but it is precisely because of this that it can emerge triumphant in the end.

An interdisciplinary approach enables analysis of imaginative texts to be integrated into the historical, cultural, religious and political influences that shaped how people thought and felt about happiness. The interplay of philosophy and literature in Shakespeare's plays is discussed by Tzachi Zamir:

The relations between philosophy and literature are epistemological rather than moral: it is less the moral (paraphrasable) content being justified, and more the manner of contemplation, support, and acceptance of this content that constitute literature's unique contributions to philosophical reflection.¹

A reading of the comedies that focuses on their content can provide us with knowledge about different types of happiness. More significantly, in their contemplation of this issue, and in their refusal to commit to moral didacticism, the plays invite us to consider the value of the different types of happiness they dramatize, and to form our own philosophical opinions about the right way to live. They give expression to Aristotelian ideas about happiness, but also move beyond them. Aristotle theorises that favourable conditions are necessary for happiness to flourish, whereas Shakespeare believes that it can emerge from adversity and have greater value as a result.

Acknowledging Zamir's contribution, Langis situates her investigation of the emotions within this "renewed interest in ethical / philosophical approaches", paying attention to the ways in which the plays explore "the interactivity between the passions and moral action."² As she acknowledges the complexity of Shakespeare's "situational ethics" that are "richly dramatized" in his plays, Langis extends the focus on an ethical / philosophical approach to consider whether emotions were experienced differently in the early modern period.³ She includes references to characters' psycho-physiological actions, paying tribute to the work that has been done in body studies, but widening the scope of her discussion to include research in the fields of psychology. The intellectual divide Laam identifies, between perspectives of moral philosophy (that deals with right action) and

¹ Tzachi Zamir, *Double Vision: Moral Philosophy and Shakespearean Drama* (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2007), 16.

² Langis, *Passion, Prudence and Virtue*, 19.

³ Ibid., 24.

psychology (that is concerned with affects) is one that I intend to bridge by discussing the connections between positive psychology and Aristotelian theories of happiness.⁴

The methodologies recommended by Zamir, Langis and Laam can be extended to include consideration of the effects that religion had on Shakespeare's representation of human nature and its potential to achieve happiness. Zamir recognises the power of literary works to make certain beliefs plausible as he points out that the works support the beliefs through the experiences they create.⁵ Trigg more broadly considers the relationship between prescribed behaviour, the actual behaviour of people living at the time, and that represented in imaginative texts.⁶ Trigg's distinctions point to a possible discordance between the ideal promoted in the literary texts that people read and the reality of their lived experiences. This approach allows for a wider range of possible responses – imaginative texts may simply reflect orthodoxy; alternatively, they have the potential to challenge conventional beliefs. The pessimistic view of humanity expressed by Augustine and the more positive Thomistic response both influenced Shakespeare's representation of religion. The plays do not give expression to a consistent theological viewpoint. In places Shakespeare seems to demonstrate Augustinian pessimism about human nature and the political, social and religious worlds that fallen man constructs but, at other times, his view of humanity is more Thomistic in expressing belief in man's potential to achieve some degree of happiness in this life.

Viewing the plays through the discipline of Freudian psychology provides an alternative to the optimism of Aristotelian philosophy and draws attention to the worlds of cruelty and intolerance that Shakespeare constructs. However, combining Freudian psychology with positive psychology offers opportunities for a more extensive understanding of character motivation and the qualities of character that Shakespeare approves of, especially those exhibited by his heroines. In addition to this, research in the field of trauma therapy

⁴ Laam, "Shakespeare and Happiness".

⁵ Zamir, *Double Vision*, 15.

⁶ Trigg, "Introduction: Emotional Histories", 8.

creates further insights that happiness may emerge out of adverse circumstances. Positive psychology draws extensively on the philosophy of Aristotle. Since it also adopts an interdisciplinary approach in which it synthesises psychology, philosophy and medicine, it can provide new insights into the representation of happiness in *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*.

The first part of my thesis describes the tensions between how people felt they should behave, as a result of being exposed to the emotional regimes that Reddy refers to, and the reality of their lived experiences. Reddy writes about the importance of emotional liberty – the freedom to choose different goals.⁷ Shakespeare's plays seem to anticipate Reddy's theories in their representation of women who challenge the conventional roles they are expected to play. In Shakespeare's plays Aristotle's faith in the potential of man is combined with the Thomistic values of faith, hope and charity, that are particularly evident in Shakespeare's heroines as they learn from their experiences and develop. They choose paths to happiness that are not always conventional, approaching the impediments to their happiness with hope, expressing charity to those who are in trouble, and faith in the potential of others to become better people. Positive psychologists express a similar faith in the power of positivity as they emphasise the importance of positive thinking as a strategy to enable people to overcome adversity, focusing especially on the value of demonstrating resilience, optimism and emotional intelligence. They believe that it is possible to counter the negative effects of tragedy and trauma by demonstrating these character strengths and by exercising mercy and forgiveness. Although, at times, they employ a terminology that would have been foreign to Shakespeare their research suggests ways to access the strengths of character Shakespeare foregrounds in his heroines. Writing with a focus on the history of the emotions, Charland and White also adopt psychology as their methodology in their study of *The*

⁷ Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 105, 128-129.

Winter's Tale, believing that Shakespeare's insights into human motivation anticipate later psychological studies.⁸ In line with this current belief that psychology can be allied with research into the history of the emotions to shed light on Shakespeare, I propose to use positive psychology as my methodology to discuss *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. I believe that this approach builds on and broadens earlier research into negative emotions and opens up possibilities for discussion of the role of a positive approach to adversity.

Shakespeare's exploration of the nature of virtue

Shakespeare was writing in an intellectual climate in which Aristotelian ideas were circulating and Aristotle's moral and hierarchical constructions of happiness are reflected in *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. Shakespeare represents different type of happiness in these plays and he challenges his audience to consider whether some types of happiness are more morally acceptable than others. Aristotle defines virtue as "a state of character concerned with choice".⁹ It does not arise in us by nature, the virtues have to be learned and then exercised, and it is the role of legislators to make people virtuous by forming good habits in them.¹⁰ By the sixteenth century in England the word "virtue" had acquired multiple meanings, not always reflective of Aristotelian philosophy. It could have some rather general moral connotations, as it does when Portia asserts the "virtue of the ring" that she had given to Bassanio as a token of her love (*The Merchant of Venice* 5.1.198). More frequently it has specific associations of "a moral quality regarded (esp. in religious contexts) as good and desirable in a person" or "each of a specified number of morally good qualities regarded (esp. in religious contexts) as of particular worth or importance, such as the four cardinal virtues ...

⁸ Charland and White, "Anatomy of a passion: Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* as Case Study."

⁹ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1107a1.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1103a14-35 and 11036b1-5.

the three theological virtues ... or these seven virtues collectively".¹¹ In Shakespeare's plays, characters are often referred to in fairly general terms as virtuous or possessing virtues. Thus Adam asks why Orlando is virtuous and Jaques refers to the Duke's virtue (*As You Like It* 2.3.5, 5.4.176). Olivia supposes that Orsino is "virtuous" (*Twelfth Night* 1.5.227) and Nerissa tries to comfort Portia with the assertion that her father's will shows that he was virtuous and holy (*The Merchant of Venice* 1.2.24). When these virtues acquire more specific connotations they can also be gender specific. Cassius and Octavius equate Brutus' virtue with the masculine attribute of honour, and Othello thinks of it in terms of his life as a warrior. For women virtue usually has connotations of chastity.¹² In this more limited and limiting sense it applies to Ophelia, Gertrude, Helena, Octavia, Imogen, Queen Katharine, Blanch in *King John*, Isabella and Mariana in *Measure for Measure*, Hero, Desdemona, Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Miranda's mother in *The Tempest*.¹³ Shakespeare's middle comedies, with the exception of *Much Ado About Nothing*, do not regard the heroine's chastity as a contested issue. Shakespeare is thus able to open up the representation of virtue in women in more complex ways that challenge the gendered expectations of Aristotle and the early modern period.

In the early modern period virtue was largely understood in terms of self-government and self-knowledge, as a result of the reason's ability to control passions.¹⁴ Langis explores Aristotle's writing on psychology and philosophy to show how he "presents human flourishing, or *eudaimonia* ... largely as virtue (Greek *aretē* for "excellence") through moderation."¹⁵ In doing so, she focuses extensively on the ways in which characters in Shakespeare's plays achieve virtue through practical wisdom and prudence, although she

¹¹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 1a and 1b.

¹² *Ibid.*, 2c.

¹³ <http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/concordance/o/?i=763959&pleasewait=1&msg=sr>.

¹⁴ Langis, *Passion, Prudence and Virtue in Shakespearean Drama*, 2-3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

includes references to the other Aristotelian virtues, courage and justice.¹⁶ However, the wisdom and courage displayed by Shakespeare's heroines do not always conform neatly to Langis' emphasis on prudence and moderation and are deserving of more detailed attention. The plays consider whether the virtues of wisdom, courage, justice and temperance that Aristotle applied only to men in the context of the *polis* might be applied to the lives of women in a wider spectrum of social and political contexts. Rosalind and Celia demonstrate courage, but expose themselves to danger in fleeing to the Forest of Arden, and neither of them responds to the man she loves with moderation. Viola shares with the audience her impassioned feelings for Orsino, saying that she is desperate for his love, and Portia's commitment to Bassanio takes her into the male world of the Venetian court to save his friend. All three heroines demonstrate courage and humanity and Portia attempts to deal justly with Shylock.

When Langis refers to the way Aristotle "presents human flourishing" in *The Nicomachean Ethics*, she uses a phrase adopted by positive psychologists when they refer to Aristotle's discussion of the positive effects of character strengths and virtues in promoting happiness. Positive psychologists consciously ally themselves with the philosophy of Aristotle as they stress the links between flourishing and moral values. Positive psychology provides a way of bridging the gap in literary criticism, identified by Laam, between moral philosophy and psychology. Aristotle's virtues of character (courage, humanity, justice and temperance) and his virtue of intellect (wisdom) have been included in Peterson and Seligman's character strengths and virtues classification.¹⁷ Moving beyond the Aristotelian virtues of wisdom, courage, justice and temperance, positive psychologists draw attention to other characteristics – resilience, optimism, empathy and emotional intelligence – that extend their discussion of the key Aristotelian virtues. Approaching *The Merchant of Venice*, As You

¹⁶ Ibid., 18.

¹⁷ Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues*.

Like It and *Twelfth Night* with these additional virtues in mind enriches our understanding of the character strengths in Shakespeare's heroines, who demonstrate virtues not identified by Aristotle. They are able to make choices about how to act and relate to others and their wisdom is revealed through the ways in which they attain self-knowledge. As a dramatist, Shakespeare is interested in how characters shape their own destinies, rather than being merely the victims of preordained forces, and in the qualities of character that impel them to do so. When he considers the extent to which these qualities might be hierarchically constructed, he presents his heroines as representative of morally admirable virtues that constitute the upper levels of the hierarchy.

Positive psychologists overtly ally themselves with Aristotelian philosophy, as they emphasise the importance of striving after virtue. Although they make no conscious links, they can also be seen to reflect Thomistic faith in the possibilities of spiritual renewal, reshaping Aquinas' faith, hope and charity as the secular virtues of resilience, optimism and empathy. Focusing on these strengths of character enables an understanding that recognises the possibilities of building positive relationships between people and draws together the influences on Shakespeare of Aristotle and Aquinas. In *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare presents characters whose behaviour seems to reflect an Augustinian vision of the inherently fallen nature of man as they respond to each other with prejudice and cruelty. He shows how the worlds they construct encourage, and even institutionalise, these negative qualities. Despite this pessimism, he also champions the behaviour of other characters who demonstrate faith, hope and charity in their relationships. In this way his approach is more Thomistic than Augustinian, and reflects the optimism of Aristotle that some people, at least, have the capacity to strive after virtue. As a result, they are able to progress towards the achievement of happiness in this life.

Positive psychologists are divided over whether Aristotle's theories are deontological (establishing moral absolutes about actions as right or wrong in themselves), or teleological (asserting that the highest good is goal-directed and behaviour has consequences that are to be evaluated).¹⁸ Seeing Aristotle's philosophy as deontological would position him as ethically prescriptive in a confident construction of a moral hierarchy. Writing about Shakespeare's middle comedies, Lisa Marciano suggests that Shakespeare was responding to this kind of deontological philosophy. She observes that, repeatedly, comic characters come face to face with their mortality, and Shakespeare uses these experiences as a didactic tool to show how they must learn to live well and gain wisdom.¹⁹ Marciano claims that *The Merchant of Venice* "provides Shakespeare's most profound treatment" of the theme of moderation, citing Nerissa's advice to Portia (1.2.3-8) and Bassanio's criticisms of Gratiano (2.2.161 and 166-167), before focusing on Shakespeare's concern to find "the mean between avarice and prodigality".²⁰ In her interpretation of *Twelfth Night* Marciano claims that the leaders of society in Illyria "consistently exhibit either austere or festive rather than moderate behaviour" and she believes that Shakespeare is teaching us that an "excess of festivity" needs correction.²¹ She sees Viola and Feste as means between these extremes, and Portia as using her wealth for "worthy purposes", rather than supporting a "dissolute lifestyle".²² She concludes by reiterating the importance of the Aristotelian mean:

The wise Shakespeare, knowing the composition of his audience, might have realised that, through the powerful medium of drama, he could school some of his viewers to avoid harmful behaviors that would likely lead them to steer a middle

¹⁸ Ryff and Singer, "Know Thyself and Become What You Are." Alan S. Waterman, "Reconsidering happiness: a eudaimonist's perspective," *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 4 (2008). <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/10.1080/17439760802303002>.

¹⁹ Lisa Marciano, "The Serious Comedy of Twelfth Night: Dark Didacticism in Illyria" *Renascence* 56, no. 1 (2003): 3-4. ProQuest Central.

²⁰ Ibid., 71.

²¹ Ibid., 74.

²² Ibid., 73.

course between social austerity and festivity, fiscal avarice and prodigality, and political laxity and sternness.²³

In proposing that Shakespeare's intention was to "school" some of his viewers she hypothesises a didactic intention on his part. She also presents a deontological response to both Shakespeare and Aristotle, positioning them as ethically prescriptive in constructing a moral hierarchy to evaluate behaviour. Although Marciano's article is relatively recent, it is out of step with the approaches taken by Zamir, Langis and Laam, who emphasise complexity instead of didacticism.

Alternatively, an approach to *The Nicomachean Ethics* that regards Aristotle's intentions as teleological, recognises his awareness of *eudaimonia* as an end that must be reached through an ongoing process of virtuous living. This is an approach more widely adopted by philosophical studies of Aristotle, as represented by Gavin Lawrence, Michael Winter and Otfried Höffe.²⁴ Höffe makes a clear distinction between a teleological approach to philosophy, which he identifies in Aristotle, and deontological ethics that he associates with Immanuel Kant.²⁵ In Aristotle's conceptualisation of character the values of individuals shape their perceptions and motivation and men play an active role in the search for pleasure and happiness. In some ways, positive psychologists reflect this approach. They see their research as teleological, since it focuses on personal growth, enabling people to find purpose in life, become open to experience, to fulfil their true potential and achieve "environmental mastery". However, as social scientists, they focus on processes and outcomes, on providing

²³ Ibid., 81.

²⁴ Gavin Lawrence, "Human Good and Human Function," *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* ed. Richard Kraut (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006). Michael Winter, *Rethinking Virtue Ethics* (Minnesota: Springer, 2012). Otfried Höffe, Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics," ed. and trans. David Fernbach (Leiden and Boston: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2006).

²⁵ Otfried Höffe, Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics," ed. and trans. David Fernbach (Leiden and Boston: Koninklijke Brill N.V., 2006), 4.

the advice and practices that will enable people to achieve happiness.²⁶ In this way they offer more of a guide to the practical application of their research than Aristotelian philosophy does. Shakespeare also gives practical application to Aristotle's political theory as he adapts it to the demands of dramatic representation of human relationships. He emphasises the importance of living well and represents characters who develop self-realisation, change and develop.²⁷

In appropriating the hierarchies of happiness constructed by Aristotle and positive psychologists within an analysis of dramatic character, I take a heuristic approach. A teleological, rather than deontological response, enables a focus on happiness as a goal that characters actively pursue over the course of each play, an end that is seen to be desired. A teleological approach to Shakespeare's plays emphasises the importance of evaluating the moral consequences of behaviour, and recognition of the ways in which at least some characters search for the highest good. It also foregrounds moral ambiguity and complexity, as Shakespeare explores how philosophical ideals might be interpreted in dramatic representations of decision-making and moral choice. This is particularly the case in *The Merchant of Venice*, where the goals and behaviour of both Christians and Jews are interrogated, and audience responses to Shylock have varied, historically, from outright condemnation to sympathy. Marciano's assertion that Shakespeare is didactic is called into question by the varying, and in many cases contradictory, interpretations of the middle comedies. Shakespeare's representation of character is far too complex, and his questioning of motivation too searching, to be limited by a simple didacticism. His titles, *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will* and *As You Like It*, imply that members of the audience are free to choose what they will take away at the end of the performance. When Walter King sees the overt concerns of *Twelfth Night* as "evaluating" the "legitimate and illegitimate claims of pleasure

²⁶ Ryff, and Singer, "Know Thyself and Become What You Are", 20.

²⁷ Ibid.

and of moral principle”, his use of “evaluate” suggests a process of reflection rather than instruction.²⁸ In this way the plays challenge audiences to draw their own conclusions about the hierarchies of happiness they represent.

Hierarchies of happiness

In asking how we should live and in discussing the nature of happiness Aristotle provides a philosophical hierarchy that distinguishes between the ethical values of different types of happiness. *Eudaimonia* is translated by David Ross as “perfect happiness”, and emphasises the importance of living in accordance with the true self (*the daimon*). For Aristotle happiness is activity in accordance with the highest virtue and is associated with reason and contemplation.²⁹ Although he proposes an ideal form of happiness he does acknowledge the legitimacy of pleasure, recognising that “all men think that the happy life is pleasant and weave pleasure into their ideal of happiness”, conceding that this is reasonable.³⁰ Nevertheless, he repeatedly emphasises that the activity of philosophic wisdom is the most pleasant of virtuous activities.³¹ Aristotle’s ethical theory has been adopted and adapted by positive psychologists, who also make distinctions between two alternatives – a hedonic and a *eudaimonic* approach. A hedonic approach focuses primarily on the outcome of happiness that is equated with pleasure, not necessarily in a pejorative sense, recognising pleasure can be a component of *eudaimonia*. However, it includes a reminder that “the antecedents of pleasure can also include goals and lifestyles antithetical to most *eudaimonic* conceptions, such as living a life of shallow values, greed, or exploitation of others”, values that are the

²⁸ Walter N. King, “Shakespeare and Parmenides: The Metaphysics of Twelfth Night,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 8. 2 (1968): 299. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/449660>.

²⁹ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, X.6.1177a.12-14; X.7.1178a.7; X.8.1178b.33.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, VII.13.1153b.12-16.

³¹ *Ibid.*, X.7.1177a.23-4.

hallmark of hedonism.³² A *eudaimonic* approach has a different target, focusing not so much on outcomes when people search for pleasure as on the process of living well. Richard Ryan, Veronika Huta and Edward Deci conclude that happiness is “probably best conceived as a multidimensional phenomenon that includes aspects of both the hedonic and *eudaimonic* conceptions of well-being”, reflecting Aristotle’s recognition that men integrate pleasure into their ideal of happiness.³³ The ethical distinctions made both by Aristotle and by positive psychologists between different types of happiness are relevant to the related hierarchies of happiness that Shakespeare establishes in his middle comedies. These range from the carnivalesque hedonism of Sir Toby, through the hedonistic pleasures of living under the greenwood tree, to the development of self-knowledge that is a component of *eudaimonia* and fulfils the Greek injunction, “know thyself”. Although happiness may be equated in some form with gratification of the senses, both Aristotle and positive psychologists identify the highest form of happiness as service to others or to something larger than the self. This is a hierarchical view that does not include happiness derived from the exploitation of others. For Aristotle “a virtuous life requires exertion and does not consist in amusement” since it is directed towards human good, and especially the good of the nation or the city-state.³⁴

Similarly, in proposing a hierarchy of happiness, Seligman, Acacia Parks and Tracy Steen equate the morally superior “meaningful life” with the tendency to pursue happiness by using our strengths towards something larger than ourselves, contributing to “knowledge,

³² Richard M. Ryan, Veronika Huta and Edward L. Deci, “Living Well: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective on *Eudaimonia*,” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 9 (2008): 141. DOI: 10.1007/s10902-006-9023-4.

³³ Ibid, 163.

³⁴ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*. 1177a 37-38. “the end of this science must include those of the others, so that this end must be the human good. For even if the end is the same for a single man and for a state, that of the state seems at all events something greater and more complete whether to attain or to preserve; though it is worthwhile to attain the end merely for one man, it is finer and more godlike to attain it for a nation or for city-states.” 1094b.7-11.

goodness, family, community, politics, justice or a higher spiritual power".³⁵ In broadening the concept of service to others to include a more localised community of family and friends, the terminology of positive psychology can foreground Shakespeare's recognition of the importance of meaningful inter-personal relationships as a source of happiness. As with Aristotle, there is a moral component in positive psychology's implication (and, at times, overt statement) that some types of happiness are superior to others. Seligman, Parks and Steen propose a hierarchy of types of happiness:

We call a tendency to pursue happiness by boosting positive emotion, 'the pleasant life'; the tendency to pursue happiness via the gratifications, 'the good life'; and the tendency to pursue happiness via using our strengths towards something larger than ourselves, 'the meaningful life'.³⁶

On an ascending scale they move from the pleasant life, to the good life, culminating in the meaningful life that satisfies the longing to find purpose in living. This is equated with contributing to "knowledge, goodness, family, community, politics, justice or a higher spiritual power".³⁷ Positive psychologists reflect the influence of Aristotle in suggesting that the highest form of happiness is linked to the relationship of the individual to the wider community. This vision of virtuous living in the service of the *polis*, or of "something larger than ourselves", has particular application to the approval that the Venetians express when Portia rescues Antonio from Shylock. Although Shakespeare appears to present some types of happiness as superior to others, his approval is provisional; when viewed from alternative perspectives some types of happiness can be subjected to critical evaluation. As he creates

³⁵ Martin E. P. Seligman, Acacia C. Parks and Tracy Steen, "A Balanced Psychology and a Full Life" *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* 359, no. 1449 (2004): 1380.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4142141>.

³⁶ Ibid., 1380.

³⁷ Ibid., 1380.

hierarchies of happiness that are relevant to the lives of his audiences, he subjects theology and philosophy to the demands of dramatic representation, and asks us to make our own decisions about the moral worth of the different forms of happiness he presents.

Hedonism and happiness

In constructing hierarchies of happiness in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare explores the legitimacy of hedonism. C. L. Barber foregrounds positive elements in festivity, emphasising its power to lead to “clarification” and self-knowledge.³⁸ Barber’s work links the regenerative rituals of folk culture to the theatrical tradition of clowning. In making more specific connections to “the social form of Elizabethan holidays” he suggests that holiday and comedy “are parallel manifestations of the same patterns of culture, ‘of a way that men can cope with their life’”.³⁹ Whereas Aristotle sees true happiness as the result of virtuous living and not mere amusement, Barber locates it in the saturnalian patterns of rural celebration. He sees this, paradoxically, as both a human need and a problem; people desire the release of holiday, but they must face the realisation that licence can only be temporary. The pattern of going on holiday from the city to the natural world is a significant influence on *As You Like It*. Shakespeare evaluates the moral worth of different types of happiness that may be gained in the Forest of Arden and its purlieus. In towns and cities festivity took the form of carnival, which Bakhtin connects to the fertility of rustic festivity as a primary source of liberation, destruction and renewal.⁴⁰ In *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare dramatizes aspects of carnival. He presents a release from constraint in the eating, drinking and game playing of Sir Toby and his accomplices, and their challenging of Malvolio’s attempts to restrain them. In ridiculing a Puritan in front of a theatre audience he is defending

³⁸ C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy*, 10, 16.

³⁹ Ibid., 4, 6.

⁴⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texan Press, 1981).

the festive value of comedy against Puritan restrictions. As a result, the hedonistic pursuit of pleasure is, initially, validated in the play. However, once again, Shakespeare asks us to consider the moral limits of a happiness that is limited by the temporality of carnival, especially when it is gained through the cruel mockery that could be a component of misrule.

Both Aristotle and positive psychologists acknowledge the legitimacy of pleasure that is derived from bodily gratification, but they relegate it to an inferior status. The hedonistic pursuit of happiness characterises the activities of the characters in the sub-plot of *Twelfth Night*, and critical response reflects widely differing opinions about Shakespeare's moral purpose. In an early article that Marciano ignores, Morris Tilley sees *Twelfth Night* as a "philosophical defence of a moderate indulgence in pleasure", reflecting contextual concerns about the need for "moderation, measure, a mean in all things", as Viola and Feste "represent the golden mean of temperance, in whom reason and emotion are at poise."⁴¹ Like Marciano, Tilley fails to recognise the essential difference between Viola and Feste. Whilst Viola attempts to restrain her passion for Orsino, Feste participates in the fooling that Tilley criticises. Tilley sees Shakespeare as opposing the "excessive austerity" of Puritanism, but his article predates more recent research on the influence of Aristotle in Renaissance England and he makes no overt reference to Aristotle.⁴² Nevertheless, Tilley's article has, as Elliot Krieger points out, been influential in identifying a moral purpose in the play, one that implies a criticism by Shakespeare of hedonistic excess and a promotion of the values of temperance promoted by Aristotle.⁴³ The need for temperance is expressed by some characters early in the play; Maria attempts to restrain the riotous behaviour of Sir Toby, telling him "you must confine yourself within the modest limits of order" (1.3.7-8). She later collaborates in the game playing that characterises the sub-plot, but Malvolio mounts a more determined attack

⁴¹ Morris P. Tilley, "The Organic Unity of *Twelfth Night*," *PMLA* 29, no. 4 (1914): 550, 554-5, 558. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/457019>.

⁴² Tilley, "The Organic Unity of *Twelfth Night*."

⁴³ In a Marxist reading, Krieger replaces an emphasis on ethics with an examination of ruling-class ideology. Elliot Krieger, *A Marxist Study of Shakespeare's Comedies* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 97.

on disorder, “My masters, are you mad, or what are you? Have you no wit, manners nor honesty ... Do ye make an alehouse of my lady’s house? ... Is there no respect of place, persons nor time in you?” (2.3.78-82). Discussing the issue of whether or not Shakespeare intended to criticise Malvolio as a figure of Puritanism who sets himself in opposition to pleasure, Maurice Hunt believes that Shakespeare did not stereotype him as a whole, although he did caricature certain aspects of puritanical behaviour.⁴⁴ On the other hand, Richard Madelaine asserts that he has “no hesitation in identifying Malvolio with Puritanism”, and he sees the steward’s attempt to restrain the revelry in Olivia’s household as, “by implication, opposition to the theatre”, an aspect of Puritan thinking.⁴⁵

The evils of the theatre were attacked in 1583 by the Puritan polemicist, Phillip Stubbes:

if you will learne falsehood, if you will learne cozenage: if you will learne to deceive: if you will learne to play the hipocrite: to cogge, to lye and falsifie: if you will learn to iest, laugh and fleere, to grin, to nodd, and mowe: if you will learn to plaie the vice You neede to goe to no other schoole, for all these good examples, maie you see painted before your eyes in Enterludes and plaies.⁴⁶

In referring to the theatre as a school, Stubbes admits to its power to shape opinion and behaviour. He criticises the way it promotes false values, indicated in references to falsehood, cozenage, lying, and playing the hypocrite. In this extract, he particularly castigates its ability to cause laughter and pleasure in living. If Shakespeare’s audiences did identify Malvolio with Puritanism and, by extension, with attempts to prohibit attendance at the playhouse, it is likely that their sympathies would have been directed, at least initially, towards the fun-loving

⁴⁴ Maurice Hunt, “Malvolio, Viola, and the Question of Instrumentality: Defining Providence in ‘Twelfth Night,’” *Studies in Philology* 90, no. 3 (1993). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4174458>.

⁴⁵ Richard Madelaine, “The Apprentice, the Clown, and the Puritan: Comic Revenge as Theatrical Drawing-out in Twelfth Night,” *Parergon* 29, no. 1 (2012): 77-9. DOI: 10.1353/pgn.2012.0008.

⁴⁶ Stubbes, *The anatomie of abuses*.

characters, and they would have recognised that the criticisms made by Malvolio do not represent the attitudes of Shakespeare. When Sir Toby reacts to Malvolio's attempts to restrain his riotous behaviour, asserting, "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" (2.3.102-103) he is not referencing Aristotle's theories of virtue, instead he establishes "virtuous" behaviour as life denying, since food and drink are the staples of existence. Barber points out that the butts in Shakespeare's middle comedies are kill-joys, and as we laugh at them "there is always a sense of solidarity about pleasure, a communion embracing the merrymakers in the play and the audience, who have gone on holiday in going to a comedy."⁴⁷ Sir Toby's first speech establishes his opposition to moderation as he asserts, "What a plague means my niece to take the death of her brother thus? I am sure care's an enemy to life" (1.3.1-2). The play opens with an emphasis on bereavement as we learn that both Viola and Olivia have suffered the loss of both a father and a brother. It also foregrounds characters who have withdrawn from engagement in life, Olivia to mourn and Orsino to luxuriate in the pangs of unrequited love. Olivia is overtly criticised by Feste, who uses his role as the licensed fool to point out the folly of mourning so excessively for her brother, since he has gone to heaven. In contrast to the kill-joys and those who have retreated from engagement with the wider world, the determination to live life to the full seems an attractive alternative, and Sir Toby and Maria are, at least initially, characters who represent vitality, enjoyment in the simple pleasures of their world, and the capacity to laugh at absurdities.

Puritans in general took a condescending attitude to laughter, which was a key aspect of holiday jests and of clowning in the theatre, regarding it as the property of common people, women and children.⁴⁸ Richard Stubbes' attack on the theatre reveals Puritan disapproval when he criticises the playhouse as a venue where people were encouraged to "iest, laugh and

⁴⁷ Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, 8-9.

⁴⁸ Jennifer Vaught, *Carnival and Literature in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

fleer, to grin".⁴⁹ In contrast, a number of humanists thought it pertinent to investigate the meaning of laughter and question its significance. Amongst these was Castiglione, who includes a defence of it in *The Book of the Courtier*. In a discussion of laughter Bernardo points out its beneficial properties:

Whatsoever therefore causeth laughter, the same maketh the minde jocunde and geveth pleasure, nor suffreth a man in that instant to minde the troublesome greefees that oure life is full of. Therefore (as you see) laughing is very acceptable to all men, and he is muche to be commended that can cause it in due time and after a comlie sort.⁵⁰

In Thomas Hoby's sixteenth-century translation, Bernardo's evaluation of laughter as something that is "jocunde" indicates recognition of its power to raise the spirits. Not only does he acknowledge that people like to laugh, he also indicates that the person who can elicit appropriate mirth is to be commended. Similarly in *De anima & vita*, Vives maintains that 'laughter is born of happiness and delight', and many Reformed English writers on education agreed, approving of laughter in the classroom.⁵¹ In *The Education of a Christian Prince* Erasmus praises laughter as a means by which the bitter pill of education can be sweetened.⁵² Erasmus, however, was ambivalent about its value, pointing out that when a person laughs the body and mind come into potential conflict, and laughing must be controlled by reason.⁵³ In contrast, the pioneering medical practitioner, Laurent Joubert, was more confident in asserting the value of laughter, which was seen to promote health, helping to correct an

⁴⁹ Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, 206.

⁵⁰ Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier from the Italian of Count Baldassare Castiglione: Done into English by Sir Thomas Hoby Anno 1561* (London: David Nutt in the Strand, 1900), 157.

⁵¹ "ex laetitia & delecttatione risus nascitur". Vives, *De anima & vita* (Lyon, 1550), translated and quoted in Quentin Skinner, "Why Laughing Mattered in the Renaissance: The Second Henry Tudor Memorial Lecture," *History of Political Thought* 22 no. 3 (2001): 421. Ingenta Connect.

⁵² "When the little fellow has listened with pleasure to Aesop's fable of the lion and the mouse or the dove and the ant, and when he has finished his laugh, then the teacher should point out the new moral". Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 46-147.

⁵³ Erica Fudge, "Learning to laugh: children and being human in early modern thought," *Textual Practices* 17, no. 2 (2003). DOI: 10.1080/0950236032000094845.

imbalance in temperament. In 1579 he published a treatise, *Traité du ris*, in which he argues that laughter enables man to refresh his mind and contributes to the health of both body and mind. Joubert also saw it as God given, setting man apart from the animals.⁵⁴ The passion that moves us to laughter is always related in some way to joy or happiness, it is caused by “the jubilant mind” and “there is nothing more marvellous than laughter”.⁵⁵ With more precise diagnostic tools at hand modern doctors and psychologists also agree about the health benefits of laughter, which improves physical health and increases longevity.⁵⁶ When Sir Toby says that “care’s an enemy to life” (1.3.2), he is reflecting contextual medical approval of the therapeutic value of laughter. In encouraging his audience to laugh with, rather than at, Sir Toby, Shakespeare is questioning an attitude to life that denies the importance of happiness. As he does this he is also mounting a defence of his profession as a dramatist, since his company included professional fools like Armin (who played Feste) and Kemp.

The function of theatre in Elizabethan England was paradoxical. On the one hand, it promoted social awareness. Steven Mullaney points out the ways in which it challenged people’s views of themselves and their world:

As a public and performative art, theatre provides public and performative cultures with a means of thinking about themselves, especially when confronting their more painful or irresolvable conflicts and contradictions ... It is ... a far from harmonious and not always therapeutic way of thinking, by means of actual bodies on stage and in the audience, about the larger – and largely virtual – social body.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Laurent Joubert, *Treatise of Laughter*, trans. David de Rocher (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1980), 65.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁶ “Habitual laughter can affect physiological changes for the better in musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, endocrine, immunological, and/or neural systems.” Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues*, 592.

⁵⁷ Steven Mullaney, *The Reformation of Emotions in the Age of Shakespeare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 6.

As audiences were entertained by the actions on the stage they could be asked to consider the application of dramatized issues to their own lives. Attendance at Shakespeare's history plays encouraged them to reflect on events of their immediate past and their relevance to contemporary politics. Alternatively, and often simultaneously, the theatre could provide a venue where people congregated, hoping to forget, temporarily, the cares that beset them in the world outside its walls. When Shakespeare presents festive happiness in the plot of *Twelfth Night* he provides the opportunity for his audience to engage in the hedonic pleasures of laughter as they delight in the antics of comic characters. Jennifer Vaught points out that in England the festive laughter in the theatre was linked to the revelry of carnival, the improvisations of jesters and clowns on the stage were in keeping with the misrule that characterised it.⁵⁸ In providing a temporary release from the problems of everyday life, Shakespeare's comedies form part of that link to carnival. He presents characters who engage energetically in the "temporary licence" that Barber describes, and he includes the audience in the fun.⁵⁹

In his address to the readers of *Gargantua*, Rabelais advises "Laughter's the property of Man. LIVE JOYFULLY."⁶⁰ In his study of Rabelais, however, Mikhail Bakhtin sees laughter as ambivalent, "it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives."⁶¹ Distinguishing it from the negativity of satire, he describes "the special philosophical and utopian character of festive laughter" which builds its own world in opposition to the world of church and state.⁶² It is characterised by "grotesque realism" which emphasises images of the "open mouth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus, the potbelly, the nose", images that he associates with "fertility, growth,

⁵⁸ Vaught, *Carnival and Literature in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 6.

⁵⁹ Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, 10.

⁶⁰ Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, trans. M. A. Screech (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 201.

⁶¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 12.

⁶² Ibid., 11-12.

and a brimming-over abundance.”⁶³ The world that Shakespeare presents in *Twelfth Night* has lost many of its connections to the rural collective that Bakhtin envisages, since Shakespeare limits his scope to the activities in a city. Nevertheless, with some alterations, he perpetuates the tradition of carnival in which people celebrated by indulging excessively in food, drink, sex and violence, often marking the occasion with temporary misrule, role reversals and disguises. The focus on food and drink is foregrounded in Sir Toby’s name, especially when he belches as he says, “A plague o’ these pickle herrings” (1.5.105-106). The reference to fish can additionally be seen as a pro-carnival attack on the dietary abstinence required in Lent. Peter Burke points out that one of the aspects of carnival was the battle between Carnival and Lent, which featured food, violence and sex, mock battles and verbal aggression.⁶⁴ Michael Bristol connects this social practice specifically to *Twelfth Night*, where carnival is represented by Sir Toby Belch and his followers and Lent is personified in Malvolio, who is physically and symbolically locked in darkness.⁶⁵ The carnival links to sex are dramatized in Sir Andrew, who has been brought into the house in the belief that he can court Olivia, but instead of celebrating sexual vitality in the suitor, Shakespeare calls Sir Andrew’s belief in his sexual potency into question. He can only make a feeble and unsuccessful attempt to “board” Maria (1.3.55). Carnival excess could spill over into violence, as it threatens to do in the planned duel between Viola and Sir Andrew. However, the excess that takes place in the absence of Olivia’s imposition of authority, does not constitute the political defiance of order that Natalie Zemon Davis identifies.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the plot against Malvolio has echoes of

⁶³ Ibid., 26, 19.

⁶⁴ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1978).

⁶⁵ Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theatre: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (New York: Methuen, 1985).

⁶⁶ According to Davis, carnival forms could evolve so that they acted “both to reinforce order and to suggest alternatives to the existing order.” Thus a charivari might be needed “to repress the temerity of women who beat their husbands”, becoming a means of punishing women who were perceived to have flouted “the provision of divine and civil law”. Alternatively it might be turned, not against disorder in the family, but against political authorities. In this way carnival became a means of criticising the oligarchical rule in cities, where even substantial citizens had few opportunities to participate in political decisions, although this rarely

the public criticism that manifested itself in unruly and shaming denigration in the skimmington ride and the charivari. Although it is limited to a domestic humiliation in the presence of the rest of the members of his household, it has wider implications as a caricatured Puritan is ridiculed in front of a theatre audience.

Carnival and comedy both celebrate the liberating power of laughter. Despite the significant role played in Greek culture by festive excess, Aristotle reveals a critical attitude to comedy, which he regards as an inferior dramatic form that is “an imitation of characters of a lower type”.⁶⁷ Greek comedy was closely linked to the hedonism of festival in its celebration of indulgence in bodily pleasures, thus it can be linked (although Aristotle does not do so specifically) to his construction of hierarchies of happiness, in which he relegates amusement to an inferior status, distinct from the virtuous living that he prioritises.⁶⁸ As a dramatist writing in a culture that linked the festive energies of carnival to the vitality of comedy, Shakespeare takes a less judgemental approach to hedonistic forms of happiness. He is, nevertheless, aware of the temporality of urban festive mirth and comic performance and shows that there are limitations to a type of happiness that is dependent on a gratification of the senses, since it will inevitably be transitory.

Shakespeare subverts the normal practice of festivity in which it was accepted that members of the lower orders should take on the role of authority figures for the limited duration of the festivities. Other characters and the audience laugh at the steward’s belief that he can become Count Malvolio (unlike Olivia, who declares that she will not marry above her station). The main figures of disorder are not the normally disempowered lower classes; they

lead to further political activity. Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1975), 123.

⁶⁷ Aristotle, *The Poetics*. V.1449a.1.

⁶⁸ “Happiness, therefore does not lie in amusement”. He elaborates, “And we think that happiness ought to have pleasure mingled with it, but the activity of philosophic wisdom is admittedly the pleasantest of virtuous activities.” “The ridiculous side of things is not far to seek, however, and most people delight more than they should in amusement and jesting”. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*. X.6.1176b.28, X.7.11771.23-5, IV.8.14-15.

are instead Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, members of the ruling class who, as Vaught points out, “appropriate the holiday motifs of Lord of Misrule”.⁶⁹ Despite this, the subplot reflects the recognition, common to the expectations of carnival, that hedonistic excess and fooling cannot be a permanent condition of life. By the end of the play, Sir Toby has recognised that the jokes have played themselves out, reflecting, “I would we were well rid of this knavery” (4.2.60-61). Sir Toby’s indulgence in eating and drinking appears to be a life-style habit that is unlikely to be amended. However, his riotous behaviour will presumably be restrained as Olivia emerges from her self-imposed seclusion, and the foolish knight that he has brought into the household will probably depart at the end. The title of *Twelfth Night* connects to the festival of the Twelve Days of Christmas and to the feast of the Epiphany that concludes it. As Karin Coddon points out, this reference foregrounds the play’s “precarious temporality”. It reminds us misrule and licence within the play will be short-lived and there are also “precarious limits” to dramatic representations of social inversion.⁷⁰ *Twelfth Night* concludes with Feste’s song that moves us outside the plot of the play. Through this metatheatrical device Shakespeare draws attention to the transience that applies to the world within the play and to the short lived festive experience of its spectators.

The intensity of emotion generated by participation in carnival or attendance at the theatre constitutes a rejection of the Aristotelian concept of the mean. Carnival and the theatre provide opportunities for emotional release and, in the case of carnival, for physical excess, that are in opposition to restraint and moderation. Part of the attraction of carnival hedonism lies in an awareness of its temporary nature; this gives a greater sense of urgency to the pursuit of pleasure, since it is underpinned by recognition of the inevitability of loss. Between these polarised alternatives there is no place for the mean, instead participants move between the two alternatives, desiring gratification and reconciling themselves to its temporality. Viola

⁶⁹ Vaught, *Carnival and Literature*, 100.

⁷⁰ Karin S. Coddon, “‘Slander in an Allow’d Fool’: Twelfth Night’s Crisis of the Aristocracy,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 33 no.2 (1993): 317. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/451001>.

does not represent the mean of a moderate indulgence in pleasure as Tilley and Marciano suggest, because Shakespeare separates her from the hedonistic excesses of the subplot. She reflects a different view of life, one that sees happiness in terms of meaningful personal relationships. Unlike Maria and her accomplices, who revel in the pleasures of tormenting Malvolio, Viola feels pity for the follies of Olivia and tries to help her. Her feelings for Orsino are distinguished from the pleasure that the Duke derives from his unrequited love. As I will go on to discuss in chapters five and six, Viola is able to recover from the trauma of the shipwreck and confront the challenges she faces with resilience, emotional intelligence, and optimism that time will resolve her problems. Her love is not a form of self-indulgence and it does not bring her pleasure. The intensity of her emotion is so strong that she declares her readiness to die for Orsino.

Pleasure and content

Whilst *Twelfth Night* explores the potential of hedonistic pleasure, in *As You Like It* Shakespeare considers the differences between pleasure and content as forms of happiness and suggests that there are moral differences between them. In the dialogue between Touchstone and Corin pleasure is “what you like”, associated with Touchstone, and content is “what satisfies you” and is expressed by Corin.⁷¹ As Touchstone brings with him the values of the court he finds some pleasure in pastoral *otium*, but admits that it is tedious by comparison with his old life. Corin, on the other hand, points out that the manners of the court would be “ridiculous in the country” (3.2.44) and that there is more honesty in a hand covered with tar than one perfumed with civet, derived from the anal gland of a cat. Concepts of pleasure can be a matter of perception and choice and Juliet Dusinberre focuses on this

⁷¹ Juliet Dusinberre, footnote to 3.2.17 in the Arden edition, (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

exchange which, she believes, “probes the play’s deceptively casual title”.⁷² As Shakespeare separates pleasure from content, he reflects Aristotelian philosophy in suggesting that some types of happiness are more virtuous than others. All people pursue pleasure, Aristotle tells us, since all men enjoy sexual intercourse and good food and wine, but they do not all pursue the same types of pleasure. Even a slave can enjoy bodily pleasures, but Aristotle does not believe that a slave can have a share in happiness. Proper pleasure intensifies an activity and is distinguished from amusement and from the excessive pursuit of bodily gratification. Aristotle’s concept of proper pleasure underpins the hierarchical classification by Seligman, Parks and Steen in which “the good life” is equated with pursuing happiness through the gratifications and occupies the middle position in their hierarchy.⁷³ Positive psychologists warn explicitly that “the antecedents of pleasure” may include shallow values and exploitation of other people that they see as the hallmark of hedonism.⁷⁴ Shakespeare also recognises that at least some of the aristocratic characters, who search for pleasure by immersion in the natural world, will engage in acts of exploitation, both of the environment and of the local people who inhabit it.

In early modern England the word “pleasure” had a number of different connotations. When combined with the possessive it meant “that which is agreeable to or in conformity with the wish or will of the person specified: will, desire, choice.”⁷⁵ Its use with this meaning is found frequently in Shakespeare, as when Celia says to her father about Rosalind, “I did not then entreat to have her stay; / It was your pleasure” (1.3.64); this usage does not usually have connotations of happiness, but is more associated with authority. An alternative definition defines pleasure as “The condition or sensation induced by the experience or

⁷² Dusinberre, footnote to 3.2.17 in the Arden edition.

⁷³ Seligman, Parks and Steen, “A Balanced Psychology and a Full Life”, 1380.

⁷⁴ Richard M. Ryan, Veronika Huta and Edward L. Deci, “Living Well: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective on *Eudaimonia*”, 141.

⁷⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*.

anticipation of what is felt to be good or desirable; a feeling of happy satisfaction or enjoyment; delight, gratification.”⁷⁶ This definition opens up wider possibilities for the word, ranging from associations with joy in Sonnet 91 (“And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure, / Wherein it finds a joy above the rest”) to moral condemnation when Hamlet refers to the “incestuous pleasure” of Claudius’ bed (3.3.90). In *As You Like It* Shakespeare explores the pleasures that people may achieve in the location of the forest and raises the question of whether they can be transformed and happiness attained through their engagement with this environment. In doing so, he questions the worth of the happiness of those in positions of power when they interact with the natural world.⁷⁷

The word “content” is less varied in connotations in Shakespeare’s plays than “pleasure” and is consistently associated with inward satisfaction, equating to the more modern “contentment”. *As You Like It* explores the possibilities of finding content in the Forest of Arden as Celia, Rosalind and Touchstone flee the corrupt world of Duke Frederick’s court, founded on dispossession and tyranny. Celia views their prospective journey as one that will be productive of “content”, since she associates it with liberty and not banishment (1.3.132) Although Orlando refers to the duke’s “contented followers” (5.2.13) and Touchstone asks Audrey if his simple features “content” her (3.3.3), the character who is most consistently associated with content is Corin. Shakespeare establishes a contrast between the pleasurable life style of the noble characters and the georgic representation of Corin, who asserts that he is “a true labourer” (3.2.64) and more genuinely draws his happiness from immersion in the natural world. Corin has achieved content, in spite of serving a churlish master, and knows that to be without it is to be without a good friend. Orlando and Touchstone seem to regard content as an inferior form of happiness and

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Juliet Dusinberre, draws attention to the distinctions between pleasure and content in the play. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ed. Juliet Dusinberre (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

Touchstone attempts to undermine Corin's serenity.⁷⁸ Corin resists this, asserting, "Sir I am a true labourer. I earn that I eat, get that I wear; owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness; glad of other men's good, content with my harm; and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck" (3.2.64-67). The measured movement of Corin's speech indicates a considered evaluation of his blessings. In simplicity of heart he has come to terms with the reality of his life, he knows that "the property of rain is to wet and fire to burn", but balanced against that is the recognition that "good pasture makes fat sheep" (3.2.23-6). The characterisation of Corin continues the tradition of the simple shepherd found in the representation of Willye and Thomalin in *The Shepheardes Calender*.⁷⁹ In the March eclogue they rejoice in the thought that winter is passing, spring is coming, the grass will grow, swallows will peep out of their nests, the sky will clear, and flowers will bud. Sukanta Chaudhuri, nevertheless, evaluates their response as a "naïve artifice". He believes that Spenser both celebrates and interrogates the ideal as he represents Colin's inability to achieve happiness within this world, despite the positive qualities associated with *otium*.⁸⁰ In the pastoral tradition, at least superficially, the escape from worldly affairs (*negotium*) to leisure (*otium*) is seen to be a source of pleasure. In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare both celebrates and interrogates the concept of georgic and pastoral idylls as a source of happiness. Unlike Colin in *The Shepheardes Calender*, Corin is not naïve, he knows that authority can be oppressive. However, in his contentment and his lack of ambition to move outside his limited world, he deliberately turns his back on engagement with the social issues that preoccupy the courtly characters. In his representation of Rosalind and Celia, and in his introduction of satirical comments made by the characters of Jacques and Touchstone, Shakespeare questions an

⁷⁸ Orlando, "We'll light upon some settled low content (2.3.68). Touchstone, "When I was at home I was in a better place, but travellers must be content" (2.4.15-6).

⁷⁹ Edmund Spenser, *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. De Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

⁸⁰ Sukanta Chaudhuri, *Renaissance Pastoral and its English Developments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 141.

uncritical representation of *otium*. He appropriates the pastoral tradition of opposing the court to the country, taking his aristocratic characters on a journey in which they adopt the lifestyle of shepherds and shepherdesses, but he provides Rosalind and Celia with gold to shield them from any real adversity or the need to work. When Celia comments to Corin, “I like this place / And willingly could waste my time in it” (2.4.89-90) the reference to wasting time further reveals the artifice of their courtly idleness.

In literature, positive representation of the pastoral can be an expression of nostalgia. Peter Lindenbaum sees it as a longing to achieve content by turning time back to an unrecoverable past, and at times that could include not only a desire for Arcadia, but also for a recovery of the Garden of Eden.⁸¹ Judeo-Christian theology and Graeco-Roman writing share a belief in an originary *locus amoenus* where people were innocent and joyful; religion locates it in an Edenic garden and Greek and Roman writing in a golden age. Both traditions imply a rejection of city living and a celebration of the moral values of nature. In these idealised worlds relationships were non-exploitative, and people lived in harmony with nature and with each other. In literary texts the association between the ideal and nature took the form of the pastoral idyll; historically this myth was part of the search for the ideal in the Americas. In the June Eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender*, Spenser intentionally combines Christianity with the pastoral. Colin sees Hobbinol as happy, since he has found the Paradise that Adam lost, where his flocks may wander without fear of wolves, and his friend advises him to join him in the dales with their “fruictfull flocks” (1.22). The poem as a whole, however, calls this synthesis into question as it includes moral tales of deception and killing and concludes with the December eclogue when winter is come. It is a fallen world since “after Winter commeth timely death” (ll.149-150).⁸² Most literary representation is shadowed by awareness that the *locus amoenus* is a paradise already lost, that pastoral simplicity is only

⁸¹ Peter Lindenbaum, *Changing Landscapes: Anti-Pastoral Sentiment in the English Renaissance* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1986).

⁸² Spenser, *The Poetical Works*.

a dream, nevertheless the fact that writers kept returning to the myth indicates its enduring power. The dream world we create out of our own desires and the happiness we seek may be ultimately unattainable, but the process of going on a quest for it can contribute to moral enlightenment.⁸³

In the pastoral world of *As You Like It* characters must discover for themselves that the *locus amoenus* is a fantasy. However, in the process of searching some of them learn to reassess their values and to form new relationships that will enable them to find “content” in the reality of a fallen world. Maurice Hunt points out that Shakespeare develops Spenser’s synthesis of Christianity with the pastoral, and combines the classics with Christianity, as he winds time back to the “Book of Genesis”.⁸⁴ Orlando escapes from the fratricidal environment of Duke Frederick’s court, where brother conspires against brother in the manner of Cain and Abel. The play dramatizes the desire to regain the happiness of unfallen man in the Garden of Eden. The possibility that the Forest of Arden is a prelapsarian paradise is raised in Duke Senior’s claim that in the forest they do not feel “the penalty of Adam” (2.1.5). When Orlando says to his faithful servant, Adam, “O good old man, how well in thee appears / The constant service of the antique world” (2.3.57-8), he combines the religious connotations of Adam’s name with the reference to the “antique world” of classical myth. At the end of the play, when four couples are joined in the apparently Christian sacrament of marriage, there is an echo of God’s salvation of the world from its sinful nature in the reference to the “couples coming to the ark” (5.4.35-6); the forward movement implied in the word “coming” suggests that nostalgic desire can be incorporated into a proactive movement

⁸³ “The green world has analogies, not only to the fertile world of ritual, but to the dreams that we create out of our own desires. This dream world collides with the stumbling and blinded follies of the world of experience ... Thus Shakespearean comedy illustrates, as clearly as any *mythos* we have, the archetypal function of literature in visualising the world of desire, not as an escape from ‘reality’, but as the genuine form of the world that human life tries to imitate.” Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 183-4.

⁸⁴ Maurice A. Hunt, *Shakespeare’s As You Like It: Late Elizabethan Culture and Literary Representation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

towards happiness. The ritual, performed by the figure of Hymen, is more classical pageant than sacrament, but Shakespeare also includes the conversion moments of Duke Frederick and Oliver, which introduces the potential for salvation in a postlapsarian world. He raises the possibility that people can achieve content in the forest, where they have escaped the tyranny and false values of the court. In this way he synthesises the classical tradition and religion, as well as the desire to turn time back to a more innocent past and the recognition of the need to come to terms with the present.

Although characters search for a better life in *As You Like It*, the influence of religion is emphasised in a pejorative fashion when Shakespeare explores the power relationships between man and animals in the Forest of Arden. As he does so, it becomes evident that he is characterising this relationship in terms of morally dubious pleasures, rather than content. In his representation of hunting he questions the moral legitimacy of pleasure when it depends on the exploitation and suffering of other living creatures. Relationships with beasts were explained theologically in “Genesis”; in the Garden of Eden they were created to be subordinate and Adam was given dominion over them by God. Shannon points out that, as the fallen world became political, the relationships between humans and animals paradoxically encompassed “transgression and entitlement.”⁸⁵ Montaigne explores the tensions between transgression and entitlement in his essay “On Cruelty”; he is torn between the pleasures of the hunt, which he admits he enjoys enormously, and his hatred of cruelty to animals. He explains that he cannot bear the sound of a hare squealing when the hounds get their teeth into it and he pities the stag that sheds tears as it implores the hunter for mercy.⁸⁶ In *As You Like It*, the Lord’s description of the sobbing deer – its groans, its big round tears and its innocent

⁸⁵ Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolitanism in Shakespearean Locales* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 3.

⁸⁶ “And so that people will not laugh at this sympathy that I have with them, Theology herself orders us to show some favour in their regard; and considering that one and the same master has lodged us in this place for his service, and that they, like ourselves, are of his family, she is right to enjoin upon us some respect and affection towards them.” “Of Cruelty” in Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, 316.

nose – creates a moment of real empathy with the natural world, and an awareness of the cost of man's exploitation of it in his search for temporary pleasure.

Biblical approval of man's control of the natural world was reinforced by English law. The allocation of royal forests as sites for the “propagation, preservation and hunting of game” established the English ruler as, paradoxically, both the protector and exploiter of natural resources, and provided him with access to pleasure.⁸⁷ In real life the Forest of Arden was not a royal forest but, in representing the Duke and his followers as hunting deer, Shakespeare identifies them as outlaws. Despite this, it is not their challenging of authority that interests him, but the relationship they establish as hunters with the natural world. At the beginning of his treatise *A brefe collection of the lawes of the forest*, Manwood describes King Canute “taking as great delight & felicitie in Forestes as other most noble Princes of this Realme had done before his time”. Nevertheless, the pleasure that the king can experience when he hunts in his royal preserve is an expression of what Jeffrey Theis refers to as a “worldview in which those in power consolidate their power through control over nature.”⁸⁸ Such an interpretation implies a moral evaluation of the happiness experienced by those in positions of power when they interact with the natural world, and is dramatized in Shakespeare's representation of Duke Senior's court in the forest. Hunting was supposed to be a royal or aristocratic recreation and, although the hunters ate their kill, this was less important than the enjoyment of the chase and its reinforcement of privilege.⁸⁹ One of the most festive moments in the play occurs when Lords and Foresters celebrate the triumph of the hunt in song, but the presence of the melancholy Jaques, and his scornful comment about the tunefulness of the music, may compromise the simple pleasure of the moment. In an

⁸⁷ A. Stuart Daley, “Where Are the Woods In As You Like It?” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (1983). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2869832>. Jeffrey S. Theis, *Writing the Forest in Early Modern England: A Sylvan Pastoral Nation* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2009), 65.

⁸⁸ Manwood, *A brefe collection of the lawes of the forest* A3^V. Theis, *Writing the Forest in Early Modern England*, 65.

⁸⁹ Edward Berry, *Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

earlier scene, Duke Senior initially expresses pity for the deer he intends to kill. His anthropomorphising of them as “native burghers … with forked heads” (2.1.23-4) seems to indicate an understanding that the dispossessed courtiers are, in turn, dispossessing the native inhabitants of the forest in ways that have connotations of male sexual possession. By referring to them as “burghers” he also imposes city values on a rural way of life. Theis believes that in referring to the deer in human terms as “poor dappled fools” (2.1.22) the Duke reflects the early modern anthropocentric way of viewing nature as designed for man.⁹⁰ The reported comments of Jaques make the connection with usurpation and tyranny explicit, but the Duke seems to retreat from his sense of guilt, considering these criticisms within the context of Jaques’ role as a melancholic, and saying rather condescendingly, “I love to cope him in these sullen fits” (2.1.67). He describes him as moralizing about the event and there is a gentle scorn in the way in which the Lord recounts it. There is a degree of ambivalence in Shakespeare’s representation of the hunt. Duke Senior is presented as morally superior to his usurping brother, and his band of followers needs to hunt to survive. Nevertheless, in emphasising the pleasure they derive from this, and the suffering of the wounded deer, the play raises questions about the legitimacy of pleasure that is derived from attitudes of entitlement.

Despite his concerns about exploitation Shakespeare reflects more positive influences in his representation of relationships with the natural world. Barber’s theory of festive comedy emphasises its life-giving abundance and regenerative potential; this is especially manifested in the cycle of the seasons as “holidays were built around the enjoyment of the vital pleasures of moments when nature and society were hospitable to life.”⁹¹ The holidays

⁹⁰ Theis, *Writing the Forest, in Early Modern England*, 65.

⁹¹ Barber builds on Frazer’s study in his analysis of the residual influence of paganism and fertility rituals in rural festivities. “‘Merry England’ was merry chiefly by virtue of its community observances of periodic sports and feast days. Mirth took form in morris-dances, sword-dances, wassailings, mock ceremonies of summer kings and queens and of lords of misrule, mumming, disguising, masques – and a bewildering

that Barber refers to are short lived affairs of temporary licence “that puts holiday in perspective with life as a whole.”⁹² Despite the temporary nature of rustic revelry Barber believes in its transformative capacities as the saturnalian pattern can be summarised in a formula, “through release to clarification”.⁹³ In *As You Like It* Shakespeare evaluates the moral worth of the pleasures of temporary indulgence in festivity. Charles’ reference to the exiled Duke and his followers living in the Forest of Arden “like the old Robin Hood of England” (1.1.101) appears to endorse the importance of traditional holiday and its associations with renewal and regeneration. In the Robin Hood plays and games that were widespread between about 1400 and 1600 young men dressed in green would enter villages, bringing with them “the bounty of summer in the shape of green leaves, branches of blossoms”.⁹⁴ Robert Leach believes that, whilst *As You Like It* is not a Robin Hood play, it has “a remarkable resonance” with the Robin Hood tradition in seeming to “endorse the values of holiday, and to propose, at least inferentially, an alternative to hierarchical, conventional, work-a-day society”.⁹⁵ Amiens’ first song contributes to the idea of rural holiday; it evokes a life of leisure, lived in the sun, under the greenwood tree, harmonising his music with the song of the birds, seeking the food they eat, and pleased with what they get. The song seems to suggest that it is possible to find pleasure in a simple life of the senses, in forming a symbiotic relationship with the natural world.

Beneath the festivities of May celebrations, however, the figure of Robin Hood could emerge as a more ambivalent figure. Tracing his representation in legend and popular history, Edwin Davenport sees him as presiding “over a merry world of pleasure and plenty which was potentially dangerous, both a threat and a promise”, and Jeffrey Singman believes that

variety of sports, games, shows and pageants improvised on traditional models ... the seasonal feasts were ... landmarks framing the cycle of the year.” Barber, *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy*, 6-7.

⁹² Ibid., 8.

⁹³ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁴ Robert Leach, “*As You Like It – A ‘Robin Hood’ Play.*” *English Studies* 82, no.5 (2001): 393. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1076/enst.82.5.393.9569>.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 400.

the medieval tradition was “rich in potential for social subversion”.⁹⁶ After 1570, the figure of Robin Hood was reshaped as a hero on the professional stage in ways that put greater emphasis on social distinctions. In Anthony Munday’s *The Downfall of Robert Earle of Huntingdon* the carnivalesque aspects of the Robin Hood tradition are gentrified as the outlawed yeoman is transformed into a dispossessed aristocrat who eventually regains his rightful heritage. In the forest Huntingdon, now Robin Hood, consoles Matilda, who has become Maid Marian, in a speech that has similarities to the Duke’s speech about the sweetness of life in the Forest of Arden, away from the “painted pomp” of “public haunt” (2.1. 3,15). Robin Hood assures Maid Marian that the life they now lead is superior to the court – they have birds instead of music, natural greenery instead of rich tapestries, and she will be able to look at her image in the glassy brook instead of a steel mirror. The play reflects the traditional representation of Robin Hood as Little John announces that all Robin’s followers must agree to a number of conditions, which include not wronging the poor or sparing “a priest, a usurer or a clarke”.⁹⁷ The play, however, foregrounds the political aspects of the story as Prince John, in addition to lustng after Matilda, is attempting to seize power from his brother, King Richard, and members of his court are banished and seek refuge with Robin Hood. At the beginning of *As You Like It* Shakespeare also appears to represent the banished Duke as potentially subversive. He attributes to him a political significance as an oppositional force to Duke Frederick’s usurpation, when Charles reports that young men are flocking to join him in the forest. In the Duke’s first speech he refers to his followers as his “co-mates”, apparently fulfilling audience expectation of an egalitarian fellowship that challenges authoritarian rule. The Duke speaks of the moral superiority of the forest but, in

⁹⁶ Edwin Davenport, “The Representation of Robin Hood in Elizabethan Drama: *George a Greene* and *Edward I*” in *Playing Robin Hood: The Legend as Performance in Five Centuries*, ed. Lois Potter (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998). Jeffrey L. Singman, “‘Munday’s Unruly Earl’ *Playing Robin Hood: The Legend as Performance in Five Centuries*,” in ed. Potter, 64.

⁹⁷ Anthony Munday, *The dovnfall of Robert, Earle of Huntington, afterward called Robin Hood of merrie Sherwodde: with his loue to chaste Matilda, the Lord Fitzwaters daughter, afterwards his faire Maide Marian* (Imprinted at London: for William Leake, 1601), F2^V. EEBO.

fact, he does not rob the rich to help the poor or challenge his brother's rule in the tradition of Robin Hood. As Maurice Hunt points out, his philosophy of pastoral life lacks "active deeds of charity that issue from right thinking."⁹⁸ In the Robin Hood tradition, when the outlaws hunted either to supply themselves with food or to challenge authority, this could become an ideological cover for aristocratic assertion of privileged control over the land. Duke Senior has more in common with Munday's interpretation than with earlier festive traditions; as the play develops it becomes clear that he is presiding over an alternative hierarchical court, where Amiens refers to him respectfully as "your grace" and Adam is reminded of his position as servant to his master, Orlando. The potential for a simple life of the senses, free from the restraints of authority in the Duke's court, is alluded to, but interrogated by the play as a whole. *As You Like It* seems, then, to reaffirm, rather than challenge, hierarchical social and political structures. As it does so, it questions the moral worth of pleasures experienced by taking possession of the natural world.

The highest form of happiness

Although happiness may be equated in some form with the gratification of the senses, as represented in *As You Like It*, both Aristotle and positive psychologists identify the highest form of happiness as service to others or to something larger than the self. Of all the heroines in Shakespearean romantic comedies Portia is the most praised by other characters, who pay tribute to her enterprise in serving her community and promoting the general happiness of its members by delivering justice. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare challenges the audience to consider their assumptions about the rights of women to participate in this aspect of public life. When Portia champions the cause of Christian justice against Shylock she takes a more public role (albeit in male disguise) than any other heroine of Shakespearean comedy.

⁹⁸ Maurice Hunt, "Kairos and the Ripeness of Time in *As You Like It*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 52 (1991): 120. DOI: 10.1215/00267929-52-2-113.

Feminist critics, like Jean Howard and Karen Newman, approach the comedies by seeing the heroines, particularly those who engage in cross dressing, as stepping outside the socially accepted role of women as subservient to men.⁹⁹ Examining the character of Portia in the context of the writings of the misogynistic John Knox and the more tolerant humanists Vives, Erasmus and More, Newman represents her as “a woman who steps outside her role and function as subservient, a woman who dresses like a man, who embarks upon behaviour ill-suited to her ‘weaker’ intellect, a woman who argues the law.”¹⁰⁰ Alternatively, in a study of the ways in which the perceptions of women’s virtue was gendered in poetry, drama, marriage manuals and conduct books, Langis asserts that there is “compelling evidence” that women successfully defied stereotypical expectations of acceptable behaviour and participated in public and political activities.¹⁰¹ She praises Shakespeare’s representation of “virtuous viragos”, who, “navigating between the gendered roles of female passivity and male activity … promote excellence in both personal and civil spheres.”¹⁰² She believes that, in endorsing Portia’s excellence in the public arena, Shakespeare deftly manipulates her image and deflects criticism of her within the play. Gratiano refers to her triumphantly as a second Daniel, Bassanio praises her wisdom, and Antonio speaks of being evermore indebted to her in love and service. Even after the deception of her disguise has been revealed she escapes criticism from the other characters, and Bassanio refers to her as the sweet doctor who will be his bedfellow (5.1.283).

Aristotle and positive psychologists share a belief in the importance of contributing to fairness and justice in the community. Ethically, justice is both an individual virtue and an

⁹⁹ Jean Howard believes that gender relations, “however eroticised” are about power relations which may be played out through dress and that Portia’s male disguise is “a vehicle for assuming power”. Jean E. Howard, “Crossdressing, the theatre, and gender struggles in early modern England,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1988): 423, 433. <http://jstor.org/stable/2870706>.

¹⁰⁰ Karen Newman, “Portia’s Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange”, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38 (1987): 127. <http://www.jstor.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/2870399>.

¹⁰¹ Langis, *Passion, Prudence and Virtue*, 20.

¹⁰² Ibid., 22.

attribute of social institutions and when the two correspond, happiness can be achieved at both a personal and social level. For Aristotle the law ideally equates to justice; since “all lawful acts are in a sense just acts” and, since the law treats all parties in a dispute equally, justice is a guarantee of impartiality.¹⁰³ Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi write that, at the group level, positive psychology is “about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship.”¹⁰⁴ This point is developed by Peterson and Seligman, who specifically connect obligation to the common good with recognition of, and engagement in, the preservation of justice in the community.¹⁰⁵ Both Aristotelian philosophy and positive psychology discuss justice from a secular viewpoint, but the 1547 Wilkinson version of *The Nicomachean Ethics* reflects the Thomistic imposition of Christian theology on a “pagan” text as he places greater emphasis on religion: “God is y uniuersall law of al thinges ... And the very iustice is not that whiche is in the lawes, but that iustice whiche is in the Almighty and glorious god, and is geuen to men, bi the which iustice man maketh himself like unto god.”¹⁰⁶ In *The Merchant of Venice* justice is inextricably entwined with religion and the distinctions that the characters make between Christianity and Judaism. The Venetians consider Shylock as representative of the demonic nature of Judaism, a man of the Old Testament, the representative of a theology shaped by the law-giving function of the Torah which he appropriates to validate his revenge.

The trial scene, with its dramatic confrontation between Portia and Shylock, foregrounds Shakespeare’s philosophical discussion of relationships between revenge, mercy and justice. Shylock refers repeatedly to “judgement” and “law”, but never to “justice”. Since the nature of the judgement he demands is barbaric, the audience is positioned to see a clear

¹⁰³ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*. 1129b.12.

¹⁰⁴ Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, “Positive Psychology: An Introduction”, 5.

¹⁰⁵ “We regard strengths of justice as broadly interpersonal, relevant to the optimal interaction between the individual and the group or the community ... This strength of character entails an identification with and a sense of obligation to a common good that includes oneself but stretches beyond one’s personal interests to include the groups of which one is a member.” Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues*, 357.

¹⁰⁶ Wilkinson, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, chapter xxvi, 43-4.

distinction between the literal application of the law which, as the Venetians all acknowledge, entitles him to his pound of flesh, and the true nature of justice. In contrast, Portia's speech about justice and mercy echoes the debate, frequently engaged in during the early modern period, about the distinctions between Judaism and Christianity, based on St Paul's "Epistle to the Romans" (9. 30-2). Her statement, "in the course of justice none of us should see salvation" (IV.i.ll.195-6) emphasises the difference established in the same Epistle between the Judaic adherence to the letter of the law and Christian faith.¹⁰⁷ Julia Reinhard Lupton points out that this Epistle "stands at the head of the Pauline canon in both the Catholic and the Protestant Bibles, as his longest and most articulated theological statement."¹⁰⁸ Shakespeare forges Portia's dialogue in Pauline theology to emphasise that her argument would have been considered by the Christians to have religious, as well as judicial, legitimacy.

The tropes that Shakespeare uses to describe Portia change significantly over the course of the action. Initially, she is connected with classical mythology when she refers to herself as Hesione, awaiting rescue by the heroic Hercules. Later, however, when she emerges as the champion of the Venetians against Shylock, she is associated with images of Christianity. She appropriates Biblical references in her defence of Antonio and in the way she describes herself, and these are also evident in the approving comments made about her by other characters. Portia's dialogue is filled with biblical allusions. In defending Antonio her plea for mercy has clear connections with the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the

¹⁰⁷ "30. What shal we say then: that the Gentiles which followed not righteousness, haue attained vnto righteousness, euen the righteousness which is of faith. 31. But Israel which folowed the Lawe of righteousness, could not atteine vnto the Lawe of righteousness. 32. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the workes of the Lawe: for they haue stumbled at the stumbling stone." Théodore de Bèze, *The Newe Testament of Ovr Lorde Iesvs Christ / translated ovt of Greeke by Theod. Beza, and Englished by L. T.; whereunto is added a kalender and a table. Geneva Bible*, (Imprinted at London: By Christopher Barker, Printer to the Queenes Maiestie, 1578). The Geneva Bible was first printed in its entirety in England in 1576. It was the Bible that Shakespeare used and that he would have heard read as he was growing up in Stratford. I am indebted to John Drakakis for the connections he makes to the *Geneva Bible* in Acts 4 and 5 in the 2010 Arden edition of the play. Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 32.

¹⁰⁸ Lupton, *Citizen-Saints*, 31.

Mount.¹⁰⁹ It also again reflects the influence of St Paul; she references the Epistle of St James on the subject of mercy, whilst her appeal to Shylock to show charity recalls St Paul's much quoted comparison, "though I speake w the tongues of man, and of angels, and haue not charitie, I am as sounding brasse, or as a tinckling cymbal."¹¹⁰ In speaking about herself Portia also appropriates religious imagery to her own actions. As she plans to travel to Venice to defend Antonio she tells Lorenzo "I never did repent for doing good" (3.4.10) and her first speech as she returns, "That light we see is burning in my hall", (5.1.88) links her "good deed in a naughty world", the rescue of Antonio, with the image patterns of heavenly light that predominate in this part of the scene. This gives Christian validation to her virtue through the echo of Matthew's Gospel (5.16), "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your father which is in Heaven." The admirable representation of Portia is extended as other characters speak approvingly of her; Lorenzo tells her that she has "a noble and a true conceit / Of godlike amity" in bearing Bassanio's absence (3.4.2-4). When Jessica and Lorenzo await Portia's return their dialogue is used to create an atmosphere of harmony – the moon shines brightly and the stars pattern the heavens with bright gold. The pun on "patens", in reference to the Eucharist, continues the religious imagery that has become associated with Portia, the reference to the music of the spheres echoes Job, "Where wast thou when the morning stars praysed together, and all the children of God rejoiced triumphantly" (Job. 38.7), whilst the phrase "choiring to the young-eyed cherubins" (5.1.62) echoes the *Te Deum*. Even though Shakespeare associates Portia with Christian iconography, he rejects Augustinian pessimism about the potential for virtue to promote happiness in this life. When Jessica tells Lorenzo that Bassanio has "such a blessing in his lady" that he "finds the joys of heaven here on earth" (3.5.66-67), she clearly indicates that Portia possesses heavenly virtues that can be lived out on earth. The atmosphere as Portia returns to Belmont

¹⁰⁹ "Blessed are the mercifull: for they shall obteine mercie" (Matthew 5:7),

¹¹⁰ "For hee shall haue iudgement without mercie, that hath shewed no mercie, and mercie reioyceth against iudgement." Epistle to St James 2:13. 1 Corinthians, 13.

is one of celebration made possible by her service to the Venetian community as a representative of its justice system in rescuing Antonio. She appears to represent what Aristotle and positive psychologists identify as the highest form of happiness. However, the play as a whole qualifies this approval. In chapter five I point to the prejudices and cruelties that exist beneath the judicial structures of Venice and question whether the individual can maintain integrity in the context of a world that is dependent on marginalisation and exclusion.

Shakespeare shares with Aristotle an interest in the ways people may attain happiness in this life. In *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* he explores the hierarchical nature of happiness. Moving beyond the purely intellectual philosophy of *The Nicomachean Ethics*, he challenges his audience to form their own conclusions about the stories they see acted out on the stage. In some ways reflecting the evaluative approach of Aristotle, he represents the hedonistic life of the senses, recognising its attractions, but encouraging us to question the extent of its moral worth. He sees a greater moral worth in achieving a state of content, but in appropriating the genre of the pastoral, and exploring the relationships that people form with the natural world, he recognises that the search for a classical *locus amoenus* or a theological prelapsarian world may be an illusion. As he calls into question the nature of pleasure derived from interaction with the natural world, he demonstrates that people engage in activities that are also exploitative. Both Aristotle and positive psychologists praise the happiness that people achieve by using their strengths in the service of the wider community. In *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare creates a heroine who defends the life of a preeminent citizen and champions the values of her society. If Portia is to be judged simply in the light of the unqualified praise she receives from those around her, she can be seen as a representative of community justice and the highest form of happiness.

Chapter 5

Looking for Happiness in a Fallen World

At the end of the trial in *The Merchant of Venice* Portia orders Shylock, “Down therefore and beg mercy of the Duke” (4.1.358). This is the climax of the play and in dramatic terms Portia’s command reflects the triumph of the Christian republic over what the Venetians regard as the demonic face of Judaism. The previous chapter focused on Shakespeare’s evaluation of the moral worth of different types of happiness. The happiness that Shakespeare explores in *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* links to Aristotelian distinctions between *hedonia* and *eudaimonia*. When Portia receives unqualified praise from most of the other characters in the play, Shakespeare is reflecting the view of Aristotle that the highest form of happiness consists in service of the *polis*. However, Shakespeare also addresses more profoundly disturbing ethical issues that are not discussed by Aristotle. *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* present worlds of cruelty and intolerance and ask questions about the legitimacy of a happiness that is dependent on the ill treatment or exclusion of others. They also consider whether it is possible to retain moral integrity in the context of a world that militates against it. A focus on the character strengths and virtues identified by positive psychology also enables us to recognise that Shakespeare was moving into territory not explored by Aristotle. Whereas Aristotle’s theories about happiness are focused on the empowered male citizen of the *polis*, Shakespeare creates women who have, at the beginning of the play, been disempowered. It is their ability to respond to adversity by demonstrating resilience, optimism and emotional intelligence that engages the audience and demonstrates Shakespeare’s faith in human potential for happiness.

Shakespeare's exploration of the dark forces in human nature

Drawing on the work of Augustine and Freud enables analysis of ways in which some of Shakespeare's characters are impelled by dark forces within their own natures. These can be explained variously by the theological doctrine of original sin or, in modern terminology, by the psychological power of the subconscious. Peter Rudnysky reinforces the claim by Debora Shuger, discussed in the Introduction, that Freud was influenced by Calvinistic beliefs about the mind.¹ Rudnysky believes that both Calvin and Freud regard the human race as "guilty of a primordial transgression" and account for the human condition "through a single myth of all-embracing explanatory power."² Specific connections between original sin, Freud and Shakespeare also inform literary critic, Heather Hirschfeld's, analysis of *Hamlet*. For Hirschfeld the story of Adam and Eve "assumes the psychological position and function of a primal, and therefore traumatic, scene".³ Both Rudnysky and Hirschfeld's references to original sin make crucial links between psychology and religion. Establishing these connections expands on the methodology of Langis and Laam, who focus on the more secular interconnections between philosophy and psychology. In her reflection on the importance of taking an interdisciplinary approach to a study of the emotions, Trigg includes references to philosophy and psychology, but she also does not discuss religion. This is a surprising omission, given the powerful influence the Church exerted over the way people thought about themselves and their world in the early modern period. The power of the Church to influence

¹ Debora Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: scholarship, sacrifice, and subjectivity*.

² Rudnysky cites *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) as evidence that Freud derived the concept of original sin "from his own hypothesis of the killing of the primal father". Peter L. Rudnysky, "Freud and Augustine" in *Freud and Forbidden Knowledge*, ed. Peter L. Rudnytsky and Ellen Handler Spitz (New York and London: New York University Press, 1994), 128.

³ Hirschfeld links the Biblical story to Freud's theory of a primal scene, which he crystallized in his case study of the "Wolf Man", concluding that the patient's phobias were the result of a childhood "primal scene" in which he witnessed his parents' intercourse. She links that to Hamlet's preoccupation with parental sexuality. Heather Hirschfeld, "Hamlet's 'First Corse': Repetition, Trauma and the Displacement of Redemptive Typology," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2003): 73.
<http://www.jstor.org.exproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable.3844057>.

how people might feel about themselves is an example of Reddy's reference to emotional regimes (the codes of expression and repression that societies create and enforce).

Official theological doctrine that emphasised original sin impacted on the vision of the world presented in Shakespeare's plays. Beneath the festivity of carnival and the optimistic search for the ideal in the middle comedies is the realisation, shaped by Augustinian theology and filtered through the doctrine of Calvin, that man is a sinful creature. As a result, the worlds he constructs are irretrievably fallen. Jan Kott, better known for his thesis that Shakespeare is our contemporary, describes the societies of *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* as ones from which there is no escape. They are "bitter, cruel and fascinating," and the clowns, Touchstone and Feste, are "bereft of myths, reduced to knowledge without illusions."⁴ In contrast to the approach of Barber and Bakhtin, a number of critics reflect the influence of Freudian psychology in discussing the consequences of living in a fallen world. A Freudian reading of *The Merchant of Venice* can explain the xenophobic nature of a society that refuses to award Shylock citizenship and then punishes him on the grounds of his alien status. The treatment of the Jew is a manifestation of how the Venetians create a society in which true Christian values are subordinated to commercial priorities and project their suppressed guilt about their mercantile activities on to another. Enterline identifies the discriminatory practices in the social, religious and political institutions of Venice. These result in acts of persecution and exclusion of those who might constitute a threat to that identity. She connects the treatment of Shylock to the tradition of scapegoating and societal rituals of casting-out.⁵ Her reading focuses on the violent fantasies and racist stereotyping produced by economic practices and systems of government that still create a collective paranoia in modern times. Drew Daniel locates Antonio's masochistic desire to be tortured as punishment for his sinful nature within a wider criticism of social conditions. Daniel sees the

⁴ Jan Kott, *Shakespeare our Contemporary*, trans. Boleslaw Taberski (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1963), 229, 230.

⁵ Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus*.

Venetians as subjected to “universal codes of regulation, punishment, and control” in a world that places “arbitrary, cruel or questionable demands” on them.⁶ Daniel references Freud’s “The Economic Problem of Masochism” in which he “details the lengths to which the moral masochist is prepared to go to secure a ‘chastisement from the great parental power of Destiny.’”⁷ In identifying a moral masochism that focuses on self-punishment as a religious rationalisation for one’s sinful nature, Daniel links Freudian analysis to a religious preoccupation with original sin.⁸ Freudian criticism can also interpret *Twelfth Night* as dramatizing a world that has lost its innocence. Thad Logan draws attention to the cruelty of human nature demonstrated by the imprisoning of Malvolio, evidence of the “psychic reversal that underlies Saturnalian festivity”.⁹ The play takes us on “a descent into the night world” of the psyche and the things we learn are “profoundly disturbing”.¹⁰ If human beings are psychically damaged, then the worlds that they construct will be worlds of cruelty, oppression and exclusion.

A more optimistic vision of human nature

The plays are, however, not as unreservedly bleak as a Freudian reading would suggest. In his Augustinian depiction of fallen political and social worlds Shakespeare does create some characters who are unable to learn or change. Gratiano becomes the spokesperson for the xenophobia of Venice when he gloats over the defeat of Shylock, Sir Toby and Feste express no remorse for their humiliation of Malvolio, and Malvolio is unable to profit from his experience. Some people, Shakespeare suggests, cannot be redeemed. Nevertheless, in conjunction with Augustinian pessimism about the sinfulness of man,

⁶ Drew Daniel, “Let me have judgement, and the Jew his will: Melancholy Epistemology and Masochistic Fantasy in *The Merchant of Venice*”: 228, 229-230, 233, 234.

⁷ Ibid., 228.

⁸ Daniel, “Let me have judgment”.

⁹ Thad Jenkins Logan, “*Twelfth Night*: The Limits of Festivity”: 226.

¹⁰ Ibid., 227.

Shakespeare presents a Thomistic faith that there are others who have the ability to rise above their sinful natures. They reveal the capacity to exhibit the virtues of faith, hope and charity. This is part of his vision that some people can attain happiness, which is a state of being that eludes them at the beginning of the play. They do this in two main ways: through overcoming adverse external circumstances and through exhibiting and developing inner strengths that enable them to triumph over pain and loss. A Freudian reading of the plays is enriched when it is combined with a response that considers theories from positive psychology. Positive psychologists provide a helpful approach to the comedies as they suggest that it is possible to find happiness in adverse circumstances. In doing so, they can make us aware of the fact that Shakespeare moved beyond the influence of Aristotle, who located his philosophy of happiness within benign political institutions. Shakespeare, rather, demonstrates that happiness may be achieved by experiencing and triumphing over suffering and loss. Laura King and Joshua Hicks adapt the more pessimistic theories of Freudian psychology when they explore how the Freudian concept of the ego and the stages of ego development can be related to happiness. They characterise ego development as “an increasing capacity to recognise conflict and experience ambivalence”. They believe that people who have reached the higher stages of this development recognise “that life’s big questions may have a variety of answers.”¹¹ Ego development is marked by increased compassion, tolerance, openness to experience, empathy and a capacity for interpersonal connectedness. Regrettable experiences have a role in promoting both happiness and complexity, since there is a value in loss, which leads to resilience and maturity. King and Hicks make connections with Aristotle as they draw distinctions between *eudaimonia* and hedonism, seeing *eudaimonia* as fulfilment which comes from engaging in meaningful activity and actualising one’s potential.¹² Through

¹¹ Laura A. King and Joshua A. Hicks, “Whatever happened to “What might have been?”: Regrets, happiness, and maturity,” *American Psychologist* 62, no. 7 (2007): 629. DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.62.7.625.

¹² Ibid., 627-9.

coming to terms with incomprehensible events people can develop a new perspective and life once again becomes comprehensible:

The intermingling of the nuanced perspective provided by ego development and positive feelings of well-being may change the very quality of happiness itself ... Happiness, from this complex perspective, may be more bittersweet, involving the recognition of legitimate loss and the fragility of human intention.¹³

In this way they show similarities to psychologists working in the area of trauma theory, who focus on helping victims of trauma to rebuild their shattered lives. Ronnie Janoff-Bulman believes that, as a result of their experiences, they develop a new-found understanding that life is precious. This encourages them to place greater value on the choices and commitments they make in their daily round. They rebuild an inner world that acknowledges the pain of the past, the recognition of their own vulnerability, and the realisation that outcomes in human life may be meaningless and random:

They possess a special sort of wisdom, aware of the greatest threats and deepest gifts of human existence. Life is simultaneously terrifying and wonderful ... having successfully struggled to rebuild their inner world, survivors emerge profoundly and gratefully aware of the extraordinary value of life in the face of the ever-present possibility of loss.¹⁴

It is the recognition that life is simultaneously terrifying and wonderful that shapes *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. It is articulated especially through the experiences of Shakespeare's heroines, who refuse to be defeated by tragedy and loss and approach the future with the optimistic belief that life has value. The most painful circumstances in life tend to be out of the individual's control, as Lawrence Calhoun and

¹³ Ibid., 625, 633.

¹⁴ R. Janoff-Bulman, "Rebuilding shattered assumptions after traumatic life outcomes: Coping processes and outcomes", 320.

Richard Tedeschi point out, and this lack of control over events can produce subjective distress.¹⁵ At the beginning of the plays a number of characters suffer from subjective distress. In *As You Like It* Duke Senior and Orlando have been deprived of their birthrights by brothers who come to resemble Cain in their fratricidal intentions, Rosalind has been disinherited and Celia chooses to follow her into banishment, rejecting her own unjust father. In *Twelfth Night*, Viola and Olivia have endured a double loss, the deaths of a father and brother. In the face of these experiences, the characters rebuild their lives. An understanding of how some people can recover from subjective distress is provided by Calhoun and Tedeschi's research into the power of post-traumatic growth. This can result in a strengthening of relationships with others, increased intimacy and closeness and willingness to help others, and a greater readiness for self-disclosure.¹⁶ In the Forest of Arden, where there is no enemy but winter and rough weather, Duke Senior can rekindle his faith in humanity, despite his experience of the perfidy of his brother, and establish an alternative court in exile, a power base that will equip him to return to his rightful position at the end of the play. Orlando, faced by his vulnerability to a brother who plans to kill him, escapes to join the Duke's band of merry men and learns to forgive Oliver when he rescues him from the lioness. Viola, cast up friendless on a foreign shore, immediately sets about coming to terms with her loss and, later, when she has cause to hope that Sebastian is alive, she finds a meaningful pattern in apparently random events, "O, if it prove / Tempests are kind, and salt waves fresh in love!" (3.4.348-349) Understanding the grief of loss and the need to rebuild her life, she is able to reach out to Olivia and encourage her to emerge from her mourning.

The plays situate characters in fallen worlds that are an expression of Augustinian pessimism, but refuse to be limited by it. Underlying the comedies is an awareness of the real possibility of misfortune, the transitory nature of life and the threats to human happiness. At

¹⁵ Lawrence G. Calhoun and Richard G. Tedeschi, *Facilitating Posttraumatic Growth: A Clinician's Guide* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999), 134.

¹⁶ Ibid., 142.

the end, the world may appear benevolent and meaningful when characters pair off in the socially stabilising ritual of marriage, but it is not always benevolent or meaningful. Individuals may be able to make significant decisions that shape their lives, but this is not always so; people may be miraculously reunited, but others are excluded. It is this ambivalence that creates the profound insights into the meaning of existence. Like the survivors of trauma some of the characters emerge from the action aware of the value of life in the face of the possibility of loss. The audience, watching them grapple with these issues, emerges with a similarly new assumption about the nature of the world, a reinvigorated appreciation of the value and complexity of life, and a belief that happiness can be attained by right thinking, resilience and optimism.

The cruelty of laughter

Shakespeare's heroines are admirable women who grapple with their problems with resilience, optimism, intelligence and emotional maturity. However, the plays often feature groups of people who reveal less positive characteristics and gain pleasure from the discomfort and humiliation of others. When they create communities of laughter that marginalise or exclude, their behaviour questions the moral worth of types of happiness that are achieved at the expense of others. Augustine believed that being able to laugh is part of what makes us human, but he also considered that it belongs to the lower part of man.¹⁷ As discussed in chapter four, some early modern humanists praised the effects of laughter, but attitudes to its significance and nature were varied and often contradictory. Writers like Castiglione and Joubert acknowledged its beneficial properties, but others were more

¹⁷ Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, trans. Thomas Williams (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), Book One 8, 14.

doubtful.¹⁸ In *The Poetics* Aristotle had described comedy as an inferior dramatic form since it represents the risible, which is an aspect of the ugly, the shameful, or the base. Mirth, for Aristotle, is always an expression of contempt.¹⁹ Commenting on *The Poetics* from a Christian perspective, Lodovico Castelvetro suggests instead that laughter is caused by our fallen and corrupted natures that have left us ‘stuffed with vanity and pride’. This interpretation, especially the criticism of vaingloriousness and pride, foregrounds the doctrine of original sin to lend additional authority to his criticism.²⁰ In his defence of poetry against other literary forms Sir Philip Sidney takes issue with the moral status of the theatre, criticising comedy as a form “whom naughtie Play-makers and stage-keepers, haue iustly made odious.”²¹ In contrast to poetry, which has the capacity to teach and move us towards virtue, Sidney separates the laughter of comedy from happiness; laughter cannot cause us delight since we only laugh at “deformed creatures”. Partly echoing Aristotle, he claims that laughter “almost euer commeth of thinges moste disproportioned to our selues, and nature. Delight hath a ioy in it either permanent or present. Laughter hath onely a scornfull tickling.”²² Since laughter is associated with deformity, it is the product of an inferior form of pleasure. Whilst Shakespeare would obviously not have agreed with Sidney’s attack, he does recognise that laughter can be a manifestation of cruelty.

In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare explores the potential for laughter to be cruel, instead of therapeutic, when the carnival cruelty of the charivari in exposing women or couples to public shame is reflected in the less public shaming of Malvolio. A Freudian response to the

¹⁸ Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier from the Italian of Count Baldassare Castiglione: Done into English by Sir Thomas Hoby Anno 1561* (London: David Nutt in the Strand, 1900). Laurent Joubert, *Treatise of Laughter*, trans. David de Rocher (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1980).

¹⁹ “Comedy is, as we have said, an imitation of characters of a lower type ... It consists in some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive.” Aristotle, *Aristotle’s Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, V.1449a.1.

²⁰ Lodovico Castelvetro, *Poetica d’Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta* (Vienna 1570 fo. 53v). Quoted and translated in Quentin Skinner, “Why Laughing Mattered in the Renaissance: The Second Henry Tudor Memorial Lecture” *History of Political Thought* 222, no. 3 (2001): 120, 432.

²¹ Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie* (London: Printed [by Thomas Creede] for VVilliam Ponsonby, 1595), E4R. EEBO.

²² Ibid., I2^V, I2^R.

play draws attention to the cruelty of such laughter as a manifestation of psychic darkness.

Martin Grotjahn discusses the impact of jokes from his perspective as a Freudian psychiatrist:

The practical joke represents a primitive form of the funny which is often so cruel and so thinly disguised in its hostility that the sensitive or esthetically [sic] minded person can hardly enjoy it. The practical joke is a dangerous performance, a realisation of the sadistic and often cruel tendency which underlines the creation of wit.²³

Grotjahn's identification of the sadistic elements in practical jokes, and his belief that it represents only a primitive form of wit, suggests that practical jokes reflect a human propensity for cruelty. This perception links Freudian psychology with religious criticism of the inherently sinful aspect of humanity. Grotjahn, however, reveals optimism that sensitive people can transcend their innate predispositions and refuse to participate in behaviour that is so demeaning to others. Bridget Escolme suggests that spectators who participate in "morally dubious, improprietary and excessive laughter" are being asked to "examine the community of laughers to which they belong".²⁴ When Shakespeare invites us, as the audience, to laugh at the treatment of Malvolio, he makes us complicit. In his account of a 1602 performance of *Twelfth Night*, which he remembers as being primarily concerned with the gulling of Malvolio, John Manningham seems to have responded particularly, and perhaps ambivalently, to the steward's ill treatment.²⁵ More recently, in a review of a 2002 production of the play at the New Globe, Ben Brantley explains how a particular theatre audience reacted to the treatment of Malvolio. He describes his attendance at the New Globe theatre as "a simulacrum

²³ Martin Grotjahn, *Beyond laughter: humor and the subconscious* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 40.

²⁴ Bridget Escolme, *Emotional Excess on the Shakespearean Stage: Passion's Slaves* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 61.

²⁵ Allison Hobgood cites Michael Baird Saenger's essay "Manningham on Malvolio" in which he includes Manningham's epigram about the play, "*Quae mala cum multis patimur laeviora putantur*". The Latin, according to Saenger, can be translated in two possible ways; depending upon the meaning taken from the term "laeviora", it can be read as either "Those evils which are suffered along with others are easier" or "Those evils we suffer in the presence of many appear still more foolish". Paradoxically, the ambiguous epigram can indicate a sympathetic response to the events on the stage or "a less compassionate enjoyment to be found in Malvolio's public humiliation." Allison P. Hobgood, "Twelfth Night's 'Notorious Abuse' of Malvolio: Shame, Humorality and Early Modern Spectatorship," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 24, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 1. DOI: 10.1353/shb.2006.0049.

of its Elizabethan prototype, with an open pit in which most viewers (the groundlings) stand.”

It was “a very public experience” in which the performers addressed the audience “in a complicitous spirit. ‘You’re a part of this, you know,’ they seem to suggest”. What disturbed Brantley the most, was the way in which the drama, and its theatrical space, “[make] you feel especially implicated when the play changes tone. You may experience vicarious guilt, for example, when the baiting of the steward Malvolio . . . slips into sadism, or when the hedonistic Sir Toby Belch . . . turns nastily on his best friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek.”²⁶

Whilst Brantley seems to have misunderstood Sir Toby’s relationship with Sir Andrew, which was always exploitative, he is right in identifying the cruelty in the way Sir Toby brings his riotous behaviour to an end, dismissing Sir Andrew with the contemptuous attack on him as “An ass-head and a coxcomb and a knave, a thin-faced knave, a gull” (5.1.198-9).

Shakespeare does not give Sir Andrew a verbal response and he is sidelined in the last moments of the play. One of the last speeches does, however, express Malvolio’s intention to take revenge on his tormentors. In this play there is a dark side to festivity, revealed in the characters who are unable to learn from their experiences and change.

Those who laugh often consider themselves superior to the subjects of their mirth.²⁷

Disturbing questions about the cruelty of laughter are raised in *The Merchant of Venice* as Shakespeare locates the action in the public political world. In Elizabethan England the crowd that assembled to witness the horrific hanging, drawing and quartering of Lopez laughed and jeered at his attempts to die with dignity, and the Christians in the courtroom, especially Gratiano, taunt Shylock as he is defeated.²⁸ Albrecht Classen suggests that, although laughter can evoke sympathy and understanding, it can have more paradoxical effects, “those who

²⁶ Ben Brantley, “Critic’s Notebook; Boys Will Be Girls in Pure Shakespeare”. *The New York Times*, August 29, 2002. <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/29/theater/critic-s-notebook-boys-will-be-girls-in-pure-shak.html>.

²⁷ Escolme, *Emotional Excess on the Shakespearean Stage*, 57, 62.

²⁸ William Camden reported that he died “affirming that he had loued the Queene as hee had loued Iesus Christ, which from a man of the Iewish profession was heard not without laughter.” William Camden, *The History of the Most Renouned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth, Late Queen of England*, STC 4500, (London: Printed by M. Flesher, for J. Tonson, 1688), 58-9. EEBO.

laugh either join a community or invite others to create one because laughter excludes and includes, it attacks and belittles".²⁹ Records of the stage history of *The Merchant of Venice* indicate that early performances were not sympathetic to Shylock and that he may have been ridiculed as a comic villain, grotesque, caricatured and stereotyped as Jewish by his red beard, inviting audience laughter.³⁰ The play itself, however, exposes the cruelty of laughter when it is directed against Shylock by other characters; the small boys mock his grief at the elopement of Jessica, he is subjected to taunts about his religion, and at the end Gratiano gloats over his humiliation and distress. Shakespeare asks his audience to consider the extent to which group solidarity is achieved at the expense of the marginalised. If those who laugh create a community of like-minded people who belittle others, it suggests that the happiness of the majority may be dependent on exclusion, and challenges us to question the moral worth of such happiness.

Living in fallen worlds

Happiness may be achieved by creating community solidarity and marginalising the minority. In the process people may exhibit conformity to discriminatory political or religious ideologies. *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It* take issue with this confronting moral problem, one largely ignored by Aristotle, as they question the worth of a happiness that is based on the exclusion of others. The plays challenge us to consider whether individuals can be happy in social and political worlds that do not accord with their personal values, and whether retreat from a morally repugnant society is the only way to achieve legitimate happiness. They also raise the more optimistic possibility that, in some circumstances,

²⁹ Albrecht Classen, Introduction to Classen ed. *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behaviour, its Meaning and Consequences* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter Gmbit & Co., K.G., 2010), 3.

³⁰ Herman Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art: and his relation to Calderon and Goethe* (London: Chapman Brothers, 1846).

individuals may become agents of social and political change to initiate new ways of thinking that are more in accord with their personal desires.

One possible response to the plays considers how societies may construct inequitable systems of government and justice. As discussed in the introduction, Aristotle's *Politics* advances a belief that people are inclined to live co-operatively, and his consideration of ways to attain happiness is situated within a democratic *polis*. He asserts that the good life is an end for both the community and the individual, and "constitutions which consider the common interest are right constitutions, judged by the standard of absolute justice."³¹ Aquinas shares Aristotle's faith in the power of a rightly organised community in which citizens can develop intellectually and morally, as well as materially.³² For both writers the possibility of achieving happiness is premised on the assumption that the state is a benign institution that caters for the common good and provides the right environment for happiness to flourish. They believe that enlightened leaders will demonstrate political prudence and practical wisdom and will guide the community by creating laws that encourage virtuous behaviour and discourage vice. Augustine is more pessimistic in his vision of political institutions; true justice is never possible in the City of Man, since the citizens who create the law are inherently sinful.

Shakespeare is Augustinian in his representation of the ways in which people construct unjust social, judicial and political worlds. An Elizabethan audience would have been familiar with the "myth of Venice", although Lewkenor's translation of Contarini was not published until 1599. The mythical image of Venice (discussed in chapter two) represented a longing for an ideal society that provided the conditions in which people might be happy, but the darker reality showed that it was a flawed world, characterised by ambition and self-interest on the part of the patriciate. Although the republic claimed to be concerned for the common good, the justice system was punitive and severe. Shakespeare's source for

³¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 111.6, 99.

³² Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics*, trans Richard J. Regan and ed. William P. Baumgarth and Richard J. Regan (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), ST I-II, Q90.

The Merchant of Venice, Il Pecorone, reflects an early modern desire to believe in the virtues of republicanism, presenting Venice as a city with a reputation for administering strict and consistent justice.³³ In *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare subjects both his source and the myth to interrogation. Writing about the play through the lens of *The Nicomachean Ethics* and Cicero's *De Officiis*, Henry Turner asks, "How is the common good to be defined, and how is the common good of the community to be reconciled with the rights and claims of singular members? ... Who is the noncitizen? What is owed to the noncitizen?"³⁴ In *The Merchant of Venice*, political and judicial authority are both vested in the Duke and his ruling depends on political, as well as legal, concerns. Shylock is finally defeated by a combination of regulations that refuse to grant him citizenship and can then punish him on the grounds of his alien status. The Jew in Venice is ultimately not equal in the eyes of the law and the Christians rejoice in his defeat. James Shapiro has pointed out that, as a result of their expulsion in 1290, Jews in England were regarded as aliens and regarded by some as a threat that was actually disproportionate to their real numbers.³⁵ The *Merchant of Venice* is thought provoking because many of the implied criticisms of Venetian society are relevant today. There is potential for interpretations that extend beyond the issue of sixteenth-century treatment of Jews to make parallels with pressing social issues of the twenty-first century, especially the exclusion and marginalisation of those who are considered to provide a threat to a dominant ideology and way of life. In recent times an increasing focus on human rights has promoted the interests of the individual as the most important moral commodity.³⁶ The story of Shylock should resonate with members of a contemporary audience who are

³³ Fiorentino Giovanni, *The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni: now first tr. into English by W.G. Waters; illustrated by E.R. Hughes* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1897). EEBO.

³⁴ Henry S. Turner, "The Problem of the More-than-One: Friendship, Calculation, and Political Association in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2006): 417. DOI: 10.1353/shq.2006.0096.

³⁵ James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

³⁶ Mirko Bagaric and James McConvill, "Goodbye Justice, Hello Happiness: Welcoming Positive Psychology to the Law," www.deakin.edu.au/buslaw/law/div/docs/vol10-issi/vol10-1-1.pdf.

concerned about the human rights of marginalised and disadvantaged minority groups and individuals.

Shakespeare raises questions about the extent to which even admirable individuals can maintain moral integrity in a context of religious and political intolerance. If the audience feels sympathy for Shylock as the victim of injustice, they will be challenged to reconcile this response with the representation of Portia when she rescues Antonio. Since the fate that awaits him is barbaric, it is probable that an audience will appreciate the intelligence of Portia who produces a loophole in the law to save him. Portia is simultaneously the most heroic and the most morally compromised of the heroines in Shakespeare's romantic comedies. This disjunction is created by her identification with the justice system of Venice, which is subjected to criticism in the play. There is a distinction between equity and justice in the rulings of Portia and the Duke, one based on the writing of Aristotle.³⁷ According to Aristotle, the law has been developed as a collection of general rules but, although the mechanical application of these rules may be legally just, the application may become problematic in particular cases because of the generality of the rules. Thus, as Thomas Bilello explains, equity operates as a 'corrective to what is legally just', where the strict unreflective application of law would be inconsistent with the lawgiver's intention" because "while the strict application of law is always just, it may not always be equitable."³⁸ There is, thus, a disjunction between the ideal of justice and its practical application. When Portia wishes to enforce an Aristotelian "justice", the rigorous application of law in her narrow reading of the bond, this justice is not equitable. Portia enters the court intending to save her husband's friend and, thus, her direct personal interest "renders her judgement fatally partial, and is

³⁷ "The same thing, then, is just and equitable, and while both are good the equitable is superior. What creates the problem is that the equitable is just, but not the legally just but a correction of legal justice. The reason is that all law is universal but about some things it is not possible to make a universal statement which shall be correct ... and that is the nature of the equitable, a correction of law where it is defective owing to its universality." Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, V.10.1137b.10-28.

³⁸ Thomas Bilello, "Accomplished with what she lacks: Law, equity, and Portia's con," *Law and Literature* 16, no. 1 (2004): 13, 21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4141777>.

itself disqualifying.”³⁹ The fact that, in planning her strategy, Portia aligns herself with the questionable values of the Venetian state, at least partially undermines her moral credibility as the representative of true justice and Christian values. Portia achieves popular acclaim and personal happiness in rescuing her husband’s friend, but this is dependent on the defeat of Shylock. Shakespeare located his play about the trial of a Jew in Venice, but he wrote it against the real historical background of the execution of the Christianised Dr Lopez, which took place two to three years earlier, engineered by the Earl of Essex, the queen’s favourite.⁴⁰ Lopez was the victim of a process that was politically and personally motivated and deprived of access to justice. In the real world of Elizabethan England Lopez was as much an outsider as Shylock is in the foreign republic of Venice, and as much a target for mockery and religious discrimination.

The fallen political world of Duke Frederick’s court in *As You Like It*, receives proportionately less attention than the republic of Venice, but it is also a world of cruelty and dispossession. Shakespeare’s refusal to explain the reasons for Duke Frederick’s usurpation places greater emphasis on his corruption, since the legitimate ruler is not accused of any dereliction of duty. In foregrounding the Duke’s unjustified political ambition, Shakespeare makes links with the Augustinian concept of original sin. The sense of this being a fallen political and social world is extended with the more detailed representation of Oliver’s denial of Orlando’s share of his inheritance and his rights to an education that befits his birth. When Oliver reflects on why he hates his brother he concludes, “I hope I shall see an end of him; for my soul – yet I know not why – hates nothing more than he” (1.1.154-5). In acknowledging

³⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁰ Drakakis points out that since Shakespeare was allied with the anti-Essex faction, he had a reason to be sympathetic to Lopez, and Drakakis identifies a possible allusion to his trial in Gratiano’s abusive comparison of Shylock to a wolf, which in Latin is *lupus*. Footnote to the Arden edition 4.1.133. Sokol elaborates by telling us that it is believed that Essex, feeling his position with the queen slipping, aimed to consolidate his power by playing on her fears of assassination. If it is also true that Lopez had gossiped unprofessionally that Essex had a venereal infection, it places greater emphasis on the injustice of his trial, at which Essex presided and took his revenge. B. J. Sokol, “Prejudice and Law in *The Merchant of Venice*,” *Shakespeare Survey* 51 (1998).

his lack of reason, and in referring to his soul hating Orlando, Oliver implies that the capacity for hatred is innate, a conclusion that also has links to the theology of original sin. This is later paralleled by the Duke's tyrannical threat to seize Oliver's lands if he cannot produce Orlando, and by his intention to invade the forest to kill the brother he has already dispossessed. However, the conclusion of the play is more optimistic. As Duke Frederick repents of his unlawful dispossession of his brother, Duke Senior is able to regain his inheritance. Although there are similarities between Duke Frederick's usurpation and the negative effects of Duke Senior's invasion of the forest, the play ends with restoration of order as he regains his rightful dukedom and promises to reward his loyal followers. The play leaves us with the impression that this new political system will be benign. In this instance, Shakespeare's representation of political power is Aristotelian and Thomistic, since the returned courtiers will be able to live cooperatively, governed by a ruler who has learned from his experiences and developed prudence and practical wisdom.

The pattern, identified by Northrop Frye, of retreating to a green world and returning with greater understanding is most clearly evident in *As You Like It*.⁴¹ Of the three plays it is the most Thomistic in its representation of people who can change and learn from their experiences. Nevertheless, Shakespeare subjects the green world to evaluation, recognising that it is not a place of simple innocence. It is in fact postlapsarian and in many ways mirrors the fallen nature of Duke Frederick's court and Elizabethan England. Shakespeare interrogates the virtues of the green world in adopting the genre of the pastoral. As Rosalind and Celia flee to the Forest of Arden, assuming the personas of a shepherd and a shepherdess, Shakespeare compares the moral worth of court and country and calls into question the possibility of finding an ideal world. There is critical disagreement about the extent to which the pastoral is simply a reflection of the search for an ideal existence where people attempt to

⁴¹ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 11.

recreate a lost innocence. Renato Poggiali believes that it has “no other reality than that of imagination and art” and that its representation in *As You Like It* is not meant to be taken seriously.⁴² It was, however, recognised in the early modern period that the pastoral provided a vehicle for social criticism, and George Puttenham acknowledged that “under the vaile of homely persons, and in rude speeches” Virgil’s *Eclogues* were able to “insinuate and glaunce at greater matters, and such as perchance had not bene safe to haue beene disclosed in any other sort”.⁴³ Frederick Garber identifies the presence of a subtext in the *Eclogues*, which acts as a sort of safety valve for intolerable pressures. This works to destabilise the surface text:

Where the surface promotes the wholeness of the bucolic condition, the subtext speaks for disjunction, lacunae, and breakings away. Where the surface speaks of plenitude and the fatness of flocks, the subtext shows deprivation and irremediable loss.⁴⁴

Literary representation is shadowed by awareness that the pastoral is a paradise already lost. In *As You Like It* Shakespeare appropriates the genre to make social commentary about dispossession, land enclosures and food shortages.

Popular anxieties that resulted from a period of political and socio-economic instability are reflected in *As You Like It*. In the context of uncertainties about the succession, the plot is premised on issues of political and familial dispossession.⁴⁵ Shakespeare mirrors the dispossession that occurs in Frederick’s court in exclusions and enclosures in the forest and its pastoral outskirts, as Rosalind and Celia buy the sheepecote that is “fenced about with

⁴² Renato Poggiali, *The Oaten Flute: Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975), 2.

⁴³ Lord Lumley, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London 1589. Amsterdam: De Capo P., 1971). EEBO.

⁴⁴ Frederick Garber, “Pastoral Spaces,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 30, no. 3, *Renaissance Culture, Literature, and Genres* (1988), 11. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40754867>.

⁴⁵ Lisa Hopkins points out that in the 1590s there were about a dozen people who considered that they had a claim to the throne. Although James was the successful candidate, the will of Henry VIII had given priority to the descendants of his younger sister, Mary, rather than the Scottish descendants of her older sister, Margaret, since they were technically alien. Lisa Hopkins, *Drama and the Succession to the Crown, 1561-1633* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 2, 4.

olive trees” (4.3.76). In real life, the Forest of Arden had been subject to appropriation of land since the thirteenth century so that by 1500 less than 9% remained available to the common people.⁴⁶ Corin refers to the market economy that has encroached on the forest. He does not own the sheep he shears and the name given to his absentee landlord, old Carlot, may be a reference to “the notorious land-encloser and absentee landlord John Quarles” whose exploitation and enclosure policies caused full-scale riots.⁴⁷ A serious food shortage affected England in the mid 1590s. Celia says that she is almost fainting to death with hunger and Corin tells her that there is no food at the sheepcote to feed the weary travellers. This is a variation of Lodge’s *Rosalynde* in which Coridon’s offer of hospitality is part of Lodge’s representation of traditional pastoral content.⁴⁸ Orlando receives more immediate relief from the Duke, but his entry with drawn sword suggests the social unrest caused by food shortages. The feast of venison establishes the Duke’s followers as outlaws, since forests were originally lands managed by the Crown for the hunting of game and poaching was a crime. Richard Wilson believes that *As You Like It* tells the “brutal story of Elizabethan social transformation” and that no Shakespearean play “transmits more urgently the imminence of the social breakdown threatened by the conjuncture of famine and enclosure.”⁴⁹ The influx of displaced courtly immigrants to the forest puts increased pressure on a location that is already threatened by demographic forces. The green world is not a simple refuge of freedom and regeneration, but an environment that also draws attention to the social problems that would have been familiar to the audiences of the play.

The representation of social problems in England has parallels with similar events that occurred when travellers intruded on to the hitherto unexplored territories of the New World.

⁴⁶ Victor Skipp, *Crisis and Development: An Ecological Case Study of the Forest of Arden 1570-1674* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

⁴⁷ Footnote to 3.5. 109. Arden edition.

⁴⁸ Thomas Lodge, *Rosalynde*, 1592 (Menston, Yorkshire: Scolar Press, 1972).

⁴⁹ Richard Wilson, “Like the Old Robin Hood”: “As You Like It” and the Enclosure Riots,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (1992): 3-4. <http://www.jstor.org.stable/2870900>.

As Celia comments about Touchstone, “He’ll go along o’er the wide world with me” (1.3.126), Shakespeare locates his play within the mythic context of the quest and the search for the ideal, especially the hope that a better way of life could be discovered in the Americas. As discussed in chapter two, early travellers to the Americas expressed joy at what they saw, and a sense of wonder in discovering people who apparently lived in a pure state of nature, free from care and engaged in honest toil. The New World seemed to provide evidence of the compatibility of the classical tradition and Christianity and to offer, briefly, the possibility that “the dream world we create out of our own desires” could actually exist.⁵⁰ Descriptions of people like the Tainos in terms of the golden age reveal a longing to turn time back to a perceived more innocent past, and are reflected in Charles’ report that the followers of the exiled duke “fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world” (1.1.101-102). As readers in Europe were exposed to the experiences of real life travellers, Shakespeare’s audiences in the theatre watched fictional characters who journeyed to the Forest of Arden in search of an ideal society, and events in the play show the effects of the search for this ideal.⁵¹ Touchstone’s initial enthusiasm quickly disappears as he reassesses his situation, “When I was at home I was in a better place” (2.4.13), and Adam reflects more seriously the threat of starvation experienced by travellers to the New World when he says, “I die for food!” (2.6.2). The forest is, simultaneously, a mythical ideal and a dangerous location, where Orlando fears being eaten by savage beasts and Oliver is threatened by a hungry lioness. There are no exotic cannibals, but humans like old Carlot prey on one another in other ways that recall Léry’s

⁵⁰ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 183.

⁵¹ Lisa Hopkins cites a number of allusions, pointing out that the play is “rich in the language of the English colonial enterprise.” “Jacques says of Touchstone, ‘in his brain, / Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit / After a voyage, he hath strange places crammed / With observation’ (II.7.38-41), and later prophesies that his ‘loving voyage / Is but for two months virtuallled’ (V.4.188-9). Rosalind in particular is strongly associated with references to the foreign and the exotic. Orlando’s egregious verses declare that ‘From the east to western Ind, / No jewel is like Rosalind’ (III.2.84-5), and Rosalind herself tells Celia that ‘One inch of delay more is a South Sea of discovery’ (III.2.190-1). Indeed Rosalind talks a great deal about travel. She says to Jacques, ‘A traveller! By my faith, you have great reason to be sad. I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men’s; then, to have seen much and to have nothing is to have rich eyes and poor hands’ (IV.1.19-22).” Lisa Hopkins, “Orlando and the Golden World: The Old World and the New in *As You Like It*,” *Early Modern Literary Studies* 8, no. 2 (September, 2002): 2. <http://www.shu.ac.uk/emis/emishome.html>.

comparison of the cannibals to French usurers.⁵² In the Americas, also, Europeans practised a metaphoric cannibalism; exploitation and dispossession of the indigenous inhabitants was a major feature of their enterprises, often exacerbated by socio-economic conditions in Europe. The increasing practice of dispossessing small landholders to enclose land for sheep farming, and the law of primogeniture which deprived younger sons of property, drove hopeful adventurers across the seas in search for lands of their own. The journey of the dispossessed Orlando has parallels with the historical predicament of landless younger sons, who joined expeditions to the Americas in the hope of making their fortunes. As English settlers in the New World symbolically imposed houses and fences on the landscape they believed that they were fulfilling the injunction in “Genesis” to subdue and replenish the land, practices that the Indians did not employ. In this way, biblical authority justified their appropriation of Indian territories.⁵³ As characters in *As You Like It* embark on a journey in search of a better world, Shakespeare shows that the success of their odyssey is threatened by man’s sinful nature. Duke Senior distinguishes between the natural and the human worlds – at its most bitter the keen tooth of the winter wind makes a physical assault on the body, but it lacks the malevolence of man’s ingratitude. Although the Duke claims that “old custom” makes life in the forest preferable to the envious court, Shakespeare reminds the audience that it is, in fact, a postlapsarian world, where the seasons change, time moves forward, not backward, where human life is but a flower.⁵⁴ In this fallen Eden a snake winds itself around Oliver’s neck, symbolic of his sinful nature as he has come to the forest to kill his brother. An Augustinian awareness of the fallen nature of man and the ways in which this can impact on the natural, social and political worlds is central to the play.

⁵² Léry, *History of a voyage to the land of Brazil*, 132.

⁵³ Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 25.

⁵⁴ Hunt, “Kairos and the Ripeness of Time”, 132.

Some of the concerns raised by the discovery of the Americas and its reverse impact on the Old World are also dramatized in *Twelfth Night*. A by-product of the invasion of the New World was the introduction of syphilis to Europe, and in Shakespeare's London it had assumed plague proportions. In *Twelfth Night* Sir Toby's taunt about Sir Andrew's hair, "I hope to see a housewife take thee between her legs and spin it off" (1.3.98-100) suggests that he hopes to see Sir Andrew bald, a symptom of the disease that could ultimately result in madness and death. Shakespeare wrote *Twelfth Night* at approximately the same time as *Hamlet*, and it shares some of the same concerns. In *Hamlet*, the gravedigger refers to the "many pocky corpses nowadays, that will scarce hold the laying in" (5.1.153-4) and Hamlet connects face painting, often associated with prostitutes, to death as he addresses the skull, "Get you to my lady's chamber and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come" (5.1.178-9). Shakespeare is also preoccupied with exploring the difficulties of finding the right way to act and maintaining sexual innocence in a fallen world. As a tragedy, *Hamlet* raises the question of whether it is possible to pursue this quest and survive; Hamlet warns Ophelia, "be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow you shall not escape calumny" (3.1.136-7). As he tells her "I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry" (3.1.135-6), Shakespeare collates the idea of plague and syphilis with the sexuality of marriage and the bedchamber. As the play progresses, the corrupting influences of the world seem to reach out and engulf Ophelia, so that in her madness she becomes preoccupied with the destructive results for women of sexual longing. In a more light-hearted manner Feste jests to Viola, "I would therefore my sister had no name ... her name's a word, and to dally with that word might make my sister wanton" (3.1.15-19). The sexual implications in the word "dally" suggest the power of language to contaminate innocence, especially in a reading that recognises the pun "wanton one", which indicates that Feste's language is already corrupting and corrupted. In these plays relationships can be compromised in a world characterised by sexual exploitation.

Coping with trauma and grief

The European discovery of the New World exposed countless people to cruelty, suffering and tragedy and validates an Augustinian response to human nature as irretrievably fallen and corrupted. Shakespeare evades the consequences of his parallel between what happened in the New World and the Forest of Arden by withdrawing his invading characters from the forest, leaving the original inhabitants in possession of their lands. In *The Merchant of Venice* he is more prepared to consider the confronting issue of the human potential for cruelty. In this play he addresses the issue, raised by positive psychologists Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, of whether a wise person can be happy in a world full of tragedy.⁵⁵ Ryff and Singer point out that this is a question that brings *eudaimonia* into confrontation with adversity, a concern that Aristotle does not explore.⁵⁶ Shakespeare, on the other hand, does investigate the ways in which characters face trauma and rebuild their lives in the aftermath. The trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice* is the most traumatic event in the three plays. There is critical debate about the way in which Antonio responds to the prospect of an agonising death. Daniel discusses it in the context of a wider Freudian interpretation that links psychology to original sin; he believes Antonio demonstrates a moral masochism in which he punishes himself as a religious rationalisation for his sinful nature.⁵⁷ Alternatively, Patricia Parker's reading makes connections with the lancing of Christ on the cross and thus a progression from Old Testament justice to New Testament mercy and the circumcision of the heart. In an interpretation that demonises Shylock and elevates Antonio to heroic, almost godlike, status, she presents Antonio as a sacrifice which "both echoes the bloodshed and

⁵⁵ Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, "Positive Psychology: An Introduction," 13.

⁵⁶ Ryff and Singer, "Know Thyself and Become What You Are".

⁵⁷ Daniel, "'Let me have judgment, and the Jew his will'".

lancing on the cross and evokes the blood libel identified with the knife-wielding Jew".⁵⁸ This is an interesting interpretation, since it is arguably how Antonio sees himself. In describing himself as "a tainted weather of the flock / Meetest for death" (4.1.113-114) he claims to be sacrificing himself for Bassanio, echoing John 1.29 which describes Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.⁵⁹ His expression of resignation is also in keeping with the belief in the importance of making a good death, discussed in chapter one. His religious faith fortifies him in the face of suffering and ensures that, when the trial is over, the trauma creates no lasting impact on him. His certainty about his religion enables him to offer what he believes is forgiveness to Shylock, rather than harbouring a desire to take revenge. Antonio will be able to move on with his life, and return to his business trading, although his constitutional melancholy will prevent him from attaining happiness. For Shylock, the situation is very different. The trauma of his forced conversion to Christianity is a life defining event, a moment of crisis when he is forced to reassess his place in the world and to foresee his future isolation. Refused real entry into the Christian world, he will be cut off from the emotional support of his people, as the faith by which he lived no longer has any power to sustain him. Janoff-Bulman points out that when their assumptive world is shattered people may "perceive a frightening universe in which they are unsafe and unprotected ... without any road map for negotiating their daily living."⁶⁰ For Shylock there will be no recovery, no ability to move towards happiness.

In *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare represents and contrasts different ways in which people respond to grief and loss. At the beginning of *The Merchant of Venice* Portia seems to have already recovered from any grief she might have felt for the death of her father, her problem is how to circumvent his continuing influence over her life.

⁵⁸ Parker Patricia, "Cutting Both Ways: Bloodletting, Castration/ Circumcision, and the 'Lancelet' of *The Merchant of Venice*," in Diana E. Henderson, ed. *Alternative Shakespeares 3*. (London: Routledge, 2008), 111.

⁵⁹ Footnote to the Arden edition.

⁶⁰ Janoff-Bulman, "Rebuilding Shattered Assumptions after Traumatic Life Outcomes", 312.

Viola, in contrast, has suffered from a much more traumatic experience. In *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare introduces an extra dimension, not included in the other two plays. He represents a world driven not only by human interactions, but also by external forces over which the characters have no control. Janoff-Bulman believes that disaster of this sort “places a trembling animal at the mercy of the entire cosmos and the problem of meaning in it.”⁶¹ At the beginning, Viola is the survivor of a storm in which she believes her brother has drowned. The violence of the tempest is attested to by the Captain, who refers to how the ship split. Although he reports that he saw Sebastian bind himself to a mast, Viola can do no more than hope that her brother has survived. At the end she reveals her belief that Sebastian went “suited to his watery tomb” (5.1.227) and Sebastian says, “I had a sister / Whom the blind waves and surges have devoured” (5.1.221-222). The sea in this play becomes a place of literal shipwreck and also a metaphor for “turbulent fortune” that destroys human relationships.⁶² As we hear also of the deaths of Olivia’s father and brother, the early scenes of *Twelfth Night* appear to indicate that Shakespeare will be experimenting with a mixed genre, in which the love story is located within the context of grief and loss. However, the ending, where Viola and Sebastian are reunited, anticipates the patterns of regeneration that develop out of loss focused on in the late plays. In what is arguably the most moving moment in the action Sebastian expresses a sense of wonder as he acknowledges his lost sister, “I should my tears let fall upon your cheek / And say, ‘Thrice welcome, drowned Viola’” (5.1.233-234). This is a fallen world in which external influences can precipitate tragedy, but it is also a world in which there are benign forces, independent of human agency, that enable reconciliation and the promotion of happiness. Shakespeare does not explicitly connect these forces to religion, but his belief that they exist mitigates the pessimism created by the

⁶¹ Ibid., 312.

⁶² Helen Hackett applies this observation to *Pericles*, *The Winter’s Tale* and *Henry VIII*. I extend this to apply to *Twelfth Night*. Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 153.

characters who fail to learn and change. It challenges Augustine's belief that happiness is a condition that we cannot achieve in this life. The trauma of being cast up friendless on a foreign shore has forced Viola to recognise that life is precious; she is able to acknowledge the pain of loss and use it to develop greater empathy with the problems of others. She rebuilds her inner world and reveals a wisdom that is lacking in the other characters who must learn from her that they need to change and develop if they wish to attain happiness.

The power of forgiveness

In considering how people may change and develop in the wake of trauma Shakespeare explores the transformative power of forgiveness. Ryff and Singer refer to the horror of the Nazi concentration camps as they raise the philosophically challenging question of whether we have a right to be happy in a world capable of such cruelty.⁶³ In the wake of the Holocaust and Japanese prisoner of war camps international law attempted, with varying degrees of success, to prosecute perpetrators of war crimes. However, some victims discovered that, on a personal level, forgiveness could liberate them more effectively than pursuing retribution. Peterson and Seligman record the story of Kim Phuc, the girl in the widely published photograph from the Vietnam War. Years later, speaking at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, she expressed her forgiveness for the pilot who had dropped the napalm on her village. Peterson and Seligman believe that a person who forgives undergoes positive social psychological changes; these are associated with traits that are valuable for personal and societal well-being. However, they admit it is harder to forgive actions that were intentionally committed and resulted in serious consequences. Unlike Kim Phuc, most people are less likely to forgive in these circumstances.⁶⁴

⁶³ Ryff, and Singer, "Know Thyself and Become What You Are".

⁶⁴ Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues*, 448, 446

In *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare raises questions about the extent to which forgiveness should be extended to perpetrators of injustice and the power this might have in the lives of the original victims. The positive power of forgiveness is demonstrated in *As You Like It*. Oliver has dispossessed Orlando, deprived him of the education that befits his station in life, and then conspired to murder him. Despite this, Orlando rescues him from the lioness that was about to kill him. As Oliver reports how Orlando's love saved him he observes that Orlando's "kindness" was "nobler ever than revenge" (4.3.127) and aroused him to a sense of shame and repentance. When we see them together for the first time Orlando is expressing his interest in, and support for, Oliver's sudden love for Celia. Oliver demonstrates the sincerity of his conversion by promising to live the simple life of a shepherd and transfer "all the revenue that was old Sir Rowland's" to his wronged brother (5.2.10-11). Although, later, marriage to Celia will enable him to return to the court and, presumably, to affluence made possible by the marriage, it is important for the happy ending that Oliver can respond so positively to the transforming power of forgiveness. In contrast, in *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare shows how the desire to take revenge imprisons and prevents the individual from moving forward in life. Olivia acknowledges that Malvolio has been "most notoriously abused" in the trick played on him (5.1.366) and promises him justice, but Malvolio is unable to forgive, announcing "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you!" (5.1.365). Failing to learn from his experiences, Malvolio excludes himself from the general happiness at the end of the play.

In *The Merchant of Venice* the issue of forgiveness is more complicated. The unsettling nature of the play can be explained partly by Shakespeare's decision to mingle the apparently incompatible genres of revenge tragedy and romantic comedy. As he constructs a social and political world that demonises Shylock, Shakespeare gives him some of the characteristics of the protagonist of a revenge tragedy who, traditionally, sets himself in

opposition to a corrupt society. In his speech of justification, “Hath not a Jew eyes?” (3.1.49-61) Shylock employs an accumulation of rhetorical questions. The speech is an impassioned plea for recognition as a human being, a recognition that is institutionally denied to him by the Christian relegation of Jews to an inferior place in the status hierarchy. In *The Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle observes, “it is apparent injustice that occasions rage” and Shylock has brooded on his mistreatment.⁶⁵ What angers him the most is the continuing humiliation he is subjected to as an alien, unable to raise himself from his subordinate and marginalised position in the social hierarchy. In his daily life the rewards of financial success are counterbalanced by the reminders of his lowly status. Like Aaron the Moor in Shakespeare’s early revenge tragedy, *Titus Andronicus*, Shylock is an outsider whose behaviour is shaped by awareness of his alien status into a desire to exact retribution. His intended revenge on the Christian community resonates in the twenty-first century in showing how individuals who have been denied human rights may resort to a retaliation that is in excess of the original wrong done to them. It raises searching questions about the appropriate punishment for such perpetrators of cruelty and the extent to which it is realistic to expect people to forgive. Lupton doubts that civic life can survive “as a valid and authentic form of existence if it operates at the expense of the alien” and suggests that in *The Merchant of Venice* “Civic life is not only at stake … but also on trial”⁶⁶. Delivering his judgement, the Duke clearly sees himself as exhibiting divine magnanimity when he pronounces, “That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit, / I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it” (4.1.363-364). However, his apparent mercy can also be seen as an exercise of power, which is highlighted by Portia’s command that Shylock should prostrate himself in a posture of humility and submission. The Christians (with the exception of Gratiano) truly believe that they have forgiven Shylock, but the operation of the law is less benign and Shylock must still be

⁶⁵Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*. V.8.1135b.30.

⁶⁶Lupton, *Citizen-Saints*, 96-97.

punished. His wealth will be reduced so that he will be less competitive with the Christians, and it will be used to enrich Lorenzo, whom he has good cause to hate.

The mercy and forgiveness of the Duke thus become a mechanism for reaffirming the original power structures of Venice that Shylock had attempted to subvert. It is probable that the majority of Shakespeare's contemporary audiences would have regarded the response to Shylock as justified. Reading or viewing the play against the background of the Holocaust makes it difficult, even impossible, to approach the play without anachronism. From a twenty-first-century perspective, there is a contradiction between what the Christians claim they are doing and what they actually do. Forgiveness becomes a form of vengeance that violates the essential spirit of religious teaching, highlighting how religious beliefs can be challenged when they are faced with the need to preserve social and political stability. In a tragedy Shylock would exact his revenge and die, becoming as evil as the Christians believe him to be. An audience might be poised to expect to see him make a final act of destructive defiance, but such an outcome is prevented by the inclusion of Shylock's story within the genre of romantic comedy, which traditionally excludes the death of a major character. Shakespeare dismisses him from the stage with the beaten request, "give me leave to go" (4.1.391), finally denying him defiant tragic stature. To achieve his happy ending Shakespeare had to eliminate Shylock from the final act of the play but, for a modern audience, the memory of his defeat and suffering casts a shadow over the reconciliation. We may understand Shylock's anger at his marginalisation and sympathise with his predicament, but we also recognise the barbarity of his intentions. In this way we question ourselves and consider the extent to which he should be forgiven. The mixture of genres destabilises our response, since it seems to be making contradictory assertions. The story of Shylock reflects an Augustinian pessimism about the fallen nature of man, evidenced in the behaviour of both Shylock and the Christians. This creates a discordance with the love plot, where Shakespeare

expresses Aristotelian and Thomistic optimism that people have the capacity to change and grow towards virtue and forgiveness.

The wisdom of the melancholic and the fool

The Merchant of Venice, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* are challenging because they ask questions and point out truths that others would prefer to ignore. Shakespeare makes use of the convention, adopted by court jesters, of using comedy to comment on real life, and he employs the wit of the fool to unsettle his audience. In “Defense of Poetry” (1579) Thomas Lodge claims that comedy is a tool to enable people wisely to “discover the follies of many theyr foolish fellow citizens” (36-37.9 2).⁶⁷ Viola recognises the insight of Feste when she observes, “This fellow is wise enough to play the fool, / And to do that well, craves a kind of wit” (3.1.53-54). Feste must observe the moods of those to whom he jests, and is shrewd in his ability to wheedle money out of Orsino and also, more astutely, out of the less wealthy Viola and Sebastian. Depending on the privileged position of the court jester and Olivia’s assertion that there is “no slander in an allowed fool” (1. 5.80), he comments on the characters and self-deceptions of those around him. In his interactions with other characters within the play the fool may be used to provide a criticism of the social world outside the theatre. The sometimes metatheatrical aspect of his dialogue can set up a relationship with the audience that encourages them to reflect on their own lives and their relationships with others. It is Feste who comments most clearly on the fallen nature of the world of Illyria and, by extension, the world the audience will return to at the end of the performance.

In philosophical terms Feste is the wisest character in the play. Paul Bailes and Ursula Staudinger argue that proverbs provide access to wisdom that has historically been stored in folk culture, providing time tested guide-lines to the achievement and interpretation of the

⁶⁷ Thomas Lodge, *The schoole of abuse*, by Stephen Gosson: A reply to Gosson’s *Schoole of abuse*, by Thomas Lodge, ed. Arthur Freeman (New York: Garland Pub. 1973), 36-37.9 2.

good life.⁶⁸ Feste's dialogue is sprinkled with allusions to such folk wisdom.⁶⁹ Additionally, in his role as the licensed fool, Feste engages in many punning exchanges with other characters. Beyond the level of plot and the misunderstandings caused by self-deception and disguise, the play focuses on the ambiguities and uncertainties created by language. Feste's dialogue with Viola focuses on the elusive nature of meaning as Viola points to the slippery nature of words, "they that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton" (3.1.13-14). Feste's representation as a wise fool, who recognises the uncertainty and complexity of life, encourages the audience to accept the vision that he presents. In his role as an "allowed fool" he criticises Olivia's retreat into mourning, pointing out that she is the fool. Feste suggests that he is the only sane person in Illyria. Logan believes he "challenges our assumptions about festivity and foolery", suggesting that "festivity is not as satisfying an experience as we might imagine ... what the characters and the audience come to are the limits of festival, and at that extremity are violence and indiscriminate passion."⁷⁰ Feste does not only draw our attention to the dark side of festivity, he suggests the bleakness of life in general.

Feste's songs are central to the vision that he represents. He begins his first song (2.3.35-48) with a promise of true and fulfilled love, but the second stanza creates uncertainty with the question, "What is love?", and urges the importance of seizing the day since youth will not endure and the future is uncertain. His second song (2.4.50-65) is more overtly melancholy, emphasising the connection between love and death, appropriate to Orsino's determination to see love in negative terms, and it can be influential in creating a sombre

⁶⁸ Paul B. Baites, and Ursula M. Staudinger, "Wisdom: A metaheuristic (pragmatic) to orchestrate mind and virtue toward excellence," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000). DOI: 10.1037//0003-066X.55.1.122

⁶⁹ The Arden edition footnotes record the following examples: "better be half hanged than ill wed" and "weddings and hangings go by destiny" (1.5.19), "an honest man's word is as good as his bond" (3.1.20), "the sun shines on all alike" (3.1.39), "no man can play the fool as well as the wise man (3.1.61), "you will not believe he is bald (dead) till you see his brain" (4.2.120), "he holds Belzebub at the stave's end"- a proverb from the sport of quarterstaff fighting (5.1.282), and "all is not gospel that comes out of his mouth" (5.1.285).

⁷⁰ Logan, "Twelfth Night: The Limits of Festivity", 229, 237.

mood. The song with which the play concludes, “When that I was and a little tiny boy” (5.1.376-395), sets the image of Feste’s own life span from “a little tiny boy” to old age within the greater context of the cosmos, creating a mood of pessimism that extends beyond the events of the play. His assumptive world recognises that man is vulnerable to time and decay, one is threatened by “knaves and thieves”, and the hedonism of self-indulgence will result in broken heads. In a world where the rain rains every day there is no escape from inevitability. Logan claims that it is Feste who will lead us out of the play at the end, returning us to the everyday world we must all inhabit with the positive conclusion, “and we’ll strive to please you every day” (5.1.395).⁷¹ Whilst this is true, it is debatable whether two metatheatrical lines, designed to elicit applause, can weigh against the dominant pessimism of Feste’s dialogue. As Logan acknowledges, it directs our attention to the swift passage of time, the fact that life is more likely to bring us pain than pleasure, and the inevitability of death.⁷² Such a dark vision begs the question of the possibility of finding happiness.

Although Shakespeare gives Feste the last words, he does not allow his character to dominate the action, and over the course of the play he subjects Feste to dramatic evaluation. Despite his wisdom, Feste lacks the important qualities of empathy and warmth. It is not enough to tell Olivia that she is foolish to mourn for her brother since his soul is in heaven; grief is not so easily alleviated and the grieving person requires sympathy, understanding and social support to regain equilibrium. Wisdom involves good intentions.⁷³ Although Feste shows a clear-sighted understanding of human nature, he does not use this knowledge in the service of others or for the common good. We can accept that he needs to use his insight into others for the personal gain of earning a living, but his participation in the imprisonment of Malvolio is another matter. There is a relish in the way he taunts him, as he gleefully switches

⁷¹ Ibid., 230.

⁷² Ibid., 229.

⁷³ Bailes, and Staudinger, “Wisdom: A metaheuristic (pragmatic)” to orchestrate mind and virtue toward excellence”, 123.

between his own identity and the impersonation of Sir Topas. In the comic song in which he associates himself with the vice of the medieval morality he links himself to evil and at the end, when the joke is played out, he shows no remorse. In showing Feste to be lacking in empathy and human warmth, in calling his morality into question, Shakespeare reduces his authority to comment on the nature of his world and of the world beyond the playhouse and suggests the limitations to his vision of life. As a result, we are challenged to look for an alternative vision in the play. We recognise that there are positive qualities of character, those that are endorsed by Aquinas and positive psychology, that can give value and meaning to life and enable people to achieve happiness, despite the fallen nature of the world. These qualities are represented especially in the characterisation of Viola, who demonstrates hope that time will provide a solution to her problems, loyalty to Orsino, even in unpromising circumstances, and charity to Olivia in encouraging her to emerge from her mourning.

The function of Touchstone is similar to Feste's as the symbolism of his name links him to the traditional role of the fool who speaks the truth. He is introduced as a comically admirable character who is prepared to follow Rosalind and Celia into exile. His loyalty is attested to by Celia, but later his integrity is called into question when he plans to be married dubiously to Audrey by Sir Oliver Martext so that he will have an excuse to leave her. Touchstone predominantly gives expression to a cynical view of life, especially in the speech reported by Jaques. In commenting on "how the world wags" he appears to acknowledge the significance of ripeness and maturity when he says, "And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe", but he immediately follows this with the statement, "And then from hour to hour we rot and rot" (2.7.23, 26-7). The pessimism of this world view is highlighted by focusing on the sexual wordplay in the speech: the reference to "wags" links to "tale" which was slang for the penis, "hour" was pronounced "whore", and "rot" puns on "rut". These puns reduce human

sexuality to an animal level.⁷⁴ Not only does he focus on the inevitability of decay and death, he fails to recognise an intermediate stage when ripening corresponds to the enjoyment of living and the achievement of wisdom. Commenting on Shakespeare's stylistic construction in this speech, Hunt says that he "strengthens our impression of time drained of enriching value through Touchstone's thrice-repeated 'and', and a conjunction beginning four successive verses and creating a paratactic syntax relatively rare in the Shakespeare of 1599."⁷⁵ Touchstone has no faith in the positive potential of life.

Similarly, Jaques criticises the world of the forest and, by extension, the wider world beyond it. He makes the political comment that the Duke and his followers are usurpers and tyrants in the forest, so that the killing of animals has a resonance that links him to his usurping brother. He sees his satire as having the capacity to "Cleanse the foul body of th'infected world" (2.7.60), fulminating against city women who bear the cost of princes on their shoulders and men whose finery comes at a cost to others. In his "All the world's a stage" speech (2.7.138-164) Jaques offers no vision of ripening, the infant does not represent the promise of regeneration, but instead reveals its already fallen nature by "mewling and puking in its nurse's arms". At the other end of man's life span he has failed to gain wisdom, and descends instead into physical decay and mental oblivion. In between, as Maurice Hunt observes, there is no point in time when he can attain ripeness; the representations of the lover, the soldier and the justice all reduce human dignity.⁷⁶ Jaques looks at the world of *As You Like It* and finds no reason for hope.

⁷⁴ Footnote to *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997).

⁷⁵ Hunt, "Kairos and the Ripeness of Time", 121.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Engagement or retreat?

Although he represents the cynicism of Jaques and Touchstone, Shakespeare counters it at the end of *As You Like It*. Jaques' melancholy is seen to be a denial of earthly happiness in his decision to join a monastery, a retreat that would, presumably, be regarded with disapproval by a largely Protestant audience. More generally, as Shakespeare represents fallen worlds in his plays he raises the question of whether characters should engage in those worlds or whether they can only maintain moral integrity by retreating. Over the course of the three plays he explores three different possible answers to this question. Aristotle believes that the virtuous man is one who engages responsibly in the life of the *polis* to ensure the common good, but at the end of *The Nicomachean Ethics* he appears to give greater validity to the contemplative life.⁷⁷ Despite his approval of the contemplative life and his association of contemplation with happiness, Aristotle did not recommend retreat from the world of the *polis*, but seems to have envisaged the possibility of personal disengagement within the world of Athens. The decision to withdraw into contemplation does not imply a criticism of the values of his society, but provides an opportunity to reflect on them. Both Aristotle and positive psychologists assume an interaction between personal virtue and the values of the wider society that is conducive to individual happiness and the common good. Whilst Aristotle limits the attainment of *eudaimonia* to adult male citizens, positive psychologists see it as potentially available to all. They also believe that being successful means accomplishing things valued by your culture and flourishing in terms of the goals set forth by one's society.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ "Therefore the activity of god, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative, and of other human activities, therefore, that which is most akin to this must be most of the nature of happiness ... Happiness extends, then, just so far as contemplation does, and those to whom contemplation more fully belongs are more truly happy, not as a mere concomitant but in virtue of the contemplation; for this is in itself precious. Happiness, therefore, must be some form of contemplation." Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, X.8.1178b.20-32.

⁷⁸ Sonja Lyubomirsky, Laura King and Ed Diener, "The Benefits of Frequent Positive Affect: Does Happiness Lead to Success?" *Psychological Bulletin* 131, no. 6 (2005). DOI: 10.1037/0033-2909.131.6.803.

In presenting a fallen social and political world in Venice, Shakespeare is not as optimistic about the desirability of integration and suggests that, at times, retreat may be the only possible option. When Portia cross-dresses and acts like a man, she adopts some of the less attractive characteristics of the masculine, mercantile world of the play. She categorises Shylock as “Jew”, rather than acknowledging his individual identity through referencing his name. The remorseless accumulation of penalties that she imposes on him culminates in his physical humiliation as he is commanded to prostrate himself. Peterson and Seligman observe that modern psychological studies have found that there are gender differences in the ways in which people exhibit social responsibility and that women are more likely to exhibit empathy and altruism than men.⁷⁹ In their analysis they combine a biological construct of gender with recognition of the role of culture in creating twenty-first-century expectations of the nurturing nature of women. When Portia increasingly demonstrates the ethical values of Venetian society, her behaviour becomes correspondingly less compassionate in her treatment of Shylock. As characters return from the commercial interests of Venice to the relative innocence of Portia’s estate, and its associations with Christian harmony, Belmont in some ways functions as a green world where people have a greater chance of achieving virtuous living and happiness. Although, legally, marriage has established Bassanio as the owner of Belmont, the success of the ring trick positions Portia as the dominant force in the relationship. Since the death of her father Belmont has been a largely female world, in which characteristics that Shakespeare admires, like empathy and loyalty, have flourished. If Portia

⁷⁹ Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues*. A study by A. M. Beutal and M. M. Marini concluded: “Females in our sample are more likely than males to express concern and responsibility for the well-being of others, less likely than males to accept materialism and competition, and more likely than males to indicate that finding purpose and meaning in life is extremely important. Helping is also more central to the female gender role than to the male gender role. As a result, studies of gender stereotypes indicate that women are typically rated more favorably than men on helpfulness, as well as on kindness, compassion, and the ability to devote one's efforts completely to others.” A. M. Beutal and M. M. Marini, “Gender and values,” *American Sociological Review* 60, no. 3 (1995): 436, 437.

<http://www.jstor.org.exproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/stable/2096423>.

has compromised these qualities in the courtroom, becoming the mouthpiece for Venetian insecurities and prejudices, then Shakespeare can be seen to be suggesting that it may be impossible to function in a corrupt society without becoming contaminated by its values. To establish a companionate marriage Portia and Bassanio must retreat from a world where the acquisition of money and property is valued more than loyalty and trust. This is a less optimistic conclusion than the resolution proposed by a number of critics, influenced by Barber and Frye. Catherine Belsey quotes Barber's assertion, "No other comedy ... ends with so full an expression of harmony" and, although she qualifies the idea of harmony, Belsey sees Act 5 as a festival of love that is presented in terms of mutual compatibility, consent and partnership.⁸⁰ Enterline believes that the final act counteracts the violence of the courtroom scene as Antonio's goods are returned and loving bonds are established when Portia is returned to her owner as private property, no longer in circulation. This is a surprising interpretation, since her apparent approval seems to fly in the face of feminist readings.⁸¹ Similarly, Walter Cohen sees Belmont in terms of Frye's green world, a pastoral aristocratic fantasy where the dilemmas of the city and the court are "tested and validated by its ability to master the deepest conflicts" of the alternative world.⁸² It is true that Belmont is a world that Shakespeare seems to want us to like. Whilst it does not represent the "green" values of the natural world that Frye identifies in the Forest of Arden, its associations with Christian iconography suggest that it is a world that can be redeemed. It is, nevertheless limited in its inclusiveness; it accepts Jessica who has converted to marry Lorenzo, but it excludes Shylock, although it is prepared to appropriate his money to Lorenzo's use. Living in a fallen world may involve a process of accommodation and compromise in the search for happiness.

⁸⁰ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*. Catherine Belsey, "Love in Venice," *Shakespeare Survey* 44 (1991).

⁸¹ Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus*.

⁸² Walter Cohen, "The Merchant of Venice and the Possibilities of Historical Criticism," *ELH* 49, no. 4 (1982): 777.

In contrast to the commercial world of *The Merchant of Venice* there is, as Kott points out, no escape from Illyria.⁸³ The twins can be seen, in some ways, to represent qualities associated with the green world since, as Logan suggests, they bring “a special vernal quality into the play”.⁸⁴ Thrown up from outside by the natural forces of the sea, they see Illyria with clarity of vision denied to the other inhabitants and are never self-deceived, although they may be temporarily deceived by others. Viola is perceptive about her unrequited love for Orsino and Olivia’s predicament in being deceived by Viola’s disguise. Sebastian, perplexed by the confusion about his identity, is nevertheless able to make a rational evaluation of Olivia and her household. Aristotle only considered *eudaimonia* to be achievable by men. Shakespeare shows through Viola that women can also aspire to virtuous living, and in Viola’s fidelity to Orsino and her charity to Olivia he demonstrates the qualities of character that enable people to achieve lasting happiness. Nevertheless, the influence of the twins over the carnival excess is limited, and characters must discover for themselves that festivity has its limitations. As the title of the play implies, carnival must end and the normal order of society be restored. Olivia promises Malvolio that he will receive justice, but his final determination to take revenge creates an open ending in which not all conflicts have been resolved. As we listen to Feste’s final, song Shakespeare raises the disturbing possibility that the carnival excess of Illyria is, in fact, a representation of the hedonism and cruelty of the real world outside the theatre, and from this there is no escape. If the lovers are to achieve happiness, they need to recognise the limitations of their world and find a way to live within them. Orsino and Olivia must learn from Viola and develop meaningful interpersonal relationships that can withstand, and triumph over, the fallen nature of their world.

The possibilities of attaining happiness through engaging in a process of retreat and reengagement as a result of enlightenment are explored in *As You Like It*. For Duke Senior

⁸³ Kott, *Shakespeare our Contemporary*, 229.

⁸⁴ Logan, “Twelfth Night: The Limits of Festivity”, 231.

and his followers, for Rosalind, Celia, Orlando and Oliver, the forest represents an escape from the evils of the outside world that has refused to accommodate them. Although the hope of finding a prelapsarian world is an illusion, the forest does, at least in some ways, correspond to Frye's "green world", providing a location that puts them in touch with the regenerative powers of nature. Religion has not been appropriated by autocratic institutions, but provides a true path by which individuals can reach personal enlightenment and salvation as they repent of their evil ways. The politically inclusive court of Duke Senior contrasts with the tyranny of Duke Frederick's rule, and Rosalind, in the guise of Ganymede, can develop a relationship with Orlando that would not have been possible in the outside world of her uncle's court. In his plot resolution Shakespeare offers both retreat and engagement as alternative possibilities. The usurper, Duke Frederick, and the melancholic, Jaques, will retire to the all-male community of a monastery, separating themselves from the heterosexual coupling of the lovers, but the repentant Duke Frederick's retreat is balanced against the reformed Oliver's engagement. In representing the links between the journey into the forest and the invasion of the New World, Shakespeare creates a drama that is more optimistic than the historical record. In the New World Christianity was a divisive and oppressive teaching. Men killed their brothers in horrifying numbers, and the Europeans had come to stay. Religious imagery threads its way through the play, but it escapes appropriation by institutionalised intolerance and exclusiveness, and the invaders of the forest depart, leaving William, Corin, Silvius and Phoebe in possession of their land. The majority of the courtly characters choose to return to an engagement in the wider world, where the restored dukedom will be a socially and politically benevolent state as the Duke rewards those who have shared his exile "according to the measure of their states" (5.4.164). The play is optimistic as the action moves from winter to spring which, contrary to Jacques' pessimism, offers the promise of rebirth. Balanced against the acceptance that life is but a flower is the advice for the lovers

to “take the present time” (5.3.32) when they pass across the green corn field that will ripen to the fulfilment of harvest. This song establishes the mood of optimism that accompanies the marriage and family reconciliation that characterise the plot resolution. Of the three plays *As You Like It* offers the most optimistic vision that people who demonstrate positive values can form meaningful personal relationships, become agents of social change, and find happiness in a fallen world.

Shakespeare encourages the audience to leave the theatre considering the questions his plays have raised. The titles *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night or What You Will* reflect his realisation that the audience will read into the plays what they will and their complex and often paradoxical aspects ensure that responses are multiple and often contradictory. Some interpretations focus on the comic vitality of Shakespeare’s middle comedies; others emphasise their underlying darkness, acknowledging early modern preoccupation with the fallen nature of man, a legacy of the writings of Augustine. Shakespeare reflects this legacy as he presents fallen worlds, where happiness is threatened by human depravity. This vision exists in tension with the influence of Aristotle and Aquinas who both, in different ways, express the belief that human nature has retained the inclination to strive after virtue. In his characterisation of his heroines, Portia, Viola and Rosalind, Shakespeare expresses that faith as he dramatizes their ability to learn from their experiences, to change and develop, and to help others to do the same. Shakespeare is not seduced by the illusion that drove explorers to search for an unfallen Eden in the Americas. He recognises that the world we live in is irretrievably fallen and that human nature is inevitably sinful. Despite this, he offers the message that there are positive qualities in some people that will enable them to transcend their sinful natures. An understanding of the positive qualities Shakespeare identifies in his heroines can be enriched by exploring how positive psychology challenges the pessimism of Augustine and intersects with the philosophy of Aristotle and the theology of Aquinas. It

also draws attention to aspects of the plays that move beyond Aristotle and Aquinas, showing that happiness can be achieved in spite of adversity and that people may actually be strengthened by coping with trauma and grief.

Chapter 6

Rewriting Eve.

In the Brancacci chapel in Florence, Masolino's painting of Adam and Eve represents the snake with the face of Eve, clearly showing that it was the woman, not the man, who must bear the responsibility for the Fall. The same concept is represented in Italian art in the paintings of Paolo Ucello in Santa Maria Novella in Florence and Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel; it also existed earlier in England in the late Middle Ages.¹ This interpretation of the Biblical story of the temptation in the Garden of Eden is an example of misogynistic representation of women in a patriarchal church structure that feared women's sexuality, which was associated with the devil, and insisted on their inferiority. In chapter three I discussed a number of early feminist writers who challenged the assumption of female inferiority: de Pizan, Cereta, de Gournay, Tarbotti, de Loynes, Fonte, Franco and Lanyer. Isotta Nogarola, the first major woman humanist in Italy, went further in her rejection of patriarchal misogyny by specifically mounting a defence of Eve. She makes use of dominant ideas about women to argue against patriarchal concepts by asserting that Eve was weaker than, and intellectually inferior to, Adam. Thus, she was less guilty, and her sin only had consequences because Adam also ate the fruit.² Writing later in Protestant England, Lanyer

¹ Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe Volume One 1500-1800* (London: Harper Collins, 1996).

² Nogarola sees Eve's ignorance as implanted by nature, of which God is the author and founder, so that Eve cannot be blamed for behaving in accordance with the way in which she was created, and she claims that Eve was redeemed with Adam. Her argument controversially questions patriarchal stereotypes about the nature of gender, and asks searching philosophical questions about free will and whether behaviour is shaped by context or is innately determined. She refutes Aristotle's theory that "whatever is the cause of the cause is the cause of the thing caused" by arguing logically that if Adam did not have free will then he cannot be held accountable for his actions and if he did have free will then Eve could not have forced him to sin. Once again, she uses quotations from male authority to support her point and undermine conventional male views. "Eve lacked sense and constancy and therefore sinned less", "the Lord commanded Adam, not Eve", Eve ate the fruit "because she was weak and inclined to pleasure", if Adam had not eaten, her sin would have had no consequences, "Eve's ignorance was implanted by nature, of which nature God himself is the author and

also portrays Eve as innocent, ignorant of the harm she would cause, and deceived by the cunning of the serpent. She criticises the way in which women have been blamed and demands that they should be given liberty and equality, since men only come into the world through women.³ Janel Mueller acknowledges that little is known about Lanyer's education and contacts. Nevertheless, she raises the tantalising possibility that she might have been aware of an epistolary disputation (1451 to 1453), conducted between Ludovico Foscarini, a Venetian doctor of medicine and of canon and civil law, and Nogarola over the issue *Of the Equal or Unequal Sin of Adam and Eve*.⁴ Despite being separated by over one hundred and fifty years and differing religious beliefs as a result of the Reformation, both writers assert that Adam should receive blame for the Fall. In this way they present a spirited defence against patriarchal and theological assumptions about the nature of women.

In his romantic comedies *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare also takes issue with the religious representation of women. His women are not temptresses and their sexuality and intelligence are not something to be feared. The feminists cited above tend to represent women's relationships with men as problematic, characterised by attempts to establish their inferiority and demeaning to their intelligence. Since their desire to speak in public and to write was suspect, and in many cases condemned, attempts to gain recognition were often dependent on the patronage and protection of influential men. Alternatively, for some women a solution could be a retreat to a sheltered female space that excluded men, but they also recognised that this solution might be elusive. Although Shakespeare does not overtly attack Biblical ideologies as they are expressed in both Augustinian and Thomistic theology, he actually goes further than these feminists in his dramatization of women. His heroines resist the dominant early modern ideology of female

founder". Isotta Nogarola, *Complete writings; letterbook, dialogue on Adam and Eve, orations* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), 146, 151.

³ Lanyer, *The Collected Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*.

⁴ Janel Mueller, "The feminist Poetics of 'Salve deus Rex Judaeorum,'" in *Aemelia Lanyer: Gender, Genre and the Canon*, ed. Marshall Grossman (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 120.

inferiority. Viola is financially dependent on Orsino for employment, but Portia and Rosalind are able to exercise a degree of personal autonomy – Portia does this through the possession of wealth, and Rosalind in her ownership (with Celia) of the shepherd's cottage, flock and pasture. Shakespeare celebrates the wit and intelligence of these women, especially the verbal dexterity of Rosalind in her encounters with Orlando. Happiness is not achieved by retreating from engagement with men, but by entering into a meaningful relationship and believing in the possibility of making a companionate marriage. Drawing on the terminology of positive psychology I show how they face the impediments to their personal desires and are not crushed by adversity. Shakespeare demonstrates their capacity for post-traumatic growth and their superior ability to deal with grief and disaster. They refuse the temptations, indulged in by male characters, to luxuriate in melancholy. Portia, Rosalind and Viola respond with optimism and resilience to the problems they encounter. They reveal emotional intelligence as they articulate their concerns and interact with others, attempting to teach the men of their choice how to change so that they may enter into a companionate marriage. Shakespeare is less overtly radical than the early feminists discussed, but he actually takes the defence of women further in asserting their superiority to men, in emotional and even intellectual strengths. They are the agents of enlightenment. He recognises in the end that they may effect limited, or no, significant change at the community level, but he offers the hope of improved inter-personal relationships that will be conducive to moral development and happiness.

Reason and Emotion

In his late romantic comedies Shakespeare takes issue with the gendered distinction that women are associated with emotion and men with reason. He challenges the disparaging assumption that women's propensity to uncontrolled emotion makes them inferior to men. In referring to the gendered dichotomy between reason and the passions, Susan James suggests,

“In certain ways oppositions between reason and passion, mind and body, carry connotations of male and female and mirror the power relations of a patriarchal society in which women are dominated by men.”⁵ The period inherited from classical writing a belief in the importance of reason and the assumption that this was the property of men. In *The Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle only makes passing reference to relationships between men and women, although he does acknowledge the possibility that friendship can exist between spouses. His philosophy is male-oriented; he speaks of the just man, the continent man, the good and wise man. As he does so he teaches that reason is what separates man from beasts and that moral virtue can be achieved when the appetites are made responsive to reason.⁶ Many early modern thinkers and writers had less faith in the power of reason to restrain the baser appetites and control emotion. Some explained this pessimism primarily in religious terms, attributing inability to govern emotions to the Fall, since God punished Adam by removing his capacity to moderate, control, and direct his passions.⁷ Thomas Wright connected philosophy to religion as he warned that the passions “blind reason, they seduce the wil”, pointing out that both the moral philosopher and the Christian recognise that the appetites must be “bridled”.⁸ Others connected the passions to the humours, believing they had so much power that calm rationality could not be a part of cognition.⁹ These explanations were likely to include reference to the inferior nature of women. Beliefs about women’s emotional irrationality and the influence of the humours that validated misogyny have been

⁵ Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 18.

⁶ In *De Anima* Aristotle proposes the concept of the tripartite soul creating a hierarchy of plants, animals and humans. The human soul has both cognition and understanding. In *The Nicomachean Ethics* he makes a clear distinction between animals and men. After discussing the life of nutrition he continues: “Next there would be a life of perception, but it also seems to be shared by the horse, the ox, and every animal. There remains, then, an active life of the element that has reason”. I.7.1098a. 1-3.

⁷ James, *Passion and Action*, 13.

⁸ “The morall philosopher … sheweth how our inordinate appetites must be bridled with fortitude and temperance” and “the mortified Christian” knows his passions “because by brideling them, he wins a great quietnesse of minde”. Thomas Wright, *The passions of the minde in generall* (London: Printed by A. M. for Anne Helme, 1620), 2, 3, 8. EEBO.

⁹ Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*.

foregrounded in studies of the body. Paster, Rowe and Floyd-Wilson refer to “early modern anxieties about the overwhelming power of emotions in general”, and they explain how these anxieties were experienced particularly in attitudes to women.¹⁰ Writing about the influence of the humours, Paster draws attention to the ways in which Galenism read women’s bodies as leaky vessels, over-productive and incontinent, requiring patriarchal discipline.¹¹ Schoenfeldt has pointed out, since women were also seen as inverted men, they were “frequently assumed to be physiologically less capable of the regimens of self-discipline than were men”. In this way, “Galenic medicine was frequently in collusion with patriarchal ideology to give a physiological ‘explanation’ for the asserted inferiority of women.”¹² Medical explanations of women’s emotion and their innate inability to exercise reason reinforced religious doctrine that criticised women. Levinus Lemnius warned that a woman’s mind is not as strong as that of a man, since she is subject to uncontrolled passions and lacks male understanding, reason and judgement to bridle her disturbed affections.¹³ However, Vaught challenges the belief that representations were uniform, referring to the “misleading association of men with the mind and women with the body”.¹⁴ She suggests that there are ways in which early modern literary works “unsettle the conventional associations of

¹⁰ Paster, Rowe and Floyd-Wilson, Introduction to *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, 1.

¹¹ Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*.

¹² Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves*, 35-6.

¹³ “But daily examples testify that women are subject to all passions and perturbations, and that they will be cruelly angry and mad, when there is little cause for it”. “Whence it happens that a woman enraged, is besides her selfe, and hath not power over her selfe, so that she cannot rule her passions, or bridle her disturbed affections, or stand against them with force of reason and judgement”. “For a woman’s mind is not as strong as a mans, nor is she so full of understanding and reason and judgement, and upon every small occasion she casts off the bridle of reason, and like a mad dogg, forgetting all decency, and her selfe, without choice, she sets upon all, be they known or unknown. If any man desires a natural reason for it, I answer him thus, that a womans flesh is loose, soft and tender, so that the choler being kindled, presently spreads all the body over, and causeth a sudden boyling of the blood about the heart.” Levinus Lemnius, *The Secret Miracles of Nature* (London: Printed by Jo Streater, 1658), 273-4. EEBO.

¹⁴ Jennifer Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2008), 6.

masculinity with reason and femininity with emotion”, asking how selected texts from this period might challenge customary assumptions.¹⁵

Shakespeare challenges these assumptions as he dramatizes, but also questions, the early modern polarisation of reason and emotion. He presents individual characters who appear to endorse the importance of either reason or emotion, but the plays as a whole represent the limitations of both reason and passion when one is employed exclusively as a means of responding to human interaction. In *Twelfth Night* the failure of reason as a corrective to emotion is demonstrated in Feste’s attempts to draw Olivia’s attention to the folly of her grief. Simply telling her that it is not rational to mourn if she believes her brother is in heaven does not address the emotional impact of loss. It is not reasoned argument, but the arousal of the alternative positive emotion of love for Cesario, that persuades Olivia to remove her veil, emerge from her self-imposed seclusion, and re-engage with life. More perceptively, Portia recognises that the application of reason to her predicament will not provide a solution. Nerissa counsels her that reason will guide her to an acceptance of her father’s control over her future, since the lottery of the caskets will identify the man she can rightly love. This is an argument that fails to convince Portia, who is motivated by emotion in her recollections of meeting Bassanio. In *As You Like It* Shakespeare creates a polarisation between reason and passion in his contrast between Touchstone and the lovers, Orlando, Oliver and Silvius. The application of reason is parodied in the dialogue between Touchstone and Corin, where Touchstone applies the logical pattern of a syllogism to reach the false conclusion that Corin is damned because he was never at court. As they discuss the difference between pleasure and content it is apparent that Corin’s practical wisdom, as he explains why shepherds do not kiss hands, is much more in touch with the realities of country life than Touchstone’s appropriation of the language of logic. At the other end of the spectrum,

¹⁵ Ibid., 6.

uncontrolled passion is also subjected to interrogation. The suddenly aroused passion of Celia and Oliver, is so intense that “Clubs cannot part them”, but this “very wrath of love” (5.2.39-40) must be channelled into the socially acceptable institution of marriage to prevent incontinence. Shakespeare works within the genre of romantic comedy in which marriage provides the happy resolution of the plot, and the audience is presumably meant to sympathise with, rather than condemn, the impetuosity of Celia and Oliver. In contrast, the relationship of Touchstone and Audrey warns about the uncertainties of a marriage based solely on sexual desire. Shakespeare unsettles the gendered distinctions between reason and passion, since the passion of Orlando and Silvius is not presented as making them effeminate. Instead, he establishes an alternative gender distinction in suggesting that it is women who can show a truer understanding of their emotions and the feelings of others. As his women express emotion differently from men, Shakespeare represents his heroines navigating between the extremes of reason and passion in ways that do not necessarily reflect the Aristotelian concept of the mean proposed by Marciano and Tilley. Instead he offers a different kind of gendered distinction between men and women as he demonstrates the superiority of women’s capacity for empathy, and for insight into their own feelings and those of other characters. It is through their enlightened understanding of the emotions that they can discover the path to happiness.

Emotional intelligence

Shakespeare’s challenge to gendered distinctions between reason and passion suggests a radical departure from dominant beliefs. It was more common to express ambivalence about the emotions, as they were considered to have both their negative and positive effects on human experience. Writing about the passions in a modern context, James reflects a similar ambivalence as she tells us that the passions can be “painful and destructive impulses which

drive us to pursue the very ends liable to do us harm”, but they are also “functional characteristics essential to our survival and flourishing.”¹⁶ In contrast to the imaginative richness of literary representation of the passions, analytical philosophy has been shaped by theories of knowledge that accord only a marginal role to the emotions in contributing to cognition. James points out that it is only recently that the “complexity and diversity of the emotions” has been acknowledged, allowing us to “reconsider their part in our mental life and behaviour.”¹⁷ The writing of James in the field of contemporary philosophy links with recent work by positive psychologists in the area of emotional intelligence, drawing attention to the connections between cognition and the emotions. The early modern distinction between passion and reason has been reflected in a long tradition in American psychology of considering passion and reason as polar opposites. Studies of the emotions emphasised their dysfunctional qualities, they have been seen as irrational forces that destabilise competent functioning.¹⁸ Cognitive psychology in the 1960s focused on how the mind can register and store information, and emotions were not considered to play a part in intelligence.¹⁹

More recently, theories about intelligence derived from cognitive psychology have been challenged by proponents of multiple and affective intelligence on the grounds that they provide “only a partial or distorted picture of human reflection and deliberation.”²⁰ In *Frames of Mind* Howard Gardner proposes the concept of multiple intelligences that extend beyond the merely cognitive to include the social and affective.²¹ The concept of emotional

¹⁶ James, *Passion and Action*, 14.

¹⁷ Ibid., 21.

¹⁸ Peter Salovey, Brian T. Bedell, Jerusha B. Detweiler and John D. Mayer, “Coping Intelligently,” in *Coping*, ed. C. R. Snyder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). More recently, the belief that IQ tests provide a reliable measure of intellect has been challenged by proponents of multiple and affective intelligence on the grounds that they provide “only a partial or distorted picture of human reflection and deliberation.” David Carr, “Feelings in Moral Conflict and the Hazards of Emotional Intelligence,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 5 no. 1 (2002):8. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27504219>.

¹⁹ Annette L. Stanton and Robert Franz, “Focusing on Emotion: An Adaptive Coping Strategy”, in *Coping*, ed. C. R. Snyder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 90.

²⁰ Carr, “Feelings in Moral Conflict,” 8.

²¹ Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). Gardner’s work has been a significant influence on Peter Salovey and John Mayer, who have pioneered

intelligence marks a significant stage in the evolution of the way we think about the relationship between reason and passion. Whilst traditionally in psychology cognition and emotion represented different functions of the mind, they are now seen to interact and can be expressed in an integrated form.²² Daniel Goleman believes that this new paradigm “turns the old understanding of the tension between reason and feeling on its head” and “urges us to harmonise head and heart.”²³ According to Peter Salovey and Daisy Grewal, emotional intelligence “brings together the fields of emotions and intelligence by viewing emotions as useful sources of information that help one to make sense of and navigate the social environment.”²⁴ In this approach, emotions are seen to be adaptive and functional, they organise cognitive activities and behaviour so that the passions are able to serve reason.²⁵ Although Peterson and Seligman found that gender does not correlate with the majority of their character strengths and virtues, they assert that in the case of emotional intelligence there is “a well-documented performance advantage of women over men on scales of emotional intelligence.”²⁶ Discussing the importance of emotional intelligence involves bridging the gap between philosophy and psychology in the manner recommended by Laam. It connects affect to right action as Shakespeare challenges the gendered stereotypes of the early modern period by presenting emotion as a legitimate motivation for behaviour. In doing so, he depicts his heroines as more emotionally intelligent and empathetic than the men. It is their superior emotional intelligence that is needed to guide the men they love to a deeper

theories of emotional intelligence, and on Daniel Goleman who has very successfully popularised the notion. Goleman writes, “The lopsided scientific vision of an emotionally flat mental life - which has guided the last eighty years of research on intelligence - is gradually changing as psychology has begun to recognise the essential role of feeling in thinking.” Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam, 1995), 41.

²² John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey and David R. Caruso, “A Further Consideration of the Issues of Emotional Intelligence,” *Psychological Inquiry* 15, no. 3 (2004). <http://www.jstor.org/stable.20447235>.

²³ Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* 28-9.

²⁴ Peter Salovey and Daisy Grewal, “The Science of Emotional Intelligence,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 14, no. 6 (2005): 281. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20183048>.

²⁵ Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler and Mayer, “Coping Intelligently.”

²⁶ Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues*, 350.

understanding of the intricacies in interpersonal relationships. It is the women who show the men the path to personal happiness.

To define the characteristics of emotional intelligence John Mayer, Peter Salovey and David Caruso have proposed a hierarchical four-branch ability model. Among the lower level skills is perceptive emotion, which is the ability to “recognise emotion in others’ facial and postural expressions”.²⁷ Portia demonstrates her sensitivity to Bassanio’s sudden change of mood when he receives the news of Antonio’s plight, commenting, “There are some shrewd contents in yond same paper / That steals the colour from Bassanio’s cheek” (3.2.242-3). Her ability metaphorically to read his face and respond to the emotional cue provided by his loss of colour is an expression of her emotional intelligence. Similarly, Celia observes Rosalind’s change of colour, in this case presumably involuntary blushing, when she discovers that Orlando is in the forest. Rosalind and Viola are immediately aware that their disguise has aroused the misplaced affection of another woman; Rosalind comments about Phoebe, “Od’s my little life / I think she means to tangle my eyes too!” (3.5.44-5), and Viola reflects about Olivia, “Fortune forbid my outside have not charmed her” (2.2.16). The ability to recognise feelings in others allows emotionally intelligent people to show empathy, a characteristic particularly evident in Viola. Whereas Rosalind scorns Phoebe’s mistaken passion, attempting to shame her into more rational behaviour, Viola pities Olivia. Having suffered the loss of a brother herself, she demonstrates empathy for Olivia’s mourning, but she also understands the importance of resilience and re-engaging with the outside world. Her life-changing speech, “Good madam, let me see your face” (1.5.202), framed as a request rather than a command, encourages the countess to abandon artifice, signified by the symbolic action of removing her veil. Revealing her face, Olivia asks the personable Cesario for compliments, the beginning of her journey away from grief and towards love.

²⁷ John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey and David R. Caruso, “Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Findings and Implications,” *Psychological Inquiry* 15, no.3 (2004): 199. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20447229>.

People exhibiting emotional intelligence can use their emotions to facilitate thought and direct their planning.²⁸ At the beginning of the plays all three heroines are disempowered by circumstances. Portia and Rosalind are deprived of autonomy by patriarchal authority and Viola is cast up on a strange shore without familial or financial support. Initially it seems that Portia and Rosalind must show emotional intelligence by accepting what they cannot change, but all three employ practical wisdom in seizing opportunities to increase their autonomy. Aristotle observes that “we deliberate about things that are in our power and can be done” and *phronesis* involves making sure that a hopeful response is tempered by a realistic approach to problems.²⁹ It underpins modern conceptions of emotional intelligence, since the ability to control emotions is part of a broader capacity for self-regulation.³⁰ For Rosalind and Viola the opportunities to demonstrate practical wisdom arise early in their decision to adopt male disguise, a choice that gives them the independence to relate to the men they love in ways that would not have been otherwise possible. Although Rosalind says, “What shall I do with my doublet and hose?” (3.2.200), her practical wisdom enables her to recognise that her disguise is not an impediment to her desires. It is, rather, a means by which she can achieve personal autonomy and establish a relationship with Orlando that would not have been possible in the ducal court. Similarly, Viola establishes an intimacy with Orsino in which he unclasps the book of his secret soul, but her autonomy is more limited and her interactions with the Duke are more restricted than those of Rosalind with Orlando. Orsino offers a greater challenge to the heroine’s ability to effect positive change. At the beginning of *As You Like It* Orlando is a callow youth, but he always has the potential to develop into an attractive man and he demonstrates unwavering loyalty to his Rosalind. Orsino, on the other hand, is apparently older and more sophisticated; he is simultaneously presented as changeable and as limited by

²⁸ Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, “Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Findings and Implications”: 199.

²⁹ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1112a.31-2.

³⁰ Paulo N. Lopes, Marc A. Brackett, John B. Nezlek, Astrid Schultz, Ina Selin and Peter Salovey, “Emotional Intelligence and Social Interaction,” *Pers Soc Psychol Bull* (2004): 1018. DOI: 10.1177/0146167204264762.

a world-view structured by the generic limitations of Petrarchanism. He asserts the undying nature of his passion for Olivia, but Feste says perceptively that he is made of “changeable taffeta” and his mind is “a very opal” (2.4.73-4). Whereas Orlando engages responsively with Ganymede’s gender games, revealing a desire to know more about what his Rosalind might be thinking and feeling, Orsino is less receptive to Cesario’s opinions. Shakespeare only allocates two scenes between Viola and her master before he emerges from his self-imposed seclusion and comes to a realisation of the true nature of love. For Portia, control is deferred until the middle of the play. In the scenes where Morocco and Aragon make their choices of the caskets she is a helpless bystander, unable to influence the result, a situation Shakespeare emphasises by the dramatic structure of the scenes in which most of the dialogue is given to the men. It is not until she has the possibility of influencing the outcome of the casket lottery by guiding Bassanio to the right choice that she can exercise autonomy, and it is only in Act 4 that she also has the opportunity to achieve environmental mastery in the wider social context of Venice.

At the higher levels of emotional intelligence people can understand their emotions.³¹ They are able to use them in the context of their individual goals and develop self-knowledge and social awareness.³² Barbara Fredrickson has found that positive emotions can temporarily broaden the individual’s repertoire of thoughts, enabling creative problem solving.³³ She provides a recontextualisation of Aristotle’s belief that the prudent man can deliberate about what is good and advantageous to himself and what this means to the good life in general. Portia demonstrates emotional intelligence in her understanding of her own emotions and in her ability to navigate her relationship with Bassanio. The passivity she demonstrated in the scenes with Morocco and Aragon disappears when Bassanio arrives and she has the

³¹ Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, “Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Findings and Implications,” 199.

³² Ibid.

³³ Barbara L. Fredrickson, “The Role of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology,” *American Psychologist* 56, no. 3 (2001). DOI: 10.1037//0003-066X.56.3.218.

opportunity to influence the outcome of events. It is her dialogue that dominates in the beginning of the third casket scene. Despite her avowed intention to abide by the terms of her father's will, Portia demonstrates practical intelligence, the ability to twist a literal adherence to the words of the law (in this case not to help Bassanio) to her own purposes. She quite openly tells Bassanio that she is able to teach him "how to choose right" and, although she immediately retracts the possibility, she returns emotionally to the idea, "you'll make me wish a sin, / That I had been forsworn" (3.2.10-11). As he is about to make his choice she calls for music, which she compares to "those dulcet sounds in break of day / That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear / And summon him to marriage."(3.2.51-53) The music is thus quite explicitly linked to making a successful choice, and in the words of the song "bred", "head", "nourished" and "engend'red" all rhyme with "lead" (3.2.63-71). The song's warning that fancy is "engend'red in the eye" prompts Bassanio to reflect on the reliability of outward appearances and visual perception and helps him to choose the winning lead casket. Thus, Portia combines emotional and practical intelligence to achieve her desired outcome, which she believes will facilitate her marriage to Bassanio.

Discussion of the problems of living in a fallen world in chapter five raised the question of whether it is possible to be happy in circumstances when the individual's desires do not correspond to dominant cultural ideologies. This is a crucial issue for Portia, who seeks to retain autonomy in a marriage when society expects female subservience. Emboldened by the success of the casket strategy, she demonstrates a characteristic of emotional intelligence in negotiating a different type of relationship with Bassanio, challenging dominant ideologies, but avoiding a confrontational approach. She represents herself as "an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised" with a gentle spirit that will be directed by Bassanio as "her lord, her governor, her king" (3.2.159, 165). In saying this, she acknowledges contemporary beliefs that saw the power structures of marriage as a microcosm of the power structures of the state.

When she hears about Antonio's predicament and makes the unwelcome discovery that Bassanio has deceived her about his true financial state, she shows her emotional intelligence. She ensures his gratitude and regains the ascendancy by telling him that he "shall have gold / To pay the petty debt twenty times over" (3.2.305-6). The reference to Antonio's loan as "petty" emphasises the disparity between her fortunes and those of Bassanio, but she is actually appropriating to herself a decision that is no longer hers to make. Marriage will give Bassanio the legal right to dispose of her money as he chooses. However, in taking control of arrangements for the wedding, Portia regains the decision-making initiative that Bassanio appeared, temporarily, to have won from her.

In the highest level of the four-branch ability model of emotional intelligence proposed by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso people who understand their emotions can manage them in the context of self-awareness, social awareness and goals.³⁴ They are better able to navigate their relationships with romantic partners and, in a wider context, better able to relate to their peers and create and sustain good relationships.³⁵ To achieve her personal desires Portia must find a way to deal with the unpromising characteristics revealed in Bassanio, both in his allegiance to Antonio and his mercantile priorities. Reflecting on the issue of mercantile attitudes to women, Newman discusses Levi-Strauss's anthropology in which women are seen as capital, as objects that can be exchanged among men. In Newman's reading, the friendship between Antonio and Bassanio is a homosocial bond that is enabled by the exchange of women.³⁶ The trial confronts Portia with an unpleasant reality; in asserting that he would sacrifice Portia to save Antonio, Bassanio prioritises his homosocial

³⁴ Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, "Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Findings and Implications", 199. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso , "A Further Consideration of the Issues of Emotional Intelligence."

³⁵ Daisy Grewal and Peter Salovey, "Feeling Smart: The Science of Emotional Intelligence: A new idea in psychology has matured and shows promise of explaining how attending to emotions can help us in everyday life," *American Scientist* 93, no. 4 (2005). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27858608>. Peter Salovey and Daisy Grewel, "The Science of Emotional Intelligence," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 14, no. 6 (2005): 281. <http://www.jstor.org/stab;e.20183048>.

³⁶ Newman, "Portia's ring: Unruly women and structures of exchange," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1987): 22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870399>.

relationship with Antonio above his commitment to Portia, and Portia must reconfigure his loyalties if she is to achieve the happiness in marriage that she desires. The challenge for Portia is to negotiate a companionate marriage, thus allying herself with social change. If they are to achieve the happiness of a companionate marriage, Bassanio must abandon his belief in male entitlement and build a relationship based on mutual trust and cooperation. In initiating the ring trick and claiming to be the sole possessor of her body, able to dispose of it as she wishes, Portia uses her emotional intelligence to navigate her new relationship and reshape it. She leads Bassanio to believe that he is already cuckolded even before the marriage is consummated, and will be denied his marital rights. As a result the return of the ring, with the implied promise to consummate the marriage, comes as a welcome relief. In these circumstances she is able to require a new commitment from Bassanio; he must swear to keep the ring better than the last and reassess his emotional priorities. By setting up the bawdy argument about the rings Portia highlights the issue of control over women's bodies and the importance of renegotiating their marriage. She realigns loyalties and obligations in ways that resist Antonio's attempts to reassert his homosocial relationship with Bassanio. The romantic plot subverts traditional notions of gender and power and makes a social commentary on early modern attitudes to women and marriage.

In *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*, Shakespeare creates pairs of women who offer each other practical and emotional support in challenging the gendered expectations of their society. They reflect the importance that early feminists placed on female solidarity. Nerissa demonstrates one of the key characteristics of emotional intelligence in encouraging Portia to accept circumstances that are beyond her power to control or change, offering a hope for the future in reminding her of an earlier meeting with Bassanio in her father's lifetime. Rosalind and Celia demonstrate practical wisdom as they organise their escape to the forest and provide themselves with independence by buying up

the sheepcote. The emotionally intelligent way in which they interact is more significant for Shakespeare's characterisation, as they recognise each other's emotional needs and provide sympathetic support. The relationship of the cousins is an important dramatic device used by Shakespeare to represent Rosalind; in contrast to Orlando who inscribes his poems on trees, Rosalind can only share her love with Celia. In a play where the one (brief) soliloquy is given to Orlando, Shakespeare relies on dialogue, supplemented by the occasional aside, to dramatize Rosalind's character. A surprising amount of her speech is in patterned prose. As she promises to cure Orlando of his love sickness she draws a mocking picture of the "true lover" (3.2.276), "Then your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied, and everything about you demonstrating a careless desolation" (3.2.340-345). Here the speech patterns employ balanced serial clauses, linked by alliteration.³⁷ This reflects her self-control, since she must disguise her true emotions. At the same time she mocks the self-imprisonment of the lover in a "cage of rushes" (3.2.356-335), suggesting the ephemeral nature of his condition and challenging Orlando to make a more meaningful declaration of his feelings. Rosalind's emotional intelligence is revealed through insight into her own feelings and those of others. She recognises that her powers of reason have been overthrown by the sudden onset of love (1.3.7), but in the forest she demonstrates practical wisdom that is a kind of mean between passion and reason. Although she laments the constraints imposed on her by her disguise, "Alas the day, what shall I do with my doublet and hose?" (3.2.200), she has the insight to realise that, by exercising self-restraint, she can turn the situation to her advantage. She is able to develop a relationship with Orlando that would not have been possible if he knew she were a woman. In the process of speaking "like a saucy lackey" (3.2.270), she makes him recognise the wit and intelligence she will bring to their marriage. When she encourages him to woo her, asking him to come every day to her

³⁷ Barber makes this general point about Rosalind's prose without specific analysis. C. L. Barber, "The Alliance of Seriousness and Levity in *As You Like It*," in *William Shakespeare's As You Like It*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004).

cote, she establishes the foundations of a companionate marriage, one based on previous knowledge of each other's character. She is also able to recognise and satisfy her own emotional needs, telling him he must call her Rosalind. He obeys, greeting her with the salutation, "Good day and happiness, dear Rosalind" (4.1 27) and allays her fears about his constancy, caused by his late arrival. In initiating the informal method of marriage contract through a witnessed exchange of vows she binds Orlando more closely to her, and in professing a male cynicism about the fidelity of women in marriage she provides the opportunity for him to assert the virtues of his Rosalind.³⁸ Through their interaction she is able to satisfy her emotional needs and simultaneously educate the man of her choice about the true nature of love.

The gendering of melancholy

The superior emotional intelligence of Shakespeare's heroines is demonstrated in the ways in which they deal with their initial sadness. *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night* open with both male and female characters who express feelings of melancholy as Shakespeare establishes contrasts between men and women to challenge early modern stereotypes of gendered emotion. The early modern preoccupation with melancholy has been extensively explored in recent studies of the period.³⁹ Enterline takes a Freudian approach in linking melancholy to narcissism, Trevor and Schliener focus on the Aristotelian and Ficinian traditions in which scholarly melancholy was both esteemed and lamented, and Schiesari foregrounds the influence of Ficino in proposing that responses were gendered. Predictably, the studies focusing on Aristotle and Ficino prioritise analysis of *Hamlet*, the melancholy male scholar. Alternatively Vaught challenges these gender distinctions, claiming that genre

³⁸ Rosalind would be aware that her disguise nullifies any legality in the ceremony.

³⁹ Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus*; Neely, *Distracted Subjects*; Radden, *The Nature of Melancholia*; Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholy*; Schleiner, *Melancholy, Genius and Utopia in the Renaissance*, Trevor, *The Poetics of Melancholy* and Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature*.

influences the image of gender and that the texts pertinent to her study represent emotions “with great subtlety”, but there has, to date, been no study of the ways in which emotional intelligence enables people to overcome the effects of melancholy.⁴⁰ In *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* the genre of romantic comedy concludes with the happy resolution of marriage from which characters who persist in maintaining their melancholy are excluded. Applying psychological research to the plays emphasises the strengths that enable some characters to overcome the effects of melancholy when cognition and emotion are integrated. In these plays Shakespeare challenges assumptions about gendered melancholy and champions emotionally intelligent women who are able to transcend their initial negative emotions.

Representations of melancholy were far from uniform in the early modern period. In one of the most influential early modern studies, Bright referred to the “griefe and heauiness” caused by this condition.⁴¹ Aristotle had believed that it could be an attribute of “those men who have become extraordinary in philosophy, politics, poetry, or the arts.”⁴² The concept of the glamorous melancholic was adopted and popularised in the Renaissance by Ficino, for whom melancholy was primarily associated with literate men from the upper class.⁴³ In this elitist interpretation, male melancholy was a mark of exceptionality and a condition that implicitly or explicitly excluded women.⁴⁴ Schiesari has focused particularly on the ways in which attitudes to melancholy were gendered; Ficino “turned melancholia into a positive

⁴⁰ Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion*, 12.

⁴¹ Timothy Bright, *A Treatise on Melancholie* Imprinted at London by Thomas Vautrollier, dwelling in the Black Friars, 1586 (Amsterdam: De Capo Press, 1969), 125.

⁴² Aristotle, *Problems Books 20-38*, ed. and trans. Robert Mayhew (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), 277. “But those in whom the excessive heat is relaxed towards a mean, those people are melancholic, but they are more intelligent, and they are less eccentric, but they are superior to the others in many respects, some in education, others in arts, and others in politics.” Book XXX, 287.

⁴³ The attribution of *Problems* to Aristotle has been questioned. “It is possible that this chapter was written by Aristotle or largely based on something he wrote; but given the available evidence, there is no way to establish that with certainty. In any case, the author was clearly familiar with Aristotle’s scattered remarks on melancholy.” Mayhew in Aristotle, *Problems Books 20-38*, 274-5.

⁴⁴ Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia*, 115.

virtue for men of letters”, whereas in women it was seen as a “debilitating disease and certainly not as an enabling ethos.”⁴⁵ In this way early modern culture traditionally denied the importance of emotional loss for women. Shakespeare reflects the influence of Galenism in presenting emotional states in terms of bodily influences when Portia says, “my little body is aweary of this great world” (1.2.1-2). Although in this case he employs reference to the humours as part of his characterisation, he challenges the preconceptions of his society by contrasting her ability to rise above her initial melancholy with Antonio’s inability to change. Similarly, in *As You Like It*, Rosalind’s resilience is contrasted with the self-indulgence of Jaques, who sees himself as a representative of the glamorous, intellectual, Aristotelian melancholic.

Jaques revels in his role. He differentiates the melancholy of the scholar, the musician, the courtier, the soldier, the lady and the lover from his own, which is more complex since it is “compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects” (4.1.15-16), and is the result of his experiences as a traveller. Robert Burton later reflected traditional beliefs when he recommended that travel could be a cure for melancholy since it offered changes of air and scenery.⁴⁶ Jaques, however, is claiming to have a specifically individual melancholy that results from his observation of the wider world. The description of the way his rumination “wraps” him in a “most humorous sadness” (4.1.18) suggests that it is a pose that he deliberately adopts, one which provides a form of protection from affective engagement with humans, although not with animals. In response to Amiens’ statement that singing would make him melancholy, Jaques expresses a belief that he is actually nourished by his active pursuit of sadness claiming, “I can suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs” (2.5.10-11). He is both accepted and mocked by other characters. The Duke and his followers

⁴⁵ Ibid., 7, 12, 13.

⁴⁶ Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicholas K. Kiessling and Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). Through Rosalind, Shakespeare also makes a topical allusion to Raleigh who sold his lands to fund his expedition to the New World. Footnote to the Arden edition 4.1.20.

encourage him in his melancholy musings as the Duke says, “I love to cope him in these sullen fits” (2.1.67), but the Duke also reminds him more seriously that he has been a libertine, “as sensual as the brutish sting itself” (2.7.65-6). Whilst Shakespeare uses the melancholy of Jaques to comment on the fallen nature of the world of the play (as discussed in chapter five), he also uses his speeches and his interaction with other characters to challenge cultural acceptance of intellectual melancholia. Jaques regards himself as superior to Touchstone, whose observations cause him to laugh for an hour. Schleiner, however, suggests how their meeting is used to challenge his understanding of his wisdom by associating him with the madness of melancholia as he “crows like chanticleer” (2.7.30). She states that “spreading one’s arms like wings and crowing like a cock was from the time of Galen to the seventeenth century one of the physicians’ standard examples of the irresponsible antics of the melancholic.”⁴⁷ There is, thus, a disjunction between the way Jaques sees himself as intellectually superior and the Galenic interpretation that places him as emotionally uncontrolled. More explicitly, Orlando points out the self-love that motivates him as he invokes the myth of Narcissus, telling him he will find a fool in the brook when he looks in. Jaques believes that his satire has the ability to “cleanse the foul body of the infected world” (2.7.60), but his speech on the seven ages of man reveals his intellectual limitations (2.7.138-165). Mera Flaumenhaft points out that each age is “isolated vertically in time, every part temporary and discrete”, there is no awareness of the discovery Rosalind makes – that time brings maturity and ripeness.⁴⁸ Jaques deliberately excludes himself from the festivities at the end as he retreats from, instead of engaging in, the delights of human interaction.

In contrast to Jaques, Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* does not exhibit the glamorous melancholy of the scholar. The opening speech of the play puts emphasis on his

⁴⁷ Schleiner, *Melancholy, Genius and Utopia in the Renaissance*, 231.

⁴⁸ Mera J. Flaumenhaft, “Is All the World a Stage? Marriage and a Metaphor in *As You Like It*,” in *Perspectives on Politics in Shakespeare* 2006, ed. John A. Murley and Sean D. Sutton (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2006), 73.

condition, which both he and his friends, Salerio and Salanio, feel the need to diagnose. When he emphasises “I know not”, and repeats the idea of being wearied, he represents the melancholy discussed by Bright, which is characterised by grief and heaviness, rather than that of Aristotle. His companions take his condition seriously, suggesting first that it might be caused by his fears of maritime disaster, and then that he is in love. In Shakespeare’s source, *Il Pecorone*, Ansaldo is grieving for the death of Gianetto’s father, but Antonio seems unable to understand the causes of his sadness.⁴⁹ The Greeks stressed the importance of self-knowledge, but Antonio confesses that he has “much ado to know myself” (1.1.7). His melancholy is not a role deliberately adopted, but something he has caught, found or come by. The audience is encouraged to search for a motive for his sadness; it eludes us as it eludes him, and his introspection creates the dramatic impression of an inner life. In *A Treatise on Melancholie*, Bright recommends the company of friends as a cure. Antonio’s companions attempt to alleviate his condition with laughter, but Salerio acknowledges defeat as he departs with the statement, “I would have stayed till I had made you merry” (1.1.60).⁵⁰ Salanio sets up a contrast between being sad and merry, referring to the determined sourness of those of “vinegar aspect” who refuse to smile even at a good joke. Despite recognising that his condition wearies his friends, Antonio persists in his sadness, strenuously resisting their concern.⁵¹ In a different way from Jaques, he regards his melancholy as a condition that defines his life, even before he has good reason to be melancholic. If it is permissible to speculate about the lives of characters after the play ends, then it is probable that Antonio,

⁴⁹ Fiorentino Giovanni, *The Pecorone of Ser Giovanni*, trans. W.G. Waters (London: Lawrence and Bullen Ltd., 1897).

⁵⁰ “I refer the melancholic to the books of the Scriptures and moral precepts of Philosophers, to the godly instructions of the divines, and comfort of their friends.” Timothy Bright, *A Treatise on Melancholie* 125. Robert Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy* is the source more frequently cited in discussions of melancholy, but its date, 1621, makes it too late to be an influence on Shakespeare’s romantic comedies.

⁵¹ The fact that Shakespeare refuses to provide a clearly articulated explanation for Antonio’s sadness has challenged critics to supply their own interpretations. For Steve Patterson it is caused by his unequal relationship with Bassanio, whereas Drew Daniel locates it in a “structure of subjection and desire”, and Cynthia Marshall in Antonio’s masochism. Steve Patterson, “The Bankruptcy of Homoerotic Amity in Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice.” Drew Daniel, “Let me have judgment, and the Jew his will.” Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity and Early Modern Texts*.

miraculously restored to financial liquidity, will return to his business ventures in Venice. However, the last impression created is of a solitary figure, isolated from the married couples who are preparing for bed. As with Jaques, Shakespeare refuses to present Antonio's sadness as an emotion that is admirable and elevates him above the emotions of his female characters.

At the beginning of *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia's lament about her weariness echoes Antonio's reference to his sadness, as Shakespeare employs the technique of comparing scenes with contrasting characters to establish connections, but also differences. In contrast to Antonio, Portia has clearly articulated reasons for her melancholy. Schiersari claims that the "cultural expression of women's losses is not given the same representational values as those of men in the western canon of literature, philosophy and psychoanalysis", but Shakespeare takes Portia's condition seriously.⁵² There is a real impediment to happiness in the terms of her father's will, a form of patriarchal dominance designed to retain control even after his death, and deprive her of personal choice. It is the equivalent of an arranged marriage and Portia laments, "I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike, so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father" (1.2.22-3). Her portrait, locked in the winner's casket, is a metaphor for her imprisonment.

Unlike Antonio, Portia uses her friendship with Nerissa to create emotional intimacy. Their dialogue reveals her readiness for self-disclosure of her private thoughts and feelings and her confidence that Nerissa will respond warmly and supportively. She trusts her and Nerissa responds by attempting to alleviate Portia's melancholy by joking. Aristotle believed in the importance of trust, a warm and supportive response, but he identified it in relationships among men; Shakespeare shows its importance for women too. Belmont can be seen as a site of resistance where Portia, with the support of Nerissa, attempts to defy the patriarchal control of her father. She acknowledges the common gendered belief that women

⁵² Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia*, 13.

are less capable of exercising self-control than men, a belief that clearly motivated her father when he devised his will. She reflects on her predicament in dialogue with Nerissa, “I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree” (I.2.15-18). Here Shakespeare’s use of the active verb “leaps” highlights the conflict between the brain as the seat of reason and the overheated blood which was traditionally associated with anger and could lead to madness in women. Portia has internalised this culturally constructed doubt about women’s capacity to restrain their emotions. Nerissa advises her against indulging in excessive emotion, supporting her comments by referencing the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean, but lightening the seriousness of her counsel with a pun, “It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean” (1.2.6-7).⁵³ Portia attempts to follow Nerissa’s advice and apply reason as a method of restraint for her debilitating condition of melancholy, but laments that “this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband” (1.2.18-19). When reason fails her at this point she is able to employ positive emotion as a strategy for dealing with her sadness, engaging in a humorous evaluation of her suitors, to lighten her mood. She makes use of the incongruous in connecting the Neapolitan prince with a blacksmith and jokes about the lottery of the caskets which disempowers her, suggesting that Nerissa should set a glass of Rhenish wine on the “contrary casket” to encourage the Duke of Saxony to make the wrong choice. In this scene Shakespeare validates Portia’s melancholy as more legitimate than Antonio’s as he explores and celebrates the resilience that will enable her to overcome it.

⁵³ In *The Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle had written: “Similarly with regard to actions also there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. Now virtue is concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success; and being praised and being successful are both characteristics of virtue. Therefore virtue is a kind of mean, since, as we have seen, it aims at what is intermediate.” Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106b.24-28. David Beauregard refers to Shakespeare’s representation of virtue and the mean in *Virtue’s Own Feature: Shakespeare and the Virtue Ethics Tradition*.

In *As You Like It* Rosalind has even more serious reasons for melancholy than Portia. Portia has inherited vast wealth; in contrast Rosalind is now dispossessed, both financially and politically, despite the fact that she is Celia's cousin and they have grown up on terms of intimacy and equality. Duke Frederick's usurpation of his older brother's dukedom has destabilised the political hierarchy, since it confers all rights on Celia and reduces Rosalind to dependence. At this point in the play it is Celia who is the dominant character socially and to some extent dramatically, her admonition to Rosalind to "be merry" (1.2.1) opens the scene and is repeated. Rosalind attempts to follow her advice and, like Portia, turns to humour to alleviate her sadness, proposing that they engage in the unlikely sport of falling in love, jesting with Touchstone, and then agreeing to watch the wrestling. Portia laments that she is not able to choose her husband; Rosalind is in a situation where she is unlikely to find a husband at all. Ursula Potter points out that early modern medical treatises identified greensickness as a disease of virgins that could be remedied by marriage.⁵⁴ In *Romeo and Juliet* Capulet associates Juliet's rebellion with greensickness, but overall it is not a condition to which Shakespeare pays much attention. Portia, Rosalind and Viola are all unmarried young women on the cusp of entering into marriage, but none of them is shown to exhibit greensickness. It is not marriage that enables Portia, Rosalind and Viola to overcome their sadness; rather Shakespeare shows that it is the ability to transcend melancholy by demonstrating optimism and resilience that enables them to achieve the happiness of marriage with the man of their choice.

Falling in love with Orlando provides Rosalind with a further cause to feel melancholy, since there is no future for them in the hierarchy of the court, and she refers to the way in which her "working-day world" has become "full of briers" (1.3.10). Initially Celia's emotional support is demonstrated in attempts to joke her cousin out of what seems

⁵⁴ Ursula Potter, "Greensickness in *Romeo and Juliet*: Considerations of a Sixteenth-Century Disease of Virgins," in *The Premodern Teenager: Youth in Society, 1150-1650*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2002).

like an impossible attachment, encouraging her to regard the briers as less troublesome burs which can be hemmed away; then, more seriously, she advises her to wrestle with her troublesome affections. When the Duke banishes Rosalind, Celia's empathy translates into a practical plan of action that involves major self-sacrifice on her part. She is not only prepared to resign her claim to the dukedom on her father's death, she is also ready to abandon the comforts of her present role as heir to accompany Rosalind into exile. It is Celia who proposes the initial plan of escape and determines that they should seek her uncle in the Forest of Arden. It is only in the alternative world of the forest, and in male disguise, that Rosalind will have the freedom to engage in activities that enable her to overcome her melancholy and move towards happiness.

Coping with grief, optimism and resilience

Modern grief counsellors advise that there is no “right” period for the duration of mourning.⁵⁵ However, as *Twelfth Night* opens with representations of melancholy and mourning and evaluates their legitimacy, certain types of grief are, apparently, being given greater validation than others. It is not clear how long it has been since Olivia’s brother died and initially Orsino’s love melancholy seems to have greater legitimacy than Olivia’s grief, since it is not subjected to criticism from his courtiers. However, as the Duke employs the well-worn trope of his heart as a hart torn to pieces by desire he appears to derive a masochistic pleasure from his situation. Karin Coddon sees his behaviour as a form of self-indulgence. She points out that when he imagines music as the food of love, employing images of appetite, excess and surfeit, his lyric behaviour connects his “relatively decorous” amorous appetites with the “more grotesque ‘carnivalesque’ appetites of Sir Toby Belch.”⁵⁶ In contrast to Orsino’s behaviour, Olivia’s grief is overtly criticised by other characters,

⁵⁵ Bonanno, “Loss, Trauma and Man’s Capacity to Thrive after Extremely Aversive Events”.

⁵⁶ Coddon, “‘Slander in an Allow’d Fool’”, 314.

especially Feste. As Shakespeare investigates the relationship between grief and time, she is blamed for her abrogation of authority that allows the misrule disturbing her household, a situation that does not apply to the administration of Orsino's dukedom as a result of his neglect of his responsibilities. There seems to be a degree of wilfulness in Olivia's grieving. This is emphasised by Valentine's report that she "will" walk veiled around her chamber and that she "would" keep her brother's memory fresh, words that, by their grammatical use of the future tense, emphasise her determination to persist in demonstrations of grief. Olivia's intention to mourn for seven years thus seems excessive and suggests a degree of artifice. This suspicion is reinforced by the way Orsino links her mourning to his own love, which he sees as superior to her "debt of love but to a brother" (1.1. 33). Although in these ways Shakespeare appears to be making gendered distinctions that validate the emotions of men and denigrate those of women, in fact he represents Olivia's behaviour as superior to that of Orsino. He endorses her readiness to abandon artifice and re-engage with living while the duke is still pining. At the beginning of the play Shakespeare contrasts the responses of Olivia to death with those of Viola. Shipwrecked in a foreign country, with limited financial resources, and mourning the loss of Sebastian, Viola is deprived of the emotional support of other women that is available to Olivia who is accompanied by Maria, or to Portia and Rosalind in their respective predicaments. She must find her way in a male world, aided only by her disguise. She has no audience for her grief except the Captain and, unlike Portia and Rosalind, she cannot afford the luxury of mourning or melancholy. Faced with the probability that her brother has drowned, Viola listens to the Captain's comforting report that he saw Sebastian demonstrate courage and hope by binding himself to a mast and "hold[ing] acquaintance with the waves" (1.2.15) and she responds, "Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope" (1.2.17). Later, when Antonio mistakes her for Sebastian, she finds evidence that seems to indicate that her original hope was justified.

The belief in the value of hope is part of a long tradition of thinking about what makes life meaningful; it is endorsed by both philosophers and theologians. Augustine and, more emphatically, Aquinas link it with faith and charity as an important theological virtue. Although it is not directly included in the Galenic theory of humoral behaviour, the characteristic that most closely resembles it is the sanguine humour, caused by the blood. In *The Castel Of Helth* Sir Thomas Elyot reports the positive effects of the sanguine humour when he describes the blood having “preemynence ouer all other humours in susteinynge of all lyuyng creatures”. It nourishes and restores and is “the very treasure of lyfe”.⁵⁷ Similarly, Andre Du Laurens selects sanguine people as the most desirable because they are “sociable and lovers of companie” and always in love.⁵⁸ In *Twelfth Night* Viola demonstrates the characteristics of the sanguine person endorsed by Elyot and Du Laurens, although Shakespeare does not explicitly link this to the humours. Her ability to hope distinguishes her from other characters in the play and the positivity of her approach to life makes her attractive to them and to the audience.

In Calvinist theology hope has less significance than it does in early modern medical writings. Since the fate of sinners is predetermined by God, they cannot hope to affect the final outcome of whether they will be saved or damned. Deciding to live a godly life will make no difference to their election, although it may be proof of God’s choice. Such denial of free will is not congruent with Shakespearean drama, in which the plot is driven by character

⁵⁷ Sir Thomas Elyot, *The castel of helth* corrected and in some places augmented, by the first author thereof, Syr Thomas knight, the yere of oure lorde 1541(Londini: In aedibus Thom[ale] Bertheleti ryographi [sic] regii typis impress., M.D.XLVII. [1547]) Electronic reproduction, Ann Arbor, Mich. Digital version of: (Early English books, 1475-1640 ; 35:08) s1999 miun s, 2, 8.

⁵⁸ It is a thing most freely agreed upon in Phisike, that there are foure humours in our bodies, Blood, Phlegme, Choler, and Melancholie: ... if blood doe abound, we call such a complexion, sanguine; ...It is most true that every constitution bringeth forth his different effects, which make the actions of the soule more quicke and lively, or more dull and dead ... The sanguine persons are borne for to be sociable and lovers of companie: they are as it were always in love, they love to laugh and bee pleasant: this is the best complexion for health and long life, because it hath the two maine pillars of life, which are naturall heate and moisture in greatest measure.” Andre Du Laurens, *A discourse of the preservation of the sight: of melancholike diseases; of the rheumes, and of old age ... Translated out of the French ... by Richard Surphlet, practitioner in phisicke*, 1599 London, Jacson, in *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry 1533-1860*, ed. Richard Hunter and Ida Macalpine, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 84-6.

decisions and their consequences. Rejecting the Calvinist theology of predestination, Shakespeare is particularly interested in ways in which his heroines, finding themselves in adverse situations, express hope for the future and make positive decisions to help shape it to their desires. At times they acknowledge that all they can do is hope, since circumstances deprive them of autonomy. Initially, Portia wants to believe that Bassanio will re-enter her life and that she will be able to escape the marital ambitions of her other suitors. Similarly, Viola acknowledges that only time can unravel the complexities if the situation in which she finds herself. Rosalind, forced to flee Duke Frederick's court, can only hope that Celia's plan to search for the banished Duke in the Forest of Arden will lead them to liberty. However, as the plays develop Shakespeare shows that his heroines can take a proactive role in shaping their own destinies and transforming hope into reality. The failure of Morocco and Aragon to pass the test of the caskets, and the arrival of Bassanio at Belmont, provide Portia with the opportunity to fulfil her hopes by guiding him to the right choice of casket. Later, finding her desire for a companionate marriage threatened by Bassanio's competing loyalty to Antonio, she devises the ring trick that forces him to make a choice between homosocial friendship and romantic love. Viola turns the apparently adverse situation of her disguise to her own advantage, as it provides her with the opportunity to develop a relationship of intimacy with Orsino before the operation of time unravels the complexities of the plot. For Rosalind the reencounter with Orlando in the forest means that her hopes of love are more likely to be fulfilled than Viola's, since the decision of when to reveal her true identity is hers to make. Nevertheless, she postpones the moment and, like Viola, uses her disguise to advantageous effect.

Positive psychologists in the twenty-first century have foregrounded the importance of hope as a counter to despair, linking it with dispositional optimism. The term "optimism" was first used in English in 1759, defined as "the doctrine propounded by Leibniz (1710) that

the actual world is the best of all possible worlds".⁵⁹ Peterson and Seligman point out that the Leibniz definition of optimism is cognitive in its approach, since the belief that good prevails over evil is produced by reason.⁶⁰ Positive psychologists have linked optimism to a number of cognitive behaviours such as effective goal setting and problem solving, achievement, perseverance and happiness.⁶¹ They see optimism is a component of resilience, a word first used by Bacon in 1626.⁶² Positive psychologists believe that resilience acts as a buffer against depression after a person has suffered from a crisis.⁶³ In representing Viola as expressing hope in the aftermath of a shipwreck, Shakespeare also demonstrates the character strengths of optimism and resilience, for which there were no specific lexical explanations in Elizabethan England. Thus, positive psychology provides a terminology to interpret Viola's character that emphasises Shakespeare's originality in recognising causes and aspects of human behaviour not always accounted for in the epistemology of his time.

Positive psychologists endorse the belief that resilient people are also able to elicit positive emotions in others close to them, as well as cultivating positive emotions in themselves.⁶⁴ Such people demonstrate both cognitive and behavioural competencies, a number of which are reflected in Viola's behaviour.⁶⁵ Faced with the predicament of being a woman, alone in a strange country, she solves the problem by adopting a disguise to seek employment with Orsino since, as a bachelor, he has no wife to whom she might attach

⁵⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary* online.

⁶⁰ Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtue*, 571.

⁶¹ Peterson, "The Future of Optimism," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 44, 47, 49. DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.44.

⁶² *Oxford English Dictionary* online.

⁶³ Barbara L. Fredrickson and Michele M. Tugade, "What Good Are Positive Emotions in Crises? A Prospective Study of Resilience and Emotions Following the Terrorist Attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001," *Journal of Personality and Psychology* 84, no. 2 (2003). DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.84.2.365.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 367.

⁶⁵ Cognitive competencies, which include intelligence, ability to delay gratification, moral reasoning, insight, interpersonal awareness, planning ability and behavioural competencies, are reflected in problem solving skills, empathy, emotional stability and management, happiness, recognition of feelings, emotional management skills and humour. Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues*, 79.

herself. Once accepted into his court, she demonstrates empathy in encouraging him to treat her as a confidant and the ability to manage her own emotions and delay gratification by concealing her developing love. She is capable of insight into the feelings of her employer and shows understanding of the emotions of Olivia; the impact of her willingness to engage with life is influential in persuading Olivia to emerge from her seclusion. She also reveals her wit and capacity for humour in her verbal jousting with Feste. Paradoxically Viola, the most resilient of the three heroines, is in some ways the most disempowered. Portia adopts her disguise as a response to a particular situation and discards it when its immediate usefulness is over. Rosalind disguises herself out of necessity, but determines when and how she will reveal herself. Viola has less control over circumstances; having chosen to adopt the persona of Cesario, she has limited power to influence the outcome of events. Positive psychologists point out that an aspect of resilience is the ability to accept circumstances that cannot be changed and still remain optimistic. On two separate occasions Viola laments that the resolution of problems is beyond her control and must be left to time, but she does not retreat into melancholy.⁶⁶ Finally, at the end of the play, her readiness to die for Orsino provides her with the opportunity to declare her feelings openly, and her affirmation of love is a lesson to Orsino in the value of unchanging loyalty. In contrast with her earlier description of her fictional, disempowered sister who could never tell her love, pined away and died, the intensity of Viola's feelings, which she can finally express, contributes to Orsino's reorientation of his emotions.

Emotional intelligence in friendship

Shakespeare shows that his heroines are more emotionally intelligent than men and, in doing so, he dramatizes the ways in which friendships between women are more productive

⁶⁶ "What else may hap to time I will commit" (1.2.57). "O time, thou must untangle this, not I / It is too hard a knot for me t'untie" (2.2.40-41).

of happiness than those between men. This is because his women are more adaptable in their relationships. For men the conception of homosocial friendship was shaped by the discourse of amity, as discussed in chapter three. Shakespeare represents the nature of this discourse of replication as simultaneously rewarding and limiting when they have to negotiate their relationships and confront the competing demands of a companionate marriage. In the middle comedies he represents close relationships between men and between women and, in the process, explores the tensions between the emotional, and perhaps physical, demands of *amicitia* and the conflicting demands of other relationships. Including, but moving beyond the language of *amicitia*, he also appropriates, adapts, and transforms discourses of friendship and love that are represented in traditional and emerging genres in the early modern period, especially in the context of emerging concepts of the companionate marriage. As he does so he questions the extent to which any of these relationships can be productive of happiness.

The fact that so many writers, both in classical and early modern times, represented the power of amity attests to its enduring imaginative appeal and the belief that close personal relationships between men were productive of happiness. Many also acknowledged the rarity of an ideal that friends will mirror or replicate each other. In *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night*, particularly, Shakespeare subjects the idealism of *amicitia* to the practicalities of interpersonal relationships.⁶⁷ He considers the extent to which this discourse provides a legitimate expression of happiness between men and his representation reveals an increasing pessimism about the power of *amicitia* to resist challenges to its ideals. Huw Griffiths points out that the values of male friendship can be “a

⁶⁷ When Shakespeare, together with John Fletcher, returned to the subject of male friendship in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* they did so in ways that radically challenge conceptions of amity and happiness. The death of Arcite at the end exposes the tragic failure of friendship to resist either internal or external challenges. In the last act, written by Shakespeare, the language of amity is replaced with images of war. When Arcite makes his invocation to Mars who “heal’st with blood / The earth when it is sick” (5.1.63-4) the image fails to work as a paradox of healing. It highlights instead the impossibility of such a resolution and makes clear that expectations of restoration are being subverted. As marriage takes place in conjunction with funeral, the ending will not be able to accommodate a return to male bonding.

source of intense emotional power" in a number of Shakespeare's plays, but they are also "often tinged with melancholic regret" and "associated with strong feelings of loss".⁶⁸ In *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice* there is a sense that the friendships are unequal in their intensity. In *Twelfth Night* Antonio demonstrates the power of *amicitia* in his readiness to risk arrest and possible death in his search for Sebastian, but Sebastian evinces a desire to escape from Antonio's suffocating affection. It is true that later in the play Sebastian expresses joy at their reunion:

Antonio! O my dear Antonio,
How have the hours racked and tortured me
Since I have lost thee! (5.1.210-212)

His speech is marked by exclamations, and the emotive reference to having been racked and tortured by separation is characteristic of a relationship of amity, but it is ironized by its context, since he is already married to Olivia. There is no sense that he is forced to make a choice of loyalties, and Antonio is side-lined in the last part of the play, where he has no dialogue. In *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare appears to validate the classical concept of friendship by synthesising it with Christian iconography. As Antonio tells the Duke that he is "armed / To suffer with a quietness of spirit" (4.1 10-11) he echoes the advice of St Paul in his "Epistle to the Ephesians". Antonio's request not to grieve ennobles him in a way that demands his friend's grief, and his affirmation that he will pay the debt with all his heart reinforces the sacrificial nature of his love. Bassanio, however, fails the test of amity as he passes up the opportunity to offer to die for, or with, Antonio in the tradition of Damon and

⁶⁸ Huw Griffiths, "'Shall I Never See a Lusty Man Again': John Fletcher's Men, 1608-17," in *The Creation and Recreation of Cardenio: Performing Shakespeare, Transforming Cervantes*, ed. Terri Bourus and Gary Taylor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 101. Huw Griffiths, "Adapting same-sex friendship: Fletcher, and Shakespeare's The Two Noble Kinsmen, and Davenant's The Rivals," *Shakespeare* 11, no. 1 (2015): 21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450918.2015.1022551>.

Pithias and Titus and Gisippus, offering to sacrifice Portia instead. The trial scene dramatizes the limitations of the friendship.

Traditionally, the discourse of *amicitia* did not include women. Writers exploring the nature of female friendships were often constrained by the absence of an acceptable discourse that was culturally equivalent to male representations of friendship and happiness. Despite the presence in England of female writers like Whitney and Lanyer, representations of women's experiences and feelings are predominantly male constructs. Traub believes that early modern drama "does not express women's self-perceptions and experiences but it provides an index to how male-authored culture imagined, impersonated and regulated their desires."⁶⁹ In his middle comedies Shakespeare raises the question, not addressed by Aristotle or Cicero, of the ways in which the masculine language of *amicitia* might be transferred to apply to relationships between women. The plays also ask us to consider the extent to which such a transfer might be appropriate to create representations of female intimacy and happiness. Helena, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, reminds Hermia of their closeness:

So we grew together
Like to a double cherry: seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition,
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem. (3.2. 205-212)

The image of the double cherry appropriates the discourse that suggests that there can be one soul in two bodies, and that physical bodies may replicate each other to mirror the unity of the souls. In a similar manner Celia tells Rosalind how inseparable they have been:

We still have slept together,
Rose at one instant, learned, played, eat together,

⁶⁹ Traub, "The (In)significance of Lesbian Desire," 69.

And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans
Still we went coupled and inseparable." (1.3.67-70)

The physical unity suggested by the images of "coupled" and "inseparable" is supplemented by descriptions of the activities that they have shared. Traub and Jessica Tvodri consider the speeches made by Helena and Celia as powerfully erotic, but what is notable about them is that they are characterised by the use of the past tense and, in the case of Helena, express regret for the loss of youthful happiness.⁷⁰ The plays question the extent to which the youthful friendships of these women might be limited by the imposition of an unrealistic, male constructed ideal.

Shakespeare's heroines in his middle comedies initially reflect idealism in their belief in a unity of the soul and physical replication, but move on to accept that the happiness of such a relationship cannot survive into adult life. They progress from expectations of a relationship in which friends replicate one another to form female alliances in which they complement each other. In *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*, Shakespeare creates pairs of women who offer each other practical and emotional support in challenging the gendered expectations of their society. Nerissa demonstrates one of the key characteristics of emotional intelligence in encouraging Portia to accept circumstances that are beyond her power to control or change, offering a hope for the future in reminding her of an earlier meeting with Bassanio in her father's lifetime. Portia uses her friendship with Nerissa to create emotional intimacy as their dialogue reveals her readiness for self-disclosure of her private thoughts and feelings and her confidence that Nerissa will respond warmly and supportively. She trusts her with confidences about her feelings and Nerissa responds to that

⁷⁰ Traub, "The (in)significance of Lesbian Desire", Harriette Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England: Female Same-Sex Literary Erotics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). Jessica Tvodri, "Female Alliance and the Construction of Homoeroticism in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*," in *Maids, Mistresses, Cousins and Queens*, ed. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

trust in attempting to alleviate Portia's melancholy by joking. Aristotle believes in the importance of trust, a warm and supportive response, but he identifies it in relationships among men; Shakespeare shows its importance for women too. However, the power structure of this relationship between mistress and waiting gentlewoman gives undisputed authority and dramatic pre-eminence to Portia. The relationship between the cousins, Celia and Rosalind, is more one of equals, although Celia is initially socially dominant as her father's heir and Rosalind later gains authority through her male disguise. Rosalind and Celia demonstrate practical wisdom in the way they organise their escape to the forest and provide themselves with independence by buying up the sheepcote. More significant for Shakespeare's characterisation is the emotionally intelligent way in which they interact, recognising each other's emotional needs and providing sympathetic support. The empathy demonstrated in their interaction is highlighted by contrast with the dysfunctional nature of the relationships between the two pairs of brothers. Shakespeare initially appropriates the male language of *amicitia* as Celia defends her cousin to Duke Frederick and later tells Rosalind, "thou and I am one" (1.3.91), but as the plot evolves he develops a different kind of language to express their relationship. As their dialogue shifts from verse to prose, Rosalind and Celia no longer speak of their oneness; their emotional intelligence is revealed in their recognition of difference. Instead of viewing her cousin as another self, Celia recognises that the lovelorn Rosalind has individual emotional needs that must be addressed. She demonstrates her emotional intelligence initially by adopting a sympathetically humorous response to Orlando's unexpected presence in the forest and his incompetent attempts to write love poetry. With comic exaggeration Celia exclaims, "O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful, and yet again wonderful, and after that out of all hooping!" (3.2.176-177). She proceeds simultaneously to sympathise with Rosalind's excitement and point out the need for restraint. She would need the mouth of Gargantua to answer the outpourings of Rosalind's

questions. When, in her guise as Ganymede, Rosalind employs the language of male misogyny, Celia reminds her not to take the deception too far, accusing her of disparaging women and playfully threatening to expose the deception, “We must have your doublet and hose plucked over your head and show the world what the bird hath done to her own nest” (4.1.172-174). After nearly betraying Rosalind’s disguise by calling her “Cousin” in her alarm when Rosalind faints, she helps her to pass the unmanly weakness off as pretence, encouraging Oliver to return with them to their cottage. It comes as a surprise to realise that this is Celia’s last speech in the play, in the interests of focusing on the Rosalind / Orlando relationship, Shakespeare has chosen to marginalise and silence a woman who had displayed so many signs of emotional intelligence.

It appears that, in considering the friendship of women, Shakespeare is relocating the Aristotelian and Ciceronian rhetoric of friendship in the context of service to the state to the private sphere, but the friendship of women also has a political charge. As Shakespeare focuses on emotionally intelligent heroines who resist enculturation, he comes to reject simple acceptance of male friendships that are dependent on the exclusion or suppression of women. The plot resolution he provided in his early comedy, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, is one that he did not repeat in the middle comedies. Proteus’ soliloquy (2.6.1-43) is an expression of his inner conflict as he abandons his allegiance to Julia and his friendship for Valentine to pursue his sudden love for Silvia. The conflict between friendship and marriage disappears at the end of the play as the couples reconcile and friendship is restored, with Valentine affirming, “One feast, one house, one mutual happiness” (5.4.170). Janet Adelman has commented on the unsatisfactory nature of the resolution, particularly the way in which it depends on the silencing of women.⁷¹ In the later comedies, *The Merchant of Venice* and

⁷¹ Janet Adelman, “Male Bonding in Shakespeare’s Comedies,” in *Shakespeare’s “Rough Magic”*: *Renaissance Essays in Honor of C. L. Barber*, ed. Peter Erickson and Coppelia Kahn (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985). Within about five minutes of stage time Proteus attempts to rape Silvia, she is rescued by Valentine, Proteus repents, Valentine forgives him and renews their bonds of friendship, Julia discloses her true

Twelfth Night, Shakespeare reverses the situation and it is the male friend who is silenced at the end. Portia contests Antonio's friendship with her husband and Olivia's dialogue with Sebastian moves from initial entreaties, "I prithee", to imperatives, "Go with me ... and hear", to the command, "Thou shalt not choose but go" (4.1.50-56). In the light of their wives' authority, Bassanio and Sebastian must reconfigure their emotional loyalties.

What Shakespeare is interested in in the later romantic comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* is the ways in which women bond to create female alliances that enable them to resist patriarchal domination. Beatrice supports Hero when she is falsely accused, Nerissa encourages Portia to overcome her melancholy response to her father's disempowering will, Celia defies her father and accompanies Rosalind into exile, and Maria attempts to preserve order in Olivia's house in the face of male riot and exploitation. The plays demonstrate that in adult life friends may develop intimate relationships that are complementary and based on shared interests, while opening up space for individuality and extending the possible range of meaningful connections. The friendships these women develop can be contained within the marriages they form at the end of the plays more comfortably than the alliances of men. Male homosocial friendships give place to marriage, but there is no reason to believe that the female alliances will meet the same fate. The happy endings of the plays involve not only marriage, but an awareness of the ways in which women find emotional happiness and support from their relationships with other women. Shakespeare can be seen to be aware of the importance of friendship between women in enabling them to navigate the complexities of their relationships with men, and he represents their solidarity with sympathy and understanding.

identity and forgives Proteus, Thurio lays claim to Silvia and abandons his claim, and the Duke is reconciled with Valentine.

Women as agents of change

As Shakespeare represents the strength of friendships, he considers the extent to which women might be empowered to become agents of change. In *The Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle teaches that happiness lies in virtuous activities.⁷² For positive psychologists, Ryff and Singer, personal growth is the characteristic of well-being that comes closest in meaning to Aristotle's *eudaimonia*, since it is explicitly concerned with the self-realization of the individual. They associate the potential for personal growth with environmental mastery which, they believe, is an important characteristic of mental health, defining it as the ability of the individual to create or choose environments suitable to his or her psychic condition. They emphasise independence, self-determination and the regulation of behaviour from within, an ability to function autonomously and resist enculturation.⁷³ This has links to the higher levels of emotional intelligence, in which people manage their emotions in the context of self-awareness, social awareness and goals.⁷⁴

Reading the plays through the lens of Aristotelian philosophy and positive psychology raises the question of whether Shakespeare creates heroines who successfully challenge the dominant ideologies of their worlds. Feminist critic, Howard, reads the middle comedies in ways that resist the application of positive psychology. She believes that, to enable the socially acceptable dramatic conclusion of marriage, Shakespeare's women are returned to "their admittedly somewhat ameliorated places within the dominant patriarchal order".⁷⁵ Howard and Clare Kinney criticise the end of *As You Like It* on the grounds that Rosalind is reinserted in the patriarchal order when she gives herself back to her father's authority and

⁷² Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, x.6.11.

⁷³ Ryff, and Singer, "Know Thyself and Become What You Are," 21-23.

⁷⁴ Grewel and Salovey, "Feeling Smart".

⁷⁵ Jean Howard, "Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggles in Early Modern England," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1988): 436. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870706>.

accepts Orlando's dominance as her husband.⁷⁶ Alternatively, it can be argued that Rosalind has helped Orlando develop from an engaging, but inexperienced, youth into a man who will be worthy of her love. For Rosalind, the reward for her emotional intelligence comes when she is able to abandon her disguise and stage-manage the resolution of the romantic relationships. As the others subscribe to Silvius' evocation of the faithful lover, Rosalind dissociates herself, asserting her dominance by reminding them that she has left commands. Before the wedding she instructs her father to give her away as she wishes and Orlando to accept her, and at the wedding she reiterates her authority, "I'll have no father if you be not he, / I'll have no husband if you be not he" (5.4.111-112). Although the last words go to Duke Senior, this is the only play to which Shakespeare appended an epilogue delivered by a female character. Rosalind charges, first the women and then the men in the audience, to like as much of the play as they please, so that the final impression they take away from the theatre is one of female authority. In presenting a character who demonstrates the higher skills of emotional intelligence, Shakespeare suggests that his fictional creation may have the power to initiate social change by challenging the dominant discourse of a woman's inferiority. Rosalind in *As You Like It* is the most successful of the heroines in achieving self-determination and environmental mastery within the play and in calling into question the preconceptions of the theatre audience watching it.

In *The Merchant of Venice* Portia gains a degree of environmental mastery as she challenges the dominant early modern ideology that discouraged a woman from speaking in public. Whilst it is true that she is forced to adopt a male persona to defend Antonio, and her deception is not made public, her immediate circle do become aware of her disguise and continue to praise her achievement. However, it cannot be argued that she is successful in challenging the dominant ideologies of Venice, on the contrary, in applying the laws of the

⁷⁶ Howard, "Crossdressing." Clare R. Kinney, "Feigning Female Faining: Spenser, Lodge, Shakespeare, and Rosalind," *Modern Philology* 95, no. 3 (Feb., 1998). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/438878>.

Republic to defend Antonio, she becomes the mouthpiece of its xenophobia. The environmental mastery she achieves in the courtroom is subjected to interrogation by Shakespeare, who shows that it is necessary to abandon control in the wider world and retreat to the more innocent estate of Belmont. There, by renegotiating her relationship with Bassanio, she will retain her authority to create an environment that is suited to her desires.

Rosalind and Portia are both more empowered than Viola since, despite her resilience, her disguise as an attendant on Orsino limits her ability to influence events. However, despite her limited authority, Viola retains the ability to demonstrate self-awareness of her feelings, social awareness of the emotions of those around her, and recognition of goals, even though she may lament the difficulties of achieving them. Both Portia and Viola make the alarming discovery that the man of their choice is prepared to sacrifice them. Bassanio at least has the excuse that his offer is made in a moment of emotional guilt over his responsibility for the imminent death of his close friend, but Orsino's outburst seems more like the product of wounded vanity and pique. His final speech to Viola, who is still in male attire, suggests unwillingness to transfer his intimate relationship with the youth to the woman. This is a reflection of the reluctance some early modern men felt to abandon the security of homosocial friendships to enter the more challenging relationships of a companionate marriage. In this play Shakespeare draws attention to the difficulties strong women encounter in their search for a worthwhile life partner. On the other hand, Viola's assertion of her readiness to die, "most jocund, apt and willingly" (5.1.128), shames Orsino, and he can transfer his affections from the boy to the woman when her true identity is revealed. Nature in her bias enables him to acknowledge in Viola the admirable qualities that he recognised in Cesario, and the intimacy he formed with the youth will be continued with the woman. The end of *Twelfth Night* is more ambivalent than the other plays, but Shakespeare offers the hope

that Viola will achieve happiness in her marriage when Orsino learns to love in his wife the qualities he admired in his page.

The extent to which Rosalind, Portia and Viola attain environmental mastery in the wider worlds of the plays varies. They all show emotional intelligence in their readiness to influence events when it is possible to do so, and acceptance of the fact that it may not be always possible. What they have in common is their ability to overcome the initial temptations to indulge in melancholy, to develop self-awareness, and to effect change in the area of personal relationships. Moving beyond her political disempowerment, Rosalind learns self-regulation and the value of a positive approach to her predicament. She demonstrates emotional intelligence in her interactions with others, teaching Phoebe the value of Silvius' love. More importantly, she negotiates her relationship with her own romantic partner. She teaches Orlando to resist enculturation in developing self-awareness and an attitude to love that will recognise the woman as an independent person, removed from the limiting discourse of the Petrarchan convention. Portia, faced by the unwelcome discovery of Bassanio's conflicting emotional loyalties, is successful in re-negotiating the terms of their relationship, using the ring trick to demand that he also should resist enculturation and accept the emerging practice of a companionate marriage. Viola encourages Olivia to abandon excessive grief for the death of her brother and re-engage with living, so that the countess is able to develop self-realisation, move forward and find love.

Adopting positive psychology as my primary methodology for discussing *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* allows me to emphasise the character strengths and virtues in Shakespeare's heroines. He represents their superior ability to deal with grief and disaster; they respond to the problems they encounter with optimism and emotional intelligence, and teach the men of their choice how to change and develop self-realisation. In this way, Shakespeare takes issue with the dominant ideology that regarded

women as sinful temptresses, governed by passion and incapable of reasoned behaviour. He shares some of the beliefs of early feminists in showing that patriarchal ideologies should be reassessed, but his final conclusions are different, since he represents his heroines as superior in reason and emotional intelligence to men. He also provides a solution different from that suggested by other early feminist writers. Pizan saw happiness for women as only achievable by retreating from interaction with men to the City of Ladies, and Fonte more wistfully proposed the possibility of creating a *locus amoenus* in a paradisical garden. Like Lanyer, these feminists acknowledged that women could only find happiness in a single sex environment and, like Lanyer, they realised its temporary nature. Shakespeare proposes that women can attain happiness by engaging in, not retreating from, social interaction and that they can form meaningful and productive relationships with men. Cereta saw the demands of marriage as an impediment to self-fulfilment; Shakespeare presents the companionate marriages of his heroines as rewards for self-determination, self-regulation and emotional intelligence. At the end of the play they reach the safe haven of a marriage in which they will be able to function autonomously in relationships with their partners and achieve happiness. This is a concept that, during the plays, Shakespeare has reconfigured as available to women, more often located in the private than the public arena, and only achievable through adversity.

Conclusion

My interest in theories of happiness was first aroused about ten years ago in discussions with friends who were working in the field of positive psychology. As clinicians they were looking at how their findings could be used to make people's lives happier, they were not applying this to a study of literature. As I listened to them talk about resilience, optimism, and the ways in which the power of positive thinking can enable recovery from trauma and grief, it seemed that there could be connections between their research and literature, more specifically links to Shakespeare's late romantic comedies. Early investigation of databases suggested that this was an area that had not been investigated and offered possibilities for original research. By the time I was ready to begin my thesis my topic had broadened, and I proposed to locate my investigation of Shakespeare within the context of attitudes to happiness in the political, religious and philosophical paradigms of the early modern period.

My decision to access different types of texts enabled me to bring together different kinds of discourses and focus on the rich diversity in people's expression of their desire for joy. Frye refers to the "dream world that we create out of our own desires"; this is a longing that a number of writers express.¹ The benevolent political worlds people created out of their desires proved to be illusions, but the treatises they wrote and the myths they created testify to the power of the ideal. It shaped the way in which early travellers to the Americas responded as they expressed belief that they had discovered an unfallen Eden or a Golden Age. It underpins the creation of utopian fiction and is fundamental to the genres of the romance and the pastoral. The escape to a *locus amoenus* is particularly a convention of the pastoral, which can be seen as an expression of nostalgia for an idealised world where life was non-exploitative and relationships harmonious. However, underlying many of the pastorals is a

¹ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 183.

realisation that these too are fallen worlds and the dream is ultimately unattainable. The tension between the myth and the underlying reality inherent in the pastoral is reflective of a broader realisation, that happiness is most meaningful when it is brought into relationship with adversity, a point emphasised by positive psychologists. We can appreciate the importance of happiness most intensely when it is threatened, or when it has to be fought for.

In contrast to the myths that some writers constructed, letters and diaries provide insights into the accommodations people made as they attempted to find purpose in their lives and create meaningful relationships that might be conducive to personal happiness. Reading letters exchanged between men we become aware of the difficulties they experienced as they engaged in the political arena; letters between women draw attention to the problems they encountered when they sought to attain autonomy in a patriarchal context. A common theme in these letters, both those written by men and those composed by women, is the need to make compromises, and often the desire to retreat to a sheltered space where personal relationships can be sustained. This reflects ideas expressed in other imaginative texts, like those written by Pizan, Fonte and Whitney, that complete happiness can only be achieved in a *locus amoenus*. A consideration of a wide variety of texts draws attention to the difficulties people encountered in searching for happiness, and suggests opportunities for further studies of the choices and compromises they made.

In my Introduction I refer to the question raised by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, “Is the world too full of tragedy to allow a wise person to be happy?”² We live in a time shaped by religious intolerance and political certainties, where the happiness of some is dependent on the marginalisation, exclusion or elimination of others. The problems we face today have many similarities to those we encounter when we visit the foreign country of the past. There we also consider the legitimacy of desiring personal happiness in a world of

² Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, “Positive Psychology: An Introduction”, 5.

tragedy, and whether this can be a mark of wisdom. Aristotle does not provide an answer to this question, nor do most of the early modern writers discussed in this thesis. I argue that in *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare grapples with this challenging issue as he explores the relationship between wisdom and happiness. The heroines in Shakespearean comedy encounter a world characterised by tragedy, but happiness emerges out of suffering and loss. Through their experiences they gain the wisdom to recognise that the desire for personal happiness is legitimate, and that as they attain it they can contribute to the well-being of others. To deny the importance of happiness and focus only on negativity is to see the world as Jaques sees it, and find no reason to hope.

My initial decision to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to an exploration of happiness is in line with the methodology of established scholars now working in the emerging fields of the history of the emotions and ethical, philosophical and psychological research. Recent investigations into the history of the emotions, first by Reddy, Rosenwein and Stearns, and later by Matt, Plamper, Trigg, Broomhall and White, correspond with my belief that the way forward involves recognition that focusing solely on the humoral body as an explanation for motivation is potentially limiting, especially for a study of Shakespearean drama. The writers referred to above extend the scope of their enquiry to include exploration of the relationship of individuals to the contextual forces that shape their lives. Trigg's broader recognition that philosophy, literature, psychology, history and politics are scholarly fields that now connect to emotion represents a shift to which my work is contributing.³ Thus my thesis is situated within, and contributes to, a developing line of enquiry that emphasises the complex nature of the emotions. It foregrounds the importance of recognising their diversity within a cultural context that shaped the way they were expressed. It also recognises the power of emotions to shape the imagination and the texts that it inspires.

³ Trigg, "Introduction: Emotional Histories".

In taking an interdisciplinary approach I consider the importance of ethics, particularly to my analysis of Shakespeare. In doing so, I discuss the relevance of Aristotelian virtue ethics to his evaluation of the moral worth of different types of happiness in the late romantic comedies. There is an increasing interest in links between Aristotle and Shakespeare, developed most comprehensively by Langis. Her project of developing a “virtue-based study” into the ethical importance of Aristotle’s work is a significant contribution to scholarship in drawing attention to his influence on early modern thinking.⁴ Langis is predominantly concerned with exploring Aristotelian theories of moderation; I see my emphasis on his theories of happiness as offering an alternative response that could be the subject of further investigation. In acknowledging, but also moving beyond, Aristotle’s influential doctrine of the mean, Shakespeare opens up possibilities for recognising the power of intense emotions to operate positively in people’s lives.

In her analysis of the connections between Aristotle and Shakespeare, Langis focuses on secular interpretations when she refers to approaches that are ethical / philosophical, political, and physiological. Similarly, in considering the disciplines through which we might study the emotions, Trigg does not include religion. Whilst I do not read the emotions, and specifically happiness, from a religious perspective, I recognise the role that religion played in the early modern time. Its influence was inescapable; in many ways it constituted an emotional regime that shaped how people thought about themselves and their world. I trace its influence, especially the theology of Augustine and Aquinas, and the conflicts that might arise between theology and the more secular influence of Aristotle on attitudes to happiness. In some ways Shakespeare reflects an Augustinian pessimism about the sinful nature of man, especially in his representation of the fallen political worlds he constructs. In other ways he is more Thomistic in his faith that some people, at least, have the seeds of goodness in them and

⁴ Langis, *Virtue, Passion and Prudence*, 14.

have the ability to learn and change. Focusing on how Shakespeare might have been influenced by contextual religious beliefs adds another dimension to our understanding of his characters and the decisions they make.

Since the time of Freud there has been interest in reading Shakespeare's plays from a psychological perspective. A Freudian approach places emphasis on the dark forces of the psyche and the fallen worlds that these forces construct. It contributes to our understanding, particularly, of the political worlds that characterise Shakespeare's plays; it also draws attention to the cruelty that some characters demonstrate to others. Recently, there has been, as Langis point out, a renewed interest in approaching the plays from "cognitive and psychological perspectives."⁵ Early in my research I was influenced by positive psychologists' belief that "a complete practice of psychology should include an understanding of suffering and happiness as well as their interaction."⁶ Acknowledging the pain and suffering in the world, positive psychologists emphasise the power of character strengths and virtues. I offer an approach which foregrounds Shakespeare's belief that characters who acknowledge the fallen nature of human beings and their world can demonstrate positive emotions, particularly resilience, optimism and emotional intelligence. These qualities of character enable them to change and grow. Living in a postlapsarian world does not necessarily preclude the possibility of achieving happiness in this life. Both positive psychology and Shakespearean comedy are about wisdom and knowledge, resilience, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence and the ways in which these may combat adversity. Research by positive psychologists into trauma therapy and post-traumatic growth highlights how some Shakespearean characters have the ability to confront the impediments to their happiness. As they do so, they demonstrate that it is a condition that can

⁵ Ibid., 26.

⁶ Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson, "Positive Psychology Progress", 410.

develop and grow stronger in response to adversity, and in spite of the forces that seem to militate against it.

My thesis foregrounds the opportunities available to researchers to study representations of positive emotion in personal writings and in imaginative texts. In adopting a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach I emphasise the rich diversity of writing about happiness in the early modern period. Interpretations of what constitutes happiness as an emotion differ, but the desire to experience it appears in multiple contexts. My combination of analysis of early modern texts and Shakespearean comedy suggests further lines of enquiry that might be adopted by scholars researching the history of the emotions. The insights provided by the twenty-first-century discipline of positive psychology can be used to provide greater understanding of psychological states revealed in personal writings and explored by Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. My research draws attention to the power of happiness to enrich people's lives and enable them to find meaning and purpose in the middle of suffering and despair. In doing so, it provides a way forward for further studies of the early modern period and the people who left written records of their feelings and beliefs.

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