

“O, I have read it; it is heresy” Giordano Bruno’s *Gli Furori Heroici* as a Major Source for *Twelfth Night*

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Abstract

Once the sequence of the lovers in *Romeo and Juliet* is recognized as a pattern depicting Shakespeare’s idea of the history of mankind and the sun, it becomes clear that the heliocentric focus could only have been based on the scientific work of Giordano Bruno (1548-1600). Bruno’s presence in Shakespeare’s plays has only been speculated about in a shadowy way, especially by German critics in the 1800s. However, once the sun/coal dichotomy is recognized as a basic pattern in Shakespeare, it becomes very clear that Giordano Bruno is also present in Shakespeare’s works, although he is well disguised. In *Twelfth Night*, the treatment of Giordano Bruno at the hands of the Roman Inquisition is parodied and inverted in order to subvert it and call it severely into question. Thus Malvolio, who through imagery becomes associated with things (pedantry, Puritanism and religious intolerance, coal (i.e. denying the superiority of the sun)) contrary to what Bruno stood for is subjected to a religious inquisition conducted by Feste, the clown, who is dressed up as a priest. A question on the Pythagorean concept of the soul, a question similarly posed to Bruno by the Roman Inquisition, is also posed to Malvolio, who gives the standard Christian answer, only to have it mocked by Feste. Moreover, *Twelfth Night* (1601) was written the year following the execution of Giordano Bruno and the play is a tribute to the persecuted philosopher and heretic not only through its use of Bruno’s heliocentric concept but also through its quite specific allusions to Bruno’s *Gli Heroici Furori*, or *The Heroic Furies*. These allusions are mainly clustered around the two major scenarios or motifs of *Gli Heroici Furori*: the Actaeon/Diana passage depicting the Heroic Lover in pursuit of the Divine Truth and the Nine Blind Philosophers who receive help from a river nymph in London.

Key Words: William Shakespeare; Giordano Bruno; *Gli Heroici Furori*; Roman Inquisition; Heresy

I . Introduction

Shakespeare's festive comedies, written around 1600, are all about love and lovers. A model for the lover as a person questing after love can be found in Giordano Bruno's *Gli Eroici Furori* (1585), which dwells on a "heroic lover" in search of Divine Truth. Through the presence of many echoes of the tropes, motifs and themes in *Gli Eroici Furori*, *Twelfth Night* (1601) is likely the festive comedy which may most fully utilize Bruno's work *Gli Heroici Furori*, or *The Heroic Furies*, as its main source of inspiration and meaning.

It is not difficult to pick up on the topical references and allusions to Bruno in *Twelfth Night*: the lengthy parody of the Catholic Inquisition conducted on Malvolio, who is questioned about his view of Pythagoras' conception of the soul as Bruno was; or Viola's code-name, Cesario, similar to "Cesarino" the name of one interlocutor in *Gli Eroici Furori*. There is also the opening reference to the Actaeon-Diana myth. And, for example, there is the extended metaphor comparing Orsino's act of questing and loving, or trying to get closer to Olivia through his disguised emissary Viola, to a book:

Viola: What I am, and what I would, are as secret as maidenhead: to your ears, divinity, to any other's, profanation.

Olivia: Give us this place alone, we will hear this divinity. (*Exeunt Maria and Attendants*) Now, sir, what is your text?

Viola: Most sweet lady—

Olivia: A comfortable doctrine and much may be said of it. Where lies your text?

Viola: In Orsino's bosom.

Olivia: In his bosom? In what chapter of his bosom?

Viola: To answer by the method, in the first of his heart.

Olivia: O, I have read it. It is heresy. (I.v.215-228) (Evans 1974; 414)

Orsino seems to be a heroic lover (a sort of literary model of the philosophical one Bruno sketches out in *Gli Heroici Furori*, as I will show later) and he bids Viola to "unfold the passion of my love" (I.4.24) (Evans 1974: 411) in his pursuit of a woman representing an ideal (Olivia) and whose innermost longings are explained through the metaphor of a mysterious, heretical and unnamed "text": it is worth noting that all of Bruno's works were placed on the Catholic Index, the list of banned works.

Twelfth Night starts with an important reference to *Gli Eroici Furori* through its reference to the Actaeon-Diana myth:

Curio: Will you go hunt, my lord?

Orsino: What Curio?

Curio: The hart, my lord.

Orsino: Why, so I do, the noblest that I have.

O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence!
That instant was I turn'd into a hart,
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,
E'er since pursue me. (Evans 1974: 408)(I.i.16-22)

The passage, placed so significantly at the opening of the play, signifies the sustained but hidden presence of Giordano Bruno's philosophy from *Gli Eroici Furori*, where Actaeon's fate is used as a metaphor for the heroic intellect approaching the Divine:

...But yet, to no one does it seem possible to see the sun, the universal Apollo, the absolute light through supreme and most excellent species; but only its shadow, its Diana, the world, the universe, nature, which is in things, light which is in the opacity of matter, that is to say, so far as it shines in the darkness.

Many of them wander amongst the aforesaid paths of this deserted wood, very few are those who find the fountain of Diana. Many are content to hunt for wild beasts and things less elevated, and the greater number do not understand why, having spread their nets to the wind, they find their hands full of flies. Rare, I say, are the Actaeons to whom fate has granted the power of contemplating the nude Diana and who, entranced with the beautiful disposition of the body of nature, and led by those two lights, the twin splendor of Divine goodness and beauty become transformed into stags; for they are no longer hunters but become that which is hunted. For the ultimate and final end of this sport, is to arrive at the acquisition of that fugitive and wild body, so that the thief becomes the thing stolen, the hunter becomes the thing hunted; in all other kinds of sport, for special things, the hunter possesses himself of those things, absorbing them with the mouth of his own intelligence; but in that Divine and universal one, he comes to understand to such an extent that he becomes of necessity included, absorbed, united. Whence from common, ordinary, civil, and popular, he becomes wild, like a stag, an inhabitant of the woods; he lives god-like under that grandeur of the forest; he lives in the simple chambers of the cavernous mountains, whence he beholds the great rivers; he vegetates intact and pure from ordinary greed, where the speech of the Divine converses more freely, to which so many men have aspired who longed to taste the Divine life while upon earth, and who with one voice have said: *Ecce elongavi fugiens, et mansi in solitudine*. Thus the dogs---thoughts of Divine things---devour Actaeon, making him dead to the vulgar and the crowd, loosened from the knots of perturbation from the senses, free from the fleshly prison of matter, whence they no longer see their Diana as through a hole or window, but having

thrown down the walls to the earth, the eye opens to a view of the whole horizon. So that he sees all as one.....(Bruno, *The Heroic Enthusiasts*: 1585, translation 1889: 66-68)

The Actaeon-Diana myth appears about half-way through *Gli Eroici Furori* and is one of the work's most significant and central parts. But it appears, as I have noted, at the start of *Twelfth Night*. So this play starts with the condition where a questing, searching "heroic lover", namely Orsino, is struggling, but so far unsuccessfully, to come into contact with Olivia, divine truth. To Shakespeare, who was profoundly concerned with the thermodynamic implications of heliocentrism (one of Bruno's ideas), the 'divine truth' of Olivia is the Planet Earth powered by the sun. Thus in the unveiling scene, both Viola and Olivia characterize Olivia's face in terms that include planetary scenery ("grain" "wind", "weather" "Nature"). In addition, the goddess Diana is Bruno's way of characterizing the presence of the divine in nature so there is also a casual reference to the divine ("God") after Olivia unveils her face. Finally, Bruno's belief in the unity of all the universe, what he called the monad, is expressed in the use of Olivia's notably odd use of the word "one" in the scene:

Olivia: Look sir, such a one as I was this present. (*Unveiling*) Is't not well done?

Viola: Excellently done, if God did all.

Olivia: 'Tis in grain, sir, 'twill endure wind and weather.

Viola: 'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on...
(I.v.234-240)(Evans 1974: 414)

The play ends as Olivia recognizes that Sebastian is not Viola; Olivia pairs up with Sebastian and Orsino happily realizes that Viola is the one for him. However, despite the fact that Orsino does not marry Olivia directly, two aspects of the play clue us in to the strong possibility that he has attained a unity with the "Divine Truth" through the play's actions. Olivia explains to him "My lord, so please you, these things further thought on, to think of me as well a sister as a wife." (V.i.317) (Evans 1974: 439) Orsino assents happily before he turns to Viola and proposes to her ("Here is my hand—you shall from this time be your master's mistress") (V.i.325). Viola doesn't answer (though presumably she happily takes his hand) and instead it is Olivia who speaks, calling Viola her sister ("a sister, you are she") (V.i.327). Orsino therefore is united with Olivia through belonging to the same family through the sibling relationship of Sebastian and Viola. Actually, playfully, in Act I, Orsino has teased Viola (whom he then believes to be a man) about Viola's hairless face; "Diana's lip is not more smooth and rubious..." (I.ii.31) In this minor and playful imagery connecting her to Diana, Viola also participates in Orsino's project to attain Divine Truth, and when Orsino pairs up with her in Act V, and at the same time becomes the brother-in-law (i.e. in the same family) of Olivia, he has attained his 'Diana' in more than one way.

II . The Nine Blind Philosophers in *Gli Eroici Furori*

In order to understand how *Twelfth Night* develops the whole of *Gli Eroici Furori*, not just the heroic questing symbolized by the extremely important Actaeon-Diana myth, we have to see how *Gli Eroici Furori* changes radically in its final pages, when the story turns to nine blind philosophers who are in possession of a “fatal urn” (Bruno 1585 translation 1889: 117) and who journey from the slopes of Vesuvius to Rome, then to the banks of the River Thames, where a river nymph opens the container and restores their vision. Hilary Gatti has endeavored to place this last part of *Gli Eroici Furori* within the context of the whole work, particularly in relation to the Actaeon-Diana passage:

...the final pages of *Furori* amount to a reversal of all that has gone before, in terms that do not seem to me to have been sufficiently appreciated in the critical discussion. Both the sonnet sequences and the emblematic images that in the earlier and more Neoplatonic parts of the text had constituted the literary structures around which Bruno constitutes his philosophical discourse, culminating in the mystical death of Actaeon devoured by the hounds of his own thoughts, are now replaced by the account of what is clearly a renewed spiritual as well as a physical pilgrimage....It needs to be emphasized that the last songs of the illuminated philosophers represent the end of the phase of heroic fury that Bruno’s journey---partly a sophisticated fiction, partly autobiography---has led up to. The nine philosophers have now reached a stage of their inquiry that will need to be carried out in more ordered and tranquil meditation (“tranquillato essendo alquante l’impeto del furore”). It is surely a mistake to read this work as representing a single state of mind, to be identified in purely Neoplatonic terms with the raptus of Actaeon’s self-destructive vision of the iconic Diana. Rather, it is a fiction that represents an intellectual journey during which that vision is left behind---not without regrets, gratitude, soul-searching, and a remarkable exercise in creative poetic composition. At the end of the book, however, that phase of Bruno’s life, and of Bruno’s intellectual history, seems to be considered exhausted, and a new era to be celebrated of a consciously less heroic kind. The individual is replaced by the group, the fury by a disciplined intellectual discourse concerning natural things that are no longer occult, but open to rational inquiry and research. (Gatti 2011: 134-6)

Sebastian, Viola’s twin brother and a character whose description of himself conveys utter destitution and despair, is the locus of the action in *Twelfth Night* that picks up the story of the nine philosophers. Engaged in a dialogue with Antonio, and beginning with his use of the word “stars,” Sebastian reveals much, in a Hermetic way, about his unfavorable cosmic condition:

Antonio: Will you stay no longer? Nor will you not that I go with you?

Sebastian: By your patience, no. My stars shine darkly over me. The malignancy of my fate might perhaps distemper yours; therefore I crave of you your leave, that I may bear my evils alone. It were a bad recompense for your love, to lay any of them on you. (Evans 1974: 415) (II.i.3-8)

Like the nine philosophers, Sebastian travels far, yet without any sure path or plan. Finally he wanders into Olivia's sphere of influence and is mistaken for Cesario/Viola (who is his twin sister) and then all his troubles are over. In its spirit and sensibilities, the action parallels the miraculous events at the ending of *Gli Heroici Furori*, when, after wandering, the nine philosophers end up beside the River Thames and the river nymph there opens the urn (or rather, it seems to open, "spontaneously of itself" (Bruno 1585, translation 1889: 120) when she holds it). In their joy, the nine philosophers are amazed and act "inebriated" (Bruno 1585, translation 1889: 120). In *Gli Heroici Furori*, Laodomia, the interlocutor reporting the story, tells Giulia, the other interlocutor:

How, I say, can you expect me to describe the joy and exulting merriment of voices and spirit which they themselves all together could not express? For a time, it was like seeing so many furious bacchanals. (Bruno 1585, translation 1889: 129)

Likewise, Sebastian exhibits a similar sense of being awe-struck:

"What relish is this? How runs the stream?/Or I am mad or else this is a dream" (IV.ii.60-1) (Evans 1974: 433)

When we next see Sebastian two scenes later, he is alone, and still full of wonder at his good fortune, very much echoing the nine philosophers in *Gli Heroici Furori*. The first words he utters ("This is the air, there is the glorious sun") once again underscore and show reverence to what we learn is his new cosmic mistress ("Olivia: Would thou'dst be ruled by me?/ Sebastian: Madam, I will." (IV.i.63-65) (Evans 1974: 433)). Echoing the nine blind philosophers who recovered their vision after the urn was opened ("they opened their eyes and saw the two suns" (Bruno 1585, translation 1889: 120)), Sebastian says he "sees" and also mentions his "eyes" and, of course, the "sun":

This is the air, that is the glorious sun,
This pearl she gave me, I do feel't and see 't..
....Yet doth this accident and flood of fortune
So far exceed all instance, all discourse,
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes....(IV.iii.1-2; 11-13) (Evans 1974: 434)

III. Heliocentrism

In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare does include, in an allegory, the coal/sun dichotomy, the product of Bruno's heliocentrism and the concept of "vicissitudes", material conditions (Gatti uses the term "species", not singling out fossil fuels for any special mention, to mean things that are here for a while and then not here, "the transient objects, the accidental formations that make up the differing species and their exemplars at any one moment, do clearly come to an end, and Bruno understood the dramatic impact of these individual end-moments within the eternal processes of time" (Gatti 2011: 128)) that start and come to an end. That the species or materials in question are fossil fuels was not a secret that was ready to be openly unveiled in *Twelfth Night*. Thus, Shakespeare puts, near the beginning of the play, (as he also does in *Hamlet*), a reference to secrecy and cloaking (Hermeticism may be compared to steganography, the art or practice of concealing a message within another message or image---but it is good to covertly signal the presence of a secret). This occurs when Duke Orsino tells Viola (disguised as Cesario) about "the book of his secret soul":

Orsino: Stand you awhile aloof, Cesario
 Thou know'st no less but all. I have unclasp'd
 To thee the book even of my secret soul...(Evans 1974: 411) (I.iv.12-4)

But actually everyone in both Orsino's and Olivia's households clearly knows about Duke Orsino's passionate but one-sided love for Olivia. If so then, what is this deep secret? It is not disclosed openly, as I said. Yet the word "book", like the later references to the mysterious and heretical "text", indicates a subtle reference to an 'author' as well: it is Orsino conveying a hidden identity for himself as Shakespeare in the allegory and signaling that more hidden Hermetic elements, the hidden presence of Bruno's *Gli Eroici Furori*, a real heretical text, are also present in the play.

IV. The Sun

The character who plays the sun figure in *Twelfth Night* is Olivia, the one who gets associated with "the air" directly when her name is first mentioned. Significantly, it is Orsino who says:

O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
 Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence! (Evans 1974: 408) (I.i.19-20)

Sunlight is a well-known anti-bacterial agent and germicide. A few lines later, Olivia is still the topic, this time, associated with "the element" (the footnotes explain that this means 'the sky') and "heat" (the

footnotes explain that this rare usage of heat refers to the “course of the sun” or “progress of the sun”). A messenger character named Valentine returns from paying a visit to Olivia’s household:

So please my lord, I might not be admitted,
But from her handmaid do return this answer:
“The element itself, till seven years’ heat
Shall not behold her face at ample view;
But, like a cloisteress, she will veiled walk. (Evans 1974: 408) (I.i.23-7)

Olivia keeps a veil in front of her face, and a critical but oblique comment on her action, appropriately veiled, comes from Sir Toby Belch, who asks his friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek why the latter does not reveal his dancing talents: “Wherefore are these things hid? Wherefore have these gifts a curtain before ‘em?....What dost thou mean? Is it a world to hide virtues in?” (Evans 1974: 411) (I.iii.125-8). (For Shakespeare the dynamic of humans to choose fossil fuels was comparable to the Vice-Virtue Mankind dynamic of a morality play; the sun appeared as the Virtue; though the Vice, fossil fuels, was completely irresistible.)

If Olivia is the sun economy, then, of course, the veil she wears (presumably it is black since she is in mourning) can stand for the coal smoke shrouding the London sky and hiding the sun. But Olivia’s veil can also simultaneously refer to the last stanzas of *Gli Eroi di Furori*, where the nine philosophers sing (twice) “The hidden is unveiled and open stands” (Bruno 1585, translation 1889: 122). In this sense, Twelfth Night, besides showing the cosmic sun/coal allegory, strongly seeks to show the process of questing and trying to understand hidden things, such as the cosmic relationships that sustain material realities on earth.

Much later in the play, near the end, when Orsino sees Olivia (for the first time in the play), he says, “Here comes the countess, now heaven walks on earth” (Evans 1974: 436) (V.i.97). This sort of cosmic imagery echoes the way that Sebastian wonders at his good fortune after meeting Olivia: “this is the air, that is the glorious sun.” (Evans 1974: 434) (IV.3.1) Olivia is our planet, particularly as it is powered by the sun, as it is the sun which is the longer term, more basic, and more powerful influence than fossil fuels. The concept of “sun figure” here means the relationship: Planet Earth+ Sun. As a unified idea, it can include everything on Planet Earth too. We can even call her the Cosmos or the Truth of the Cosmos, since Shakespeare was particularly concerned with a certain cosmic truth: eventual fossil fuel depletion and the return of the sun to prominence.

V. Man

Before he meets Olivia, Sebastian in his distress is a representation of collective humanity as it reaches the fossil fuel endgame (which could last decades or centuries or millennia or more). It is important

to note that Sebastian's overriding concern is not himself but Antonio's welfare:

Antonio: Will you stay no longer? Nor will you not that I go with you?

Sebastian: By your patience, no. My stars shine darkly over me. The malignancy of my fate might perhaps distemper yours; therefore I crave of you your leave, that I may bear my evils alone. It were a bad recompense for your love, to lay any of them on you. (Evans 1974: 415) (II.i.3-8)

Sebastian is then shown in a good and unselfish light, and this is in accordance with the basic fact that he has, of course, done nothing morally wrong and nothing to deserve his dire straits. In the cosmic play, where he is "mankind", this blamelessness symbolizes a slightly different idea: that mankind has acted as a natural creature in interaction with a natural resource (coal); the conclusion, as the fossil fuels deplete, is not mankind's fault, but just part of what Bruno calls "vicissitudes".

VI. "Hang him, foul collier!"

Malvolio has a few clear associations. Maria compares him to "a pedant that keeps a school i' the church" (III.ii.75) and describes him as "a kind of puritan" (Evans: 1974, 418) (II.iii.143), and Malvolio's puritanical associations are underlined strongly in one of the most famous lines in the play in the retort by Sir Toby Belch directed at Malvolio: "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" (Evans 1974: 418) (II.iii.114-6)

But there are two less clear, more hidden, less famous and more strategic, Hermetic and subtle ideas associated with Malvolio. They occur in an important stretch of comic dialogue in Act II, scene iii. Olivia, having been approached by the cross-garter'd Malvolio, has decided that he may be psychologically unwell. She leaves the scene and then Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Maria arrive and express concern, well feigned, that Malvolio may be possessed by the devil, and that this is the reason for his insanity. The notion that Malvolio is vaguely a puritan meshes logically with the idea to accuse of him of being bewitched since puritans made it one of their duties to exorcise the possessed. In general, the play, belonging to the world of the Elizabethan theater, has a logical reason for this treatment of puritans, who were always trying to close theaters and who campaigned against holidays and feast days.

But underneath this historical idea, Shakespeare uses repetition, implied association and ambiguity to add two more subtle identities to Malvolio. One is "the devil" and the other, much more deeply hidden, is "coal". Verbal techniques are employed to transmit these identities: certain words in a scene get apprehended and emphasized and 'stick to' Malvolio, the center of attention (unless it is the devil, and thus they amount to the same, as I will show):

Enter Toby, Fabian, and Maria

Sir Toby: Which way is he, in the name of sanctity? If all the devils of hell be drawn in little, and Legion himself possess'd him, yet I'll speak to him.

Fabian: Here he is, here he is. How is't with you, sir?

Malvolio: Go off, I discard you. Let me enjoy my private. Go off.

Maria: Lo, how hollow the fiend speaks within him! Did I not tell you? Sir Toby, my lady prays you to have a care of him.

Malvolio: Ah ha, does she so?

Sir Toby: Go to, go to; peace, peace, we must deal gently with him. Let me alone. How do you do, Malvolio? How is't with you? What, man, defy the devil. Consider, he's an enemy to mankind.

Malvolio: Do you know what you say?

Maria: La you, and you speak ill of the devil, how he takes it at heart! Pray God he be not bewitch'd!

Fabian: Carry his water to th' wise woman. ;

Maria: Marry, and it shall be done to-morrow morning if I live. My lady would not lose him for more than I'll say.

Malvolio: How now, mistress?

Maria: O Lord!

Sir Toby: Prithee hold thy peace, this is not the way. Do you not see you move him? Let me alone with him.

Fabian: No way but gentleness, gently, gently. The fiend is rough, and will not be roughly us'd.

Sir Toby: Why, how now, my bawcock? How dost thou, chuck?

Malvolio: Sir!

Sir Toby: Ay, biddy, come with me. What man, 'tis not for gravity to play at cherry-pit with Sathan. Hang him, foul collier!

Maria: Get him to say his prayers, good Sir Toby, get him to pray. (Evans 1974: 428)

(III.iv.84-119)

Beyond the obvious comic set-up, the words "Sathan", "fiend", and "Devil" are used collectively 6 times; it's quite repetitive. Then Sir Toby switches to using terms such as the ridiculously endearing and familiar "bawcock", "chuck" and "biddy" since (with intentional ambiguity) he may either be addressing the devil (who is implied to be located inside Malvolio, since Malvolio is 'possessed' by him), or he may be addressing Malvolio: "Come with me" can be understood to either mean that the devil should emerge from the body of Malvolio which it is possessing, or that Malvolio himself should go with Sir Toby for further care and treatment. Once the identity of Malvolio has been properly conflated and confused with the identity of the devil, Sir Toby cries out, in the emotional climax of the sequence, "Hang him, foul collier!"

The first question is why do we see the strange use of this word “collier”, when there is no coal mine in sight, and none of the characters has such a job? The footnote in *The Riverside Shakespeare* explains that “Devils were always represented as coal-black, and they worked in a hell-pit” (Evans 1974: 428). It does seem there was an old association with coal mines and hell in Britain. In *Coal: A Human History*, Barbara Freese explains that in the 15th century, coal was extremely disliked for its smoke because the sulfur “---commonly known as brimstone---characterized the atmosphere of the demonic underworld”, (Freese 2003: 27) and that coal miners commonly held “that the inexplicable disasters that plagued them (in the coal mines) were due to demons and goblins haunting them” (Freese 2003: 47).

Yet, “Hang him, foul collier” actually makes no sense, since logically, Sir Toby cannot possibly, on moral grounds, be exhorting the devil to “hang” Malvolio, nor can he logically be addressing Malvolio as a “foul collier”, since as we have seen above, it is only the devil who is associated with coal and coal mines.

Therefore, what Sir Toby probably actually means to say is “Hang him, the foul collier”, meaning “(You) Malvolio, hang him, the foul collier (Satan)”. Yet, the little word “the” is left out, and it seems a minor point, since Sir Toby is so emotional (or pretending to be so) by now. Yet, the little mistake, along with that odd word “collier” is just strange enough to register in the mind---a question mark, a tripwire, a puzzlement, (like the non-secret secret Orsino refers to with Viola)---and turn Malvolio into the collier.

I have established that Shakespeare deliberately conflated or muddled the identities of Malvolio and the devil by having Sir Toby use the terms “biddy” and “chuck” to address both simultaneously and ambiguously. So, by the time Sir Toby passionately cries out, “Hang him, foul collier!”, the term “collier” can (within the logic of the language construction at least) refer to Malvolio, as well as to the devil. In an extremely subtle way, the world of coal, the coal mining process and coal miners all become associated with Malvolio for just a brief, but very emotional and dramatic instant.

This interpretive methodology based on tiny unobtrusive details may seem unusual, but noted Shakespeare critic Stephen Booth has called for scholars of Shakespeare to pay more attention to “the experience of virtually muffled wordplay and of patterning that does not obtrude upon one’s consciousness” (Rosenbaum 2006: 456) and he asserts that there is in Shakespeare’s plays a “subliminal consciousness of connection” that is “more valuable and should be more highly valued than the experience of witty connections that invite notice.” (Rosenbaum 2006: 456) Booth wants Shakespeare scholars to:

“pay attention to the ‘ideational static’ generated in Shakespeare’s plays, by substantively insignificant, substantively inadmissible, substantively accidental linguistic configurations---- configurations in which lurk topics foreign to the sentences in which we hear them”. (Rosenbaum 2006: 456-457)

“Hang him, foul collier!” is not the only allusion to the world of coal in *Twelfth Night*. There are at least five others and they are all associated with Malvolio. The first occurs just 43 lines before “Hang him,

foul collier” when Malvolio is fatuously imagining that Olivia loves him: “I have lim’d her, but it is Jove’s doing, and Jove make me thankful!” (Evans 1974: 428) (III.iv.74-5) Lime kilns were, at this time, one of the most common commercial uses of coal for fuel. In addition, immediately following the “Hang him, foul collier” line, (by now Malvolio has left the stage) Sir Toby and Maria use the words “taint”, “infection”, “dark room” and “out of breath” in casual conversation about their successful ploy:

Sir Toby: His very genius hath taken the infection of the device, man.

Maria: Nay, pursue him now, lest the device take air and taint.

Fabian: Why, we shall make him mad indeed.

Maria: The house will be the quieter.

Sir Toby: Come, we’ll have him in a dark room and bound. My niece is already in the belief that he’s mad. We may carry it thus, for our pleasure and his penance, till our very pastime, tir’d out of breath, prompt us to have mercy on him...(Evans 1974: 429) (III.iv.129-39)

The words “infection” and “out of breath” can be references to the unhealthy effects of coal smoke on the lungs of Elizabethan Londoners: lung ailments and lung disorders killed “multitudes” (Freese 2004: 38), while “taint” and “dark” may be subtle allusions to the pollution that could be seen in the London air. All the allusions to coal are clustered in the same scene as “Hang him, foul collier”, giving impact and power to them together collectively.

In fact, when Malvolio is next seen (in Act IV, scene ii), he is bound in a dark room, a symbol, probably, for Londoners absolutely dependent on coal.

VII. Malvolio and Giordano Bruno

Malvolio also becomes the scapegoat who undergoes the same punishment that Giordano Bruno received: to be locked up in a dark room and (among many other punishments, of course, in the case of Bruno) catechized on his theological stance on the concept of the soul. Shakespeare may have recognized in himself such a degree of emotional suffering related to Bruno’s violent and public execution (Bruno’s tongue was pierced with a brace on the way to the Campo dei Fiori in order to prevent him from speaking before he was tied to a stake and set on fire) that Shakespeare may almost have felt the world was a place of “madness”: the word “mad” appears again and again in this play. More importantly, many characters either call themselves “mad” at some point or describe another character as “mad”.

VIII. A Mummer’s Play

The basic action of the play is a cure which lifts the veil away from the sun, allowing it to shine once

again. The folk play with a cure at its center is the Mummer's play with ritual origins "in the fertility rites and agrarian festivals of pre-feudal and pre-Christian village communities" (Weimann 1978: 17). Robert Weimann describes the interior structure of the Mummer's Play as follows:

The basic four-part structure of the play begins with an introduction in which one of the actors addresses the surrounding audience asking for room to play and requesting, sometimes, their attention as well. This is followed by the hero-combat, in which two protagonists (often St. George and the Turkish Knight) appear to boast of their strength and engage in battle; the defeated player is subsequently wounded or killed. A doctor, usually assisted by an impudent young servant, is then summoned to heal the fighter's wounds or resurrect him from the dead. A number of comic characters appear in the last part of the play, which ends finally with a collection and another address to the audience. (Weimann 1978: 15-16)

By the time he wrote *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare could more freely adapt this form, so what is left in the later comedy is only the important cure itself and the doctor and the impudent young assistant, although the request for "room to play" may be seen in the request by Viola to address Olivia alone. Actually, the doctor, Orsino, does not participate first-hand in the cure scene itself. The impudent young assistant, as his proxy, "saucy" (Evans 1974: 414) (I.v.196). Viola, manages this herself. The verbal exchange between Olivia and Viola, a cosmic cure scene (I have already covered it in relation to the similarity between Olivia and the goddess Diana as Diana is portrayed in *Gli Eroici Furori*, but I need to present it again here) is very significant and relays the secret identity of Olivia in many Hermetic ways.

Olivia: ...but we will draw the curtain and show you the picture. Look you, sir, such a one I was this present. Is't not well done?"

Viola: Excellently done, if God did all.

Olivia: 'Tis in grain, sir, 'twill endure wind and weather.

Viola: 'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on. (Evans 1974: 414) (I.v.233-249)

Disparate words such as, "grain", "Nature", "wind and weather", when taken together (in performance the words, which are nouns, become apprehended images reaching the audience in a sequence) add up to a vision of the vast outdoors. "God", used, for example in the Nurse's line when she calls Juliet into the stage ("What lamb! What ladybird! God forbid!"), or when Hamlet greets the players ("Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not crack'd within the ring") transmits the sacred dimension of the sun. The word "God" seems incidental in all three cases, in the sense that in none of them does this word have a serious or technical theological connotation. But for this very reason, the usage of the word is suited to

delivering a simple message: for Shakespeare, the sun, the star which ultimately powered the planet, had a sacred dimension. The cure us the release of Olivia from the veil hiding her true nature, or what Shakespeare wishes us to imagine is her true nature.

Finally, Viola explains how she would woo Olivia if she loved her. Once again, there are the words “elements” and “air” (twice) which are so important when they occur in reference to Olivia.

Viola...Hallow your name to the reverberate hills,
And make the babbling gossip of the air
Cry out “Olivia” O, you should not rest
Between the elements of air and earth
But you should pity me! (Evans 1974: 415) (II/i.272-6)

The dialogue in this scene then secretly or Hermetically transmits the cosmic and solar dimension of Olivia, great nature. We get an image of reverberate hills, grain, nature, air, earth, God, wind and weather. The sun itself can be easily supplied by the mind as it subconsciously contemplates this poetic and earthy scenery.

Furthermore, the last song (the song of the ninth philosopher) in *Gli Eroici Furori*, also contains this sort of wide, natural and raw earth scenery coupled with the image of “the hidden” being “unveiled”:

The hidden is unveiled and open stands
Therefore deny not, but admit the triumph,
Incomparable end of all the pains
Of field and mount,
Of pools and streams and seas,
Of cliffs and deeps, of thorns and snags and stones. (Bruno 1585, translation 1889: 123)

What can we say about the fact that Olivia’s unveiling occurs not with Sebastian (who I have said is parallel to the nine philosophers who appear at the end of *Gli Eroici Furori*), but with Cesario, his disguised twin? In a sense, in *Twelfth Night*, the unveiling seems to occur quite early compared to its vague reference at the very end of *Gli Eroici Furori* (where there is no actual unveiling of anyone, only the urn is opened).

Therefore, one answer is that Shakespeare manipulated the concept and placed the unveiling where he wished, long before Sebastian meets Olivia. It is his personal maneuver and personal touch.

IX. Bruno's Distinct Presence in *Twelfth Night*

Because Bruno's ideas and what he stood for are little known, I would like to quote the concluding page from Hilary Gatti's essay "Why Bruno's 'A Tranquil Universal Philosophy' Ended in a Fire":

So, in what terms can we define exactly the final stand taken by Bruno in Rome in those dramatic days that opened the jubilee year of 1600, bringing with them a new century in the Christian era? Help can be found in attempting this definition by consulting the thought of a modern Thomist such as Jacques Maritain. For the twentieth-century French philosopher, religious liberty clearly represents a problem. No one would wish to deny the importance of Maritain's commitment to human rights, or the influence on his thought of American democracy with its principles of pluralism. Nevertheless, for Maritain, such principles have become necessary only because the modern world has lost sight of the straight and narrow Christian way. The mixed city of modern liberalism, writes Maritain, in his *Essay on Liberty*, must necessarily tolerate "les divisions religieuses que le le progress du temps, et sa malice, ont enscrites dans l'histoire du monde" {the religious divisions that the progress of time in its malice, has written into the history of the world}. Liberty there must be, but, for Maritain, as far as religious liberty is concerned, it is essentially what he calls "la liberte de l'erreur" {the liberty to make mistakes}. Over three centuries earlier, however, Bruno had argued that there is no error in liberty, particularly not religious liberty. His philosophy inquires into the gods of the ancient world, the gods of the newly discovered new world, the God of Islam and the God of Israel, as well as the God of Christian religion, both in the Catholic and the Protestant formulations. That is to say, Bruno, together with a small number of other sixteenth-century humanists, thought of religious pluralism as an essentially positive value. His God is a God of infinite variety. That is why he could claim his philosophy as a tranquil universal philology: a way of reading the natural world anew according to its differences. For these differences were, for Bruno, none other than the multiple traces of a divine presence through which the heroic mind chooses to pursue the principle of unity, the monad: the metaphysical foundation of the infinite facets of being to which the philosopher ultimately dedicates his quest. This does not mean that Bruno thought all religious faiths, or indeed all secular societies, were good—he could, on the contrary, be harshly critical. For he would always prefer those religions and those societies that valued universal life and harmony. Ultimately, what Bruno was proposing was a form of philanthropy---a gesture of friendship and peace rather than of violence and hate.

Bruno's symbol of philanthropy was the dolphin---that most gentle of creatures that swims through an ocean of infinitely changing waters, while constantly attempting to reach the light of a sky it can only occasionally glimpse. In a world once again lacerated by religious conflict and war, Bruno's proposal made to the Roman inquisitors is surely as relevant today as it was then. For all he

was asking of them was that they should settle their differences by discussion---by dialogue and debate. That was a dangerous idea in 1600. It is sad to reflect that it can still be a dangerous idea today (Gatti 2011: 320-321).

It is interesting to note that the dolphin image appears vividly and memorably at the beginning of *Twelfth Night*, when the Captain, trying to give hope to Viola that Sebastian may still be alive, explains that during the storm, he saw Sebastian tie himself onto a strong mast floating on the waves:

.....I saw your brother
Most provident in peril, bind himself
(Courage and hope both teaching him the practice)
To a strong mast that liv'd upon the sea;
Where like Arion on the dolphin's back,
I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves,
So long as I could see. (Evans 1974: 409) (I.ii.11-17)

Knowing the secret and profound reverence that Shakespeare had for Bruno's ideas, and using our knowledge that Sebastian is "mankind" in the cosmic allegory, then the action of Sebastian to use the "mast" (equated with Arion's "dolphin") makes it clear, through symbolism, that Shakespeare regards Bruno's tranquil philosophy of philanthropy as a lifesaver or a productive path forward, particularly at a confusing time (allegorized as the shipwreck). Sebastian's act to "hold acquaintance with the waves" supplies a further Brunian dimension to the act since Bruno described his "tranquil universal philosophy" as "a peaceful swim through the infinite ocean of universal being" (Gatti 2011: 309).

The long passage from the essay by Hilary Gatti which I quoted above shows how extremely unjust the execution of Bruno was, and *Twelfth Night*, especially Act IV, scene ii, where Malvolio is cruelly imprisoned in a dark room and quizzed mercilessly and mockingly about his religious beliefs by his tormentors, is disturbing. The scene shows that Shakespeare seems to have been psychologically shaken by the burning of Bruno.

Bruno's works, such as *Il Candelaio*, always show pedants in an unfavorable light: the mocking of pedants in Bruno is the "Brunian reaction against a culture conceived primarily in 'grammarian' terms as quantity and refinement of words rather than attention to things" (Gatti 1989: 142). By putting the pedantic Malvolio, who embodies so many 'enemy' qualities of Bruno's ideas since Malvolio is a puritan (puritans were not known for religious pluralism), a pedant, and (through coal) an entity who does not participate in heliocentrism, into the situation that Bruno himself had faced in reality, or rather into a nasty parody of it, Shakespeare seems to have wanted to see the tables turned on the stage.

One minor, strange, awkward, and seemingly unnecessary line, a line belonging to Malvolio when he goes to Olivia when he is dressed in yellow stockings and cross-gartered, contains two words, "executed"

and “Roman”, together: “It did come to his hands and commands shall be executed. I think we do know the sweet Roman hand.” (III.iv.37-38) This line, I believe, Hermetically establishes (and established) the play’s connection to Bruno, executed in Rome, for the audience members in Shakespeare’s day who were sensitive to it.

The most important moment in the parodic inquisition arrives when Feste, the clown, dressed as Sir Topas, the priest, quizzes Malvolio, locked and bound in a dark room, on Pythagoras’ view of the transmigration of the soul:

Feste: What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild-fowl?

Malvolio: That the soul of our grandam might happily inhabit a bird.

Feste: What thinks’t thou of his opinion?

Malvolio: I think nobly of the soul and in no way approve his opinion.

Feste: Fare thee well. Remain thou still in darkness. Thou shalt hold the opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow of your wits...(Evans 1974: 433) (IV.ii.50-58)

Gatti makes it clear that at his trial, Bruno had cited Pythagoras in the context of the Pythagorean doctrine of the “world soul”:

Already, in the crucial third session of the trial at Venice, Bruno had admitted that he considered the universe infinite and eternal, populated by infinite worlds, and governed by a universal providence identifiable with nature herself. He confessed to doubts about the incarnation of Christ and about the Trinity, and he declared that he believed in a world soul according to the doctrine of Pythagoras. (Gatti 2011: 314)

More specifically, Ingrid Rowland writes “Bruno seems also to have thought, like Pythagoras, that souls, once embodied, were immortal, destined to endless reincarnation.” (Rowland 2008: 220-221). In the radical inversion of this idea in *Twelfth Night*, Feste, the fool (a position with no power or social standing), here voices the opinion of the soul that Bruno (and by implication, Shakespeare) hold. The prisoner, Malvolio, holds the ordinary Christian view. Now, on stage, this common viewpoint is ‘heresy’, the unenlightened viewpoint: “Remain thou still in darkness”, says Feste. The tables have been turned and the stage is revealed to be a place to conduct secret ‘heretical’ reforms to set free Bruno’s ideas in a cloaked manner.

Invested with the attitudes and ideas that were hostile to or inconsistent with Bruno’s thought, Malvolio becomes a scapegoat figure, first punished and then expelled from the festive ‘magic circle’ of the happy and loving couples. His very last line, “I’ll be reveng’d on the whole pack of you” (Evans 1974: 439) (V.i.378) seems to be a shout that embodies Shakespeare’s own desire to revenge Bruno’s execution,

but this desire is paradoxically expressed and dismissed at the same instant as ridiculous. Revenge will not occur by any one hand, but by “the whirligig of time”: “And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges” (Evans 1974: 439) (V.i.376), says Feste shortly thereafter, subtly echoing one of the songs of the nine philosophers after the urn has been opened in *Gli Heroici Furori*:

Puts down the high and raises up the low,
He who the infinite machine sustains,
With swiftness, with the medium, or slow,
Apportioning the turning
Of this gigantic mass,
The hidden is unveiled and the open stands. (Bruno 1585, translation 1889: 122)

Olivia dismisses Malvolio with the line “he hath been most notoriously abus’d” (Evans 1974: 439) (V.i.379). This line can just as well Hermetically refer to Giordano Bruno. The line then obliquely and very cleverly becomes a secret but brave and public critique of Bruno’s execution.

X. Feste the Clown

Finally, it should be noted that the clown, Feste, often receives money as payment during the course of the play---this action becomes, through repetition, a comic trope, in fact. Some of the other characters pay him for singing a song, for example, or for his entertaining commentary. In fitting symbolism, he resides with Olivia, the sun figure. The fool, of course, is an ancient dramatic role, associated with ancient pagan festivals and seasonal rituals, which is to say, with the sun. In a subtle acknowledgement of the link between the sun and the fool, Feste says: “Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun, it shines everywhere” (Evans 1974: 424) (III.i.38-9).

Drama itself, as a direct descendant of the same rituals and seasonal festivals, is also therefore (perhaps when compared to some other human pursuits) ‘close to the sun’, and it is not too difficult to understand that Feste, receiving money for his witticisms and performances, is a spare and ironic sketch of Shakespeare himself, a man engaged in the enterprise of the commercial theater. Shakespeare secretly did organize his plays, “foolery” of a sort, around the sun, which can be said indeed to “shine everywhere” in Shakespeare, whether through the use of Bruno’s nascent thermodynamic heliocentrism or through the use of older dramatic forms, such as Mummer’s plays, which were also sensitive to the seasons. The sun, in Shakespeare, is a critical resource in every respect.

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