Shakespeare at Work: II

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Abstract

This essay is a straightforward continuation of 'Shakespeare at Work: I', and it offers similar analyses, this time of Shakespeare's *Sonnet 73*, three short passages from *The Taming of the Shrew* and one longer passage from *Henry IV, Part I*. The analyses are designed, as before, to demonstrate how, in any text, the effectiveness of the metaphors depends upon the appropriateness and interpretability of the metonymy that constitutes not only the heart and life-blood of a metaphor but at the same time provides the crucial link which holds together the network of logical implications that establish the logical coherence of texts, and that need to be inferred if the text as a whole is to be understood.

key words: metonymy, metaphor, implication

Introduction

My analyses stick to the pattern I set in Part I, but I shall also introduce a theme which, at this stage, is merely a hint: as he matured, Shakespeare's poetic powers did not need to rely upon finding new comparisons to keep his invention alive: he was quite content to use the old familiar commonplaces, but he went on finding (or inventing) ways to enrich his metonymies with

more complex connotations (and/or implications), thereby endowing them with a much greater range of signification. Shakespeare's early dramatic verse, as, for instance, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, is wonderfully easy and fluent while being unproblematic, at least prosodically and syntactically (for the most part). As he grew in experience and confidence, the verse became more knotty and concentrated, as the metonymies (and the metaphors they furnish) are given more extensive work to do: they have, that is, to sustain wider networks of implication.

III Sonnet 73

Shakespeare's *Sonnet 73* is one of the most anthologised of the poems, and, in our own time, has been the one most written about, from writers like William Empson (with his famous focus on ambiguity) to Joseph Peguiney's discussion (in an essay published in a recent collection)[1] of the poem as the crucial poem in a set of four (Sonnets 71-75), which Peguiney sees as reflecting collectively on the link between poet and persona and on the nature of the love felt mutually by the two friends.

I read the Peguiney account after I had written an initial draft of my own analysis here, and found that he, too, recognises "the metonymy within the metaphor", but where I seem to differ from him is in my interpretation of the metonymies, which leads to a difference in our subsequent reading of the metaphors. This would be a specific example of my general thesis: we have to attend with particular care to the "metonymy within the metaphor" if we hope to have a sense of the metaphor's richness, its complexity as well as its complexion.

The first part of this essay has already taken into account the commonplace (the *topos*) which compared a man's life to the four seasons, a pattern

which thus gave man four ages, but in other renaissance *topoi* a man's life could have as many as seven ages, or as few as three, all of which J. A. Burrow discusses exhaustively in his book on the topic[2]. The four seasons, however, offered a neat set of categories, although not everyone apportioned the same span of human years to the same span of seasonal months. It was also a commonplace to think of the ages of man as comparable to the passages of a day, from dawn to dusk. It would thereafter be natural to take the next step and think of a man's life as comparable to the daily laying and lighting of a fire in the morning, its burning during the day, and its dying down in the late evening before one went to bed. In *Sonnet 73*, Shakespeare uses all three of these all-inclusive tropes to characterise his own age, each trope a quatrain, each quatrain narrowing the focus: from the autumn of his years, to the evening of his day, to the dying of his life-giving and life-warming fire.

That time of year thou mayest in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang,
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.

Nowhere does Shakespeare use the word 'autumn', since he prefers (like most writers) to work through (metonymic) signs that signify obliquely rather than stating the obvious. While no leaves hang on the boughs in February, the vital word is 'yellow', which denotes the colours of October: if you look at me, you will see in me the signs that tell you that I am in the autumn of my life. As we have noted, Macbeth, too, associates the 'yellow leaf' with the end of life, with the additional comment that he feels his own leaf (or life) to be 'sere', withered, its life sucked dry.

While early summer winds shook the buds of May, the boughs shake (or shiver) because autumnal weather is cold (the term that for Peguiney is the

"metonymy within the metaphor"), and, as Burrow tells us, increased susceptibility to cold, like weak shanks and a bent back, was a sign that regularly signified old age, an age that came upon you without any pause to accommodate a person's usually steady progression (and alteration of his physical self) from one of life's ages to the next.

The trees are bare and their branches may have been wrecked by autumn gales, but when the poet compares the boughs to 'choirs', he generated a metaphor within a metaphor which has fascinated and bothered commentators ever since. Peguiney thinks that 'choirs' refers to the choir stalls, since they are made of wood, but so were the beams and cross braces of the roofs, which look far more like over-arching boughs, and if the choirs are 'ruined', which seems (as is 'yellow' in the first metaphor) to be the metonymically significant word, it might suggest that they are roofless, the choir stalls gone as well. Not only are the boughs denuded, the roof they resemble has fallen in, a collocation that would not have been unfamiliar to Shakespeare since he uses it himself in *Sonnet 10* when he is urging the young man to marry so that the noble house of which the young man is the head should not not fall into ruin.

For thou art so possessed with murd'rous hate
That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire.
Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate
Which to repair should be thy chief desire (Sonnet 10).

Clearly, 'roof' in the third line is part of a house, and since the term 'house' is commonly used to speak, metonymically, of a royal or noble family since its members would all have been living 'under one roof', roof, as part of the house, would then, metonymically, signify the physical place in which the family was housed. If 'roof' is then taken, as a metaphor, to signify the family line to which all members of the family belong, "beaute-

ous", as metaphor, would, one supposes, signify an especially noble 'house', attractive, eye-catching, dressed up in the gorgeous attributes that would signify its status.

Katherine Duncan-Jones thinks that 'roof' is a synecdoche (merely the roof as part of the house), but I see it as a metonym since it is once again the vital part, the part that signifies something essential, for without a roof a house is useless: a roof shelters and provides protection not only for those, the noble family, who live below it, but (when it is treated as a metaphor) the family's dependants as well, and signifies the family's feudal obligations to all those who rely on its beneficence and shelter beneath its cope or work on its estates.

Peguiney sees that the word 'boughs', the 'vehicle' of the original metaphor, generates, as a new 'tenor', a second metaphor, but to limit 'choirs' to 'choir stalls' is to limit the metaphor. The use of the word 'choirs' is enough to suggest the building of which choirs (as a feature of great churches) are a part and in which choirs (as groups of singers) sing: at once the boughs of the trees become a roof and the tree trunks the columns that line the naves and choirs of cathedrals or monasteries. It is not a simple synecdoche, and we must search out its metonymic implications to appreciate its metaphoric force: if we read it as the vital part which seems to presuppose the existence of a building in which we can find choirs and that entails their use as places where certain acts are performed, it appears to be a perfect metonym.

Since sweet birds will be sweet birds, literally, if the trees are real trees, then nothing further may be intended, but the line has such extraordinary resonance, that no one has ever believed this. Since Shakespeare is a songster, he may imply that now he is getting on in years (and one of the signs of that may be his bare, bald head, as Katherine Duncan-Jones

suggests), so his gifts of melody have dried up. Yet the introduction of the word 'ruined' (spelt 'rn'wd' in the 1609 *Quarto*) has other reverberations. The country was full of churches that had been despoiled during the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1518-47) and their choirs, open to the elements, would have been a familiar sight, as they remain to this day. It seems more likely that we are dealing with church fabric, whose more weighty parts are still standing *in situ*, rather than with church furniture and roofs, which were removed fairly quickly to provide stuff for the secular buildings that were constructed out of the purloined material.

Although it would seem that Shakespeare must have meant us to link his trope to the Dissolution of the Monasteries, some critics reject this idea, since they believe that readers would have forgotten the event by the time Shakespeare was writing, so many years after the event, and that 'late', meaning 'recently', is not a word that would be suitable as referring to an event so far in the past, but even a century is a very short time *sub specie aeternitatis*, and if we have still not forgotten four hundred and fifty years later, why should readers have done so then?

Yet such critics argue that this is also an unnecessary and distracting complication, even if Shakepeare's family (at least in the person of his father) was recusant (reverting to Catholic ways). Yet, if this is not what Shakepeare intended to bring to our minds, it can hardly have escaped his own, which does suggest that he must really have meant his readers to take the point: ruined monastic churches were and have remained poignant symbols of the decay and death of what were once living centres not only of religion but of learning and the arts.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,

Death's second self which seals up all in rest.

As yellow leaves signify autumn, and thus by association, signify the autumn of one's days, so a sunset fading in the west signifies the end of the day: as yellow is an indication that its true colour, green, is fading, so colour drains out of the late evening sky; its fading away and the twilight with which it is associated is a sign of the oncoming of darkness, which is no colour at all, and if night 'takes away' the light, this suggests that night is somehow prior to day, superior to it, can give us light, as the year gives us the summer, but has the power to take it away when it so wishes: we are subject finally to the power of night, not permitted for long to enjoy to the pleasures of day. Such an interpretation is enforced by the notion that night is Death's "second self", its image, its simulacrum, and both night and Death are responsible for sending us to sleep: Hamlet was not the only man of his time to have noticed that to sleep is to die and to die is to sleep.

Peguiney believes that 'seals up' means "closes, shuts up as in a casket". He may be right, since a casket can be a coffin that is sealed before it is placed in the earth, but, again, I feel that this is a limiting interpretation. Certainly, the verb "to seal" means to close up something to prevent entry or exit (or to stamp something with a sign of authority) and the word is indeed spelt 'seal' in the 1609 *Quarto* (the first, and perhaps, authorised) edition. Yet if it had been spelt 'seel', it would have had a very different meaning, and someone listening to a reading of the text might have interpreted it as auditors in the theatre would have interpreted Iago's words to Othello in Act 3, Scene 3, as he poisons Othello's mind with his insinuations about Desdemona: "She that so young could give out such a seeming To seel her father's eyes up close as oak, He thought 'twas withcraft".

In Shakespeare's day, an austringer or falconer might have seeled up a young hawk's or falcon's eyes in order to prevent it from seeing: today, only

in the East are birds' eyes still seeled: that is, to "close the eyes of (a hawk etc) by stitching up the eyelids"(*NOED*). Today, hoods are used for the same purpose, and birds wearing hoods are "hoodwinked", as was Brabantio. "My lips are sealed" may come by transference from this falconer's usage: sealed not with wax but by thread.

Although in these lines of *Sonnet 73*, Shakespeare mentions neither eyes nor sleep, both are immediately implied by the words 'seals up' if they mean 'seels up' (eyes are presupposed, darkness and sleep are entailed), while a listener who knew the falconry meaning of 'seels up' would at once recognise its propriety in this context; and since the falconer closes the bird's eyes to cause the bird to sleep (the reasons for the action of seeling and the result of the action), the action would establish the grounds of the metaphor and greatly add to its suggestiveness. At the same time, should our eyes be seeled to enforce sleep upon us, then an agent other than ourselves is responsible for closing our eyes and for sending us to sleep: this agent of Morpheus would be Night on every day throughout our life, Death once and for all on the day (or night) when he comes to cancel all bonds and bring our life to an end.

All creatures desire rest, and Shakespeare's kings know how difficult it is to throw off the burden of their responsibilities and find rest in sleep: King Henry IV is aware that, in contrast to his own sleeplessness, "upon the high and giddy mast" sleep will "seal up the ship-boy's eyes and rock his brains In cradle of the rude imperious surge", a sleep so fast that nothing can wake him. Ultimately, we shall hope to find the 'rest in peace' that death promises us, for we "are men And rest eternal sorely need" (as Thomas Hardy put it in "Channel Firing")

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,

As the death-bed, whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by....

Since the stages of a human life may be compared to the passage of a year or the passing of a day, so it is a not uncommon trope to compare a man's life to a fire: the metaphor is another commonplace, but it is enlivened and enriched (is given its necessary power to act as a metaphor) by the metonymic associations of those features of the metaphorical term that are given to signify aspects of a dying fire and thus those aspects of a dying human life which the metaphor of the dying fire calls to mind. Not all fires are similar in their constitution or their behaviour, though, and fires that blaze up quickly tend to burn themselves out fast: "his rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last", as Gaunt says of Richard in his famous set peice at the beginning of Act II of *Richard II*, a set of commonplace *sententiae* that everyone would recognize as such:

His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,
For violent fires soon burn out themselves:
Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short:
He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes,

and so on, or, as W. B. Yeats said in his poem 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory',

Some burn damp faggots, others may consume
The entire combustible world in one small room
As though dried straw, and if we turn about
The bare chimney is gone black out....

In *Sonnet 73*, though, Shakespeare seems to be thinking more of a fire at the day's end (thus linking the trope with the trope just used and intensifying the focus on the "dying of the light"), when, before we go to bed (to sleep, to dream, to die), we sit and gaze on the dying embers, reluctant to break

them up with a poker and so "put out the light", wishing still to watch its final flickerings, those last glowing shards that lie on the heap of ashes which is all that is left of the wood (or coal) that has burnt during the day, like the last touches of red in the sky before night comes, when "the west yet glimmers with some streaks of day".

The ashes signify all that remains of what not so long before had been the logs of wood (or lumps of coal) burning with the energy and passion of youth, the white ashes seen as the sheets that are laid upon our death-bed, which, indeed, constitute the very bed on which the last of the fire will go out, will expire, as breath leaves the dying body: at our life's end, we are mere burnt-out scraps of ashen wood, and it is perhaps not an accident that 'ashen' is an epithet that often stands for 'deathly pale'.

It is a final paradox (as Peguiney also notes) that all that energy, like Richard II's blaze of riot, is the very means by which we are self-consumed (as Gaunt pointed out, in what must have been for Elizabethans a truism): the fire of life nourishes us yet at the same that same fire eats us up, and fire, as we saw, was the element associated by the Venerable Bede with youth and summer: the exercise of our strength wears us out.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

The Shakespearean sonnet, different in structure from the Petrachan proto-type, tends either to link an octet and a sestet, or, as here, to round off three quatrains with a couplet, although the sestets usually end with couplets, too. The couplet is usually a summary of the argument, although sometimes it offers a reversal of what we might have expected. Here, the metaphors are reduced to their common substance and consequence, apparently devoid of fugurative language, although certain logical connections are implied, and the ever-present sense of regret that we will have felt as

we contemplated the unleaving of autumn, the coming of night, and the dying of the fire, our unwillingness really to let go of them, will carry over into the final couplet: we love the dying year, the dying day, the dying fire all the more intensely because we are soon to lose sight of them. The metaphors and the metonymies that underpin them have been brought to our attention to establish the mood in which we are to experience the simplicity of the final couplet: but everything will depend upon how closely we have been able to associate with the metonymic presuppositions and entailments upon which the metaphors rest.

What the young man, looking at the poet, perceives, is, quite simply, that his friend is now a man in late middle age, whose end is therefore not far off, when the older man must leave his young friend by dying (implied cause) and from whom therefore the young friend must take his leave (as a consequence of the poet's death). Awareness of this not too distant prospect will make the young man love his friend all the more (a consequence) since conscious of how little time is left for them to enjoy their mutual love (the cause of that consequence). In so far as metonymic relationships are involved in reading causes from consequences and consequences from causes, then a metonymic strategy is the guiding principle at work here, too.

II A young man's fancy

The Taming of the Shrew is an early play, and the examples from it that I shall consider reflect back on what we have been considering so far and forward to what we shall go on to look at later: the essential Shakespearean tropes are there from the beginning; they simply grow more complex.

The Shrew is Shakespeare's deft weaving of two Italian plots, framed

and set off as an entertainment put on to bemuse a drunken English wastrel, who is made to believe that he is a mad aristocrat recently come to his wits. The world of the Induction is consequently rural England, not renaissance Italy, a countryside in which the aristocratic sports are hawking and hunting, and the several early references to these country pursuits set the tone for much of the play proper, beginning with the title.

The Induction opens as a Lord returning from hunting decides to play the trick on the drunken Christopher Sly. Players arrive, as in Hamlet, and agree to put on a play to entertain Sly, who, when he wakes, is unwilling to believe that he is anyone but himself. He is asked, *inter alia*, "Does thou love hawking? Thou hast hawks will soar above the morning lark". If he prefers to hunt, "Thy hounds shall make the welkin answer them". But the play begins, and a young boy actor, pretending to be Sly's wife, sits beside him to watch the play. Sly would rather go to bed (with his putative wife) and finds the play very wearisome; audiences, however, do not, although many, especially today, are offended by its apparent mysogyny, although this can be turned on its head by intelligent, witty playing, as, at Stratford in the early sixties, Peggy Ashcroft brilliantly demonstrated.

The underlying premise of the play is that you can tame a headstrong woman as you would tame a hawk, or a falcon, and the technical term for this is 'manning': hawks are wild and must be trained so that they become used to men and learn to obey them. Austringers trained hawks and falconers trained falcons (nowadays the term falconer covers both professions). To train a hawk, and usually female hawks only were used in hawking or falconry, is a long and arduous business: you must persuade them to eat at your bidding and to sleep at your bidding, too, and once (upon a time) you might have seeled their eyes to ensure that they slept: a young hawk will be too frightened to eat, and to persuade her to eat at the times

you wish her to, and of the quantities you require her to, is one of the falconer's first tasks[3].

Yet before Petruchio arrives on the scene to set about taming Kate, a young man, Lucentio, and his servant, Tranio, turn up, having come from Pisa to Padua, the nursery of the arts, where Lucentio means to study philosophy; but Tranio, a man of singular learning already, thinks rhetoric might serve Lucentio better. Tranio 'compares and contrasts' philosophy and rhetoric in a way that illustrates how Shakespeare may himself have learnt this skill, while being something of a demonstration of the tropic arts that I have in these pages been attempting to illustrate. Richard II's last great aria is a more elaborate example of the exercise. It is clear, too, that Tranio has been taught how to debate, for he first concedes his opponent's point, and then sets out to demolish it by revealing its inadequacy: and to do so, he must select, as metonyms, such instances as will reflect back upon the worlds of which they are such signifcant parts.

Mi perdonato, gentle master mine:
I am in all affected as yourself,
Glad that you thus continue your resolve
To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy.
Only, good master, while we do admire
This virtue and this moral discipline,
Let's be no stoics nor no stocks I pray,
Or so devote to Aristotle's checks,
As Ovid be an outcast quite abjured;
Balk logic with acquaintance that you have
And practise rhetoric in your common talk,
Music and poetry use to quicken you,
The mathematics and the metaphysics

Fall to them as you find your stomach serves you;
No profits grows where is no pleasure ta'en...
In brief, sir, study what you most affect.

Although this is early verse, and wears its rhetoric on its sleeve, as it were, we still need to work out how its metonyms connote more than they explicitly state. To suck the sweets of something already sweet may quickly induce nausea, as it does in *Troilus and Cressida*: by over-sugaring the line, Tranio makes us suspicious that he is being ironic. His logic is clear: admirable though the philosphical virtues and moral discipline (ethics, such as Aristotle taught) may be, the dangers are that we may become a stoic (which implies an inclination to fatalism and acceptance of things as they are, and thus inactivity) or a stock (which is cognate with stick, a post or stake, and so are representatives of what has no feeling, mere lifeless lumps of wood), and given the derived meaning (the stocks) it may open us to ridicule.

Nor should we devote ourselves to the checks Aristotle prescribed: 'checks' are curbs to action, restraints, and this would support the criticisms already implied: we shall be abandoning the vigour associated with youth: such checks would be obstructing our natural inclinations. (Hector was later to remind his brothers of Aristotle's belief that young men were unfit to hear moral philosophy, anyway.) The word was also used, however, when a falcon refused to come to the fist, or flew at the wrong quarry (prey): when, thus, she misjudged her task.

It is odd to find Ovid as a philospher, but he seems to be present more as a type of someone who has been outlawed from his own society, no longer *persona grata* in his own community and abjured by (renounced by) those who would be supposed his natural friends: so would the young man Luncentio presumably be if he took up philosophy. The verb 'to balk' is a

variation of 'to baulk', a verb with a disconcertingly wide arrary of meanings: to shirk, to ignore, to avoid, to refuse, to miss by mistake, to hinder, to thwart, to quibble, to chop logic, to shy away from (as a horse might before an obstacle), and several more. Shakespeare uses it in *Twelfth Night*, where it seems to mean 'to disappoint expectation'. In terms of what follows, it might be glossed as "avoid showing off whatever logic you are familiar with" (although this is to wrench the syntax very severely), and in your everyday conversation stick to (the flowers of) rhetoric.

Since philosophy seems likely to render you as dead as a post, you will need music and poetry to quicken you, that is, to give you life, to make you come alive (or as Shakespeare might later have said, to make you forgetive, quick to conceive). The opposition, presented through representative metonyms that have the force of implicatures, seems thus to have resolved itself into 'Philosophy is death, Rhetoric is life'.

If your stomach serves you (if you have an appetite for mathematics and metaphysics, Aristotle (again) and as types of philosophy) then you may 'fall to' (an invitation to a person to settle down at the table and eat his, or her, fill), but if you do not enjoy what you are doing, you will gain nothing from it. In the end, though, study what you most want to.

III Manning a Kite

When Petruchio has finally carried off his recalcitrant and ill-tempered bride, he elaborates in a soliloquy on the central trope that has inspired the title of the play, and that will have permitted the audience to see from the start what he is up to before he now explains his strategy and his tactics in detail.

Thus have I politicly begun my reign,
And 'tis my hope to end successfully:
My falcon now is sharp and passing empty,
And till she stoop, she must not be full-gorged,
For then she never looks upon her lure.
Another way I have to man my haggard,
To make her come and know her keeper's call:
That is, to watch her as we watch these kites
That bate and beat and will not be obedient.

However offensive some may find this speech, it is a vividly clear exposition of an analogical argument: that husband and wife will both seek for mastery, for reign, and here Petruchio means to be the monarch. Whether he succeeds quite as he hoped to, is a question that the play does not completely resolve, and I do not think that feminists should get all hot and bothered by this since they might endorse the argument if it were presented the other way round, and obviously many of them do.

I hope that my own expositions have already made this an easy speech to understand, each falconry detail one metonym in a web of supporting metonyms (or, in other words, a sign in a net of signifiers). In terms of the comparison, 'my falcon' is Kate and 'I' am the falconer: since I have been starving her (her belly is empty) she is sharp (hungry), but until she stoop (where we have two meanings in one: falcons drop steeply on to their prey, we stoop in front of a superior, and she must do the second before I allow her to do the first), she will not be fully fed (her gorge, her throat, the passage by which food passes to her stomach representing her stomach, the food's destination). A lure, meat attached to the end of a long leash, is swung round to entice the falcon to snatch it, but as it is controlled by the falconer, he can continually frustrate his falcon: only when the bird is

sufficiently hungry, though, will the falconer be able to commence on this part of a bird's training.

Since Kate is headstrong, she is, in her behaviour, more like a *haggard* (a bird that has preyed for itself before it is manned) than an *eyas* (a bird that has been taken directly from the nest), and thus a haggard is a much 'wilder' and more intractable bird. But whether haggard or eyas, she has to be manned, trained, disciplined to make her recognise who is her keeper, and come to him at his signal (his call). She must be watched, which meant, as everyone would have known, that the falconer, who must at first keep his hawk awake, has to stay awake himself; the relationship between the hawk and its master thus becomes symbiotic, and by the end, as with the relationship between dogs and humans, it is difficult to know which is the master, which the servant. At the end of the play, the relationship between Kate and Petruchio appears to signal a more mutually respectful partnership than those who overlook such implications realise in their rush to condemn the drama. *The Goshawk*, a wonderful book by T. H. White, now sadly out of print, is the diary of a man who engages himself to participate in this strange fellowship between man and wild creature, and it is, on his part certainly, a love affair.

A kite is not a particularly suitable bird for training and is rarely employed, so that Shakespeare will be using it as a metonym for all birds of prey, but more probably because as, in Cockney speech today, Kate would still be pronounced Kite (as Eliza Doolittle would have pronounced it before she had elocution lessons): the pun can be made apparent by suitable modulation of the vowel, as you modulate between 'bate', 'beat' and 'obedient'. Before birds accept either the man's fist or their perch in the mews, they will both 'bate' and 'beat': that is, they will jump off their perch, to which they are attached by their jesses, and hang there, beating their wings

in vain: the falconer has gently to lift them back on to the fist or the perch: this can continue for hours, and is a test of the falconer's patience as well as of his will.

A book, *The Diary of Master William Silence*, has been written about the host of hunting and hawking terms that Shakespeare introduces into his plays, although the book is not recorded in the new *Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, and the two terms used of hawking birds that I have mentioned, eyas(s) and haggard, both appear in later plays. Rosencrantz, for instance, tells Hamlet of the children's company that is likely to have sent the Player and his company out on the roads, and speaks of them as "an aery of children, little eyases" (*Hamlet*, 2. 2.), whom Hamlet immediately identifies as 'children': the comparison is then worked out in some detail, for satirical effect. On the other hand, Othello's use of 'haggard' is acutely painful, and his vivid employment of the term is an instance of the mature Shakespeare's handling of a familiar trope. After Iago has persuaded Othello to fear that Desdemona had slept with Claudio even while he was courting her, Othello's response is quite literally heart-rending: "If I do prove her haggard, Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings, I'ld whistle her off and let her down the wind To prey at fortune" (*Othello*, 3. 3. 262-265).

To appreciate this metaphor, though, we must know, as an Elizabethan audience would have known, that jesses are the leather strings which are attached to a bird's feet (the correct term but in fact the legs) and are linked to a leash by a swivel. The leash is held by the falconer (or austringer), and when he wishes to send his falcon (which has been sitting hooded on his fist) after prey, he unhoods her and detaches the jesses (which remain attached to the bird's feet) from the leash, which he himself continues to hold. Shakespeare uses all this knowledge to inform Othello's cry and so makes it unspeakably painful, for his action would indeed tear his heart from his

body; and he would let her go where fortune took her (would that he had). It is this intense concentration and detailed propriety of the metonyms which energises the metaphors of Shakespeare's mature poetry.

She eat no meat today, nor none shall eat;
Last night she slept not, nor tonight she shall not;
As with the meat, some undeservéd fault
I'll find about the making of the bed,
And here I'll fling the pillow, there the bolster,
This way the coverlet, another way the sheets;
Ay, and amid this hurly I intend
That all is done in reverend care of her.

Since this part of the speech is entirely non-figurative (except perhaps for 'hurly' and 'reverend'), it may seem pointless to include it. I do so because we are bound to understand the literal actions that Petruchio intends in terms of his presuppositions (which are founded upon his initial analogy) and what he believes will be entailed by the performance of his actions, and we can only understand this if we have already understood the original figure and what it presupposes. The word 'hurly' comes from a game in which the players threw, or hurled, a ball, which is what Petruchio is doing with the bed-clothes, and it must have been a noisy game, since the word came to signify a commotion, as in 'hurly-burly'. Petruchio's care of Kate will 'show great respect', accompanied perhaps with a bow or curtsy (a reverence).

In Verdi's *Falstaff*, '*reverensa*' is Mistress Quickly's favourite word; she often uses it ironically, and at first sight it might seem that Petruchio is being ironic, too, since he is not showing Kate very much respect. Yet since care of his bird is the concern of all the falconer's actions, for if not well-cared for the bird will not be able to perform as its master wishes it to,

it may not be so ironic after all. Although the speech still has several lines to go, I shall leave it there, but if Kate recognises that 'reverend care' is actually what Petruchio means, it may persuade her, as in the end it seems to, that the man does indeed love her.

IV On Telling the Time

After Petruchio has carried off his bride and subjected her to the hardships we have just read about, he decides to return with her to her father's house. In the meantime, a haberdasher and a tailor have come to show the cap and gown that they have made for the bride, who finds them attractive and desirable, but Petruchio scolds both men and sends them off with their rejected goods, once again disappointing his wife. They will visit her father dressed only in 'mean habiliments'.

Well, come my Kate, we will unto your father's,
Even in these honest mean habiliments:
Our purses shall be proud, our garments poor:
For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich,
And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
So honour peereth in the meanest habit.
What, is the jay more precious than the lark,
Because his feathers are more beautiful?
Or is the adder better than the eel,
Because his painted skin contents the eye?

As Tranio did earlier, Petruchio is showing off his rhetorical skill in presenting a case with which not many Elizabethans would have agreed, Kate no more than the great lords, who often carried their fortunes on their backs, and the players whose wardrobes (often furnished from the great

lords' cast-offs) were of greater value than all other items of theatrical furniture. Dress was a mark of social position, and when tradesmen began to wear clothes that were the prerogative of the nobility, this was seen (and legislated against) as a threat to social order[4]. Sly is dressed in a lord's clothes to persuade him that he is a lord, while Tranio wears his master clothes to persuade others that he is the master, while his master Lucentio disguises himself as a tutor in order secretly to woo (and win) Kate's sister, Bianca. Clothes are very important, and Petruchio is defending a position that might be taken by philosophers, but would not have found favour with those who preferred rhetorical dazzle to austerity. Petruchio, of course, indulges in rhetorical dazzle to speak against it.

Nevertheless, honour might indeed peer though the 'meanest habit', and in *Cymbeline*, for instance, Imogen's royal brothers, brought up as country boys, behave with honour and belie their garments, while Imogen's own nobility is not obliterated by her habit, although she mistakes the body of Cloten, her stalker, for that of Posthumus, her husband, because Cloten is wearing Posthumus's clothes. For Lear, all clothes are 'lendings' and in his madness he would like to stip to the buff. Clothes are important signs, obviously, but they are also complex ones, and it is difficult to be certain if Petruchio is being honest or not: Hamlet, much occupied with the difference between being and seeming, would presumably have thought him honest.

Yet their garments (their habiliments) are not honest since they are not telling the truth about their social station, which is not mean, and if their clothes are poor, signals of poverty, that again would not be consistent if their purses were 'proud', in the sense, presumably of swollen, over-flowing, strong or in flood, rising vigorously, all secondary meanings of 'proud'.

Petruchio presents his *sententiae* with great assurance, yet they are all highly debatable, and we should perhaps be ready to debate them, but, if we

are Kate, we will not be permitted to do so, which may be the point. They are, one would guess, the kinds of proposition, based upon comparisons and likenesses, which schoolboys invented in their schoolrooms.

The state of the sun was the source of many tropes, as we shall see again soon, and here it is used with a certain simplicity: the sun breaking through clouds does not peer, it blazes, and may not manage to do so every day. The lark is precious because of its voice, which is favoured over a jay's feathers: jays have rather ugly voices. An eel is presumably favoured over the adder because we can cook and eat eels, whereas it is not usual (as far as I know) to eat adders. Men used to eat larks, too, which were caught by falcons (which would soar above them before stooping), but jays were thought of as vermin. We may, therefore, read 'precious' as signifying 'precious as food', which Kate, in her hungry condition, might think of as further provocation. Nor is she likely to be mollified to be told that her dress, her habit, 'poor furniture' or furnishings, is adequate array for someone who is not of 'mean' condition but, in her station, a lady.

Kate remains mum, though until, after Petruchio has explained how they will travel to her father's, he says

Let's see, I think 'tis now some seven o'clock,
And well we may come there by dinner time.

Kate is compelled to contradict him, not yet having learned that the way to master her lord is to acquiesce:

I dare assure you, sir, 'tis almost two,
And 'twill be supper-time ere you come there.

Since the times of dinner and supper varied, we cannot be sure when meals were eaten in Lombardy, or in Stratford-upon-Avon, but we can deduce (since contrareity seems to be the norm) that dinner time will be around two o'clock (which it still is if you live in the country), while supper will be at

seven.

Since Petruchio will not be contradicted, he says that he will not go today, "and ere I do, It shall be what o'clock I say it is", rather like Humpty Dumpty. The last line in the scene is given to Hortensio, who has been a looker-on for most of it: "Why, so, this gallant will command the sun". Prince Hal, at the end of the third scene of *Henry IV, Part I*, is content merely to imitate it, which is at least to put himself on an equal footing.

V Hal's (prefiguring of his) Volte-Face

At the end of Act 1, scene 3, of *Henry IV, Part I*, Prince Hal, who has been portrayed (and has been seen by others, his father no less than Falstaff) as a man indulging himself in a rash fierce blaze of riot, quietly removes his rioter's mask and shows the audience the change of face that others will see only on his accession to the throne: and in doing so, he compares himself to the sun, a sun that is content for the time being to hide itself: the comparison is not indecorous since there is congruity of status between the monarch of the skies and an earthly king.

As his roistering companies leave him alone on the stage, Hal considers them as examples of men who, like undomesticated animals (or domestic animals on holiday that are not being set to work draw the plough or the cart), are unrestrained, their behaviour idle and undisciplined, following their "humours" not only in the Venerable Bede's sense, but in the more modern sense of disposition, as in "it's his humour (his inclination, his manner or way) to do that", when we follow regardless of our responsibilities the dictates of our wills. All this is conveyed by a single word, metaphorical in that it compares men to beasts, but metonymic in that we read (see and comprehend) the behaviour of beasts relieved of their burden

in the actions of men: the word (the metonym within the metaphor) is "unyoked".

I know you all and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness.

Of course, dairymaids, too, carried a yoke on their shoulders, to help them support their milkpails, and anybody might place a yoke across his shoulders to uphold a burden, but the term here suggests animals in a team, whose yoke bound them to their furrow, disciplined them to their task, prevented them from being idle, a terrible sin in the eyes of puritan christianity (although, as Handel's *Messiah* reminds us, for Christians God's "yoke is easy, his burden is light"). And while 'uphold' clearly means what it says — to sustain and support — it also implies 'to countenance' — to sanction or permit — by showing in your appearance (your approving face) that you do so sanction whatever it is that needs such official recognition. Hal, will, for the time being at least, give (his) countenance to, make a show of acquiescing in, even approving of, the behaviour of Falstaff and his cronies. Hal means, in the end, though, to turn his countenance away from his sometime friends.

Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That when he please again to be himself
Being wanted he may be more wondered at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.

Hal is rehearsing the Machiavellian strategy that his father followed, not needing the reminder that his father will later give him, while being sufficiently machiavellian never to tell his father (although he tells us) of the

change (the *volte-face*) that he has promised (to himself). He introduces, as his controlling trope, the fundamental comparison, the opposing figures of the sun (himself) and clouds (his companions, in particular Falstaff). The sun can be dimmed (as in *Sonnet 18*) or can be smothered by clouds, and can break through them (both verbs were originally metaphors but now, by catachresis, they are used as if they were literal).

These clouds, however, are clouds of a poisonous kind, rather than those which bring "the soft, refreshing rain", and while Hal 'rings the changes' on the terms he uses to speak of them, each term reinforces the terms with which it is contingently associated: each is a metonym as well as a partial synonym of its partners, since they call each other to mind and strenghten the logical links between them: clouds that become mists that become vapours are linked in a worsening sequence, while the foul and the ugly become base and contagious (although here the pairing is reversed); something that smothers may finally strangle. All of these terms, when related to each other, signify the dangerous and possibly lethal power of these particular clouds. And all of this, I suggest, is metonymic in its operation, and the metonymies are thus varied and accumulated to give more emphasis to the over-arching metaphor that they are designed to serve.

In fact, the basic comparison is not (as by now we realise) especially note-worthy (it is a familar trope, for Petruchio as well as Hal), and its success depends entirely upon the metonymic contingencies which ground it. Hal as the Sun King is the stated starting point of the comparison, while the noxious clouds that carry disease like a contagion are introduced obliquely and as such are unnamed, but in the context they represent Falstaff and his friends, base because basely born and unworthy when thinking themselves able to pervert their nobly-born superior.

The sun permits, sanctions, gives countenance to clouds to dim his countenance, his 'gold complexion', and the sun can 'permit' all this because it has it in its power to 'please' itself whether to hide itself or to 'break through' what only 'seemed' to prevent the exercise of its power: the sun is sovereign. Hal, like the sun, is also beautiful, and will be seen as such when his face is no longer 'dimmed', when it breaks through the disguise, the veil of ugly clouds (Falstaff and his friends).

The strategic objective of thus permitting himself to be misjudged as a result of his playing the knave as well as the fool is one that his father would have approved of had he known, since like father like son: it has been Bolingbroke's own method of winning public approval, although he had been perhaps less cunning than his son: he had never shown himself and therefore never staled the eyes of those whose support he looked for; Hal goes one better: to stun those who thought they knew him by showing them that they never knew him at all — that "Being wanted he may be more wondered at". Here, 'wanted' carries the meaning both of being wanted in the sense of 'being desired' (the people would have desired him to be a better man), and 'in being lacked' (they lack what they desire) with the hint that Hal lacks the qualities that the people desired of him. At his reformation, those who had wanted him to be princely (or thought that he lacked princely attributes) will wonder all the more when they find he is just what they wanted (the virtues that they desired him to have) and that he has (possesses) just what they thought he wanted (the very virtues that they thought he lacked).

If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wished for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents:
So, when this loose behaviour I throw off,

And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes,
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,
Shall show more godly, and attract more eyes,
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend to make offence a skill,
Redeeming time when men think least I will.

If you are going to use an 'if this, then that' argument (rather than 'if p, then q', which is reserved for logicians), then you have to choose instances which will be familiar, and this one would arise naturally out of the context: of rare days of sunshine and the idleness of Hal's present way of life, though he might be suggesting, obliquely, that his life of continual holiday is becoming tedious (which we might suppose it would, to a man of his martial spirit). Hal is using what looks like an Aristotelian *enthymeme*, which Elizabethans learned how to manage at school, the logical figure in which only two parts of a syllogism are given: one premise and a conclusion, with an absorbed premise. If we extend the argument into a proper syllogism, it would seem to be: i) 'a life without variety is tedious'; ii), to do the same thing every day lacks variety; iii), therefore, unvarying work (or unvarying holiday) is tedious. If you are making a general observation, you have to take instances as species of the general condition you are speaking of, and your instances will have a trace of both metonymy and metaphor about them, since in the first place they depend upon contingencies operating within a single domain (metonymy) and in the second they work by analogy or comparison (metaphor).

Hal's then takes his *enthymeme* a step further: if something occurs only

rarely, then we look forward more eagerly to its occurence. What is missing here is already implied, however: 'holidays', which presuppose leisure, free time, time to ourselves to do what we like, all of which presupposes, too, that we like holidays, enjoy what they offer us. Since holidays are rare, and since we relish holidays, so we relish anything that is rare (which does not necessarily follow, but we accept it).

Hal then changes his figure, and picks up the clothes image again, since you 'throw off' a garment, and some garments fit tightly, some loosely; but 'loose' is a pun: 'loose' behaviour is behaviour that is improper, unsuitable, immoral: it is not fitting, as a proper suit of clothes would fit. Because the use of clothes as an image is so ubiquitous, Hal can make use of it in this oblique fashion and call to mind a dozen other instances, not all of which would necessarily correspond in significance. Besides, he is thinking too quickly, shifting from metaphor to metaphor, and moves at once to another familiar trope: that of owing something (a debt) and being obliged to pay what you have promised to pay (by saying that you owe something to someone) it: his general behaviour has never promised anything, certainly not that he is likely to a good, indeed an ideal, king.

So that, when he actually does what he has never promised to do, he reverses men's expectations of him, and this is the rare occurence that, unlooked for, is the more to be treasured. Yet what he says is that he will 'falsify' men's 'hopes'. Yet you hope for something good, and to falsify those hopes would be to fail to live up to what men hope for. In fact, his future subjects can hope for nothing from him, and far from disappointing them, he means to astonish and delight them: what he will falsify is their expectations, not their hopes, which must therefore be a kind of metonymy, standing for the anticipation of the future events based on the knowledge of past occurences.

This is all quick-silver stuff, and it is to metal that Hal now turns for his next 'invention': mists and vapours and working days and what men have thought of him — his fault — are like a dull (sullen) background which is going to set off, as some matt surface sets off gold or silver that it glitters more brightly, his sunshine, his holiday, his reversal of what men expect of him — his reformation. All of which is done for a machiavellian end (and for the undoubted psychological pleasure that it will give him): that, as a result, he will have much greater control over his subjects than might otherwise have been the case: they will be shocked into admiration and respect, and out of gratitude easily grant him the authority that he might otherwise have had to work for.

Each of the metaphors, shuffled at speed, depends for its effect upon a common core meaning, which is of strong contrast, and all of the metaphors in their different domains pick on two features of each of those domains which demonstrate such a contrast: their metonymic relationship is consistent across all the domains and within each of the metaphors.

The gorgeous garment majesty will show, as gorgeous garments do, a goodly exterior, and this is what will catch the 'eye', the human part that observes, that takes in what it observes, and judges what it observes. The eye, however, can be deceived, can be 'taken in', and like a conjurer, Hal determines to deceive it. He will work so hard at appearing to offend that he will become a master of deception and duplicity. Yet when men think him least likely to buy back (redeem) what he has left 'in pawn', the moment when he becomes king, then he will reclaim it by his reformation. Since both 'reformation' and 'redemption' are words loaded with theological or theocratic significance, they are presumably not chosen lightly: Hal, after all, is the Sun-King, a kind of God.

Conclusion

The two parts of this essay have (as have previous essays and any I might add to them) attempted to illustrate, here from the work of William Shakespeare, a common habit of the human mind: to speak of your immediate topic in terms of something else, either something that in some way resembles it (by comparison, analogy, simile, metaphor), or something related or connected to it either contiguously or causally (metonymy), and, further, that it is the second of these two operations which enables us not only to base our comparisons on the features of the two different domains (that of the 'tenor' and that of the 'vehicle') which are alike, but also to deduce or infer from the part(s) that we are given (the metonyms) those related features that it (the metonym) calls to mind, and that we shall need to deduce or infer if we are to interpret correctly what it is that we are being told.

If the opportunity offers itself, I hope to continue with this series of essays, specifically devoted to more analysis of Shakespearean texts: the possibilities are endless.

Notes

1 *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. James Schiffer, Garland Publishing, Inc., New York, 2000, pages 284-304.

2 *The Ages of Man*, A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought, J. A. Burrow, Oxford, the Clarendon Press, 1986, the book to which I refer in 'Part I' of this essay.

3 See, *Falconry and Hawking*, Philip Glasier, Batsford, 1978, second

edition, 1986

4 All this and much much more is illustrated with rich and adundant detail in a marvellous book that won last year's James Russell Lowell Prize, presented to the authors this January at the Modern Language Association Convention in New Orleans: *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, by Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass. The Shakespearean scholar Peter Holland describes it as a "startlingly brilliant study", in which the authors "show how the dressed body functions in the fully complex range of its social significance". In the early sixties, I produced *The Shrew* as a Speech Day entertaiment at Shrewsbury School, with gorgeous costumes (that had been worn not long before that by Peggy Ashcroft and the cast of a Stratford production) hired from the Stratford wardrobe, and Peter Stallybrass, then fourteen years old, played Bianca. I have been wondering if there is any connection.