

## Shakespearean Thinking

### 2. Thinking in Groups, Thinking Alone

#### A. Soliloquy and Self-Definition

Key thing about soliloquies is that they aren't all *sol-* or indeed *loqu-* in the same ways. We have set speeches, as if for listeners; and as-if-private as-if-meditations too. Here, an interesting subset: where the *sol-* defines a *self*, freely and on its own twisted terms.

Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;  
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house  
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.  
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;  
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;  
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,  
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.  
Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;  
And now, instead of mounting barded steeds  
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,  
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber  
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.  
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,  
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;  
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty  
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;  
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,  
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,  
Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time  
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  
And that so lamely and unfashionable  
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;  
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,  
Have no delight to pass away the time,  
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun  
And descant on mine own deformity:  
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,  
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,  
I am determin'd to prove a villain  
And hate the idle pleasures of these days. (*Richard III*, 1.1)

Why bastard? Wherefore base?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,  
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us  
With base? With baseness? Bastardy? Base, base? [...]  
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base  
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:  
Now, gods, stand up for bastards! (*King Lear*, 1.2)

## B. Crowthink

Two critical contexts for thinking about Shakespeare and crowds: Annabel Patterson, *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* (1989); Bart Van Es, *Shakespeare and Company* (2013) – the first because it is interested in the energy and efficacy of the popular voice; the second because it sees Shakespeare's plays as unusually interactive / relational, deriving from the social dynamics between actors in the company. Here, two Roman examples – a location in which crowds behave dynamically, destructively, organically. [NB this interpersonal thinking is linked to the Extended Mind / Distributed Cognition theories, on which see the 'History of Distributed Cognition' project, [www.hdc.ed.ac.uk](http://www.hdc.ed.ac.uk).]

First Citizen	Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.
All	Speak, speak.
First Citizen	You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?
All	Resolved. resolved.
First Citizen	First, you know Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people.
All	We know't, we know't.
First Citizen	Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is't a verdict?
All	No more talking on't; let it be done: away, away!
2 <sup>nd</sup> Citizen	One word, good citizens.
First Citizen	We are accounted poor citizens, the patricians good. What authority surfeits on would relieve us: if they would yield us but the superfluity, while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely; but they think we are too dear: the leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularise their abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them Let us revenge this with our pikes, ere we become rakes: for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge.
2nd Citizen	Would you proceed especially against Caius Marcius?
All	Against him first: he's a very dog to the commonalty.
2nd Citizen	Consider you what services he has done for his country? ( <i>Coriolanus</i> , 1.1)

Cinna The Poet	I dreamt to-night that I did feast with Caesar, And things unlucky charge my fantasy: I have no will to wander forth of doors, Yet something leads me forth.
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### *Enter Citizens*

First Citizen	What is your name?
Second Citizen	Whither are you going? [...]
Cinna The Poet	Directly, I am going to Caesar's funeral.
First Citizen	As a friend or an enemy?
Cinna The Poet	As a friend.
Second Citizen	That matter is answered directly.
Fourth Citizen	For your dwelling, -- briefly.
Cinna The Poet	Briefly, I dwell by the Capitol.
Third Citizen	Your name, sir, truly.
Cinna The Poet	Truly, my name is Cinna.
First Citizen	Tear him to pieces; he's a conspirator.
Cinna The Poet	I am Cinna the poet, I am Cinna the poet.
Fourth Citizen	Tear him for his bad verses, tear him for his bad verses. ( <i>JC</i> , 3.3)

### C. Twothink

Othello and Iago; Macbeth and Lady Macbeth; Rosalind and Orlando; here Gloucester [later Richard III] and Lady Anne: portraits of intimate exchanges in which words / thoughts are exchanged, transferred, enforced. Cooperative / coercive cognition at work.

LADY ANNE	Villain, thou know'st no law of God nor man: No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.
GLOUCESTER	But I know none, and therefore am no beast.
LADY ANNE	O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!
GLOUCESTER	More wonderful, when angels are so angry. Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman, Of these supposed-evils, to give me leave, By circumstance, but to acquit myself.
LADY ANNE	Vouchsafe, defused infection of a man, For these known evils, but to give me leave, By circumstance, to curse thy cursed self.
GLOUCESTER	Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have Some patient leisure to excuse myself.
LADY ANNE	Fouler than heart can think thee, thou canst make No excuse current, but to hang thyself.
GLOUCESTER	By such despair, I should accuse myself.
LADY ANNE	And, by despairing, shouldst thou stand excused; For doing worthy vengeance on thyself,
[...]	
LADY ANNE	And thou unfit for any place but hell.
GLOUCESTER	Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.
LADY ANNE	Some dungeon.
GLOUCESTER	Your bed-chamber.
LADY ANNE	Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest!
GLOUCESTER	So will it, madam till I lie with you.
LADY ANNE	I hope so.
GLOUCESTER	I know so. ( <i>Richard III</i> , 1.2)

### D. Fairies

Some of the interactive thinking in Shakespeare happens between different kinds of fictional mind (on which, see next lecture). What happens when humans believe in fairies?

Titania	Be kind and courteous to this gentleman; Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes; Feed him with apricocks and dewberries, With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries; The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees, And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes, To have my love to bed and to arise; And pluck the wings from painted butterflies To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes: [...]
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Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

P'blossom Hail, mortal!

Cobweb Hail!

Moth Hail!

M'seed Hail!

Bottom I cry your worship's mercy, heartily: I beseech your worship's name.

Cobweb Cobweb.

Bottom I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

P'blossom Peaseblossom.

Bottom I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir? (*MND*, 3.1)

M. Qu. Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,  
 You moonshine revellers and shades of night,  
 You orphan heirs of fixed destiny,  
 Attend your office and your quality.  
 Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy oyes.

Pistol Elves, list your names; silence, you airy toys.  
 Cricket, to Windsor chimneys shalt thou leap:  
 Where fires thou find'st unraked and hearths unswept,  
 There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry:  
 Our radiant queen hates sluts and sluttery.

Falstaff They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die:  
 I'll wink and couch: no man their works must eye.  
 Lies down upon his face

[...]

M. Qu. About, about;  
 Search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out:  
 Strew good luck, ouphes, on every sacred room:  
 That it may stand till the perpetual doom,  
 In state as wholesome as in state 'tis fit,  
 Worthy the owner, and the owner it.  
 The several chairs of order look you scour  
 With juice of balm and every precious flower:  
 Each fair instalment, coat, and several crest,  
 With loyal blazon, evermore be blest!  
 And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing,  
 Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring:  
 The expressure that it bears, green let it be,  
 More fertile-fresh than all the field to see;  
 And 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' write  
 In emerald tufts, flowers purple, blue and white. (*MWW*, 5.5)