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Judy Schavrien
Sofia University

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Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and the Mystical Particular: Redemption, Then and Now, for a Disassembled World

Judy Schavrien
Sophia University
Palo Alto, CA, USA

Cymbeline reflected Shakespeare's late-in-life aspirations for a world redeemed. Those in baroque England, past the first burgeoning of Renaissance vision, were nevertheless making a literal New World abroad. Likewise, Shakespeare arrived at a vision both post-innocent and post-tragic. As they compared to tragic heroes, he down-sized the late play characters; still, he granted them a gentler end. Late characters and worlds suffered centrifugal pressures; yet, ultimately, centripetal forces, internal and external, brought selves and worlds together. Relevant to today's disassembled world, the study tracks Shakespeare's approach to unification: He rebalanced gender, internal and external; he placed an emphasis on feminine and pastoral virtues, crucial for navigating a seemingly chaotic but beneficent cosmos. In addition, his vision in *Cymbeline* was mystical, relying on acute and shifting contextual awareness, and the power of a vivid particular to transport beyond the rational.

Keywords: ***Shakespeare, Cymbeline, Imogen, paradigm, postmodern, baroque, transpersonal, integral, feminist, gender, romance, mystical***

Emerging from his tragic period, Shakespeare distilled a new vision as the 17th century began: This was the century of British colonizing in the New World (cf. references in *The Tempest* to Bermuda [Shakespeare, 1980b]), of a new direct access to God through the vernacular Bible (under Shakespeare's patron James I), and of Cromwell's populist Puritan revolution that echoed decimating religious wars on the continent (1618-1648) and that beheaded a king (1649). It was also the century of the worldview-shifting work of Galileo, Descartes, and Newton. In short, it was packed with changes that came to deeply affect the present-day paradigm. Shakespeare, one of the most enduring commentators on the human condition, stood at a visionary vantage point; he offered, especially in the late romances that followed upon his tragedies, a wisdom and direction for not just the Jacobean era but also the postmodern one.

This study highlights a particular play of his, *Cymbeline,* in which centrifugal forces work to disassemble identity of person as well as of couple, family, realm, and globe. Even the universe seems out of joint as malevolent or deeply misguided creatures dominate the outcome of action. The forces are both internal and external—psychological and sociopolitical, forces from Nature and from seemingly heavenly and hellish emissaries. To give a preview of the parallel between Shakespeare's late Renaissance/early baroque period (in which he wrote *Cymbeline* [1608-10]) and the present era, here is one characterization of the postmodern: "Where modernism asserts centering, fusing, continuity once the break with tradition has already occurred—postmodernism decanters, enframes, discontinues, and fragments the prevalence of modern ideals" (Silverman, 1990, p. 5, as cited in Hunt, 1995). Many consider post-post-modernism to be upon us (with variants such as post-post-millenialism, metamodernism); this new age can be cultivated by consulting and deploying Shakespeare's insights into everything from globalizing forces to the associative rather than dissociative forces for healing of nation and person.

Shakespeare and other Renaissance humanists such as Montaigne, Rabelais, and Erasmus shared a vision that would further such an end: Their worlds

were variegated, honoring context, offering the local, the timely, and the particular. These worlds an author such as Stephen Toulmin (1990, pp. 24, 63) characterized as the true Renaissance worlds, proposing that the scientific revolution that came to prevail as the 17th century developed constituted a counter-Renaissance, one that narrowed focus to the generic, the formulaic, and the universal. This study will revisit, at its conclusion, the contrast between the variegated vision of Shakespeare and the ongoing search for a decontextualized universal: Contextuality, whether Shakespearean or postmodern, provides the necessary contrast with, supplement of, the search for the universal instituted by 17th century science.

It is not unique to advocate for harmonizing and unifying the world, or to recommend exercising in that process an ecumenical tolerance that welcomes diversity. The harmony need not be simple; the *concordia discors* or discordant concord that would result would necessarily accommodate tension among the different elements. Most useful of all, however, would be to anatomize a vision like that of Shakespeare's—and to value it for giving full weight to psychological, sociopolitical, natural, and cosmic forces that cause disassembling. Such a detailed examination precedes and highlights the reassembling: How is it actually accomplished, at least in the instance of this particular late play? In addition, other late Shakespearean plays supplement; all five of the late plays were commentaries for and from a society poised to create literally—in the American colonies—a New World. They offered at the time and offer now an alternative vision crucial to present day attempts to find pluralistic concord.

In such a spirit, this study approaches (after plot summary) two scenes from what critics have come to characterize as the late period of Shakespeare's work, the period that ended in 1613, three years before he died, and began around 1606-1608, when he wrote *Pericles*. These scenes facilitate, indirectly, exploration of the entire play, summarized as introduction to the scene analyses. The scenes also illuminate the way in which the play is set among the late plays, which embody a similar vision throughout. How did Shakespeare—as he laid out variegated, improbable, centrifugal, and finally centripetal plot lines in *Cymbeline*—see his way clear to the repair of a seemingly chaotic situation? That is the question for then and for now.

The two scenes in question are, again, from *Cymbeline*, considered by most (such as Bevington, 1980, p. xxv) to be the second in a sequence, which began and ended with plays Shakespeare wrote in collaboration, such as *Pericles* (1606-08) and *Henry VIII* (1613), and which featured in the middle the two works that have proven most appealing to present-day audiences, *The Winter's Tale* (1610-11) and *The Tempest* (1611). These two middle plays are the popular choice these days, and perhaps rightly so, since they find their wholeness without the extravagant acts of plot assemblage that occur in the last scene of *Cymbeline.* Nevertheless, as the first late play written with Shakespeare as sole author, *Cymbeline* gives a special entrée into the new post-tragic vision as it had begun to emerge in the playwright and his works.[1]

"How good a society does human nature permit?" Conversely: "How good a human nature does society permit?" (Maslow, 1972, p. 203). Spiritual issues, transpersonal issues, are at root intertwined with sociopolitical ones. There are additional challenges confronting the *Cymbeline* characters: They suffer from their internal fragmentations and variegations and likewise from the external ones that characterize not just their sociopolitical, but also their natural, and (seemingly) cosmic settings. These splinterings then make the challenges intense. Likewise, the characters and their worlds face challenges in the reconciling of cultured society with nature, both internally and externally, due to splits between urban and rural, civilized and developing, the natural creature—whether freshly innocent or brutish—and the near-divinity who stretches to be a pattern and a paragon.

Cymbeline, an Improbable Story

What follows is a synopsis. It precedes the analysis of scenes that exemplify the mood and tone of the play as a concordia discors. Not just the summary but also the analyses, insofar as they portray unfolding of events and character in the play, I explore in the present tense, aiming to retain a vivid portrayal.

Posing the greatest challenge to summarizing and analysis are the discontinuities in plot and, internally, in the characters. Bevington (1980) attempted to rescue both the discontinuities and the improbabilities from blanket condemnation. He described Shakespeare's use of the romance genre as follows: "[R]omantic improbability is related to the serious motif of redemption, of an unexpected and undeserved second chance for erring humanity" (p. 152). In short, an analysis of *Cymbeline* may baffle a reader as much due to oddities in plot and

character as due to some complex argument. With luck these oddities carry their own brand of charm, however, since they are reconciled in the triumphant assemblage accomplished at the play's conclusion.

Synopsis—The Actual and the Imagined

The following plot summary will function not just to set in context the two scenes central to this study but also to begin the exposition of parallels between the 17th century and now. Any bringing about of a happy, even redemptive, ending will entail resolving plot elements into a concordia discors, a harmony from disharmonies—a parti-colored pastiche of different times and places and cultures. The pastiche exists even within this character or that: For example, the heroine who provides a charismatic center of the play spends half her play-life as a female and half as a male. (She is called, in the summary below, "Innogen," but in other redactions "Imogen.")

> Cymbeline, King of Britain when Augustus Caesar was Emperor of Rome, has a daughter, Innogen, and two sons who were stolen in infancy. The queen, his second wife, has a son, Cloten, whom Cymbeline wishes Innogen to marry; but she has secretly married a commoner, Posthumus Leonatus. Cymbeline banishes Posthumus to Rome, where he meets Iachimo, who wagers with him that he can seduce Innogen. Arriving in Britain, Iachimo realizes that she is incorruptible, but, hiding in her bedroom, obtains evidence which convinces Posthumus that he has won the wager. Posthumus orders his servant Pisanio to kill Innogen at Milford Haven, but instead Pisanio advises her to disguise herself as Fidele, a [male] page; in Wales, she meets her brothers, who were stolen twenty years before by the banished nobleman Belarius. Cloten pursues Innogen to Wales in Posthumus' clothes, determined to rape her and kill Posthumus. Instead, he is killed [for his customary insolence] by one of her brothers, and his decapitated body laid beside Innogen, who has taken a potion that makes her appear dead. When she revives, Innogen/ Fidele joins the Roman army, which is invading Britain as a result of Cymbeline's failure to pay tribute to Rome. Posthumus and the stolen princes are instrumental in defeating the Roman army. A final scene of explanations leads to private and public reconciliation. (Macmillan, 2008)

To add to the complexity, let it be noted that the Rome mentioned above is part classical, supplying an army from Augustus Caesar, and part 17th century. Posthumus, banished, spends his exile in Rome, but there it is a late Renaissance Roman type, Iachimo, who persuades him that his wife back in England has betrayed him. Cultures and eras, then, are juxtaposed in a manner that challenges any sensibility that might be seeking Ben Jonson's much-touted classical unities.

As Posthumus leaves England on a boat, having been torn away from Imogen by her father and propelled into exile, Imogen must stay behind. She tells Pisanio, the servant, how much more devoted she would have been than he to the task of seeing her husband off. The servant failed to watch with a fraction of the intensity she herself would have brought to viewing the boat, which receded with her husband on the deck:

> I would have broke mine eyestrings, cracked them but
> To look upon him till the diminution
> Of space had pointed him sharp as a needle
> Nay, followed him till he had melted from
> The smallness of a gnat to air.
> (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 1.3.17-21)

Imogen's remarks draw one into her imagined performance of a devoted lover's feat. As the gnat melts to air, her ardent imagination, with its greater than pinpointed particularity, performs an act of mystical devotion—one that strives to make the lovers' union indissoluble. This kind of extravagant loving, which she, in the end, proves equal to making real, has won her much devotion from critics and audiences down the centuries. Even she, as the plot progresses, gets disassembled and turned around, it is true. But she is easiest to reassemble as an identity because this utter devotion to her beloved gets dislodged only for the merest instant. It quickly snaps back into place and becomes crucial to the healing of the *Cymbeline* universe—if only by setting a feeling tone that magnetizes her lover, her enemy, Iachimo, and her father to move toward that warmth; it encourages all parts of her world—couple, family, realm and cosmos—to reassemble.

Her description is one example of how space and time not only splinter or converge, they accordion from large arcs to tiny points. The remark quoted above, again, is the heroine's impassioned outburst as she imagines that she could have been there to see her beloved sail into forced exile. Tanner (1961)

focused on Imogen's impassioned profession to note the following:

> "Diminution of space" has an added resonance in a play which brings ancient Britain, Renaissance Italy and wild Wales together in the same spot. And I have a quite unjustifiable sense that Shakespeare would like us to experience this play as somehow taking place at the very periphery of vision, where lands and times and events merge together—and the gnat melts to air. (p. lx)

The audience must apply their imaginations to follow along. At other moments, however, the play finds ground in extremely realistic doings and characters. It is worth noting that the realism—the familiar texture of everyday actualities—is the other pole: extravagant yet precise imagining, down-to-earth particularities. In the opening scene of the play, there is jocular commentary on an unlikely story, which serves as a kind of audacious flaunting on Shakespeare's part. Second Gentleman: "That a king's children should be so conveyed, / So slackly guarded…!" First Gentleman: "Howsoe'er 'tis strange, / Or that the negligence may well be laughed at, / Yet is it true, sir" (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 1.1.64-69). An imaginative plot line is, at one moment, then, satirized in the light of the realistic court setting; the King's losing his children to a kidnapper sounds like mere fantasy, the Second Gentleman suggests. At the next moment, imagination is not at all sheer fantasy; it offers up the very stuff of which true love is made. The audience can remain neither in archetypal fairy tale realms nor in supposedly realistic realms either: They are eventually induced to take a wide-ranging overview of many worlds and kinds of worlds to reach resolution for dilemmas of person, society, globe, and cosmos. Like settings, faculties must also vary: Reason must be liberally supplemented by imagination, which in turn can function to produce a fluffy fantasy or a kind of true knowing.[2]

A reconciling resolution—whether at the "periphery of vision" or not—will often aim to unite the fragmented and misguided self before addressing reconciliation among larger entities. Plato, Gandhi, Tolstoy, and Jung approached social reform by way of reforming the individual: Without certain personal developments from ignorance to knowledge, and without changed motivations signaling a change of heart, no major shift could be both initiated and sustained in the world. Successful change must be internal and external.

The people of *Cymbeline* suffer fragmentations; their world also changes with bewildering rapidity. The epistemological challenge—to sort out what exactly is happening before even considering what to do about it—is a challenge, both for the characters and the audience, as severe as any political, ecological, or theological one.

The First of Two Scenes: The Dirge

In the first scene to be examined two young men sing a dirge. Death and, soon after, resurrection occur at the pivotal moment of the play. Both the death and the resurrection are highly colored—or mottled—by epistemological befuddlements. In other words, the main character seems dead but is instead in a death-like sleep. The two young men think themselves forest-dwelling commoners, but they are kidnapped royals. When they first had met the "lad" to whom they gave refuge and, eventually, a burial, they fell in love at once; in fact, the elder brother declared that, had this fellow been a girl, he would have romanced her. They failed to realize that she is not only a princess, fleeing trouble at court while pursuing her banished husband, but also their sister. They ultimately discover that their instant love might find some portion of its explanation in natural family feeling. They have luckily, on the other hand, skirted incest, because they fall for Imogen's gender disguise and make no advances. The young men will speak a dirge over his/her grave, misconstruing identities, actions, meanings, and the contexts that color all these.

Death in so many ways is the key to the shift in knowing and being—to the second chance for erring humanity. In these pivotal scenes, however, much that is associated with it just accents, poignantly, vividly, the dark ironies of the human condition. This will be highlighted both through the mixed-up circumstances for the funeral with its dirge and also in the content of the dirge itself.

The fog as context. Before presenting the actual verses of the dirge, one may begin with epistemological context by quoting Tanner's (1961) commentary. He noted the befuddlement that prevails throughout this play amid its "myriad, mixed actions" (p. lvi). He first supplied this quote from Imogen: "I see before me, man. Nor here, nor here, / Nor what ensues, but have a fog in them / That I cannot look through" (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 3.2.79-81). Said Tanner (1961): "The 'fog' which centrally engulfs the heroine, Imogen, settles variously on them all, until they cannot see to see—to borrow Emily Dickinson's powerful formulation. In no other play do so many characters seem so blind" (p. lvi).

The downsizing. What correlates with this befuddlement, and with the near defeat at the hands of rapid life-change, is Shakespeare's new way of viewing the characters that suffer these indignities. They are, not just epistemologically, but in all ways, considerably downsized from those huge creatures who dominate the tragedies.

The downsizing is especially interesting in light of the fact that Hamlet, one can easily argue, is the first full-fledged personality to be presented on stage. Shakespeare had reshaped the soliloquy convention so that soliloquies delivered not just details of time, place, or plot but glimpses into the character's complex inner workings (Mowat, 1977). Hamlet's inner landscapes were a New World for psychological explorers. It is striking that the same playwright who created that towering personality in the round and other great ones, such as Macbeth, Othello, and Lear, came to deploy personality on a much smaller scale and only for the purposes of certain "establishing" close-ups (as film lingo would have it); in a late play like *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare abandoned personality when he preferred for his purposes to substitute a *type* for that same creature who had earlier in the play appealed to us in a unique persona. Note, for instance, that Posthumus turns into a carbon copy of Iachimo, when, mistakenly disillusioned with Imogen at the villain's hands, he launches into an obscene rant against women (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 2.5.13-22); then, at a later moment in the play, he resumes his own shape again. Sometimes Shakespeare even substituted a downright puppet for the creature we thought we had come to know.

Here are some comments Northrop Frye (1986) made on the matter:

> [T]here's a close affinity between the romances and the most primitive (and therefore most enduring) forms of drama, like the puppet show. To mention some of their characteristics: . . . there's a noticeable scaling down of characters;. . . Leontes [in *The Winter's Tale*] and Posthumus are jealous, and very articulate about it, but their jealousy doesn't have the *size* that Othello's jealousy has: we're looking at people more on our level, saying and feeling the things we can imagine ourselves saying and feeling.
>
> . . . The scaling down of characters brings these plays closer to the puppet shows I just mentioned. If you watch a good puppet show for very long you almost get to feeling that the puppets are convinced that they're producing all the sounds and movements themselves, even though you can see that they're not. In the romances, where the incidents aren't very believable anyway, the sense of puppet behavior extends so widely that it seems natural to include a god or goddess as the string puller. (p. 155)

This study does not view in isolation the formation, repair, or dissolution of personality, because such an approach would violate Shakespeare's vision; it would bypass whatever wisdom he had to offer on the shifts that were taking place and needed to take place during his watershed times. Instead, the analysis places psychology in political and metaphysical context. It is no accident that Frye mentioned the god and goddess string-pullers. In *Cymbeline,* as in *Pericles, The Winter's Tale*, and *Henry VIII,* there are dei ex machina, prophecies, oracles, and epiphanies, all crucial to the reconciliatory resolutions. The study attempts, then, to take an in-the-round view of *Cymbeline*, one that encompasses attention to contextuality not just internal to the play but also external to it. This play is situated amidst Shakespeare's last five or six plays, his late romances, that share in late vision; such a vision is intimate with both death and also with whatever mitigates, overarches, or transcends it[3]—by way, for instance, of natural transformation or even Providence.

The dirge, in detail. It is now time to approach more nearly the dirge scene. The "lost in the fog" theme, the downsizing of characters, and the casting of aspersions on free will by way of the puppet stylistics provide good context for viewing it. Yet the dirge serves as a momentary counterpoint to a related facet of the play—that its world is one of incessant and rapid transmutation. The various forms of disorientation accompany changes that come upon characters with bewildering rapidity. On the other hand, the dirge stops the action and stops the show. It has an enchanting effect on the characters for whom it provides solace—and also on the audience. This particular dirge, in fact, surely enchanted the audience of the play at the early theatrical productions, given that it has continued to enchant audiences down through the centuries:

> Fear no more the heat o' the sun;
> Nor the furious winter's rages,
> Thou thy worldly task hast done,

Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney sweepers come to dust.

Fear no more the frown of the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke:
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.
(Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 4.2.262-271)

These are the first two verses, that represent well enough the dirge as a whole. They point to the disruptions and insults wished on humans, who are so vulnerable. They mention the injuries dispensed by Nature, which the sylvan young men—singing to their lost lad (Imogen in disguise)—would understand, given their country upbringing. The verses also detail the injuries suffered in an urban court culture, which the young men could not understand, at least not feelingly. Both the lost-in-the-fog and out-of-control quality, which allow for poignantly expressive human moments, and the dislocating spatial and temporal details of this scene (sylvan naives singing in a timeless Welsh forest about urban court life) are quite characteristic of the play's approach as a whole.

Uniquely vivid in this scene is the conjoining of moods, which would, in a rational world, be quite inappropriately joined, but not so in this world dominated by imaginative elaboration, whether in the direction of puppet show, legend, fairy tale, nightmare, or dream. At the end of the first verse, a pun, one might even say a really bad pun, establishes the consolatory premise of the dirge. "Golden lads and girls all must/ As chimneysweepers come to dust." The fair face of the aristocrat and the blackened face of the chimneysweeper merge in the line "come to dust," which bodies forth both the sweep's chimney dust and the grave's dust. Two extremes of a verbal, social, visual spectrum meet and merge. The social worlds, for instance, could not be further apart, since the chimney sweep child would have led a life in which he was cruelly abused (as William Blake [1789/1969] wrote, "So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep" [line 4]). The visual gold-and-black pun has a neo-Platonic emblematic quality about it, inviting a soulful contemplation, although a complex one, since, again, the pun is outrageous. The solemn mood, then, is interrupted by a kind of clowning, and yet these two disparate moods join to make one enchanting one. Only with the kind of sensual, imaginative reception that transforms one's being while listening to music can one fully appreciate the concordia discors of this mood.

In the late plays, Shakespeare reworked characters and themes not only from the tragedies, revisiting, for instance, Othello's jealousy (as the jealousy of Posthumus) or Iago's boundless cynicism (as the subversive cynicism of Iachimo, that little Iago); but Shakespeare also pursued these reworkings from one late play to the next. The uncanny "Full Fathom Five" song in *The Tempest* may help the reader to comprehend with feeling the accomplishment of "Fear No More." In the midst of Shakespeare's probing, in his late vision, into the nature of personal identity, given its shifting contexts, he came to magnify the role that death plays or lessen it or both: He magnified its role in disassembling personal identity (as when a girl gets mourned as a boy and also buried with her worst enemy rather than best beloved [more on this later]), since death can now turn a self-story topsy-turvy; the tragic heroes were spared this kind of indignity. On the other hand, Shakespeare also softened rather than intensified the impact of death on personal coherence, since late play characters tend to pop up again after a brief turn at death or life-in-death; or else they continue to exist in some transmuted afterlife. Just as Imogen will resurrect from this supposed funeral, so there is a king whose death gets mourned in the *Tempest*; he will instead turn out to be alive and well, and, had he not been, the mourning song conveys, enacts in fact, his "rich and strange" (Shakespeare, 1611/1980b, 1.2.92) afterlife. The setting is this: The king's son, sitting on the beach, with his arms "in this sad knot," (Shakespeare, 1611/1980b, 1.2.61) mourns the loss of his father. Ariel, a sprite who has created the faux tempest that supposedly drowned the king, sings a song to relieve the young son's intense grieving:

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that does fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong,
Hark! Now I hear them – Ding-dong, bell.
(Shakespeare 1608-1610/1980b, 1.2.91-92)

It would seem cruel to sing a song like this to a sensitive young man so freshly bereft. Yet the song soothes the prince; it succeeds. The dead father is transforming into live coral, his eyes into pearl. The dirge for him pervades the wide sea. Nature has the last word in this intertwining, and She has her mysteries.

The difference between the *Tempest* song and the *Cymbeline* one is that the *Cymbeline* solace is all in how death provides rest from the unpredictability and futility of life's efforts, romantically, politically, culturally (to follow the enumeration in the verses), and also in pursuit of food and clothing, sheer survival; whereas the *Tempest* song is about a mysterious and visually gorgeous conjoining. What is the same in both songs is that whatever unhappiness one's life project may have brought, whether in pursuit of the consummation of a true love (*Cymbeline*) or the rule of a kingdom (*The Tempest*), he may comprehend and find solace by applying not only reason to contemplate the texture of life but also imagination; the full meaning goes beyond the actualities as one might know them and includes the imaginings (Grene, 1967, p. 46). In this light, certain of life's ironies transmute more kindly into paradox, even mystery.

The Second Scene: Waking in the Grave

To further clarify the meaning, here is the second crucial scene for this analysis; it follows upon the dirge. The fuller context of this scene is that this is the nadir of the plot action and things basically ascend, with dips and recoveries, from here. There is, in fact, some pre-planned destiny, a prophecy to be fulfilled, with the fulfillment announced by Jupiter descending on an eagle to bring solace to the young protagonist, Posthumus, as he dreams. The prophesied destiny will bring all together, including the much-weathered lovers, in a final scene. There will be reconciliation all around. (Britain, despite winning the war, will resubmit itself to Rome, paying tribute; the lovers can now marry, despite commoner's being matched with royal, Posthumus with Imogen. This is because the newfound sylvan brothers show up at court. They, like Posthumus arrive at court by way of having heroically salvaged the war effort, and the elder brother takes precedence over Imogen, much to her delight, for inheriting the throne.) It remains relevant, nevertheless, what the look and feel is of such a nadir; it is one that juxtaposes life and death, the brute in the human and the breathtaking paragon, the privileged being and the desolate destiny which may overtake her.

The sheer vulnerability of a character's life project dominates not just the dirge but that which follows it. A person is vulnerable regarding the simple project of maintaining a decent human state, at least minorly self-defining, and free from grotesque mischaracterization. One may even suffer, as in the next portion of the play analyzed—the placing of one's bodily remains alongside the remains of those most hated instead of those most loved.

The scene that follows the dirge centers on a pun even more outrageous than "come to dust." The adoptive father of the sylvan young men tells them that they will have to put their beloved lad in the same grave with Cloten. They are, of course, aware that this Prince Cloten is a fool, but unaware that he is the brutish suitor being forced on Imogen by her father, and that the imposition had been a major spur to her fleeing court. (They are likewise unaware that their beloved boy, Fidele, is in fact this Imogen.) Cloten has had his head cut off by the elder sylvan brother in a dispute; nevertheless a prince, even a headless one, deserves burial. Therefore, the two, Imogen/Fidele and Cloten, are laid out together. (Their "burial" will rely on a director's choice of staging; the grave can be a relatively superficial one, still visible to the audience. The brothers plan to return for some midnight work on it.) Because Imogen was only mistaken for dead but lies instead in a death-like sleep, she soon after the departure of her mourners wakes up next to the headless body. It is wearing her husband's clothes, since she had ill-advisedly touted her husband by informing the obnoxious suitor that her husband's "meanest garment, / That ever hath but clipp'd his body, is dearer/ In my respect than all the hairs above thee,/ Were they all made such men" (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 2.3.135-38). Very telling as to the character of this shallow and embittered Cloten, he takes his greatest offense from the remark about garments (Grene, 1967, pp. 52-53) and decides to rape her in her husband's clothes. She awakes and keens her bereavement:

> The dream's here still; even when I wake, it is
> Without me, as within me; not imagin'd, felt.
> A headless man! The garments of Posthumus!
> I know the shape of 's leg, this is his hand,
> His foot Mercurial, his Martial thigh,
> The brawns of Hercules, but his Jovial face—
> (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 4.2.378-383)

She smears, in the BBC production (Sutton & Moshinsky, 1983), the blood from the headless corpse, still wet at the stem, on her face. She is transformed into

all grief; she is a ritual of mourning. She falls (according to Shakespeare's stage directions) on the corpse.

Two kinds of personal happiness. What does this second scene say about human beings, about person and personality? As the older brother says, upon consenting to bury both bodies together, "Thersites' body is as good as Ajax'/When neither are alive." (Shakespeare, 1608-1619/1980a, 4.2.252). There is a world of difference between the ugly and mocking commoner, Thersites, and the high-born battle hero, Ajax, but only when they live, not when they "come to dust." Furthermore, not just live but even dead people suffer a terrible vulnerability. The dirge pun was a bad funeral joke, but this is a worse one. The first was about the coinciding of linguistic universes: The chimneysweep discourse comes to coincide with that of the aristocratic golden world. In the case of the grave revival scene, however, the pun is not just verbal but fleshed out: The body of the worst of men, Cloten, takes on the identity, at least in Imogen's eyes, of the body of the best of men, her husband Posthumus, so often praised as a paragon; Cloten reaps the delicious mourning.

As to funeral jokes, perhaps the comedian Woody Allen (n.d.) got it right when he said, "I am not afraid of death, I just don't want to be there when it happens." Death can have its own say when it puts the final punctuation mark on one's assiduously constructed self-image and self-story. Not everyone feels comfortable with that. Aristotle (350 BCE/1962), in the *Ethics,* offered one definition of the pursuit of a flourishing life when he discussed what is needed to achieve *eudaimonia* (Colebrook, 2007-2008, pp. 82, 85). This would be, literally, the wellbeing of one's daimon (accompanying spirit or genius), but is frequently translated as happiness. He detailed virtues required for sustaining life purposes and included, in the description of a life of wellbeing, the achievement of a good narrative for the person's life. He discussed, therefore, whether onlookers should wait for some years after a person's death to see if eudaimonia has been achieved. The children that survived that person, after all, might suffer terrible misfortune or bring disgrace to the family reputation that had seemed secure.

It is worth noting that reputation does matter in *Cymbeline.* However much "Fear No More" celebrates the rest and withdrawal offered by death, its last two lines are these: "Quiet consummation have; / And renownéd be thy grave!" (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 4.2.280-281)

One's personal identity, aside from this wait-and-see stipulation, often seems to culminate with the funeral. What happens to identity at that moment? Will the deceased be promoted to paragon—even someone who had no patience for that kind of aggrandizing? Will he be demoted by brooding children to a devil, however much they might sugarcoat embittered remarks? Will she instead be invoked by way of endearing foibles? This might actually bring moments of joy and solace to those who grieve her. In short, no life project of achieving a personal identity remains in one's control. Here is a memorable comment on the situation: My reputation's more interesting than I am; more people working on it (Saul Bellow in paraphrase, personal communication, circa 1971). To the mix of artisans, one may certainly add Death.

Cymbeline is about protagonists who resemble Everyman and Everywoman, simply pursuing their happiness. There is also an important way in which they differ: Because the main characters are royal or married to royalty, their fates will affect the fate of the realm. But before moving the analysis to the next level, to the political one, one would do well to examine an alternative way to pursue personal happiness. This second manner, rather than overlooking the whole of the life, emphasizes the peak experience that accompanies full presence in and to the moment. Leading with a Ram Dass phrase from popular culture, the philosopher Colebrook called the approach "Be here now" (2007-2008, pp. 84-86). For Imogen, waking in the grave next to Cloten, her pursuit of the kinds of peak experiences she enjoyed in her originally blissful liaison with Posthumus leads her to a nadir experience. She is reduced in every way possible as a human being. She might as well be the hunk of meat she embraces, mistaking it for her husband. Nevertheless, she resurrects from that moment to, in some sense, trigger the redemption of the realm (even her estranged and then remorseful husband fights successfully to save it in her name). One might consider that she regresses as far as one can in the service, ultimately, of a transpersonal development. When she finally does issue from her misfortunes, she shares with her husband a moment far-famed for its sweetness. Posthumus, in realizing that he has failed to kill his most dear wife, whom he thought untrue, embraces her at the culmination of the play declaring "Hang there like fruit, my soul, /Till the tree die!" (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 5.5.266-267). They are together in a

paradise of mutual forgiveness, reunion, and recovery. Attesting to the lasting impression this moment makes even on witnesses down through the ages is the anecdote about Tennyson's last moments. It is narrated by his son, Hallam Tennyson:

> Hallam reports that his dying father tried unsuccessfully to read this particular passage ("which he always called the tenderest lines in Shakespeare") before uttering the sentence "I have opened it [the book]," and then speaking "his last words, a farewell blessing, to my mother and myself." (Hughes, 2007, p. 95)

Perhaps this latter form of happiness, the peak experience, will have to stand in for the long arc of life, the eudaimonia, in regard to the play's action; eudamonia, after all, calls for more control in a less shifting world. Any self-defined and self-defining identity is gravely at risk in the *Cymbeline* world (as in most of the late play worlds, cf. end note 3). Imogen in the grave mistakes Cloten for Posthumus. Yet here is another point: She is not completely mistaken. Posthumus has turned into a kind of Cloten because, like Othello, he has his own Iago who persuades him falsely that Imogen has betrayed him. True to the world of this late play, Iago is named instead "Iachimo," which means little Iago. Still, Iachimo does sufficient damage. Iachimo differs from Iago because he is capable of a kind of repentance at the end that permits the tragedy to turn into tragicomedy. Everyone forgives, is forgiven, is rescued all around, except for the two truly dispensable characters, Cloten and his wicked mother, and even she repents before dying.

Holding one's shape—or not. The point is, however, that Posthumus fails to hold his shape. The play opens with a discussion of what his proper shape is, at least as report would have it. The Second Gentleman objects to the lavish praise accorded Posthumus: "You speake him farre." The First Gentleman replies: "I do extend him (Sir) within himselfe,/ Crush him together, rather then unfold/ His measure duly" (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 1.1. 28-31). It is hard to make a project of personal identity when identities in this particular world seem to have a Silly Putty quality or at least an Alice-in-Wonderland one. There is some analogy here between the way space and time accordions and the way personalities change shape. Posthumus might mind less in this particular instance; he is being praised to the skies. But as the action proceeds, Posthumus also seems to "catch" like an infection the lascivious and misogynistic mindstate of Iachimo; a speech that comes from him could have come from Iachimo, fails to contain that personal coloring, which would distinguish the two men (Grene, 1967, p. 57):

> Is there no way for men to be but women
> Must be half-workers? . . .
> O, all the devils!
> This yellow Iachimo, in an hour, was 't not?
> Or less, –at first? –perchance he spoke not, but,
> Like a full-acorn'd boar, a German one,
> Cried "O!" and mounted . . .
> Could I find out
> The woman's part in me! For there's no motion
> That tends to vice in man, but I affirm
> It is the woman's part . . .
> (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 2.5.13-22)

Posthumus also comes to order an attempt on his wife's life, a violence like that of Cloten's, who failed in his attempt to violate her. Personal identity, then, suffers a kind of shifting of elements, colliding, coinciding, infecting, dissolving, and so on just as the action, in addition to character, arrives at moments of elemental coinciding, as in the dirge and graveyard puns. Not only Buddhists but also Quantum physicists like Heisenberg would recognize this world as one of dependent co-arisings. Even personality can be viewed this way, and certainly the personal project of accomplishing a fulfilled identity.

The dissociated personality may not be as abnormal an occurrence as one tends to imagine. The fully associated personality may be the exceptional accomplishment. Sometimes—especially in young people still forming—destiny takes aim at identity, easily shifting or dispersing its fragile assemblage. If matters turn out in *Cymbeline* for the best in the end, it is worth noting that this occurs not solely or even mainly due to human intention and enterprise but by way of supernatural intervention. The intervention, one may grant, enjoys facilitation by way of certain human virtues. But they are more passive and receptive than active: patience, persistence, resilient loyalty, and so on.

Context and Co-arising—Then and Now

The Person

Shakespeare's view of personality, during his disconcertingly fast-moving times—the view of someone who helped, by way of Hamlet, invent the concept—

conveys insight into not just his own era but also ours. His late Renaissance/Baroque times were disconcertingly fast-moving, so full of change that centrifugal forces applied their pressures. Heinz Kohut, the psychoanalytic theorist, had reluctantly noted that Freud's psychology was out of date (Schavrien, 1989, pp. 156-58). No longer should hysteria be viewed as the main illness or trauma the main marker; instead Kohut reset the psychological focus on fragmentation and its characteristic illnesses—dissociated or multiple personalities, narcissistically wounded ones, including what now lists in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th Edition; APA, 2000) as borderline. He tracked the likelihood of fragmenting during developmental transitions and other pressured periods. The fragmenting might well include not just disintegrating within oneself but also a dis-integrating from society. This vulnerability to fragmentation was his new characterization of people in the 20th century; but it likewise describes those in the 21st. A next step is as follows: To investigate the contexts for these fragmentations, not just in personal terms, examining identity and endeavor, but also in political terms. This is a world in which there are elements that migrate, there are co-arisings, and they are interdependent. There is nothing that is separable from context, although there are expressions of a deep longing for that separation, whether in the death celebrated in "Fear No More"—sweet rest at last—or in the paradise that restores Posthumus and Imogen to their glad beginnings: "Hang there like fruit, my soul"—ripe, palpitating with life, but blissfully still.

The Polity

The romances aim to align personal happiness with social and political success. And they do so successfully by the end of each late drama; the audience is prevailed upon both to believe in the alignment and to applaud, even if they suspect that the kaleidoscopic shifts have been suspended for a moment rather than brought to a full stop. There are attempts also to align natural goodness with sociopolitical and personal happiness by way of the grafting of rural and urban together; such a grafting, the plays suggest, would produce the best possible royal progenitors: the best of rural, the best of urban, producing and stabilizing a brave new world. This nature/culture grafting, then, occurs in most of the late plays. *Cymbeline,* a drama that had begun with much centrifugal force, scattering its participants far and wide, will end with centripetal action and even coherent meaning. There will be more than town and country uniting; there will also be an ecumenical gathering in of people from disparate cultures, classes, and genders. (The gender divide, as suggested by the "German boar" quote, is the most painful divide of all).

I will explore, then, the relation to hope of the "grafting" theme, suggesting that this theme aligns with other centripetal dynamics. I will first, however, provide the reader with some biographical notes on Shakespeare. They further delineate a context for the grafting discussion.

A biographical/historical note. Who better to bring a most catholic vision to the turn of the 17th century and to a decisive launching point for much that came to characterize the modern age than Shakespeare? The 17th century could have been the age of great peace; James I called himself James Pacificus. To begin with, James intended to offer reassurance, now that he had ascended the English throne, that his own Scotland could be united with England in one Great Britain. Such reassurance would have to counter English doubts about Scottish "barbarians." In addition, the title of James Pacificus was one that announced the King's ambitions to ward off religious wars brewing in his own country and on the continent; the Protestant son of a Catholic mother, James acted upon his pacifying intentions by negotiating marriages to Catholics for two of his Protestant children. Elizabeth, who reigned in the early part of Shakespeare's career, and James, who succeeded her, had done their best to ward off religious wars by taking relatively mild tacks in their enforcement of loyalty to the new Anglican Church rites. Shakespeare witnessed Puritan dissent against James (he was often at sword's point with the House of Commons, which housed the majority of Puritans—and this portended the revolution, which would soon behead his son Charles). Shakespeare likewise, from the Catholic side, witnessed the Gunpowder Plot; it aimed, without success, to explode James along with his Parliament (Schavrien, 2008, pp. 210-11). (Shakespeare had even known from childhood Robert Catesby, a chief conspirator in the plot [Pearson, 1961, p. 132]). The playwright's mother and her family were known to be Catholic; whether or not he or his father were remains a subject of contention.

To add to the religious mix, there was a rural/urban mix and a class mix. Shakespeare was a country boy. In his plays he made increasingly powerful use

of pagan deity, as was originally encouraged by anti-blasphemy legislation, in place since Henry VIII battled theatrical Catholic vestiges (e.g. the mystery plays) and revived by Elizabeth, then James. To avoid blasphemy, then, Shakespeare and his contemporaries would name pagan divinities instead of Christian ones; this allowed them, too, to revive passages from classical texts. In the late plays especially, the pagan deities were invoked and sometimes seemed to wear their old Roman dress, as does the Jupiter who descends to resolve *Cymbeline*. He descends on an eagle like the Roman one that signals, in the dream scene and the final scene, the union between Britain and Rome in the 1st century CE, through Britain's choosing to pay tribute despite having won the war. This ending implicitly highlights the fact that the play locates its action in the century of Christ's salvific appearance (Tanner, 1996, p. lxvi); a New Age would begin for all. Movement in *Cymbeline* toward political reconciliation between England and Rome would have carried, for Shakespeare's 17th century audience, allusions to a dearly needed rapprochement between their official Church of England and the church of a lingering, volatile portion of the population, that of Rome—with Christ presiding over the whole.

Shakespeare, however, used pagan deities for other 17th century purposes as well: He re-imported contemporary rural festivals, whether for harvest or sheep-shearing, using fertility goddesses, with their accompanying rites. This happens explicitly in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, which both feature Ceres and Proserpina. Less explicit as reflections of nature celebrations, but equally crucial, are the behaviors and rites of the sylvan brothers in *Cymbeline*. They suggest that the country lads will supply in their persons a hardy, natural-grown stock for regenerating the royal breed at court and a solid decency, having been brought up far from the court machinations, and intentionally so. They will also contribute, not just their noble impulses to excel in battle (apparently inborn, since no sylvan father's warnings could quell their martial fervor) but also their acquired intimacy with natural surroundings.

Why recapitulate religious points of view? Such a review highlights the following: Not only the obvious differences in temporal and spatial cultures are reconciled in the mosaic of the conclusion but also differences of religion and of country and town. Shakespeare, at a salutary distance from the keening despairs of the tragedies—using their dark insight as a point of departure but not an endpoint—now offered the ecumenical insight his own person afforded him; he suggested a direction for the future.

There were two more areas which he could reconcile. He was a commoner who came to London and hobnobbed with court figures. Several critics believed either that the Earl of Southampton or else that the Earl of Pembroke was his lover. (Anthony Burgess [1972] posited the Southampton connection in a fictional version of the bard's life, for instance, while A. L. Rowse [1965] blamed a bisexual Southampton for making advances.) His patrons as well could have helped educate him in ways of the court; a friend like Ben Jonson, with his excellent training, could round out Shakespeare's education. In his person, Shakespeare spanned the classes. Eventually his father, probably greatly helped by the son's achievements and funds, obtained an escutcheon for the family, nudging them into petty aristocracy. After all, William, the son and playwright, really was born a king of the species, if not by blood then by the might of his talent. In short, the alliances that Shakespeare cast between those seeming plebeians, revealed in the end to be noble, and upper class figures, or even royal lovers, must have been well-informed by his own life. In the late plays, he flirted with brief democratic outbursts but never concluded on such a note; instead he also indulged in broadsides against the rabble. On the whole, his humanity comprehended a wide range of classes.

Also, his gender-play was well-informed: On the one hand, he gave us the young boys playing women, as did the other playwrights of his day; on the other hand, he made witty use of boy playing woman playing boy; and what he did in this regard matured and deepened after the early comedies. What at first had accomplished the upending and transcending of a social category, requiring a social solution to set the situation right, eventually participated in a natural and cosmic reshuffling. Shakespeare's own bisexuality, as amply demonstrated in the sonnets, unless one spends one's ink explaining away phrases like "Master-mistress of my passion" (Sonnet 20), schooled him well for this gender play. These sets of categories spanned by Shakespeare, most of them not just mentally but through life experience, give context to the grafting solution in the late vision.

Grafting. The metaphor of grafting is used explicitly in the play, which most probably followed on *Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale.* "You see, sweet maid, we

marry/ A gentler scion to the wildest stock, / And make conceive a bark of baser kind/ By bud of nobler race" (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 4.4.92-95; Schavrien, 2009). In dialogue with Perdita, female protagonist of the play, a seeming shepherdess who discovers only at the last moment that she is royal, a King seems to advocate grafting in a way that would bless the marriage of the commoner girl to his son the prince. As in all the romances, twists and turns ensue before any such happy issue can occur. Nevertheless, in the end, the issue is precisely this—with a small but necessary change rung on the situation: The girl, country-raised, discovers her royal blood.

In this case, as potentially in Imogen's case, despite her marriage to the commoner Posthumus, succession would be through the daughter (Hunter, 2005). Such a marriage only makes sense because in the commoner, or seeming commoner, there can be a natural nobility rather than one that relies on nobility of blood. In all the late plays other than *Cymbeline*, however, the blood nobility proves to second the natural nobility, when all hidden truths surface. In other words, the audience is given to understand that, although the conventional social order could just possibly fail to reflect true desert, in this case there will be a happy correlation—the pure, good country type turns out to be noble by birth. What occurs to bless the royal/commoner marriage in *Cymbeline,* however, is something different: The belatedly discovered royal brother, imported from his sylvan setting, replaces Imogen as heir to the throne. It may be assumed that he too will bring the rural to refresh the court culture, but the grafting, though present in *Cymbeline,* is downplayed. By contrast, in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* the grafting figures prominently. The fact that succession is through the daughter in those plays adds an additional note of refreshment, even revolution; it may be viewed as one more element for bringing about a New World; the gender balance is altered. In some sense, then, there is a new foregrounding of the Feminine and of feminine virtues[4].

To supplement Shakespeare's innovation, he may have revisited in his mind the 40 year long, relatively stable reign of Elizabeth I; it was a happier one than the reign of James, since James, almost from the start (his ascension in 1603), was spending the English treasury into bankruptcy. There is the last scene, in the playwright's *Henry VIII*, which trumpets the birth of Elizabeth I as salvific[5] (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1968, 5.4.15-55).

Interestingly enough, then, succession, which would have been through the daughter in *Cymbeline,* is reversed at the last moment; this works in Imogen's interest, as it releases her to remain married to her commoner husband. She gets replaced by the long lost and now found son of her royal father. The brother fills his half of the bill for a grafted couple: He is raised in the countryside, so he will bring both his own unspoiled nature and Nature back into the royal formula.

Imogen is without doubt the most compelling figure in the world of the play—so, on the other hand, she holds the stage in a different way, if not as heir to the throne; her stature suggests the rearranging of figure and ground regarding the Feminine. Virtuous women play more prominent and hope-instilling roles in these romances than they did in the tragedies, where good women such as Desdemona and Cordelia could not survive the dark world dynamics and where a Lady Macbeth turns murderer at the provocation of the prophesying witches.

In sum, *Cymbeline* offers a sociopolitical solution that spreads an ecumenical arbor over the whole, and that also re-visions the Feminine, giving a young woman like Imogen the faithful and resilient virtues both of herself and of masculinity-in-innocence, as personified in her alterego, the young Fidele. The play offers a grafting solution as well, that brings together Nature and the urban segment of the polity by bringing a rural commoner-turned-prince to court. As to succession through the daughter, however, the fact that Shakespeare revisits the theme three more times (in *The Winter's Tale, The Tempest,* and *Henry VIII*) may well indicate that he found a more paradigm-shifting version of it when he finally sustained, rather than overturned, such a solution (Schavrien, 2009).

Globe and Cosmos

What assembles the world of *Cymbeline* into a healthier polity likewise assembles a healthier globe. This is expressed through the bringing together of the Roman Empire with Britain, after Britain wins the war but decides to pay tribute nevertheless. What could this accomplish? In the 1st century CE of *Cymbeline*, it might have both fended off an additional attack from Augustus Caesar and might, at the same time, have offered a civilizing path for the still ruffian Britons: This is suggested when the naïve Briton, Posthumus, is almost fatally disassembled by the complex Roman, Iachimo. No one at the British court, in the culminating scene, objects

to Iachimo's contrasting the two cultures to this effect. The alliance subordinating Britain also seems appropriate for the era in which Christ, the prince of global peace, lives and dies. Then again, when one translates this to Jacobean times, an alliance between Protestant Britain and such Roman Catholic countries as France (through son Charles' marriage) or Spain (through a planned marriage for son Henry), would have furthered James' reconciliatory efforts, courting populations internal and external who were followers of the Church of Rome.

What is the parallel with the present-day? There is no doubt that, as in Jacobean times, the paradigm is a shifting one; likewise, as in Jacobean times, it shifts willy-nilly. The challenge is to focus *deliberate* attention on a globalizing strategy; such a strategy would, of course, entail joining forces with those already active in benevolent efforts. The field must not be left to those who strategize, and quite successfully, in ruthless pursuit of profit. Globalizing must instead be accomplished in a spirit both benevolent and ecumenical or, like the characters in *Cymbeline,* the people of today risk inhabiting an increasingly centrifugal rather than a reconciling and centripetal world.

The Dynamics of Reconciliation

To return to earlier questions posed by this study: What in human nature furthers or obstructs the good state? It now appears that Shakespeare set such questions in cosmic context as well: There seems to be a cosmic beneficence; how does one align with it? Shakespeare posed alignment as central to any hope for the future. The alignment would be with Nature and more.

In *Cymbeline* Divinity descends on an eagle in the form of Jupiter, accompanied by thunder and lightning, to explain the misfortunes of the past and the hope for what is to come. Jupiter delivers his opening gambit in a peremptory tone, in the Job-like spirit of "who are you to question?" But tenderness soon shows itself, as Jupiter offers solace for what otherwise might seem inexplicably cruel reverses for the protagonists; Jupiter reassures petitioners on Posthumus' behalf that Divinity "crosses" those it loves in a fruitful way.

> Be not with mortal accidents oppress;
> No care of yours it is; you know 'tis ours.
> Whom best I love I cross; to make my gift,
> The more delay'd, delighted. Be content;
> Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift…
> He shall be lord of lady Imogen,
> And happier much by his affliction made.
> (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 5.4.99-108)

Before discussing the human dispositions that facilitate Divine help, it is reasonable to inquire whether a benevolent cosmic disposition really does prevails. If so, in the world of which plays? In a tragedy like *Lear,* the gods were no friends: "As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods, /They kill us for their sport" (Shakespeare, 1603-1606/1968, 4.1.35-37). Lear's daughter, Cordelia, the one creature who is all beauty, both moral and physical, dies at the last moment; in a way that seems gratuitous, she gets "swatted." Instead, in the romances, the universe seems to tip toward beneficence. "Whom best I love I cross." As readers and audience, we sense that the cruel and brutish moments really are there; nevertheless, we are asked to accept the sugar-coating, or better than sugar-coating, that things turn out for the best in the end. The last beat of the play is the upbeat.

Gender in a tricky cosmos: The women. In the worlds of the romances, the virtues that further cosmic purposes manifest especially in women. A man like the good servant Pisanio will also exemplify loyalty and decency; more prominently, however, Imogen incarnates such virtues. Her loyalty to Posthumus, after she is given to understand that he has put out an order to kill her, is almost beyond natural; she finds a way to rework in her mind, as she sits next to Cloten in the grave, that murderous command, concluding that the servant Pisanio must have plotted her demise and deceitfully attributed the plot to her husband.

Patience and persistence—not just Imogen but Marina in *Pericles* exemplifies this—as does Hermione in *The Winter's Tale* and Katherine in *Henry VIII.* Katherine calls out, in fact, the excellence which should be attributed to a good woman like herself. It is particularly "—a great patience!" (Shakespeare, 1613/1968, 2.4.137). To second this, the *Henry VIII* epilogue clarifies that the play is all about "the merciful construction of good women/ for such a one we showed 'em." (5.Epilogue.6-11). In *The Winter's Tale,* the good female counselor, almost burned by the King as a witch, serves as an agent for divinity in the last scene, prevailing upon the audience to have faith that miracles can resurrect what has been lifeless; the deaths that she brings into resurrection are of a wife murdered by a jealous king, and thereby of a marriage, family, kingdom, and harmonious cosmos. She makes it clear, however, that she is a willing and submissive agent

for a larger magic. In the exercise of a receptive virtue like faith, and of the supple alertness to a redemptive good magic, women often show the way.

To further clarify this point, here are points made by Marilyn French (1981) on the gendered division of experience in Shakespeare. The quote first appeared in my own article on *The Winter's Tale* (Schavrien, 2009):

> French (1981) examined Shakespearean male protagonists who set themselves against the frightening fluidity of their experience, and with this as backdrop summarized the contrasting virtues of female characters throughout the Shakespearean corpus. These virtues, which the human species would do well to augment, include "harmony, community, tolerance, moral flexibility (within limits), pity, compassion, forgiveness, and loving nutritiveness" (p. 330). She highlighted these virtues as the necessary counterbalance to qualities, necessary and often beneficent, that Shakespeare attributed to the masculine: "structures, permanencies, control, individualism" (p. 339). She deplored the dualities and gender assignations but considered it mandatory to spell out such divisions, which are often enforced in too rigid a fashion, if they are to be overcome. (p. 36)

More gender innovation: The men. There are aspects of *Cymbeline* that reflect a view beyond innocence yet beyond tragic disillusionment as well: post-innocent yet post-tragic. To smooth the way for any alignment of patient, loyal, or faithful characters with beneficent cosmic intention, to smooth the way for the forgiveness and reconciliation, which characterizes the closing scenes of *Cymbeline* and the other romances, often sparked by the women but happily contagious in their effects, there are certain virtues in these late plays required in the men as well. The virtues are not the usual ones: Take the case of Posthumus.

He had been all too innocent in the Italian court, such that, through tapping into what might be construed as the Original Sin taint in the flesh (and is so, literally, in *The Winter's Tale* [1610-1611/1980a], 1.2.74-75) and what manifests in an almost indelible (Shakespearean) male suspicion that such a taint predominates in women, Iachimo could overthrow Posthumus' decency and drive him to murder. The infected mind, which had now come to resemble Iachimo's, pictures his wife in coitus welcoming a brutish mount, like that of the German boar. After innocence, then, comes tragic disillusionment; but, at what for Posthumus is a turning point, he begins to inhabit a world that is post-tragic, stepping into a forgiving one.

The anatomy of the fall into pessimism is visible enough. One begins with undue optimism or idealism. In *Cymbeline,* the idealism and the dilemma it poses is, for a Shakespearean male protagonist, a familiar one. Should one hang a belief in the value of human life upon one's female beloved? Can she deliver utter and complete chaste constancy? Late play characters like Marina in *Pericles*, Hermione in *Winter's Tale*, Miranda in *The Tempest*, Katherine in *Henry VIII* can, strangely enough, provide this. Likewise, in *Cymbeline*, Imogen can provide this, even if she has to turn into a boy, Fidele, to guard herself from a suitor like Prince Cloten. The point, however, becomes, in the course of the play, that this idealizing is worse than a losing game; it is a mindless cruelty imposed on the object of affection. Posthumus, her husband, concludes at his nadir, when he believes he has successfully ordered her killed for succumbing to a seduction that he himself instigated as a test: "You married ones/ If each of you should take this course, how many/ Must murder wives much better than themselves/ for wrying but a little" (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 5.1.2-5). Placing one woman to stand in for the entire sex, typically what is done when forming opinions of a subordinated population, proves to be a bad strategy. What seems to shift a theme Shakespeare revisited repeatedly, whether in *Troilus and Cressida*, in which Cressida really is loose, or in *Othello*, in which Desdemona is, of course, innocent, is this: In the late plays Shakespeare considers also whether a young man can be true, and in what spirit. In *Cymbeline,* it is clearer than in earlier plays that there is a kind of homoerotic current, in terms of sly but titillating competition, to which the young man succumbs. (The homoerotic thread also stretches through meetings that the lad Fidele has with the royal brothers, the Roman General, and the King; all fall instantly into a lavish affection for the boy and declare this to be the case.) The banter with Iachimo, seducer of Posthumus' mind and would-be seducer of Imogen's body, makes it clear that discovering the wavering ways in women then licenses detached promiscuity for young men. On the other hand the late plays ask for romantic commitment from the men as well as from the women—in a somewhat new fashion to accompany the historically new fashion of romantic partnership marriages rather than merely pragmatically arranged ones. Given such a demand placed on them, the

young men get the opportunity to consult themselves as to whether they could meet the same high standard they hold for the women.

A world post-innocent, post-tragic, post-perfectionist. It is most interesting, then, that the late plays arrive, in one way or another, at a post-perfectionist world. They link this to a kind of relenting, central to their forgiving and reconciling endings. Whether Pericles in the play by the same name gets released from judgment for his excruciatingly bad behavior, forgiven by his daughter and wife (since women seem to have the forgiving gene), or whether Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* gets forgiven by his miraculously resurrected wife, although he will have to live with her new wrinkles. Whether Miranda, in *The Tempest,* offers, in a chess game with her princely lover, to forgive him should he play her false to win kingdoms, or whether Henry VIII must release himself and everyone else from his murderous pursuit of a male heir in order to celebrate the birth of Elizabeth (which he does in the play but not in real life)—the scripts pose these tests and are about these relentings. The relentings in turn require a shift in disposition; they call for one's being weaned away from a cherished script of insistent idealism. Only this post-perfectionist turn will release both oneself and one's romantic partner from the oppressive script. As this occurs in the play in question, *Cymbeline*, the young husband near the center of the action, knowing his own flaws now that he has lived a little and grown beyond his conventional and untried assumptions (Grene, 1967, pp. 49, 55), arrives at an innovative insight: It is laudable to forgive a wife for a mistake, even and especially a sexual one.

Hell and heaven—human nightmares and dreams. In *Cymbeline* it is clear that the idealizing comes as a natural part of being human, especially being human and young. Even the worst villain, Iachimo, in the scene that finds him with successful access to the sleeping Imogen, in which he swoons at the sensual delights that attach to her physical form, delights of smell and sight, which stimulate the sensual imagination—even he finds himself most thrilled at being able to pronounce himself in "heaven."

> The flame o' the taper bows
> Toward her; and would underpeep her lids,
> To see the enclosed lights, now canopied
> Under these windows—white and azure, lac'd
> With blue of heaven's own tinct!
> (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 2.2.19-23)

He follows this lavish praise of her eyes, lidded but imagined as "white and azure, lac'd," with saying "Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here" (2.2.50).

Humans do in fact seek heaven on earth, even devilish ones like Iachimo. The penultimate moment of the play returns the audience to the human pursuit of a changeless paradise. "Hang there like fruit my soul until the tree die." But the play brings home, not in a preachy way, but instead through the accumulation of action, character, and poetic expression, this truth: that the imagination's working accomplishes moments of heaven, moments of hell, and then again new moments colored and shaped by ever-shifting currents internal and external. An inclination to loyalty and virtue is crucial or else there would be no mooring. It is, in fact, especially these virtues that counter ever-shifting circumstance; they ask to supplement the usual self-assertive virtues that function so well, at an important transitional moment in the drama, on the battlefield. Instead, passive and receptive virtues augment in importance, as Shakespeare has increasingly focused not just on the astonishing potential (Hamlet's "What a piece of work is a man!") but also on the limitations of being human. What culminates the action is a scene that attests to the loyalty, patience, persistence of the characters throughout this purgatory of a life. The final virtues, forgiveness and an inclination to harmonize (British dignity with Rome's far-reaching rule, for instance), brings healing all around.

If one longs for realism, the play does deliver it, often in the context of highly colored imaginings. The realistic moment may be flanked by miracles; and the reverse is also true. A second visit to the blunt speech of Jupiter, for instance, reveals that his explanation for human suffering has its good side and its bad, however affirmative its tone. Both the tragedies and the romances have posited a cosmic Will, but, in the romances, the Will that prevails seems, by contrast, to be beneficent; on the other hand, there is also in the *Cymbeline* cosmos some tendency that delays gratification, threatening to prevent it (Tanner, 1996, p. 22). "Whom best I love I cross." The romance world is a world of extreme emotions, often distressing ones, in which creatures who find themselves hanging by their fingernails, receive at the last moment a helping hand, sometimes stretched down literally from the heavens. The moment that concludes their dramas, restoring them to terra firma, they experience and convey as an extreme one, full of gladness and gratitude.

Further remarks on providence—the Christian version of it. "In Shakespeare's time there were aspects of social and political and religious life that more truly showed belief in a kind of immortality than would be the case in Ibsen's nineteenth century or Sophocles' fifth-century Athens" (Grene, 1967, p. ix). One could say the same about belief in providential oversight. An urbane and mitigated version of providential oversight would be what Pisanio the servant describes mid-way in the action: "Fortune brings in some boats that are not steer'd" (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1980a, 4.3.46). One hopes, however, for better than that, and the play's action bears out a universe with less chaos, more planning to it.

There is in the play a characteristically late Renaissance/Baroque split between an earth-plane world in rapidly shifting motion, suggesting chaos, and a heavenly providence that sets things right. This is, in fact, characteristic of Shakespeare's Baroque Jacobean era, with its arts that lay a counter-Reformation accent on miracle and mystery (Norman, 2001). Such a contention is borne out by a viewing of El Greco's *Assumption of the Virgin* (1577). In a bottom plane are the discombobulated mourners angled helter-skelter, astonished in a realistic fashion by the emptied bier of Mary; while in the top half, all is set right again as Mary ascends on a half moon toward her new place, received by winged figures arranged in a relatively harmonious pyramid. Providence is pattern, as in the prophecy for *Cymbeline* (or the oracle for *Winter's Tale*)—a pattern that, though hidden, has been hovering all along, one that might just bring sustained happiness. Humans do contribute, however—if a proper disposition, at least in some of them, permits Divinity to work its best will.

Future Attitude, Action, and Research

In our present day, something analogous is needed: that people bring a spirit of ecumenical reconciliation to their global endeavors and a spirit of alignment to their exchange with Nature. One can hope that rebalancing flourishes, in terms of gender and also in terms of culture, whether between rural and urban, or between dominant and sub-dominant cultures, such that not only women but all those with faces and cultures previously consigned to the margin, be viewed as figure-to-ground, not just ground-to-figure; this would invite their crucial contributions. That there is a need for incorporating these populations, a need for rebalancing between theirs and the dominant orientations, may have been said before; but it bears repetition, in all its varying contexts, until thoughts become deeds and such efforts are brought to fruition. Finally, it matters as well to focus attention on mystery; there is a context in which humans are colloidally suspended, but its meaning and characteristics remain at least partially hidden. Perhaps the powers that be do respond to invitation, consenting to supplement flawed human efforts. As Fritjof Capra (2000) concluded in *The Tao of Physics,* the necessary shift in paradigm entails a gender rebalancing and a move toward humble receptivity:

> At present our attitude is too *yang*—to use again Chinese phraseology—too rational, male and aggressive. Many . . . [scientists] support a society which is still based on the mechanistic, fragmented world view, without seeing that science points beyond such a view, towards a oneness of the universe which includes not only our natural environment but also our fellow human beings. . . . The survival of our whole civilization may depend on whether we can bring about such a change. It will depend, ultimately, on our ability to adopt some of the *yin* attitudes of Eastern mysticism; to experience the wholeness of nature and the art of living with it in harmony. (p. 307)

Capra added an afterword to his edition, written a quarter century after the first publication of the *Tao,* in which he clarified that the many global worldwide crises are in fact "different facets of one single crisis, which is essentially a crisis of perception" (p. 325). He further specified that a failing of the old paradigm is "the belief that a society in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male is one that is 'natural'" (p. 325).

To the usual version of yin one can add the contribution of imagination. Without imagination there is no whole vision—a divorce that William Blake (1804) roundly denounced. Someone like Iachimo uses devious reasoning to disease the fantasy of his victim; he extinguishes true imagination. The kind of imagination to which Blake referred, the one that leads not just to arbitrary fabrication but to a true knowing, like the other virtues highlighted here, requires that one manipulate less and receive more. There is, in fact, a nuanced dialectic between the seeming actualities of our lives and our imaginative perceptions and pursuits (Grene, 1967, p. 46); both texture our lives, sometimes in concert, sometimes in tension. Both are "true."

It is my hope, then, that this examination of Shakespeare has indicated a way to move forward. Clearly, if any already formulated direction for transpersonal re-visioning were to further illuminate the work I have done in this study, it would be the mystical yet ecumenically variegated re-visioning of Jorge Ferrer (2002). I hope that I have brokered a relationship between such a theory and the 17th century paradigm shift, *before* humanists like Shakespeare (and Montaigne and Erasmus), devotees of the great variety of experiences—the many concrete case histories —were discredited by Descartes and Newton (Toulmin, 1990). The latter, those great "clarifiers," gave people then and now temporary shelter from diversity by insisting on a universalizing method; but that shelter is now outmoded, at least in its claim to exclusive franchise. Their methods might have offered refuge from the 17th century's decimating religious conflicts on the continent and in England (Toulmin, 1990); nevertheless, their universalizing and formulaic approach eclipsed complementary ways of knowing, ones needed in a world both bedeviled by diversity and gifted with it. Imaginal, transpersonal, and integral thinkers have a mighty labor to accomplish: It is time to turn the kaleidoscope and invoke the new paradigm, resolving the present-day fragmentation into a concordia discors full of grace and Grace.

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Notes

1. The early works of a new phase, in this instance Shakespeare's late phase, are sometimes clumsy. *Cymbeline* asks its questions in a way that, despite all the phantasmagoria of romance and despite the almost laughably awkward plot assemblage in the last scene, will come even closer to the feel of our present-day reality—in a play like *The Tempest*, a culminating gem of the late phase—than do the tragedies (Grene, 1967, p. 37).
2. A guidepost for tracking down Shakespearean wisdom is the following formulation: What destroys whole vision is what Blake (1804) denonced as "the reasoning power in man ... when separated from imagination" (p. 74). William Blake wrote to an Enlightenment public that often had so little tolerance for the "irrationalities" in Shakespeare's late plays that they could present and view them only with substantially altered plots. Without their allowing for imagination as a co-partner in making meaning and sense of life, Blake's rationalist contemporaries were offended: They had to conclude that their own understanding of human life exceeded that of Shakespeare; a plot like *Cymbeline's* needed a rational facelift.
3. The plays are sometimes classed as tragicomedies, a genre Shakespearean contemporaries defined as entailing danger for the main characters but no death; they may also be classed under English romance, with its panoply of improbable fictions. Here is a small set of examples of such fictions in *Cymbeline*. There are "a stepmother-queen skilled in poisons and envious of her fair and virtuous stepdaughter (as in *Snow White*), lost sons recognized by the inevitable birthmark, the reunion of many persons long separated by exile and wandering, the intervention of the gods by means of a riddling . . . prophecy" (Bevington, 1980, p. 151).

Those writing in late style (as examined by everyone from Georg Brandes to Theodor Adorno and Edward Said [McMullan, 2007]) will typically take note of social convention in some sense because they will be viewing life in a long arc that may include life-review, succession, and legacy. They will be viewing life, in short, in the light of death (Schavrien, 2008). On the other hand, they will often dismiss convention, as evidenced in the way discarding of genre limitations suggests that late style authors give themselves permission to look at life with an immediacy and freshness that counterbalance the long arc retrospective. The retrospective may, again, revolve around life concerns that do interface with convention, such as concerns about legacy and succession. The authors, on the other hand, defy convention: They may draw dark conclusions from what they see (as Adorno and Said characterized a late stylist such as Beethoven) or arrive at relatively serene

acceptance (as Brandes characterized Shakespeare). I come to a conclusion like Updike's (2006), since I view Shakespeare as presenting a late Renaissance chiaroscuro, with its alternation of shadows and lights, obfuscations and clarities. Shakespeare's version of late style absorbs the dark irreconcilables into an overall movement toward reconciliation.

4. I use words like feminine, or even The Feminine, without assuming that this is a mode inherent in nature. The aim instead is to track Shakespeare. It should be added that he too holds a complex view; he plays with the intersecting of convention and nature (cf. the presto-change-o switch of Imogen into Fidele, which incorporates as well the gender-virtuosity of the boy actors in Shakespeare's troupe).
5. In the same speech (Shakespeare, 1608-1610/1968, 5.4.15-55) James, who was after all the patron of Shakespeare, receives his own encomium, since, by the description, he rose like a phoenix from Elizabeth's ashes. The encomium for the infant Elizabeth, "pattern of princes," however, is the stranger one, since her father gains, throughout the play, momentum in what, in actuality, would become the murderous pursuit of a male heir. The play pretends that he instead recognizes the sublime issue of his loins and assigns succession through his daughter.

About the Author

Judy Schavrien, *Ph.D.*, *MFT*, is former Chair and core faculty of the Global Psychology Doctoral Program at Sofia University. At California Institute of Integral Studies, she team-founded the first two degrees in the world in Women's Spirituality. She taught Feminist Transpersonal Psychology there in 1991 and, in 1989, published a pioneering article with that orientation in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. She has published on late vision, which views life in the light of death—whether death of an individual or an era—analyzing renewal through the feminine in the late visions of Shakespeare and Sophocles. Her previous book is *What Rhymes with Cancer?,* and she is anthologized as a poet and scholar, having received 17 awards for academic work and in the arts (http://judys.imagekind.com). These include most recently the feminist Pioneer Award from the Association of Women in Psychology. Contact: judynow@comcast.net