

## November 21. Lecture on "The Pattern in Shakespeare's Carpet" for Angel Foundation

Today's title from TS Eliot on "Dante", originally from Henry James,

based on long and mature consideration of all Shakespeare's plays together by looking through the plays as woven on a loom, to the pattern implicit in them. But left by them as abstract possibility, without concrete explanation for lack of understanding the "meta-drama", in three layers (as explained).

Secret of Shakespeare seen in love of triplets – *himitsu wa mitsu* (three = honey).

In Elizabethan age, *annus mirabilis* in 1595, including RJ, MD and R2, following early three plays, H6, TA, and CE – cutting across triple boundary.

Then history plays, in two threes, 3 Parts of H6, Falstaff plays 2 Parts of H4, H5, with three in between, two Richards 3 and 2, plus KJ

Another *annus mirabilis* 1599, for opening of Globe, MA, AL, and H5, preceded by three "weary" comedies, MA, AL and TN (What You Will), leading up to problem play of H, as climax of Elizabethan age.

But what of MV? Looking beyond that age to O as Moor of Venice, "the other"

Also to MM (in 1604), theme of Puritan v. Catholic, justice and mercy

Also three Roman plays, from JC looking to AC and Cor. (Plutarch)

Now turn to Jacobean age – breaking with Elizabethan age

With three tragedies, O, M, KL, each based on theme of Passion, unlike H, gradually manifesting ideal of "meta-drama"

Then in view of ideal heroines (as in previous age, before "frailty" in H),

all 12 plays together grouped in three 4's, in chronological order,

Ideal heroines, Desdemona in O, Cordelia in KL, Isabella in MM, Helena in AW

No such heroines in Lady M, Cleopatra, Volumnia in Cor, none in TAth

Four more such heroines, Marina in P, Imogen in Cym, Perdita in WT, Miranda in T

Different way of conceiving the Pattern in parallel with Sonnets

Number of Sonnets 154, but 4 may be omitted, giving the number of 150 (= 3x50)

Applied to the order of plays

not as in First Folio, comedies, histories, tragedies (edited by Hemings, Condell)

but excluding histories, which are either tragic (R3, R2) or comic (H4, H5)

from comedy (including MD, MV, MA, AL, TN), all Elizabethan

via tragedy (including RJ and H, as Elizabethan, O, M, KL, as Jacobean)

to tragi-comedy (beginning with AW, going on to 4 romances P, Cym, WT, T.

= Mysteries of the Holy Rosary, Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious

with emphasis in Jacobean plays on Passion and Resurrection,

According to Jesuit proposal of a "Society of the Rosary" for Catholic recusants.

Today's lecture chiefly on the four romances, from 1608 to 1611.

In contrast to Elizabethan romantic comedies, emphasis on young lovers,  
Now in development from KL, parent-child relationship,  
as if dramatist apologetic for having killed off poor Cordelia (in *Passion*)  
now turning to theme of Resurrection in three ideal daughters

Marina (born at sea) to P, Imogen to Cym. Perdita (to Leontes) in WT,  
with Resurrection of mothers, Thaisa in P, Hermione in WT  
involving period of separation between grieving father and lost daughter  
but omitting ideal Miranda in T, as never separated from father Prospero

Implication in names with reference to Virgin Mary

Marina = *Stella Maris*, Star of the Sea, applied to Mary by St Bernard

Perdita = *Perdita Gratia*, Lost Grace of Leontes in rejecting Hermione

Miranda = combining two titles of Mary in Litany of Loreto,

*Mater Admirabilis, Virgo Veneranda*, "Admired Miranda!" (Ferdinand)

Turning-point on seeing unfinished play by George Wilkins (first two Acts)

taken up by Shakespeare and finished (but rejected from First Folio),

from point of death of Thaisa in giving birth to Marina in *tempest*.

Speech of Pericles, "Thou god of this great vast, rebuke these surges,/ Which  
wash both heaven and hell, and thou that hast/ Upon the winds command,  
bind them in brass,/ Having called them from the deep!/ O still/ Thy nimble  
sulphurous flashes!"

Forced to leave Marina at Tarsus, while continuing his wandering at sea,

Eventually, while she is captured by pirates and sold to brothel at Mitylene,

he comes by ship to Mitylene, old and weary, while she is brought to him

and he comes to recognize that she is indeed his lost daughter

Speech of P. "O Helicanus, strike me, honored sir,/ Give me a gash, put me to

present pain,/Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me/ O'erbear the

shores of my mortality/ And drown me with their sweetness. O come hither!/  
Thou that begett'st him that did thee beget,/ Thou that wast born at sea."

Cf. Hymn, *Alma Redemptoris Mater* (Dear Mother of Our Redeemer)... *Tu*

*quae genuisti, Nature mirante, tuum sanctum genitorem.*"

Everything in the play attributed to intervention of "Diana of the Ephesians",

owing to Puritan Act of 1606 in restraint of abuses by players of divine name

But Shakespeare gets round this Act in plays after 1606 by Neo-Platonic

Parallels, Diana = Virgin Mary, Jupiter in Cym = Father, Apollo in WT = Son

Also Mary has special connection with Ephesus from Council of 431, *Theotokos*