



## WEANING REPUBLICANISM: POLYPHONIC MUSIC OF THE STRATFORDIAN ORPHEUS

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### ABSTRACT



The á la mode belief that writing is one of the manifestations of ideology establishes the status of the literary aspect as somewhat subservient to the historical aspect of the historiographic chef-d'oeuvres, reducing literature to explanatory content. In order to reinstate and reassert the importance of these literary texts it becomes important to readdress them as, not explanatory but rather as episteme alongside the canonical essays and pamphlets. Republican literature faces this grave problem and in order to address this issue literary works must be re-evaluated as epistemes. Shakespeare's poetic and dramatic oeuvre can prove a set example. He tried to seduce the Globe's audience to the ideas of republicanism, in order to awaken them to the concepts of individual freedom, human dignity, and social equality in a foxy-artful way. The present paper shall delve into the realms of the Shakespearean songs in order to emboss the extent of contribution they make to the further building up of the undercurrent of republicanism.

**Keywords:** Republic, Shakespeare, Music, Orpheus, Discourse, Episteme.

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The á la mode belief that writing is one of the manifestations of ideology establishes the status of the literary aspect as somewhat subservient to the historical aspect of the historiographic chef-d'oeuvres, reducing literature to explanatory content. In order to reinstate and reassert the importance of these literary texts it becomes important to readdress them as, not explanatory but rather as episteme alongside the canonical essays and pamphlets. Republican literature faces this grave problem and in order to address this issue literary works must be re-evaluated as epistemes. Shakespeare's poetic and dramatic oeuvre can prove a set example. He tried to seduce the Globe's audience to the ideas of republicanism, in order to awaken them to the concepts of individual freedom, human dignity, and social equality in a foxy-artful way. The current paper, in the span of next few pages, shall delve into the realms of some selected popular Shakespearean songs, in order to emboss the extent of contribution they make to the further building up of the undercurrent discourse of republicanism.

For Orpheus' lute was strung with poets'  
sinews,  
Whose golden touch could soften steel and  
stones,  
Make tigers tame and huge leviathans  
Forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands.  
(*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* III. ii)

Shakespeare used the Orpheus myth as the symbol of poet's power to move the audience throughout his texts. That it is representative of his own empowered image goes without saying. This empowered disseminator of knowledge and ideas gives vent to his republican inclinations in his texts. His texts qualify as epistemes when considered parallel to the then topical political scene and the ghostly presence of the republican undercurrent discourse. The unifying concept of episteme paints the perception of reality of a particular era. That is to say that 'Episteme' are the dismembered fragments that collectively form a 'discourse.' Foucault believes that all of the historians are influenced and their actions colored by their own epistemes, and therefore they can never be totally objective. In

other words, Foucault believes in the concept of textuality of history and the historicity of texts. The historians reflect their own discourses in their account of history. This implies that every historical text that claims to be an episteme is only as epistemic as a literary work, and from the given yardstick even a naturalist text qualifies as an episteme.

New Historicists point to the culturally specific nature of texts as products of particular periods and discursive formations, while viewing reality-history-as itself mediated by linguistic codes which it is impossible for the critic/historian to bypass in the recuperation of past cultures.<sup>1</sup> It is in the light of this statement it becomes inevitable to understand Shakespeare's understanding of the republic from history as well as his contemporary scene. Even though republican ideas had gained currency in England decades before the sixteenth century witnessed a lot of translations. Christopher Marlowe translated the first book of Lucas's *Pharsalia*, which portrayed the defeat of the republican Pompey, in 1598. Tacitus' *Annals*, which paid tribute to the Roman republican values, was translated by R. Grenewey in 1598. Machiavelli's writings familiarized classical republicanism in the Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Also, *Discorsi*, published in 1636, was in circulation in translation.

Shakespeare's understanding of the classical republic is similar to that of Aristotle and Peltonen. Aristotle who propounded that all forms of government be it monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, moved with the idea of public good but the republican form of government was the most driven by it, also held the view that tyranny was plausible in certain conditions when the world had descended into decay and corruption. Peltonen's understanding of the republic can be expressed with his words from the *Classical Humanism and Republicanism* that the republic was a,

Cluster of themes concerning citizenship, public virtue and true nobility...Virtue was closely linked with the distinctively *republican* character of classical republicanism: to ensure that the most virtuous men governed the common-wealth and to control corruption, magistracy should be elected rather than



inherited. In this sense republicanism (in the narrow sense of the constitution without a king) could be an anti-monarchical goal: civic values required concomitant republican institutions, but monarchical arrangements were said to suppress these. Arrangements usually favoured by classical republicans were those of the mixed constitution, and the term republic was also used in the wider and more general sense of referring to a good and just constitution. (Hadfield 52)

Over the years the lyrical quality of Shakespeare's music has begotten the impression of being wild and uncultivated, while in truth it's quite the contrary. His music is a result of painstaking labor and craftsmanship concealed under the impression of ease, brevity, and spontaneity. It's when as a reader one comes across dialogues like Lorenzo's mouthpiece that,

The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night  
And his affections dark as Erebus:  
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.  
(*The Merchant of Venice* V. i)

One is awakened to the importance that music held for Shakespeare. He used songs as a part of the dramatic scheme to forward the action and made it a consistent art-form. However, it must be noted that he did not himself invent the tradition and was indebted to the interludes of Cornish and Heywood, which influenced the Elizabethan comedy, especially the comedies of Lyly.

Shakespeare's idea of music was in accord with the generally accepted musical theory of his time, the classical and Neoplatonic views of the ethical or moral nature of music, of which Lorenzo's above purport bears witness. Shakespeare locates the harmony of music in the cosmic myth, bearing an analogy between heavenly music of the universe that is basically harmonious and the concords of human body. Robert Fludd's *Utriusque cosmi...historia*, 1 (1617), explains the concept aptly suggesting mathematical proportions to musical harmonies as

Pythagoras discovered and Boethius' concepts of 'musica mundana' and 'musica humana' suggest. Shakespeare held that music also had a persuasive character, positive or negative depended on the nature of its purport, a concept that accords with Boethius's concept of 'musica instrumentalis,' a practical category of music which may induce personal and social harmony, but which is also capable of corrupting human nature. Plato's arguments relating music within *The Republic* are also in tune. Socrates, the narrator states,

...musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul of him who is rightly educated graceful, or of him who is ill-educated ungraceful... (Plato 73)

Plato believed that the rhythm and melody, out of the three parts of a song should depend upon the words. And that only the Dorian and the Phrygian harmonies which did not have multiplicity of notes or a panharmonic scale, could be approved in a just state. He not only rejected the Ionian and the Lydian harmonies but all sorts of baser emotion stirring instruments like the lyres, flutes, pipes, etc. for a higher and loftier sort of music. Such harmonies will be naturally followed by the rhythms, seeking simple systems of metre that express courage and harmonious life, which in turn shall be followed by the foot and the melody. The duty of these rhythms (three principles of rhythm) and notes (four notes) shall be to avoid express meanness, insolence, fury and other such feelings. He also equates grace of rhythm and its absence with the good and bad quality of rhythm, which naturally assimilate to a good or a bad style. And style he believes is followed in turn by harmony and discord, which are regulated by words. The words and character of the style will therefore follow the character of the soul, which depends upon the simplicity, which Plato differs from folly, of the soul. Hence, graces and harmonies are indicative of virtue and just-sound minds, and should be the aim of the youth.

The Elizabethan Age was the golden age of the English song. Madrigals and motets, the Te Deum



or the Gloria, the tinker's catch, the drinking song, the lutenist's song and the street cries, to the accompaniment of instruments like the lutes, citterns, viols, rebecs, violins, shawms, recorders, flutes, fifes, cornets, sackbuts, trumpets, drums, and regals, bells, birdcalls, etc. formed the scene. Globe Theatre productions incorporated two string players (violin, viol, and lute), a trumpeter, a hoboy (shawm) player, flute, and recorders. Instruments in Shakespeare's theatre accompanied entrances and exits, and held symbolic significance.

The *First Folio* (1623) only includes compositions by Robert Johnson, John Wilson, and Jack Wilson, and for the sake of keeping the argument as authentic as possible I shall evaluate the music/songs as it finds place there. Not a single note of instrumental music from the Shakespeare plays has been preserved. The problem of authenticity plagues most of the vocal music as well. Barely a dozen of the songs exist in contemporary settings, and not all of them are known to have been used in Shakespeare's own productions. For defining the jurisdiction of my paper because of the constraints of space I shall focus only on the Roman plays, while I do recognize the strong republican outlook of Shakespeare in other works.

### TITUS ANDRONICUS

"The play shows that the republic is reverting to the bad model of the tyrannical monarchy enforced by the Tarquins, foolishly surrendering the liberty it has gained of its own violation" (Hadfield 161). The sight of Aaron and Timora's baby as a significant symbol of the dark forces in Rome, and Lucius being established as an emperor with Titus Andronicus's brother proclaiming support for him rather than the citizens, anticipate a doom. Shakespeare seems to suggest the mindlessness of a society that does not take lesson from its mistakes. Rome as a society is shown to have flourished during the war years when military might seemed necessary to bring republican liberty and equality to the citizens but eventually the very military values become a threat paving way for tyranny. Titus's act of recommending Saturninus over Bassianus after declining the crown for himself to tribunes' and the citizens is significant for the scene is reflective of the republican character of the society

which heads for a nose dive with this single act of misjudgment. Titus has still not realized that the society has transitioned from war to peace and needs to refresh its political leadership accordingly. Thus *Titus Andronicus* is a Senecan tragedy which bears witness to the coming of throne of Saturninus through primogeniture as the sole rule of political selection and right to rule, thwarting the principles of civic republicanism. While Bassianus stands for republicanism, Titus Andronicus stands for military virtue and Saturninus stands for tyrannical monarchy that is backed by military virtue, a central dilemma in Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

Shakespeare makes the abnormality of Saturninus' rule obvious through music. The use of a special trumpet signal for Saturninus can be understood as seeped deep in irony for trumpets accompanied the just and able while Saturninus is distant from the idea of justness, a living epitome of the monarchical vices. Shakespeare also employs hoboys/oboes which were sounds that presaged doom and disaster. *Titus Andronicus* also employs hoboys for a similar purpose.

#### MARCUS ANDRONICUS.

Pleafe you therfore draw nie and take your places.

SATURNINUS. *Marcus* we will. *Hoboyes.*

*A table brought in.*

*Enter Titus like a cooke, placing the meat on the Table, and Lavinia with a vale ouer her face.*

(V. iii. 51)

In the First Folio hoboys/oboes are indicated to accompany the gruesome banquet where Titus kills his own daughter Lavinia and Tamora 'daintily has fed' on the flesh of her own children 'baked in this pie'. In the Quarto 1, 1594 the stage direction reads 'trumpets sounding'. Here, a banquet, music, and bloody revenge are combined in a melodramatic manner. There is a great deal of excess in this early tragedy, as its critics customarily declare, but there is no denying that the counterpointing of cruelty and music is an effective dramatic procedure. After the production of *Titus*, Shakespeare's use of instrumental music in tragedy is more in the nature of foretelling crime and punishment than accompanying it.



A *Dictionary of Old English Music & Musical Instruments* (1923) traces the ancestry of the hautboys (the wood-wind instruments) in the Shalms. The evolution witnessed two constant features; the double reed, and the conical bore of the tube. The plain fingerholes of the early Shalms gave place to a modern system of keys. The name, hautboys, then, designated the improved Shalms of the Sixteenth Century, and the oboe of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries. It is to be derived from the French Hautbois, (high wood), which describes the material of which the instrument was made, and gives its pitch, for, though tenor and other Hautboys were known, the treble was by far the commonest. When the word Shalm was dropped and the other applied cannot be fixed with certainty. It appeared, however, in *Gorboduc*, by Norton and Sackville (first acted in 1560/1), where it was named in 'the order and signification of the dumb show before the fourth act.' After this date its use became more and more common. From the first quarter of the Seventeenth Century onwards, the words Hoboy, Hoaboyle, Hooboy, or some such variation, are of very frequent occurrence in the State Papers. The instrument occupied an important position in the military music of early times, and under date July 10, 1678, we read: 'Account for liveries for two hautboys for the troop of Grenadeers under his Grace the Duke of Monmouth for the war against the French king' (Lord Chamberlain's Records).

A more peaceful entry is that of September 29, 1686, where liveries are ordered 'for twelve hautboyes...for the first, second, and third Troops of Guards, to be made ready against his Majesty's birthday.' The mere mention of the word Hautboy presumably meant the treble instrument, though occasionally we find the pitch given.

### **JULIUS CAESAR**

Shakespeare seems to be parodying republican ideas in *Julius Caesar*. Brutus appears to be the true republican force in *Julius Caesar*, the uomo universal, a harmonious man who is gentle, courteous, and has a love of music. He exhibits certain qualities of Plato's philosopher king for he is sensitive to the perfect pattern of 'justice, beauty, truth.' Just as a philosopher king has the knowledge of the eternal, contemplates all time and

all existence, so Brutus foresees the death of the public good in the growing power of Caesar, but ironically he is ignorant of his own manipulation at the hands of Cassius and that of the public opinion for his cry for 'Peace, Freedom and Liberty' qualifies as nothing but comical naivety. He fails to live up to the masculine principle of republicanism that as a tradition seems to build on the death of a woman (Lucrece, Lavinia, etc.), he is lacking in the skill of rhetoric/oratory, his marriage with Portia is not a marriage of equals, even though he deals with her loss with stoic courage her committing suicide out of anxiety is a mockery of stoicism. Music too holds a sway on him. Boy Lucius, Brutus' servant, while at the camp in Sardis, sings to Brutus in a stage direction that reads 'Music and a Song', but the text of the song is missing, though it is indicated that he plays to the god of slumber. Lucius' remarks about the 'false' nature of the strings he plays anticipate the ghostly apparition to follow. In *The Republic* Socrates acknowledged that the nature necessary in philosopher-kings is rare. Quick, fiery natures suited to music are usually too unstable for courage in the face of war, and trustworthy, brave natures that excel in war are often slow intellectually. Brutus seems to fall in the category in between the guardians and the philosopher kings, for he needs music to calm his emotion whose final result appears dubious in the light of his witnessing the apparition, even though he is stoic, also he is farsighted enough to understand the vices of Caesar's growing power but is deceived by his co-conspirators.

The song 'Orpheus with his lute made trees' from *Henry VIII* is often employed in modern performances to serve as Lucius's strain. Lyres and lutes were mainly associated with the lyrical so the symbolic meaning of the image seems apt. Orpheus is the legendary lyric poet who is the living symbol of the Elizabethan understanding of the theory of ethos. But amidst the action of the play one character seems to be silent only to assert the muted idea of republicanism as was the case in the Elizabethan Age. This character is Cicero, whose silent, detached, and calm demeanor draws attention to his writings in the play but outside Marcus Tullius Cicero was a Roman philosopher, politician, lawyer, orator, political theorist, consul and constitutionalist. Petrarch's



rediscovery of Cicero's letters is often credited for initiating the 14th-century Renaissance in public affairs, humanism, and classical Roman culture, and through him of the rest of Classical antiquity. During the chaotic latter half of the 1st century BC marked by civil wars and the dictatorship of Gaius Julius Caesar, Cicero championed a return to the traditional republican government. Following Julius Caesar's death Cicero became an enemy of Mark Antony in the ensuing power struggle, attacking him in a series of speeches. He was proscribed as an enemy of the state by the Second Triumvirate and subsequently murdered in 43 BC. His works *De Officiis* (Of Duties), *De re publica* and *De Amicitia* in which he voices his disapproval of the militarization of the state and edges towards community, citizenship and friendship hold much relevance to Julius Caesar.

#### ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Shakespeare narrates the annihilation of an age of heroes in *Antony and Cleopatra* as he dramatizes the end of the Roman republic even beyond the point of its disintegration in *Julius Caesar*, both allegories to the sixteenth century political England. Antony and Cleopatra's plot entails the pulverizing of the triumvirate of Octavius, Antony and Lepidus who defeat the republican army of Cassius and Brutus in *Julius Caesar*. Beguiled by the Egyptian queen Antony only returns briefly to thwart the last bit of republican resistance posed by Pompey's son. He marries Octavia but only to return to Alexandria leaving his allies to defeat Pompey. The truce between the three allies breaks at this point when Octavius kills Lepidus and marches towards the east to kill Antony and Cleopatra to become the emperor, Augustus. At the allegorical level while critics observe similarity between Cleopatra's lust and Queen Elizabeth's virginity, both exhibiting "excessive concern with private self rather than the body politic" (Hadfield 222), Octavius' character is thought to resonate that of James I.

In history, James's character entails shades of grey owing to his disregard of the republican inclinations of his tutor George Buchanan in the wake of opinions that hold him as someone,

...who had put the State in order not by making himself king or dictator but by creating

the Principate. The empire's frontiers were on the ocean, or distant rivers. Armies, provinces, fleets, the whole system was integrated. Roman citizens were protected by the law. Provincials were decently treated. Rome itself had been lavishly beautified. Force had been sparingly used—merely to preserve peace for the majority. (Hadfield 223)<sup>2</sup>

Similar tones of ambiguity surround the characterization of Octavius, an usurper of endless Caesar-like power who also, "preserves the ascetic code of the Stoic ideal, principal philosophy of the republic, subordinating his emotions and appetites to his rational capacities" (Hadfield 228). The galley scene reveals Pompey's secret wish to usurp all power contrary to his outward republican bent. Antony and Cleopatra's willingness to sacrifice the world for their love is yet another perversion of monarchical rule.

However, the revelry scene, where the three rulers meet, holds the essence of the text for it is emblematic of the excesses and the blurring of the lines in terms of the political values that stood as strictly defined in the initial phases of the Shakespearean republican allegories. The boy sings,

Come thou Monarch of the Vine,  
Plumpie Bacchus with pinke eyne:  
In thy fattes our Cares be drown'd,  
With thy Grapes our haire be crown'd,  
Cup vs, till the world go round,  
Cup vs, till the world go round.

(II. vii. 351)

The entire banquet scene is in the nature of a masque with its attendant antics—an Egyptian Bacchanal dance with clasped hands, to the accompaniment of instrumental music; the boy's singing, and finally, the triumvirs joining in the 'holding'. It is worth noting that Octavius chooses to remain sober and even warns Antony against the 'levity' at a time when what was required was a look at the affairs of the state, 'graver business.' The scene seems to reinstate the ancient averment, that Dorian music inspired men to be disciplined, martial and courageous, strengthening the church and the state, while the Lydian music had a demoralizing



effect which made a man effeminate and unfit for political and military discipline.

### CORIOLANUS

*Coriolanus* reminds one of Cicero's warning against the notion of glory which elevates personal above the common. Cicero states in *On Duties* that if, "...the loftiness of spirit that reveals itself amid danger and toil is empty of justice, if it fights not for the common safety but for its own advantages, it is a vice" (Cicero 25-6). Though initially Caius Martius or Coriolanus had won fame as a republican fighting Tarquin the play's ongoing action reveals that his actions were far from altruistic. His act of deserting his own party for Tullus Aufidius cannot be interpreted as something guided by patriotism or a sense of common good. His patrician pride badges the plebeians as 'crows' pecking the patrician 'eagles.' He looks down upon the non-military world. He saw power to articulate as synonymous with military power. He comments, "...[a]s for my country I have shed my blood,/not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs/ Coin words till their decay" (*Coriolanus* Act 3. Scene 1). His manipulation of the corn crisis is a further proof reflecting his desire to humble the plebeians, for he believes that giving away of the corn for free in the manner of some Greek places would breed disobedience. It is interesting to note how Shakespeare grants Coriolanus' character some degree of redemption in the face of death. While his stoic demeanor and prior victories in wars for his country need no mention, his death for the common good of his people brought about by the intervention of Volumina, his mother, in the form of a peace treaty between the Volscians and the Romans, is significant. The redemptive strain of this action is further stressed through the employment of the dirge, when funeral strains are heard at the burial of Martius at the end of the play. Michela Calore in the *Music in Shakespeare: A Dictionary* avers that, "instrumental dirges or 'dead marches' were a convention in Elizabethan tragedy...Dead marches are not employed in Shakespeare or his contemporaries when a character is sullied by crime" (136). The last lines of Act 5, scene 5, reads, 'A dead march sounded.'

### CYMBELINE

In *Cymbeline* Giacomo, like Tarquin is provoked by Posthumus' boasts of Imogen's chastity, though he does not defile her he enters her bedchamber to note the details and steal the bracelet that Posthumus had given her. The subtle overtones of the scene are important for Imogen is seen reading the story of Philomela in a chamber decorated in Roman taste, thus hinting that Imogen was a "British Lucrece whose chastity remains inviolate" (Alexander Leggatt 240). Imogen's resemblance to Lucrece and Lavinia holds true even in terms of her contribution to the architecture of the republican value. Shakespeare seems to be hinting a woman's chastity as a prerequisite of a republican state. But to a feminist mind the concept of chastity is subjective. Imogen it seems is a figure Shakespeare employs to judge Elizabeth and her "unchaste" politics to construct a strong monarchical rule. Another republican aspect of the play is the difference between Cloten and Posthumus' character. While Cloten represents the idea of rule by succession, Posthumus embodies the caliber that Plato seeks in his philosopher kings.

The stage directions in the Folio text of *Cymbeline* provide no cues for fanfares ('flourishes') at royal entries or for military music to mark the stages of the battle in Act V, Scene 2, although these must have been played as a matter of course in the original performances as in modern ones. The Folio text only specifies music at three points: for the song 'Hark, hark, the lark'; for Belarius' 'ingenious instrument'; and for Posthumus' vision of his ghostly family.

Hearke, hearke, the Larke at  
Heauens gate fings,  
and Phoebus gins arife,  
His Steeds to water at thofe Springs  
on chalic'd Flowers that lyes:  
And winking Mary-buds begin to ope  
their Golden eyes,  
With everything that pretty is, my Lady  
fweet arise:

Arife, arife ! (Il. iii. 377)

'Hark, hark, the lark', a song in the manner of the earliest comedies —one sung in a 'consort' by a trained musician, is employed in Act II, Scene 2. A



serenade, or to speak more strictly an aubade was a theatrical device to subtly surmount the limitations imposed upon the dramatist by his physical stage. Here it dispersed the heavy atmosphere instilling a sense of relief after the trunk episode, apart for indicating the transition from night to dawn, which though is easily attainable today through the use of lights, was difficult on the bare platform stage. The indispensable effectual assistance that the song seems to render however holds much more significance than meets the eye. The music seems to further build the lack that the idea of rule by succession embodies, personified in the character of Cloten.

The second instance of music, that of Belarius' 'ingenius instrument' at the time of Euriphile's death, whose name sounds somewhat like Eurydice, is similar to the instrumental music that follows Guiderius' announcement of his tossing of Cloten's head into the river and to the sound that announces Fidele's death. Here the idea that music holds powerful sway over emotion is evident, but it also suggests that Imogen is the martyr of republicanism that seems to build, as a tradition, over the body of a woman, for the dirge is similar to that of Coriolanus.

Feare no more the Lightning flafh.  
Nor th' all dreaded Thunder ftone.  
Feare not Slander, Cenfure rafh.  
Thou haft finifh'd loy and mone.  
All louers young all louers muft,  
Configne to thee and come to duft.  
(IV. ii. 389)

Authors and poets are not secular saints, they may be more circumspect about their societies than the average citizen, but they nonetheless participate in it. Apparently Shakespeare's oeuvre bears witness to his fascination with the idea of republicanism and his eventual disillusionment. His manner of evaluation of the principle of republicanism is in line with the general polyphonic treatment of all Renaissance issues. He counters it with voices pro other forms of government, probably an antic to dodge his patrons. Each view point in his work holds unique while still retaining its relationship with the others, just in the manner of the voices in

polyphonic music, thus concluding with several attitudes celebrated.

The analogy between Shakespeare and Orpheus is justified, not only on the basis of the above discussion but also when one directly parallels him against the legendry musician. While the world owes Orpheus the *Orphic Hymns*, we owe Shakespeare great literature. Both shared an understanding of the lyrical (in case of Orpheus, Hermes invented the lyre and he perfected it) and could enchant all audiences despite age and other differences. Just as Orpheus outdid the beautiful songs of the Sirens of Sirenum scopuli, Shakespeare's music artfully drowns the outward facade of his own work that seems to be appeasing the monarchical patrons. While the most widely known story of Orpheus is that of his undertaking a journey to the underworld in order to bring back his wife Eurydice to life after her being bitten in the vipers nest on being set upon by a satyr. This very journey that he undertakes on the advice of the nymphs and the gods who wept at his grief and manages to soften the hearts of Hades and Persephone only to lose Eurydice again forever turning back upon reaching the 'upperworld' to catch a glance at her, is narrated in a somewhat darker light by some. Plato's *Symposium* for instance sees Eurydice's brief journey towards the real world as a mere apparition. He sees Orpheus as a coward who chooses to mock the gods making them revert back their action instead of dying a heroic death to meet her across the Styx. Plato deems his love untrue hence and finds it in keeping that he was actually punished by the gods, first by giving him only the apparition of his former wife in the underworld, and then by being killed. Shakespeare's initial attachment of the republican ideas is also an apparition that slowly fades away as he himself realizes its utopian character. According to Aeschylus's lost play *Bassarids*, Orpheus at the end of his life disdained the worship of all gods, save the sun (Apollo), and one early morning he went to the oracle of Dionysus at Mount Pangaion to salute his god at dawn, but was ripped to shreds by Thracian Maenads for not honoring his previous patron (Dionysus) and buried in Pieria. A similar disregard for patrons is evident in Shakespeare whose patrons were Queen Elizabeth and King James



I, among others [Henry Carey; The Lord Chamberlain, Henry Wriothesley, Mr. W.H. (possibly Wriothesley's initials reversed)]. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* gives Orpheus a pederast character when he forsakes women after his wife's death for young boys. Shakespeare is also seen as a homosexual by some owing to his sonnets addressed to Mr.W.H. In the end it can be said that just as Shakespeare's life and death entails mystery owing to lack of facts the Orpheus myth too has varied interpretations, but what is significant is that just as Orpheus's head and lyre continued singing mournful songs till the lyre was carried to heaven by the Muses, and was placed among the stars and his soul returned to the underworld where he was reunited at last with his beloved Eurydice so the Stratfordian bard's work still holds relevance and the seems to be among the brightest shining stars.

#### NOTES

1. Quoted from: [Lai, Chung-Hsiung. "Limits and Beyond: Greenblatt, New Historicism and a Feminist Genealogy." *Intergrams* 7.1-7.2 (2006): n.pag. Web. 15 Sept. 2013. ], where it's been quoted from Gabrielle M. Spiegel (1997).
2. Quoted from Hadfield who himself quotes from Tacitus's *Annals*.

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