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SHAKESPEARE AND THE AGGRESSION OF
CHILDREN

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Shakespeare's association of childhood with anger reflects the ambivalence of Elizabethan adults towards children. As a popular playwright, he would naturally be intimately aware of the expectations of his audience. Elizabethan parents may well have possessed the same instinctive love of their offspring that adults in other periods have demonstrated.¹ Nevertheless, political and social institutions did little to mitigate an often stern patriarchal domination of the family.² Not recognizing the special needs of children, the Elizabethans often exploited them as domestic help. Accordingly, both Shakespeare's allusions to children and the portrayal of child characters indicate that he held a far darker attitude towards childhood than literary critics have generally recognized. The playwright introduces endangered children throughout his works, from the early *Titus Andronicus* and *Richard the Third* to the late *Coriolanus* and *The Winter's Tale*. Some critics find these child characters preternaturally sweet and innocent³ while others see them as disturbingly precocious.⁴ Such interpretations may stem from an over-reaction to the contempt with which adult figures in Shakespeare typically regard children.

Stressing the malleability and sensitivity of youth, Shakespeare indicates that children learn early to reciprocate adult hostility.⁵ Maturation requires the child to convert an innate fear into aggression. Verbal precocity not only helps to establish the child's autonomy but also serves to placate irascible adults. Mingling deference with contempt, an unwary child may occasionally extend teasing into a foolhardy confrontation with an enraged grown-up. Shakespeare suggests that children when alone demonstrate a propensity for cruel games and pastimes. Such hostility would prepare a child very early for survival outside of the family of origin. Moreover, children may be included in military affairs. It is no wonder, then, that random groups of older children band together to express their explicit animosity to their elders. Indeed, Shakespeare suggests that the intensity of the conflict extends this anti-social behavior into late adolescence. Thus, the aggression in Shakespeare's mature characters replicates earlier behavior.

Morris Henry Partee

123

I

The Origins of Aggression

Shakespeare sets the foundation for later hostility in the ambivalent nurturing of infants and children. I have pointed out elsewhere that although nurses dandle and sing to children, these haphazard caretakers just as often neglect their charges.⁶ The infant's complete dependence necessitates immediate placation for scratching a nurse (*Two Gentlemen of Verona* 1.2.58-59); open rebellion could signify chaos (*Measure for Measure* 1.3.23-31).⁷ Parental interactions reveal even more extreme manifestations of total involvement alternating with complete neglect. Adults often distance themselves from childhood by using the term "boy" to suggest weakness, immaturity, and effeminacy. Beardlessness offers a convenient specific focus for insult. Shakespeare constantly imagines parents disciplining children; the whip is omnipresent. Despite the occasional extravagant sentimentality of parents, seldom does the playwright envision a loving interaction of child and parent. We do see Titus caring for his grandson, Lucius, but significantly, Hamlet remembers Yorick, not his father, carrying him on his back a thousand times. "Parental anxiety at the sickness of their off-spring was exacerbated by the fact that any illness could lead to death."⁸ Knowing well the inevitably high rate of infant mortality, loving parents might transfer their fear to their sensitive offspring.⁹ And less stable parents—often fathers over-involved with daughters—would directly threaten their wayward children with death or its virtual equivalent, disinheritance. More extreme still, Tamora, Lady Macbeth, and Leontes actively contemplate infanticide.

Shakespeare recognizes the difficulties besetting a child in search of some measure of independence from the family of origin. Some fortunate children may establish an interim identity as the twin of a coeval, the remembrance of which gladdens the participants.¹⁰ Individual children display a variety of attitudes to their often bewildered elders. Responding to an undercurrent of irritability, adults in Shakespeare condemn what they see as the unmotivated peevishness of young people.¹¹ Children often hide the immediate cause of their discontents from largely unsympathetic adults. Adult expectations make the maintenance of self-respect and autonomy difficult. On the one hand, such external pressure makes the child fickle and ambivalent in inter-personal relationships (see, for instance, *King Lear* 3.6.19; *The Winter's Tale* 1.2.165-171). And on the other hand, the child might

develop an intense fixation on some personally desired object such as a new coat (*Romeo and Juliet* 3.2.28-31; *Much Ado About Nothing* 3.2.5-7).

With varying degrees of effectiveness, children frequently had a role in military exercises. Equal to his father in bravery, the son of the French Master Gunner wants to help by watching for and killing the English spies (*1 Henry 6* 1.4.21-22). The weakness of children makes their presence inappropriate on the battle field itself (*King John* 5.1.69-71; 5.2.133). Nevertheless, children may serve in support of the actual combatants. Falstaff's page accompanies Pistol to France; the youth scorns the cowardice of his elders. Only boys guard the baggage at Agincourt (*Henry 5* 4.4.76-77), and although this youth probably dies there in the cowardly French attack, the king does not mention him in the list of notable dead. Lucius accompanies Brutus into battle in *Julius Caesar*, and Othello declares he has spent most of his time since he was seven years old in military service (*Othello* 1.3.83). Children would not wish to remain in such a menial capacity for long. Enthusiasm may compensate for inexperience; boys may try to assume the appearance of adult males in order to join the wars (*Richard 2* 3.2.113-115). Young Siward dies in his first military encounter (*Macbeth* 5.9.6-9); his father shows no personal anguish at the news. More successfully, the beardless Claudio, the right hand man of Don Pedro, has the glory of the overthrow of Don John (*Much Ado About Nothing* 1.3.67). Likewise, to the vigorous encouragement of his mother, Coriolanus goes to war as an early adolescent (*Coriolanus* 1.3.5-9).

Although the Puritans in particular stressed the importance of the family as an agent for morality and education, these advances were slow to reach the lower segments of society. "Not only did children not live with their parents for very long in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but such relations as existed were...normally extremely formal, while obedience was often enforced with brutality."¹² An unsympathetic Italian traveler in England around 1500 felt that English parents exchanged both male and female children at the age of seven to nine for purely selfish purposes for a period of seven to nine years hard labor and that subsequent rejection forced the children to make their own way in the world.¹³ A wealthy parent like Gloucester might send his son away for further education (*King Lear* 1.1.32-33). The offspring of the lower social classes might become apprentices or pages like Moth in *Love's Labor's Lost*, Biondello in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Falstaff's page, Robin. The Ephesian Dromio has served his master continuously from birth (*Comedy of Errors* 4.4.30-31) while Vincentio

has brought up Tranio from the age of three (*The Taming of the Shrew* 5.1.81-83). Although Shakespeare does not dwell on the discomforts of these young servants, the few records we have of the daily lives of apprentices around the time of the passing of the Statute of Artificers “frequently underline the harshness if not the brutality of the lives of our forebears.”¹⁴

Institutions formalized this neglect. The Statute of Artificers (1562) and the Poor Laws of 1597 and 1601 attempted to correct the social unrest which accompanied the decay of small towns and the instability of the rural population.¹⁵ Although people usually became apprentices at age sixteen, “the Poor Law of 1601 authorized the churchwardens and overseers of the poor to enforce compulsory apprenticeship for poor boys and girls between the ages of five and fourteen and continuing to age twenty-four for men and age twenty-one for women.”¹⁶ These laws placed such great demands on the parishes that orphans faced incredible brutalization as social outcasts.¹⁷ Even Shakespeare, who normally assumes that the extended family cares for bereaved children, has the apparition of Sicilius Leonatus, the father of Posthumous, lament that Jove, reputedly the father of orphans, did not protect his child (*Cymbeline* 5.4.37-42).

II

Cruelty and its Effects

Shakespeare shows less interest than many of his contemporaries in archery as a discipline for later military service. Many people—including Ascham and Stow—worried about the disuse of the long-bow.¹⁸ Frowning on more innocuous pastimes as handball, football, and hockey, the Tutor government institutionalized military preparedness by requiring parents to see that their sons over the age of seven practiced shooting at targets with the long bow.¹⁹ Although Shakespeare says little about this training, he does suggest that children could learn archery young (*Titus Andronicus* 4.3.2-3). Even wealthy and profligate youths faced the challenge of maintaining their supply of weapons. Bassanio in his schooldays would carefully watch the flight of a second arrow in an effort to find one lost earlier (*The Merchant of Venice* 1.1.140-143). Since more expensive guns—real or toy—would be generally unavailable to children, youths must settle for the simulated aggression of a shot “out of an elder-gun” (*Henry V* 4.1.197-

198). Such fantasies of military violence prepare youth for the aggression of the adult Elizabethan world.²⁰

Although Shakespeare does not treat archery extensively, he recognizes the inevitable love of young boys for aggressive games. Football (*King Lear* 1.4.86; *Comedy of Errors* 2.1.83) was so popular that in 1349 it was prohibited by royal edict because it was believed to interfere with the popular interest in archery.²¹ By Shakespeare's time, the game was so violent that James sought to abolish the sport altogether. Other games may involve almost mindlessly aggressive physical competition. For instance, the simple "Dun-in-the-mire" (*Romeo and Juliet* 1.4.41) consists of obstructing the efforts of others while dropping a log on the toes of some one else. Even in play, fencing could be abrasive. Shallow and Silence admiringly recall seeing the young Falstaff bloody an opponent's head (*2 Henry 4* 3.2.29-31), and they praise him for being skillful with the back-sword, a stick used in fencing practice (*2 Henry 4* 3.2.63-64). Nor is duplicity absent. Benedick recognizes the possibility of a schoolboy's stealing a bird's nest from a companion (*Much Ado About Nothing* 2.1.222-224). Besides these interactive games, a child might dangerously challenge his own physical limits. Excessive reliance on a bladder for support in the water might cause a careless boy to venture beyond his depth (*Henry 8* 3.2.359).

Whereas children observe a certain circumspection in violence towards their fellows, they may demonstrate a reprehensive cruelty towards lower creatures. The nests of birds offer a temptation to young children (*Romeo and Juliet* 2.5.74). Some children inflict direct pain on an animal. Falstaff refers to filliping, a game involving driving a small animal like a toad into the air by means of a blow on the opposite end of a fulcrum (*2 Henry 4* 1.2.228). Falstaff himself plucked the feathers from a live goose (*Merry Wives of Windsor* 5.1.24-25). Both Menenius (*Coriolanus* 4.6.94) and Valeria (*Coriolanus* 1.3.60-65) accept—and even approve of—the irrational violence of children to butterflies. Shakespeare's own disapproval of such practices may be seen in Gloucester's compassionate extension of suffering throughout all animate nature: "As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods,/They kill us for their sport (*King Lear* 4.1.36-37).

Shakespeare also recognizes the possibility of appropriate bravery in these children. The young Prince Edward firmly confronts his uncle concerning the loyalty of his mother's relatives (*Richard 3* 3.1.16), and he plans to conquer France or die as a king should (*Richard 3* 3.1.91-93). Arthur in *King John* represents the most extreme case of calmness in the face of danger. Despite Hubert's clear intent to blind him, the

youth retains presence of mind to evoke enough sentimental images to deter the hardened soldier. Subsequently, Arthur takes his fate into his own hands, and he dies in a courageous attempt to escape his captors: "As good to die and go, as die and stay" (*King John* 4.3.8). Later in Shakespeare's career, Little Macduff calmly accepts the absence of his father in a very dangerous time, and indeed the boy attempts to sooth his mother's anxiety. He declares that without a father he will live as birds do—not with worms and flies as his mother suggests—but simply with whatever comes along (*Macbeth* 4.2.33). Both the son of Coriolanus (*Coriolanus* 5.3.127-128) and young Mamillius (*The Winter's Tale* 1.2.162) declare their willingness to fight at a suitable future occasion.

Ignorance may lead the child, however, into foolhardy behavior. "For the humanists of the sixteenth century, whose ideals were so profoundly social and intellectual, childhood was not so much innocent as ignorant."²² Shakespeare himself commonly attributes to children a sense of timelessness, a disregard for the future.²³ Occasionally a child may seek out danger in taunting an adult. Young York maliciously proclaims his wish to render only little thanks to his uncle Gloucester for the gift of a weapon, and he refers to Richard's deformity (*Richard 3* 3.1.125-130). For all his subtlety, the youth lacks discretion, for Buckingham immediately recognizes the mockery behind his bold words:

With what a sharp-provided with he reasons!
To mitigate the scorn he gives his uncle,
He prettily and aptly taunts himself:
So cunning and so young is wonderful.

(*Richard 3* 3.1.132-135)

Such abuse only confirms Gloucester in his inexorable march to the throne, and he has the brothers assassinated in the Tower. The same reckless behavior appears later in Shakespeare's work. Even in the face of death, Young Macduff not only defends his father as a loyal citizen, but also insults the murderer: "Thou li'st, thou shag-ear'd villain!" (*Macbeth* 4.2.83)

Children often reveal their contempt for adults, either directly to those concerned or to the audience.²⁴ Moth amuses the audience by sneering in asides at Don Armado's poverty and general ineptitude in *Love's Labor's Lost*, and the more independent page of Falstaff enjoys taunting Bardolph directly from *2 Henry 4* to *Henry 5*. The boy Lucius vows a complete and bloodthirsty revenge on the attackers of Lavinia

(*Titus Andronicus* 4.1.107-109); his asides in the following scene show that he has added duplicity to animosity. Likewise, deceived by Richard, the children of Clarence seem to have caught some of his spirit of vindictiveness. They pray for God's vengeance for the death of their father (*Richard 3* 2.2.14-15), and they refuse to comfort the innocent Queen Elizabeth (*Richard 3* 2.2.62-65). Children imaginatively and unsympathetically replicate the suffering of adults, and both Lucretia (*Rape* 813-814) and Cleopatra (*Antony and Cleopatra* 5.2.219-220) feel embarrassed at the prospects of being remembered by youths in years to follow.

Aggregations of children compound their mischief by giving them confidence for direct verbal confrontation. Ephesus is troubled with unruly boys (*Comedy of Errors* 3.1.62), and a band of children have been mocking Shylock (*The Merchant of Venice* 2.8.23-24). Adult dignity, especially that of a leader, must be maintained in the face of such encounters. King Henry states that Richard did himself a disservice by casually interacting with vain and gibing boys (*1 Henry 4* 3.2.65-67). Scorning Claudio, the older Leonato declares that he knows the real merits and characters of these youths:

That lie and cog and flout, deprave and slander,
Go anticly, and show outward hideousness,
And speak [off] half a dozen dang'rous words,
How they might hurt their enemies—if they durst—
And this is all.”

(*Much Ado About Nothing* 5.1.95-99)

Peer pressure and mere fashion makes these obstreperous boys brag to cover up their basic cowardice. Rosalind confirms Leonato's insight in telling Celia that to travel safely they will assume a bold exterior “As many other mannish cowards have/That do outface it with their semblances” (*As You Like It* 1.3.121-122).

Portia deems that insensitive behavior, not only of aggression, but of romance, typifies maturing youths. As she and Nerissa assume masculine disguise to travel to Venice, she explains her resolution to lie and pretend. She will

speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
How honorable ladies ought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died.
I could not do withal. Then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them;

Morris Henry Partee

129

And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
 That men shall swear I have discontinued school
 Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
 A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
 Which I will practice.

(*The Merchant of Venice* 3.4.68-78)

Adults see shame as a characteristic usually absent in youth (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* 5.4.165). Falstaff distances himself from such inexperienced lovers: he is not "like a many of these lispng hawthorn buds, that come like women in men's apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury in simple time" (*The Merry Wives of Windsor* 3.3.70-73).

Intergenerational hostility continues at least into adolescence. Perhaps marking the beginning of adolescence, Borachio declares excessive interest in changing fashions of clothes starts at age fourteen (*Much Ado About Nothing* 3.3.131--132). The medieval *Bestiary* defined adolescence as the third stage of life, which begins when a youth is grown up enough to be a sire and ends about the age of twenty-eight.²⁵ The shepherd foster-parent of Perdita wishes "there were no age between ten and three-and-twenty, or that youth would sleep out the rest; for there is nothing in the between but getting wenches with child, wronging the ancients, stealing, fighting" (*The Winter's Tale* 3.3.59-63). Sexual license typifies the onset of adulthood. Lechery is "a sin prevailing much in youthful men,/Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing" (*The Comedy of Errors* 5.1.52-53). At an extreme, "the fury of ungovern'd youth" may thrust some gentlemen from "the company of awful men" (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* 4.1.43-44).

The transition to responsibility is difficult. Portia recognizes that "the brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree—such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple" (*The Merchant of Venice* 1.2.18-21). Reason's power over the will ultimately marks the achievement of maturity (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.2.115-120; *Hamlet* 3.2.63-65). Loving and responsible interaction between parents and children may never occur. Lear's Fool suggests that parental control over hostile children must extend throughout life (*King Lear* 1.4.172-174). While Lear recognizes a special horror in the ingratitude of a child towards a parent (*King Lear* 1.4.260-261), his Fool more phlegmatically suggests that all children see their parents only in terms of economic advantage (*King Lear* 2.4.47-53).

130 SHAKESPEARE AND CHILDREN

In short, Shakespeare suggests that children must quickly outgrow their natural innocence and their innate fear. Hostile adults may resent the intrusiveness of sophisticated children, but the early formation of bravery and independence helped to insure survival. Apprentices such as Moth and Robin have no demonstrable connection with their families of origin, and any children—particularly those of the lower classes—might serve in military campaigns. Verbal precocity enables children to challenge adults by teasing them. Unfortunately, courage often becomes cruelty in older children. Adolescence merely intensifies a hostility between generations; a continuation of this antagonism into older characters provides the basis for the powerful conflicts Shakespeare so effectively presents.

NOTES

¹Some scholars see no dramatic evolution in attitudes towards childhood over vast periods of time. See, for example, Keith Wrightson, *English Society: 1580-1680* (London, 1982); Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family: 1450-1700* (London, 1984); Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford, 1986); Linda A. Pollock, *A Lasting Relationship: Parents and Children Over Three Centuries* (Hanover, 1987).

²Many students of the history of childhood find marginal parental skills in a significant number of Renaissance adults. See Craig R. Thompson, "Schools in Tudor England" in *Life and Letters in Tudor and Stuart England*, ed. by Louis B. Wright and Virginia A. LaMar (Ithaca, 1962); Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society: From Tudor Times to the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1969); Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York, 1975); Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (New York, 1977); Lloyd deMause, "The Evolution of Childhood" in *The History of Childhood: The Evolution of Parent-Child Relationships as a Factor in History*, ed. by Lloyd deMause (New York, 1974), pp. 1-73; Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost: Further Explored* (New York, 1984); Miriam Slater, *Family Life in the Seventeenth Century: The Verneys of Claydon House* (London, 1984).

³See, for instance, Algernon Charles Swinburne, *A Study of Shakespeare* (1880; rpt. New York, 1965), p. 75; Amelia E. Barr, *The Young People of Shakespeare's Dramas for Youthful Readers* (New York, 1882), p. 4; Ellen Terry, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, ed. by Christopher St. John (1932; rpt. New York, 1969), p. 27; Henry Norman Hudson, *Shakespeare: His Life, Art, and Characters* (Boston, 1898), vol. 2, pp. 30-31; A. C. Bradley,

Morris Henry Partee

131

Shakespearean Tragedy (1904; rpt. London, 1965), p. 332; John Howard Whitehouse, *The Boys of Shakespeare* (Birmingham, Eng., 1953), p. 29; C. John Sommerville, *The Rise and Fall of Childhood* (Beverly Hills, Cal., 1982), p. 82.

⁴See Edward Wagenknecht, *The Personality of Shakespeare* (Norman, 1972), p. 87; E. E. Kellett, *Suggestions: Literary Essays* (Cambridge, 1923), p. 81; Francis Lamar Janney, *Childhood in English Non-dramatic Literature from 1557-1798* (Griefswald, 1925), p. 14-15; Robert Pattison, *The Child Figure in English Literature* (Athens, GA, 1978), p. 47; Marjorie Garber, *Coming of Age in Shakespeare* (London, 1983), p. 30.

⁵Martin Luther sees such aggression that divine intervention is necessary: "God knows that there lurks in the children a poisonous resentment against the parents and therefore he commands not only that they should obey them but also honor them" ("Ten Sermons on the Catechism" in *Luther's Work*, ed. by Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia, 1966), v. 51, p. 146.) The later Middle Ages and the Renaissance felt that the innate depravity of the child made correction necessary: "Only the curbing of its essentially vicious impulses by God's grace, using parental discipline as its instrument, could give the child some prospect of escape from perdition" (Houlbrooke, p. 141).

⁶I have discussed the pervasive anxiety Shakespeare attributes to young children in my "Fear in Shakespearean Childhood," *RMRL* 44 (1990): 69-80.

⁷All quotations from Shakespeare in my text will come from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. by G. Blakemore Evans (Boston, 1974).

⁸Pollock, p. 94.

⁹Shakespeare commonly associates youth with danger. Lysander declares that "Quick bright things come to confusion" (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* 1.1.149). See also *Two Gentlemen of Verona* 1.1.45-46; *Love's Labor's Lost* 1.1.100-101; *2 Henry 4* 4.4.54-56; *Hamlet* 1.3.39-42. By tempting fate and evil humans, precocity intensifies the peril. Gloucester twice threatens his nephew in an aside: "So wise so young, they say do never live long" (*Richard 3* 3.1.79) and "Short summers lightly have a forward spring" (*Richard 3* 3.1.94).

¹⁰Garber observes: "A common Shakespearean paradigm for the condition of childhood is that of twins and twinned experience, in which a pair of friends, usually of the same sex, appear to themselves and to others as identical and interchangeable, undifferentiated in character, feature, or affection" (p. 31). See A

Midsummer Night's Dream 3.2.203-214; *As You Like It* 1.3.73-76; *Measure for Measure* 1.4.47-48; *Pericles* 4 Prologue 19-31; *The Winter's Tale* 1.2.67-68). Such proximity in earlier days leads to a special insight or rational understanding of one's companion later (*Two Gentlemen of Verona* 2.4.62-63; *Hamlet* 2.2.11-12). Portia goes so far as to assert that the common interests and activities over a period of time reduces natural differences between children (*The Merchant of Venice* 3.4.11-15). Nevertheless, Shakespeare suggests that such intimacy necessitates a certain degree of repression. When she feels that Hermia has forgotten their youthful allegiance, Helena indignantly turns on Hermia: "She was a vixen when she went to school" (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* 3.2.324).

¹¹See, for instance, *Richard 3* 4.2.96-97; *Julius Caesar* 5.1.61; *As You Like It* 3.5.110). Although some children may be simply unruly or headstrong towards their parents (*Richard 2* 3.4.30-31; *Troilus and Cressida* 3.2.122-123), patricide is not impossible (*Troilus and Cressida* 1.3.115).

¹²Stone, p. 112.

¹³George G. Coulton, *Social Life in Britain: From the Conquest to the Reformation* (1918; rpt. New York, 1968), p. 96.

¹⁴Pinchbeck, p. 227.

¹⁵O. Jocelyn Dunlop, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour* (London, 1912), p. 61; Grace Abbott, *The Child and the State* (Chicago, 1938), vol. 2 p. 323-324.

¹⁶R. Freeman Butts, *The Education of the West: A Formative Chapter in the History of Civilization* (1947; rpt. New York, 1973), p. 273.

¹⁷F. George Kay, *The Family in Transition: Its Past, Present, and Future Patterns* (New York, 1972), pp. 83-84.

¹⁸Peter H. Ditchfield, *The England of Shakespeare* (London, 1917), p. 258.

¹⁹Pinchbeck, 10.

²⁰John M. Roberts and Brian Sutton-Smith, "Child Training and Game Involvement." *Ethnology* 1 (1962): 167.

²¹William J. Rolfe, *Shakespeare the Boy* (New York, 1897), p. 126.

Morris Henry Partee

133

²²Leah Marcus, *Childhood and Cultural Despair* (Pittsburgh, 1978), p. 26.

²³Polixenes remembers thinking as a child that the future and the past blended into the present as he envisioned his role was "to be boy eternal" (*The Winter's Tale* 1.2.65). John Earle says of the child: "He is purely happy because he knows no evil, nor hath made means by sin to be acquainted with misery. He arrives not at the mischief of being wise, nor endures evils to come by foreseeing them" *Microcosmographie*, ed. by Edward Arber (London, 1868), p. 21.

²⁴Hamlet good-naturedly discusses the reciprocal antagonism between the child acting companies and the adult companies. Apparently winning the satiric battle, the children seem to be carrying away the flag of the Globe theater, "Hercules and his load too" (*Hamlet* 2.2.361).

²⁵A *Medieval Bestiary*, trans. and intro. by T. J. Elliott (Boston, 1971), p. 219.