

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL BASIS OF LEARNING  
ABILITY IN SHAKESPEARE'S PERICLES,  
PRINCE OF TYRE

By

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## PREFACE

Thematically salient yet largely critically unappreciated in this play is the operation of a concept familiar to Elizabethans as the thought embodied in the phrase "the rich blood of kings"--that is, the germinal presence in the scions of nobility, at least those in the legitimate line, of what amounts to an intuitive, deja vu-like ability to learn quickly that which lesser mortals must struggle to assimilate. Specifically, I attempt in this paper to show that Marina, noble daughter of Pericles, exhibits this lineally transmitted felicity of quick learning, a virtue of her well-descended, well-engendered, and well-nourished blood, in besting Philoten, daughter of putatively noble, yet physically and morally unfit parents, in the appropriate arts and crafts of their station in life. In little, I wish to demonstrate that Shakespeare displays Marina as the socially paradigmatic fleshing out of Elizabethan physiologic theory, meriting attention as an important nuance of the play.

The idea for this work had its genesis in an advanced Shakespeare course taught by Dr. David S. Berkeley, to whom I wish to express my thanks for serving as mentor and sometimes tormentor in its writing. I wish to thank also Dr. William R. Wray for suggestions made after seeing the paper at about the midpoint of its construction.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PHYSIOLOGICAL BASIS OF LEARNING

#### ABILITY IN SHAKESPEARE'S PERICLES

#### PRINCE OF TYRE

Now to Marina bend your mind,  
Whom our fast-growing scene must find  
At Tharsus, and by Cleon train'd  
In music's letters; who hath gain'd  
Of education all the grace,  
Which makes her both the heart and place  
Of general wonder. But alack,  
That monster envy, oft the wrack  
Of earned praise, Marina's life  
Seeks to take off by treason's knife;  
And in this kind hath our Cleon  
One daughter and a wench full-grown,  
Even ripe for marriage-rite. This maid  
Hight Philoten; and it is said  
For certain in our story, she  
Would ever with Marina be:  
Be't when she weav'd the sleided silk  
With fingers long, small, white as milk;  
Or when she would with sharp neele wound  
The cambric, which she made more sound  
By hurting it; or when to th' lute  
She sung, and made the night-bird mute  
That still records with moan; or when  
She would with rich and constant pen  
Vail to her mistress Dian; still  
This Philoten contends in skill  
With absolute Marina: so  
With dove of Paphos might the crow  
Vie feathers white. . . (from Gower's Prologue to Act IV  
of Pericles, Prince of Tyre).

Hearing the above passage, Elizabethan audiences would esteem it no miracle that Marina, daughter to King Pericles and Queen Thaisa in Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre, possessed in a degree superior to her nearest social peer in the play, Governor Cleon and Lady Dionyza's daughter, Philoten, the ability to learn the arts and crafts appropriate to their station, for the playwright was here reflecting on the stage sound socio-physiologic doctrine of the day: to wit, that the offspring of noble parents inherited through the well-nourished, well-descended blood of their forebears the ability to assimilate knowledge quickly, often amounting to a sort of daimonic intuition on the part of those so descended, while contrarily, as in the case of Philoten, moral and physical degeneracy of even very high-born parents at the time of the child's conception lessened this blood birthright, so that such a pair of parents as are Cleon and Dionyza could not hope realistically, in terms of Elizabethan eugenic theory and practice, to produce a child able to vie with "absolute" Marina in this respect, equal or even better childhood nurture notwithstanding.

Broad aspects of the virtue of gentle blood in quick learning in Shakespeare's characters have not gone without some critical appreciation. G. Wilson Knight, writing of the "royal boys" Guiderius and Arviragus in Cymbeline, states that "... the wonder [of the boys' 'natural' fast learning] is in the instinctive assertion of royal blood. . . ." He further notes that "... Shakespeare's conception [of the royal pair] clearly hints some higher order of human being in embryo. . . ." This critic sees "a new subtlety creeping into Shakespeare's royalism," and accredits it to "... emphasis on the discovery (by the owner or someone else) of a child's royal birth (in Marina, Perdita,

Guiderius, Arviragus, Miranda)." Royal blood, in Knight's observation, is felt "mystically, spiritually, with Marina as a palace 'for the crowned truth to dwell in' (V. i, 124)." Albert H. Tolman has also recognized such a quality in the situation of Perdita in The Winter's Tale:

[Perdita] grows up without any means of education. . . but seems to be educated nevertheless. Not only has she exquisite refinement, but in charming poetry she alludes to the stories of classical mythology with complete knowledge and appreciation. The mere possession of royal blood explains it all. Not only does blood tell in her case, but it tells her all that other people learn by hard study.<sup>2</sup>

Of this "blood will tell" aspect of Shakespeare's work, the play of Pericles gives a critically apposite view, for herein is seen against a backdrop of the same (or perhaps less for Marina) basis of nurture, the educational flowering of the noble daughter of a king and of a mother formerly a princess, measured with the learning achievements of another girl, daughter of parents who are also of high station, but perhaps gentle by position only, and who are at the time of their daughter's conception, attainted morally and reduced physically.

It is of significance that when Englishmen of Shakespeare's age grappled with the traditional problem of nature and nurture in human-kind, that problem which we now usually denominate the struggle between "heredity" and "environment," they did so with an eye to finding out which of the twain afforded the better avenue to man's physical and mental corrigibility. Equally significant is the fact that Shakespeare's fellow citizens believed that a good deal was possible to be done pre-coitally and prenataly through the former medium, for man's hereditary nature was not in all respects an unalterable quality, inasmuch as it could be in some measure determined by the actions of one's parents,

as attested by the many directions in socio-medical literature for the engendering of mentally well-endowed children. For example, Spanish physician John Huarte's Examination of Mens Wits, published five times in England between 1594 and 1618, delineates this belief:

For . . . there is to be found such an order and consent in naturall things, that if the fathers in time of procreation have regard to observe the same, all their children shall proove wise and none otherwise . . . . But if the parentes carrie in verie deed, a will to begett a sonne, prompt, wise, and of good conditions, let them six or seven daies before their companying, feed on goates milke . . . .<sup>3</sup>

An early obstetrical book entitled Chyldebirth, or the Happy Deliverie of Women, written by the French Royal Surgeon to Charles IX and Henry IV, Dr. Jacques Guillemeau, was also much consulted by Elizabethans. This work expresses more thoughts related to this same head:

Her sleepe [i. e., the sleep of a pregnant woman] must be in the night . . . for watchings doe ingender crudities and diseases, which cause untimely births instead of faire and goodly children . . . . Discreet women . . . will not give eare unto lamentable and fearfull tales, or storyes or persons which are uglie or deformed, least her imagination imprint on the child the similitude of the said person or picture . . . .<sup>4</sup>

Dr. John Makluire's Buckler of Bodily Health contains these advices:

. . . also a convenient tyme of copulation, the which is after the three concoctions are ended and this tyme is about the latter end of the second sleepe . . . . The immoderate use of this natural exercise doth weaken the body, and hinder all generation, and the inordinate use doth procreate weake and unable birth, by reason of the seede, which is not enough fined, or elaborate . . . .<sup>5</sup>

From these extractions of medical literature, and from others to be given later, it is possible to generalize that for a majority of Elizabeth's subjects reading and writing about the matter, one's nurture, in the good operations of one's parents, worked directly on one's nature, a thing which was at once a partly alterable, and (as will be



seen later) a partly unalterable quality. Sixteenth-century English physiology specifically undergirded by special techniques a theory of the transmission of certain physical and mental characteristics from parents to offspring, and this was by medium of the blood, which for the purpose of reproduction, was thought to be converted into semina. Dr. Alexander Read, Fellow of the Physician's College of London, speaks of the male element of generation in this manner:

The uses of the stones are three: the first is to elaborate the seed by reason of the seminificall faculty resident in the parenchyma of the stones: for they turn the bloud . . . into seed . . . . The second is, they adde strength, heat, and courage to the body, as the gelding doth manifest, by the which all these are impaired.<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Jacques Ferrand, author of a notable treatise on love translated into English, also avers that "The seed is nothing else, but blood made white by the naturall heate, and an excrement of the third digestion."<sup>7</sup> Ferrand further speaks of a "formative faculty" in human generation. This faculty

. . . residing in the seed, and being restrained by the matter, which has the impression fixt on it, receives from it the vertue to produce individualls, semable properties, qualities, and other accidents to the individuall from which they spring. Now these corporeall qualities, which are derived from the parents of the children are such onely . . . as those that they [the parents] have already contracted a habitude . . . those onely are hereditary, that are habitual in the parents; and by the continuance of time confirmed.

Thus does Ferrand allow for somewhat adventitious "corporeall qualities" contracted through long-time habitude of parents, such as the disposition toward venery in children of licentious parents.

Learned opinion differed as to the relative singular contributions of each parent to the child, most postulating a sort of battle for mastery between semina, but generally all agreed that ". . . if the fathers seed

do altogether prevaile, the childe retaineth his nature and his conditions: and when the seed of the mother swaieth most, the like reason taketh effect."<sup>9</sup> A typical attitude toward the phenomena of birth-given physical and mental features is perhaps most memorably given by a piece of doggerel from lawyer and poet Richard Braithwaite's book of courtesy, The English Gentlewoman, published in 1631:

Stout men and good are sprung from stout and good  
Horses and steers retain their parents blood.<sup>10</sup>

Such a view widely held inevitably placed a great deal of emphasis on hereditary considerations as opposed to strictly environmental ones. Elizabethans accounted it as truth that a man, once being brought into the world, must be exhorted to be virtuous; yet recognized that a man could only be, without the greatest of moral exertion, as virtuous as his inherited conditions permitted. A translation of The Courtiers Academie by the Italian Count Annibale Romei enjoyed three publications in England before 1607 and exemplifies this view:

. . . for if wee see by experience, that in the sonnes bodies oftentimes, the similitudes of fathers, grand-fathers, and great grandfathers, are represented, why should we not graunt, that in the mind with the body conioyned the like may com to pas? & that in them the like inclination & facilitie sometimes unto vertue, and otherwhiles to vice, may appear.<sup>11</sup>

And man's governing moral nature, as in the case of his physical nature, far from being a matter of chance, was a thing believed to be at least partly corrigible by the good offices of his parents. James Cleland, author of a demi-medical work containing advice for "good begetting," makes these specific points concerning a child's moral inheritance:

All those who would bee parents of vertuous children . . . be verie carefull of their primarie production, which is of a greater efficacie, and force then men doe think or

believe, for assuredlie the original temperature of the parents constitution, corrupteth not onlie the childrens disposition, and vertuous inclination, but dejecteth his courage. . . . Although this first duty of parents in endeavouring themselves to have vertuous children merits chieflie to be considered, as that which giveth the substance, the constitution, the nature, & so to cal it, the verie temper to a man: (and so is natural unto him,) whereas nursing and institution are onlie artificiall: yet I see few, who consider well how to performe it as they shoulde. They that faile in this first point will as hardlie correct their fault by the other two . . . .<sup>12</sup>

But if in this Elizabethan viewpoint it was possible for any one to alter for the better in some wise the issue of his body by altering his or her own moral and physical habitude, yet there was for many writers a portion of humanity which carried in its rarified blood hereditary qualities which were in addition to any effects obtainable through prenatal action by parents. These qualities were essentially immutable, or reductable only at a much higher eugenic level than could be reached by the commonality of mankind, and then only by great degeneracy or bodily privation. These privileged persons were the English nobility of ancient lineage. Dr. Laurence Humphrey, president of Magdalen College, Oxford, has the matter thus in his The Nobles, or of Nobilitye:

Neyther is it of lyttle materyall of whome a man be borne . . . sith oft we see in [noble] children, not onely the lyneamentes of theyr parentes countenance expressed, but even in manner and self-shape of manners, and vertues.<sup>13</sup>

Brathwaite and Romei are in concord as to the vehicle of this noblebred felicity:

Fountaines are best distinguished by their waters, trees by their fruits and generous bloods by their actions. There are inbred seeds of goodness (saith the philosopher) . . . and these will find time to express themselves. . . . Vertues have lineally and by blood descended from [noble] parents to their children: what especially inward graces usually attend some especiall

families, which no lesse memorize them, then those native honours which are conferred on them<sup>14</sup> (*italics mine*).

For if we esteeme the goodnesse of divers creatures by their races, how much more ought we to prognosticate the vertue of men by his stocke, and progeny, considering that not onely secret vertue of seede, but also reason doth instigate a man, to immitate the revealed vertue of his progenitors, not to shewe himself unworthy of their splendor and glory<sup>15</sup> (*italics mine*).

John Bossewell's Works of Armorie carries this belief to what seems to be its logical conclusion, and shows what must have been the source of such virtue in the Elizabethan view: "It is to be knowen, that Almighty God is the original author of honouring nobilitie."<sup>16</sup>

This eugenic difference between gentry and low-born was seated, it was believed, in the blood: blood was the raw stuff of seed, was in fact the "materiall cause" of seed in both sexes. Eucharius Roesslin describes this physiologic process in women:

Through these seede bringers, bloud out of the vaynes, and lively spirites out of the artires be deryved . . . drawen unto the stones, there by vertue and natural instinction of the place, altered and chaunged, beyng fyrste confused together the bloud and the spirit . . . . So that thorowe the manyfolde and infinite circulatyons of the attracted matter by the conduyctes or vaynes infinitely intricate and writhed with a thousand revolutions or turnagaynes (and all in the lyttle compasse of the body of the ovaries) the bloud and spirite commired together, getteth another nature and propertie both in colour and in effecte.<sup>17</sup>

According to Roesslin, the process is functionally similar in men:

The fourth mine is the stones, in whom by commutation of al the other thre foresaid metalles of the body, that is to say, vayne bloud, arteriall bloud, and lively spirites engendred in the head, is engendred & produced seede, which bestowed in his due place, becommeth like in perfection from whence it came: that is to say, of mankynde, man.<sup>18</sup>

Nobles must have, therefore, to have good blood in order to cast good seed, full of the "inbred seeds of nature" aforementioned. And it is important to note here, one of the most recognized concomitants of

these inbred seeds was the ability of scions of the gentry to learn rapidly, almost intuitively, the things they needed to know for their elevated situations in life. It is a question, then, as to the reason for this imputed physical difference between blood and blood; that is, by what means was noble blood so distilled as to be able to carry these germens of goodness to noble progeny, and what conditions could alter or lessen these inherited qualities.

One difference lay in the belief that the condition of the blood could be altered for the better or worse by the food one ate, or did not get to eat. Unsurprisingly, it was gentlefolk who were best nurtured in this respect. Physiologic belief was that such foods as white bread, veal, pork, capon, partridge, eggs, and potatoes went readily into good blood through "decoction" in the stomach, then through "sanguinification" in the liver, and thence to semen by action of the generative organs. This process is illustrated by Dr. Thomas Cogan, master of the Manchester Grammar School and family physician to Sir Richard Shuttleworth:

. . . as the meate received is altered and chaunged three times, that is to say, in the stomacke, liver and parts before it nourish the body, and as everie concoction hath his superfluitie or excrement, as the stomacke ordure, the liver brine, the reines sweat: So after the third and last concoction: which is done in everie part of the bodie that is nourished, there is left some part of profitable blood, not needful to the partes, ordained by nature for procreation, which be certaine vessels or conduites serving for that purpose, is wonderfully conveighed and carried to the genitories, where by their proper nature that which before was plaine blood, is not transformed and chaunged into seede.<sup>19</sup>

Educator Sir Thomas Elyot writes in his Castell of Helth of one game bird:

Partriche of all foules is most soonest digested: and hath in him much nutriment, conforteth the brayne, and maketh

seede of generacion, and reviveth luste, whiche is abated.<sup>20</sup>

Gentry, of course, got more and better of this kind of food, if only by means of their greater wealth. Figures available for the year 1588 indicate that the proverbial English "groaning board" was a strictly upper-class phenomenon. A fully employed laborer would earn only ten pounds in that year, while a skilled carpenter's yearly average might go to fifteen pounds. This is to be measured against an average expenditure of eight pounds per year for a peasant family of four,<sup>21</sup> and this in turn to be measured against some comparative food prices of the day: oysters 8d. the hundred, salmon 13/- each, lampreys 2/6. each, butter 3/1/2. a pound, and eggs 3/3. the hundred.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, sustenance came dear to the average Englishmen, constituting a principal cash outlay in his existence. Notable also in this connection is Falstaff's pointedly exaggerated tavern bill in Henry IV, Part One:

Item, A capon . . . . .	2s. 2d.
Item, Sauce . . . . .	4d.
Item, Sack, two gallons . . . . .	5s. 8d.
Item, Anchovies, and sack after supper . . . . .	2s. 6d.
Item, Bread	ob.

(II. iv 526-530)

The nobility of Elizabeth's reign, on the other hand, were able to spend great sums for food, and had rare dishes quite often "to a degree that seems unbelievable to the twentieth century palate." Some citations will help make this point. In twelve days, in late 1589, Sir Francis Willoughby, whose country seat was at Wollaton, spent one hundred four pounds on food for himself and his guests.<sup>23</sup> On 30 April, 1581, three hundred sixty-two pounds, nineteen shillings, and eleven pence was lavished on a feast at Lord Burghley's house for some French commissioners. Beginning on the marriage night of the daughter of a

certain lord, there was consumed on the following three days six hundred twenty-nine pounds, one shilling, and eleven pence worth of food and drink.<sup>24</sup> In the year 1561 the household of Lord Derby consumed fifty-six oxen and five hundred thirty-five sheep, and the household expenses for the year were two thousand eight hundred ninety-five pounds and six pence.<sup>25</sup> The household of Sir William Fairfax of Gilling Castle in Yorkshire spent in 1579 three hundred thirty-eight pounds, three shillings, nine and one-half pence for food. For the next year, Sir William spent four hundred forty pounds, two and one-half pence for food.<sup>26</sup> These expenditures were against an average of two to three thousand pounds per year landed income of late Elizabethan peers.<sup>27</sup> Of such spending, one scholar of economic history states that ". . . one of the primary causes of . . . expenditure [in noble houses] was the spreading taste for conspicuous waste."<sup>28</sup> This writer would seem to agree generally with the Elizabethan Earl of Clare's grandfather, who states: "I have sent all my revenues downe the privy house."<sup>29</sup>

Harrison, in his Description of England, makes the comparison between gentry and peasant more vivid:

. . . white meats, milke, butter, & cheese . . . are now food appertinent onlie to the inferiour sort, whilst such as are more wealthie, doo feed upon the flesh of all kinds of cattell accustomed to be eaten . . . . In number of dishes and change of meat, the nobilitie of England . . . doo most exceed, sith there is no daie in maner that passeth over their heads, wherein they have not onlie beef, mutton, veale, lambe, kid, porke, conie, capon, pig, or so manie of these as the season yeeldeth; but also some portion of the red or fallow deer, beside great varitie of fish and wilde foule, and thereto sundrie other delicates . . . . The gentilities commonlie provide themselves sufficientlie of that for their own tables, whilst their household and poore neighbours are inforced to content themselves with rie, or barlie, yea, and in time of dearth, with bread made of either beans, peason or otes . . . .<sup>30</sup>

One very singular advantage of this better type of nourishment for gentility was seen by several Elizabethan writers as having children generally more excellent than others by virtue of their nutritionally enhanced blood. Dr. Huarte makes this point in the following quotation:

. . . white bread made of the finest meale, and seasoned with salt. . . partidges. . . and kid. And if parents use these meats (as we have above specified) they shall breed children of great understanding. . . . Yet it standeth much more upon to use fine meates appiabile to the temperature of the wit: fore there is engendered the bloud and the seed, and of the seed, the creature. And if the meat be delicat and of good temperature, such is the bloud made, and of such bloud, such seed, and such seed, such braine.<sup>31</sup>

Cleland associates very closely the transmittable virtues of noble birth with the good to be gained from genteel nutrition:

Of the Begetting of a Noble Sonne . . . no more are vertuous children begotten by every man . . . so noble sons are engendred of some rare and singular substance, which nature brings not forth, in everie person, not everie day. Wherefore . . . I counsel then al noble men, to be as carefull in choosing of their wives . . . to see that they be vertuous, wel nurtured, wise, chast, of gracious countenance, of personalbe bodie, of pleasing deliverie of speech. For . . . the childe receaveth increment, and nourishment from her, sufficient to alter his constitution. . . . With that supernatural helpe of praier, natural meanes wil succeed the better, which I think consists chiefly in the temperature of the elemental qualities ['moisture,' chiefly blood] (as the most learned physitions saie, and some of the most iudicious poets: Natura Sequitur Semina Quisquis Sua,) even at their forming . . . . Therefore I advise al noble parents, to be verie careful in keeping of a good diet.<sup>32</sup>

Contrariwise, lack of this food made for poor blood and hence poor seed. The base-born, who could not, as has been noted, afford such delicately reviving food as capon and partridge, must suffer for it in their sanguinity. Physiologist Huarte pronounces: "For the nature of man, standeth in need of much nourishment, that he may be able to use procreation and continue his kind."<sup>33</sup> Huarte further delineates the breeding conditions of those parents unable to procure grander



nourishment:

Cowes flesh, manzo, bread of red graine, cheese, olives, vinegar, and water alone will breed a gross seed, and the sonne engendered upon these . . . be furious and of a beastlie wit . . . . Hence it proceedeth, that among unplanned people, it is a miracle to find one quick of capacite, or towardlie for learning: they are borne dull and rude: for that they are begotten on meats of gross and evill substance.<sup>34</sup>

Dutch physician Levinus Lemnius, whose Touchstones of Complexions was a well-read medical book, writes on the subject:

All the powers and faculties of nature derived into the vitall and spermaticke seed of our parents, doe stand in continuall need of nourishment. For if the bodie should . . . lack the preservatives and fomentations where with [it] be maintained, the whole frame of mans body must of necessity decay . . . .<sup>35</sup>

Shakespeare seems to take cognizance of this belief when in King Lear Kent calls the steward Oswald "a knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats . . ." (II. ii. 15).<sup>36</sup>

Of importance for later discussion is the great celerity with which Elizabethan physiologists believed the body converted food into seed. The first quotation is from Dr. Huarte's Examination of Mens Wit, the second from Dr. Cogan's Haven of Helth:

. . . there is no child born, who partaketh not of the qualities and temperature of that meat, which his parents fed upon a day before he was begotten . . . . Principally it behooveth, for 7 or 8 daies before to use the meats which we have prescribed, to the end that the cods may have time to consume in their nourishment, the seed which all that time was engendered . . . .<sup>37</sup>

. . . in the seede or nature of man and woman liveth the whole abilitie of procreation . . . . And as bloud is dayly ingendred of such nourishment as we receive, so likewise of bloud is nature [semen] bred continually . . . .<sup>38</sup>

Some foods were specifically aphrodisiac, among them eryngo,<sup>39</sup> eggs, and potatoes.<sup>40</sup> These foods were "hote meates" and were the cause of concupiscence because they were believed to "encrease much

seed." Huarte tells that "How fruitfull and pricking the . . . seed is, Galen noteth . . . . The same . . . soon inciteth the creature to copulation, and is lecherous and prone to lust. . . ."41 On this subject the unknown author of The Mirror of Mans Lyfe states: ". . . the belly which is daintily fed most willing of itself inbraceth carnal pleasures."42 In this same work "Leachery" is pictured as "the wicked daughter of Gluttony," and readers are told ". . . she is never put to flyght, but when shee is kepte at harde diet." And Juan Vives warns in his Instruction of a Christen Woman:

Neyther the bournying Etna, nor the countrey of Vulcane, nor Vesiuvius, nor yet Oliompus boyleth with such heate, as the bodies of younge folkes enflamed with . . . delicate meates, done.43

Certainly this quality of inciting lust was not to be despised, for vigor in procreation was considered beneficial to progeny and could only, according to Lemnius:

. . . helpe highly in the breeding and shaping of the infant or yongling, specially if the body be well ballassed with good wholesome meates . . . for without these Venus games are performed but faintly and sorily . . . . For [in this way] the members of generation draw unto them from the principall members, and convert into seed, the best and most exquisitly concocted blood which seed having in it great store of effectous and profitable spirit, is the worker of heat . . . . Take meat, and drink, and wine away, small is the lust to Venus play.44

Of bastards, Huarte writes:

. . . for bastard children are ordinarily made of seed hote and dry; and from this temperature (as we have oftentimes proved heretofore) spring courage, braverie, and a good imagination . . . .45

Again, Shakespeare glances at medical doctrine concerning lusty conception in King Lear. Edmund, reflecting on his illegitimacy, soliloquizes:

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 us  
 With base? With baseness? bastardy? Base, base?  
 Who in the lusty stealth of nature take  
 More composition and fierce quality  
 Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,  
 Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops  
 Got 'tween asleep and wake? (I. ii. 6-15).

Elizabethans, of course, had their points against bastardy, associating it, as evident in the above quotation, etymologically with the word "base." Riotous sexual excess such as was associated with the engendering of bastards might be depleting to the body. William Vaugahn alludes to this in his Approved Directions for Health:

Immoderate venery weakeneth strength, hurts the braine, extinguisheth radical moysture, and hasteneth on old age death. Sperme or seed of generation is the onely comforter of age, which wilfully shed or lost, harmeth a man more, then if hee should bleed forty times as much.<sup>46</sup>

Also, as has been previously noted in Ferrand, a predisposition to lust on the part of parents might be transferred to offspring. He emphasizes this view with a poem:

Love's powers in the parent's seed is  
 Plac't:  
 How can it be  
 That ever she  
 That's borne of Jove & Leda, should be  
 Chast?<sup>47</sup>

Further, sons in the legitimate line looked on the imputation of irregular birth as opprobrious, as when in Hamlet, Laertes, demanding vengeance for his father, cries, "That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard" (IV. v. 118). Yet the former point remains; that is, vigor in procreation, so long as it was not unprofitably excessive, was an aid to begetting able and wise progeny.

But even more than good food, aphrodisiac or not, the drinking of wine was supposed to cause good blood and hence good seed. Huarte writes: ". . . so good seed is not engendered by any meat . . . as of white wine, and especially to give wit and ability."<sup>48</sup> French physiologist Pierre La Primaudaye states in his book, The French Academie, ". . . it [wine] engendereth very pure bloud, it is very quickly converted into nourishment, [and] it helpeth to make digestion in all parts of the body."<sup>49</sup> William Vaughn agrees with this concept, and records that "wine temperately taken . . . engendereth good bloud . . . ."<sup>50</sup>

As might be expected since wine was an expensive commodity, it was those of gentle birth who could largely afford to enjoy its advantages, while the lower-born in the main drank "sodden barley-water" (beer or ale) or, worse, drank water only. It has been noted that a laborer gained only about ten pounds in money a year, and a skilled craftsman about fifteen. In 1589 the prices of wines were as follows, by gallon: claret and white wine 2/-, sack 2/8d., Rhenish 2/9½d., and muscadell 4/-.<sup>51</sup> One English observer states the general case of wine consumption by class thus:

Clownes and vulgar men onely use large drinking of beere or ale, how much soever it is esteemed excellent drink even among strangers, but Gentlemen garrawse only in wine . . . .<sup>52</sup>

This, of course, puts the case too strongly, for it is not to be supposed that noble persons never drank beer or ale, or that non-noble Englishmen never drank wine. Rather, what seems true is that it was the gentry who customarily and regularly consumed wine, whereas non-gentry did not. A modern opinion of the matter is offered by William Stearns Davis in Life in Elizabethan Days: "Gentlefolk, nevertheless,

must have their wine . . . . Without sack for the gentles and ale for the commons, where in God's name would be England!"<sup>53</sup>

Such a dichotomy of common drink was to the disadvantage of the base-born, as Sir Thomas Elyot explains:

But to say as I thinke, I suppose, that neyther ale nor beere is to be compared with wine, consideringe, that in them do lacke the heate and moysture whiche is in wine, for that being moderately used, is most like to the naturall heate and moysture of mans bodye. And also the licour of ale and beere, being more grosse do ingender more gross vapours, and corrupt humours than wine doth, being dronke in like excesse of quantities.<sup>54</sup>

From this access by nobility to wine accrued another advantage, for wine not only made good blood and good seed, it also had an aphrodisiac effect, which, as has been noted, was an aid to engendering wise children. A translated German text, written by Dr. Christopher Wirtzung, reports: ". . . [wine] provoketh venery and maketh women fruitfull."<sup>55</sup> Dr. Ferrand, in his chapter, "The Order of Diet for the Prevention of Love-Melancholy," from his Erotomania, discourses at large on this matter:

He [the love-melancholy sufferer] must also drinke water, and no wine on any tearmes: because that wine inflames the blood and makes men more prone to lust . . . therefore the poets feigne, that Priapus was the sonne of Bacchus . . . .<sup>56</sup>

Some wines were stronger in this respect than others. William Vaugahn states euphemistically: "Of muscadell, malmsie, Brown Bastard. These kindes of wines are only for married folkes for they strengthen the backe."<sup>57</sup> Sir Thomas Elyot writes: ". . . yong men should drinke littell wine, for it shall make them prone to furie, and to lecherie."<sup>58</sup> Indeed, even the physical touch of wine was held by Roesslin to promote fecundity in women:

[To conceive] . . . let her syt in a bath up almost to the navell; in the which ye shal decoct & see the these herbes folowinge: cake of bay leaves, mallowes, red myntes, myrtills, corromel, maioram, marygoldes, of each a handfull, of sage three handfull, of mercury, brankunfyne, each two handfull, see the all these herbes together in fayre water, or (if it were for a noble woman) in halfe water, and the other halfe redde wine, in this bath let her remayne the space of a good halfe houre. . . .<sup>59</sup>

Presumably the wine gave the noble woman a further advantage in the matter of fertility over her more common sister.

It is to be seen, then, that Elizabethans drew a definite connection between indulgence (and overindulgence) in food and wine and amour. The long history of this association has been pointed out by J. Leeds Barroll in his article "Antony and Pleasure,"<sup>60</sup> which treats of the relation of food, drink, and lechery in Shakespeare's play, Antony and Cleopatra. Barroll notes passages in Chaucer, Langland, and the French allegorist Guillaume de DeGuileville alluding to such an association, particularly in The Pylgrimage of the Lyfe of Man of the latter named, wherein "Glotonye" is "kyndred and allye off Venus." To show English cognizance of this relation, Barroll cites Jonson's epigram "on Gut":

Gut eats all day, and lechers all the night,  
So all his meate he tasteth over, twice:  
And, striving so to double his delight,  
He makes himself a thorough-fare of vice.

This writer instances the food/sexuality relation in lines 29 through 31 of Act I, scene iv of Antony and Cleopatra:

Broad-fronted Caesar,  
When thou wast here above the ground, I was  
A morsel for a monarch.

Further on this head, Barroll relates Antony's description of Cleopatra in Act III, scene xiii, as "A morsel cold upon/Dead Caesar's trencher."

Substantiation for this point abounds in Elizabethan medical texts. One such typical work not cited by Barroll is The Method of Phisicke by Dr. Philip Barrough, published in 1583, which contains this advice:

. . . it is convenient that you give unto such as desire to get children, some accustomed and pleasant thing to eat or drinke before meate, which be most apt to provoke carnall lust & engender seede . . . . For as the proverb is, if you have not bread & wine: carnall lust will coole & pine.<sup>61</sup>

It is in view of all that has been stated hitherto of Elizabethan physiologic and eugenic belief that one may conclude that in the writing of Pericles, Prince of Tyre, Shakespeare was influenced by this doctrine of the ability of the noble consumers of good food and drink to produce wise, quick-witted scions who learn easily, and that, further, he recognized the belief of the lessening of this lineal felicity by reason of parents' failure to eat and drink the foods and beverages thought to promote such an inheritance, even in addition to the conferrable gifts of noble blood before cited. Indeed, for all that has gone before, it is possible to see that this play, both character and plot, is in large measure informed with this idea of the good consequences of rich nurture for noble parents, and the bad effects of its lack, and that such a view constitutes a motif therein. Certainly the matter of the nobility and good nurture of the derivative characters of Pericles, Thaisa, Cleon, Dionyza, Marina, and Philoten is in Shakespeare's two most recognized sources for Pericles, the tale of Apollonius of Tyre in Book Eight of Gower's Confessio Amantis and Lawrence Twine's novel of 1576, The Pattern of Painfull Adventures . . . of Pericles, Prince of Tyre, nowhere so pronounced as are these aspects in Shakespeare's altered play version of this story.

In following the denouement of this facet of the work and its attendant associations, one must perforce follow the food and drink habits of the forebears of Marina and Philoten, principal exemplars of both sides of the "good food, good drink versus bad food, bad drink" equation. By doing so, one idea of why Marina bests her rival in quick learning ability is perhaps discernible.

In Act I, scene i, lines 20 through 23, of the play, *Pericles*, come from Tyre to seek a wife, desires the incestuous daughter of King Antiochus. This desire is expressed symbolically in terms of fruit:

You gods, that made me man, and sway in love  
That have inflam'd desire in my breast  
To taste the fruit of yon celestial tree  
Or die in the adventure, be my helps . . . .

Antiochus reinforces the metaphor in lines 29 and 30:

Before thee stands this fair Hesperides,  
With golden fruit, but dangerous to be touch'd.

None of this food imagery is in either Gower or Twine, and hence is a solely Shakespearian addition.

Such a depiction of love in terms of food, coming as it does near the play's beginning, serves a twofold purpose. First, food is associated with sexual activity, an association I suggest continues throughout the play, but here, in the case of a notably degenerate woman, sexual activity of a barren, really undesirable sort, not procreative in terms of any of the foods that were thought by Elizabethan nutritional theorists to give forth wise children, but rather completely contrarily, in terms of a food manifestly opposed to procreation and even to health and life itself. Vaughn states: "All fruit for the most part are taken fore for wantonnesse, then for any nurture or necessary good which they bring in unto us."<sup>62</sup> Sir Michael Scott, author of The Philosophers Banquet,



an Elizabethan dietary, writes:

Galen . . . because he eate no frute in all his life, lived long, and in health: whose example . . . I imitated . . . . And my friends which were counselled by mee, and abstained likewise, in their whole lives were not troubled with many diseases.<sup>63</sup>

Sir Thomas Elyot suggests:

By change of diet of our progenetours, there is caused to be in our bodies such alteration, from the nature which was in man at the beginning that nowe all frutes generally are noyfull to man, and do ingender yll humours, ofte times the cause of putrified fevers . . . .<sup>64</sup>

It is to be noted that the image inherent in the mentioning of the "celestial tree" and the "golden fruit" of the Hesperides is that of apples,<sup>65</sup> a food English physiologists believed even more adamantly anti-aphrodisiac and unhealthful. Thomas Cogan relates the bad effects of apples and adds an ancient proverb about their use:

. . . all apples generally are unwholesome in the regiment of health . . . for (as Avicen sayeth) they hurt the sinews, they breede winde in the seconde digestion, they make ill and corrupt blood. Wherefore rawe apples . . . are by this rule rejected, though unruly people through wanton appetite will not refrain from them, and chiefly in youth, when, (as it were) by a natural affection they greedily covet them . . . . [Apples] are thought to quench the flame of Venus, according to that old English saying, he that will not a wife wed, must eate a colde apple when he goeth to bed.<sup>66</sup>

Vaughn concurs with this latter postulate: "Apples . . . will serve to quench the over-abundant heate of the liver."<sup>67</sup> Finally, Ferrand advises that to avoid over-desire of physical love, "they must also often times use to eat grapes, melons, cherries, plumes, apples, peases, and such like fruit."<sup>68</sup>

Secondly, this "dangerous food" imagery is a foreshadowing, using the "forbidden fruit" tradition, that this woman is evil, attainted, and may not serve the play's hero as wife and mother of good children.

The food motif here may, with some license, even be said to direct in a very forceful fashion the action of Pericles with respect to his choice of a love object: away, in this case, from a palpably unfit woman.

The first unfolding of the food motif, here essentially one of the sterility of the unworthy half of a pair of putative lovers, undergoes a dramatic change when in Act III, scene iii, Pericles meets Thaisa, daughter of King Simonides of Pentapolis and future mother of Marina. If the former association of bad blood with a bad person obtained in the case of Antiochus' daughter and led Pericles away from love and procreation, here the thrust of the food/love equation is to lead him most assuredly into an amorous situation with Thaisa. In Simonides' court the atmosphere is suffused with references to the type of victuals rich in promoting physical love of the procreative kind. There is talk of a feast in the first ten lines of this scene. Lines 50 and 51 contain a ribald sally by Simonides on the aphrodisiac qualities of wine when he says to a knight and competitor for Thaisa's hand:

Here, with a cup that's stored unto the brim  
As you do love, fill to your mistress' lips . . . .

Importantly, in the first meeting of the two lovers, it is Thaisa who expresses her desire for Pericles, born of an instant, in terms of foodstuffs:

By Juno, that is queen of marriage  
All viands that I eat do seem unsavoury,  
Wishing him my meat (lines 13-15).

Significantly, in her next breath, she expresses to her father her hopes of his lineage, an Elizabethan association noted before:

[To Simonides] Sure he's  
A gallant gentleman (lines 15-16).

Simonides, so taken himself with Pericles' good parts that he says in an aside, "these cates [culinary delicacies] resist me, he not thought upon," wishes his daughter to marry this paragon, and, in the part of a cunning matchmaker, he asks his daughter to take a "standing bowl of wine to him" (line 65) and to ask his "name and parentage." Thaisa demurs, saying that "men take women's gifts for impudence" (line 69).<sup>69</sup> Certainly it is not hard to see why she hesitates, for in the light of what has been related about wine and its amorous effects, the scene would have her offering a quasi-aphrodisiac to a man and at the same time asking who his parents are--a first concern in marriage among nobles.<sup>70</sup> Assuredly the import would be clear to Elizabethan auditors of the play, who would not fail to also take into account the aura of the feast, repletion, and surfeit in which the offer is tendered. Yet Thaisa pleasedly carries out her father's wish, and even makes a mild sexual quip to Pericles, a sort of party flirtation, when in line 76 she hands him the wine and says, "Wishing it so much blood unto your life," a double-entendre playing on the word "life," in the sense of Pericles' life and health, recognizing the force wine had in maintaining both, and "life" in its meaning of "progeny," glancing at (1) the aphrodisiac qualities of wine, and (2) the ability of wine to aid physiologically in the manufacture of good seed--incorporating good traits like the ability to learn rapidly.

In Gower's Confessio Amantis, Pericles (Apollonius) merely arrives "at souper time," and in Twine's novel, while the King of Pentapolis and his daughter were "at meate." In both sources for the play Shakespeare uses the only evidence of Pericles' gentility is his presence at court. In Gower, the king's daughter is sent to Pericles

during the meal as in the play, but only "forto to make him glad," with no wine-serving. In The Painfull Adventures a servant is sent on this mission for the king.

Adding generally to the sexual evocation of the scene under discussion is the "soldiers' dance" which takes place after the feasting and drinking. Simonides jests broadly in lines 95 and following:

. . . a soldier's dance.  
 I will not have excuse for saying this:  
 Loud music is too hard for ladies' heads,  
 Since they love men in arms as well as beds.

A special mot at Pericles follows:

And I have heard, you knights of Tyre  
 Are excellent in making ladies trip,  
 And that their measures are as excellent (lines 101-103).

The manner in which Elizabethans might regard this dancing, especially after heavy indulgence in delicate foods and strong wine, is given by Ferrand:

Yet there are some kinds of exercises and recreation, altogether dangerous; as the reading of lascivious books, musicke, playing on the viol, lute, or any other instruments. But the most dangerous of all, are plaies, masques, and dancing.<sup>71</sup>

Yet however much these scenes may evince the food/blood/procreation aspects of this play, the clearest demonstration of this motif is in

Gower's Prologue to Act III:

Now sleepy-slacked hath the rout  
 No din but snores the house about  
 Made louder by the o'er-fed breast  
 Of this most pompous marriage-feast.  
 The cat, with eyene of burning coal  
 Now crouches 'fore the mouse's hole;  
 And crickets at the oven's mouth  
 Sing the blither for their drouth.  
 Hymen hath brought the bride to bed,  
 Where by the loss of maidenhead  
 A babe is moulded.<sup>72</sup>

In Shakespeare's sources the wedding supper is only a one-line mention of a "wedding feste" in Gower and Twine says merely, "What should I nowe speake of the noble cheare and princely provision for this feast?"

The babe "moulded" in the last line of the Prologue is, of course, Marina, conceived in an aura of rich, plentiful lushness by noble parents under conditions that from a physiological standpoint represent all that can be done by her parents to insure her good blood, full of fine, potent mental traits, including that of rapid learning. First, her parents are themselves of noble descent, and advantage by itself able to carry to progeny refined "seeds of nature" to ripen into goodness; secondly, Marina's parents have, just prior to her conception, fed on fine meats "appiable to the wits" of the child; and, thirdly, Pericles and his bride may be supposed to have drunk wine, the usufructs of which are vigor in procreation and production of good seed. That Marina does inherit good qualities from her parents will be demonstrated later.

Turning now to the parents of Marina's rival, Philoten, it is easily discernible that the equation under consideration is changed greatly, rendering the prenatal relationship of Cleon and Dionyza to their child very dissimilar to that of Pericles and Thaisa. The play first deals with Cleon and his wife in Act I, scene iv, and in this first meeting it is learned that both they and the people of their country, Tharsus, have been quite literally starving to death for two years. The inhabitants are so wasted that, in Cleon's words:

Those mothers who, to nuzzle up their babes  
Thought nought too curious, are ready now  
To eat those little darlings, whom they lov'd  
(I. iv. 42-44).

So acute is the hunger of Philoten's parents that in lines 10 and following, Cleon cries out in very agony:

O Dionyza,  
 Who wanteth food, and will not say he wants it,  
 Or can conceal his hunger till he famish?

Dionyza is starved too, and says of their overweening hunger, "Our cheeks and hollow eyes do witness it" (line 51).

Sir Thomas Elyot notes the effects of such deprivation on one's health:

And note well, that by to much abstinence [from food] the moisture of the body is withdrawen: and consequently the blood drieth, and waxeth leane, naturall heate, by withdrawing of moisture is to much incended & not finding humour to worke in, turneth his violence to the radicall or substanciall moysture of the body, and exhausting that humour, bringeth the body into a consumption.<sup>73</sup>

Such, then, is the supposed condition of Cleon and Dionyza at their introduction. This change represents a most thorough-going turn-about of the rich food, rich seed motif present in the case of Pericles and Thaisa, especially in the business of devouring the children of the land, a touch that lends horror and debasement to the two characters involved. Even though both Cleon and Dionyza are, at this point of the play, pictured as possessing high-born station, and by extension, high blood (it will be seen later that this depiction changes) yet such a reversal can only bode ill for the conception of unfortunate Philoten, in view of the Elizabethan idea of the prenatal influence of foods. It would be obvious to Shakespeare's audience that Cleon and Dionyza, with their blood so sorely depleted, would labor under a handicap to procreation, even after Pericles comes to the aid of their country with ships of corn, for nowhere is this foodstuff nor any of the other cereals commonly grouped under this word in Elizabethan usage set down as an aid to

procreation or as especially invigorating to health; rather, there is some evidence to the contrary, for one of these cereals, at least, was believed by Elyot to have a "cooling" effect on the body, which would lessen sexual desire:

Barley corn . . . is comminded, and used in medicine, in all partes of the world, and accompted to be of a singular efficacie in reducing the body temperature, especially which is in distemperature of heate.<sup>74</sup>

Yet it was at this time that Philoten must have been conceived, for the time element of the play dictates that her conception and birth followed only a small while after Pericles' departure from that land, because she is obviously about the age of Marina, and Marina was conceived shortly after Pericles' shipwreck and rescue at Pentapolis, which takes place directly following his visit to Tharsus. It is probable, then, that Philoten was badly scanted of good food in her earliest youth, there being little or no food in Tharsus save corn.

Being thus overly chary of food for children was likely, in the age's medical thought, to have evil consequences. Dr. Lemnius states that children fed "with a tender allowance and small pittance of unsavoury rusty flesh, stinking fish, and hoary bread" are subject to a great many mental and physical deficiencies:

It causeth them to be ill complexioned and coloured, the shape, comeliness and beauty of their bodyes to degenerate and grow out of fashion, the quickness, courage, liveliness, and sharpnesse of their wit to decay, their spirites to be dulled, and all the lively vertues and towardness of the minde, which was before in them (either by the benefit of nature, or by the industry of the parents, or finally by the onely and special gift of Almighty God) to be extinct and utterly quenched . . . . Whereby it commeth to pass that in growth they seldome come to any personable stature, to the use of their full powers . . . or to any handsome feature . . . and the cause is, for that in their tender and growing age, being kept under by famine, and skanted of common meate and drinke . . . .<sup>75</sup>

It is worthwhile to note that the part of the passage in parentheses takes particular care to inform the reader that the bad operation of this lack of food could apply to children of the nobility, possessors of the "onely and special gift of Almighty God" at birth, as well as to the offspring of commoners (who might by their "industry" instill some good traits in their progeny).

Thus it can be seen that from a strict standpoint of nutrition and its postulated effect on the blood, Marina might well be expected to best Philoten in learning ability, and that she does so is attested to by Gower's Prologue.

Yet, as noted previously, these differences based on the nurture of parents would not be the only consideration a thoughtful Elizabethan would look to in order to explain Marina's extraordinary penchant, for both girls have hitherto been accounted noble of birth, and, as noted in the passage above and earlier, such children had, in the belief of many socio-medical theorists, inherited qualities of mind that lent themselves to great learning ability, so that both Marina and Philoten might, on this score, yet be thought to stand on an equality. Indeed, insofar as Shakespeare may reflect this point in his work (and there is evidence that he does so to a larger extent than his contemporaries) one of his plays presents a straightforward case of an ill-nurtured but noble person besting a better-fed sibling in prowess, virtue, and learning ability. The play is As You Like It. In Act I, scene i, Orlando, complaining of his evil treatment at the hands of his elder brother, Oliver, compares his situation to that of the latter's barnyard animals:

His horses are bred better; for, besides that they are  
Fair with their feeding, they are taught their manage . . .  
(lines 10-12).



He further declaims that:

Besides this nothing that he so plentifully gives  
 Me, the something that nature gave me his countenance  
 Seems to take from me: he lets me feed with his hinds. . .  
 (lines 16-19).

Orlando believes that "in the gentle condition of blood" his brother ought to do better than "mine my gentility with my education." As a mark of his ignoble degradation he asks: "Shall I keep your hogs and eat husks with them?" (line 37). Yet, in spite of evil nurture, even Oliver recognizes Orlando as his superior in virtue, and takes especial note of his learning ability:

. . . my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more  
 Than he. Yet he's gentle; never schooled, and yet learned;  
 Full of noble device; of all sorts enchantingly beloved . . .  
 (lines 161-163; italics mine).

So then despite all noble parental precautions taken regarding foods, in this Shakespearean play and in the common view of many Elizabethan medical theorists, it was at least possible that undernourished noble children could display the peculiar talent of swift learning ability. But there is a serious question raised in Act IV, scene iii of Pericles regarding the gentility of Cleon and Dionyza. To be sure, they are named as Governor and Lady of Tharsus, a position tantamount in other of Shakespeare's plays to "king and queen."<sup>76</sup> Yet in the Elizabethan conception, the gifts of nobility inheritable by offspring were only from ancient nobility, and conferrable only after at least three generations of gentle birth:<sup>77</sup>

. . . for new nobility is but the act of power, but ancient nobility is the act of time (Sir Francis Bacon, Essayes . . . Civill and Morall).<sup>78</sup>

Nobilitie (as Aristotle saith) is a glittering excellencie proceeding from ancestors, and an honour that cometh from an ancient lineage and stocke (La Primaudaye, The French Academie).<sup>79</sup>

Nevertheless, hee may be called absolutely noble, who shal have lost the memory of his ignobilitie, which memorie remaineth, during the revolution of three generations . . . . That vertue is the cause of nobilitie we grant, but not the vertue of one alone . . . but rather the vertue of many: we grant also, that nature in respect of her selfe, is to all a kinde and loving mother: notwithstanding led us adde, that she working by seed, manifesteth her selfe a step-mother to some: considering seed from the heavens, places, nourishment, whence it proceedeth in reason, that some are esteemed of noble race, and others ignoble . . . (Romei, The Courtiers Academie).<sup>80</sup>

Indeed, some writers, in defense of nobility of ancient lineage against encroachments of the levelling spirit, were willing to hark back to the beginning of the world for justification of their position, as witness the argument of Essex's friend and follower, Gervase Markham, in The Gentleman's Academie:

Adam and Eve, had neither father nor mother, and therefore in the sonnes of Adam and Eve, first issued out both gentleman and churle. But in the sonnes of Adam and Eve, to wit, Seth, Abell and Caine, was the blood royal divided from the rude & barbarous, a brother to murder his brother contrary to the law, what could be more ungentlemanly or vile . . . .<sup>81</sup>

But, as has been stated, doubts exist as to the ancient nobility of Philoten's parents. Osorio da Fonseca writes in his De Nobilitate Civili that "He borne of base degree, by dastardness is knowen," and goes on to paint a picture in words that is very much the likeness of Cleon:

. . . even as patience in persecution proveth a noble nature, as valiancy in adversity argueth an unconquerable minde; so truly timorousness in terroure and danger, evidently sheeweth a man to be base, and of vile condition.<sup>82</sup>

In the play, Dionyza attests eloquently to Cleon's timorousness when she vituperates him with:

Y're like one that superstitiously  
Do swear to th' Gods that winter kills the flies . . .  
[i. e., it is winter that is to blame for the flies' death, and not Cleon] (IV. iv. 49-50).

Cleon himself casts doubt on the nobility of both his and Dionyza's blood when he says:

To such proceeding  
Who ever but his approbation added,  
Though not his prime consent, he did not  
Flow from honourable sources  
(IV. iii. 25-28; italics mine).

Dionyza accepts this judgement on herself as perpetrator of "such proceeding" and on her lineage:

Be it so then:  
. . . though you call my course unnatural.  
(lines 29, 37).

Cleon's lending of approbation to Dionyza's crime urges further the charge of baseness against him, for, in the words of Thomas Bodenham, writing in his Wits Commonwealth: "The base issue of base auncestry will lose their trothe to save their lyves."<sup>83</sup> This is precisely Cleon's action in the play.

Yet if either Cleon or Dionyza<sup>84</sup> is base, the consequences for Philoten are not good.

. . . for it is true, that in the seede of man, life is potentially contened, whiche is forme, and bloud in the womans wombe is the matter whereof the body is formed, so that the soul from man, and the body from woman, have their original: But also I averre, that if noble forme shal be brought to noble matter, the thing compounded will be perfectly noble; but if the matter be base, notwithstanding the forme be noble, the compound will not be absolutely noble . . . (Romei, The Courtiers Academie).<sup>85</sup>

In these cases [marriage of a noble to a base wife] although we graunt that the husband can not be sayd unnoble, or that he hath lost his gentil state . . . yet is the issue descending from such a marriage greatly blemished; yea, halfe corrupted in his blood (Sir John Ferne, The Blazon of Gentrie).<sup>86</sup>

The upshot, then, of such an admission is that Philoten may not after all be assumed to have equal footing with Marina on the score of noble birth. And the eugenic importance granted to noble blood by

Elizabethan writers, as has been noted, is great. Quotations from the scholarly Henry Peacham's Compleat Gentleman and Bishop Osorio's De Nobilitate will suffice to reiterate the point:

[Nobility] transferreth itself unto posterity, and as for the most part we see the children of noble personages to bear the lineaments and resemblance of their parents, so in like manner for the most parte they possess their virtues and noble dispositions, whiche even in their tenderest years will bud forth and discover itself.<sup>87</sup>

Nobility of bloude issueth from the excellency of good nature, and the worthiness of vertue proceedeth from some noble and princely parentage.<sup>88</sup>

More apropos of Philoten's assumed base condition is the belief that the low-born, whatever their station in life, may inherit no sort of noble abilities via their parents' blood:

. . . for he which is obscurely borne and of low degree may not through the worthiness of any place be made noble, neither gentle bloude shall have yeelded unto him estimation dewe to his byrth and estate . . . . To that end tended the drifte of all my dispensation, that the gentle and noble bloude is more then the other, by nature enclyned to dignitie & commendable acts . . . . (Osorio, De Nobilitate).<sup>89</sup>

Men have made distinction between the gentle and the ungentle, in whom there is as much difference, as between vertue and vice (Gerard Leigh, The Accedence of Armorie).<sup>90</sup>

The gentle borne, indued with plentifull vertue, is more fit then the ungentle bloud (Ferne, Blazon of Gentry).<sup>91</sup>

The noble seemeth borne with a better inclination, and disposition unto vertue, then a plebyan, or one extracted from the common sorte (Romei, The Courtiers Academie).<sup>92</sup>

The material result, then, of Marina's parents care to bestow upon their daughter well-nourished blood to complement their contribution of noble descent (which came also through the blood) as opposed to the nutritionally exhausted sanguinification and doubtfully gentle descent of Philoten's morally debased parents (which renders Philoten of

doubtful gentility) is to make Marina truly "absolute" in ability to learn better and more quickly than her supposed peer the gentle arts of their degree. Marina is like the "good tree standing in fertile ground" in the English translation of the Venetian Giovanni Bruto's The Necessarie Education of a Yong Gentlewoman, which can never "bring forth sharpe and bitter fruit . . . ." Bruto speaks of Marina's kind when he writes:

So you can hardly make me believe, that one borne of a good father, & one that for his vertues is much esteemed, will not in many points resemble the parents: which although sometimes we find in some to fall out otherwise, in that case we must impute it to the education, that hath not been such as appertained and belonged to the generositie of their nature.<sup>93</sup>

And so do readers see that Marina does in many ways resemble her father, as in Act II, scene v, line 30, Pericles is called "music's master" by Simonides, who also says he is "beholding to [Pericles] for your sweet music this last night," implying the latter's ability to both play and sing, so Marina, "trained in music's letters" at Tharsus, not only "sings like one immortal" and dances "goddess-like to her admired lays," but it is just her "sweet harmony" that in Act V starts Pericles from his grieving stupor to recognize her as his daughter. To quote Ferne's Blazon of Gentry, her singing makes it ". . . seeme that the soule and mind of man hath a certayne sympathie or compassion with the sounds of musicke . . . ." <sup>94</sup> Yet more than this, her education has truly "appertained and belonged" to her rarely begotten nature, and her achievements bespeak every maxim found in Elizabethan courtesy books containing advices for young gentlewomen. Ruth Kelso, in Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance, writes that for the Elizabethan gentlewoman ". . . every consideration from the first turns upon the central demand of chastity, the great virtue of woman, so judged by women as

well as men."<sup>95</sup> This dictum is borne out by substantially all writers on female conduct of the day:

Fyrste let hir understande that chastitee is the principal vertue of a woman . . . . As for a woman, she hath no charge to see to, but her honesty & chastitee (Juan Vives, Instruction of a Christen Woman).<sup>96</sup>

. . . that wound which women receive when they lose their maidenheads, no hearbe hath vertue ynough to scrape out that blot and therefore it is the greatest blemish (Robert Green, A Quip for an Upstart Courtier).<sup>97</sup>

Furthermore, Marina's chastity is put to the same sort of trial by fire (capture by pirates and incarceration in a brothel, with preservation of virginity being only possible through employment of early-learned skills and crafts) that at least two well-known authors of female conduct-book writers set down as the plainest manifestation of the truly chaste woman:

We have red of women, that have been taken and lette goe againe of the most unruly souldiours, only for the reverence of the name of virginitee, because they saied that they were virgins. For they iudged it shorte and small ymage of pleasure, to minishe so great a treasure: and every one of them had leaver that an other shoulde be the causer of so wyked a dede than hym selfe . . . . Also lovers, which be blynde in the heate of love, yet they stay and take advisement. Fore there is none so outragious a lover, if he thynke she be a virgin, but he will alwaie open his eies, and take discreacion to him and deliberacion, and take counsaile to chaunge his mynde. Every man is so adred, to take awaie that which is of so great price . . . . (Juan Vives, Instruction of a Christen Woman).<sup>98</sup>

. . . Musicke . . . reclaimed the untamed and beastlie appetite of certain young men, from offering of force to the house of a beautiful virgin, or dishonour to her chastitee (Ferne, Blazon of Gentry).<sup>99</sup>

No one reading these lines and knowing the story of Pericles and his daughter can help but think of Marina, taken by pirates, at whose hands the least she can expect is that "they will but please themselves upon her," and subsequently sold into a house of prostitution to "do the deed

of darkness"; yet who throughout all keeps tied her "virgin knot," and even, with the help of her early training, of which education she has had all the grace, is able to send patrons of the bawdy house away "cold as a snowball," saying their prayers and vowing to go "out of the road of rutting for ever."

Nor does Marina lack what Miss Kelso terms "the most unquestioned . . . art for the gentlewoman of any rank," that is to say, needlework. She in Act IV, scene i,

. . . weaved the sleided silk  
 With fingers long, small, white as milk . . . .  
 . . . would with sharp neele wound  
 The cambric, which she made more sound  
 By hurting it.

Again in Act V, scene i, she

. . . with her neele composes  
 Nature's own shape, of bud, bird, branch or berry.

How much this skill agrees with Elizabethan concepts of a young noble lady's proper business is seen in several citations:

Our gentlewoman shall learne not onely all manner of fine needle-worke (which are things convenient & well beseeming an honourable gentlewoman) but whatsoever belongeth to the distaffe, spindle & weaving: which must not be thought unfit for the honour and estate wherein she was borne . . . (Bruto, Education of a Yong Gentlewoman).<sup>100</sup>

Therefore let hir lerne hir boke, and besides that to handle woll & flaxe; which are two crafts, yet left of that old innocent world, both profytable and keepers of temperance . . . . I wolde in no wise that a woman shulde be ignorant in these feates, that must be done by hand, no not though she be a princesse or a queene (Juan Vives, Instruction of a Christen Woman).<sup>101</sup>

That Marina can also weave is learned in Act IV, scene vi, line 181. And of her other achievements, her skill in poetry, her beauty, her flawless complexion, her kindness to animals, her artful conversation, all of which accomplishments find parallels in feminine courtesy

literature, it is perhaps too tedious to cite exemplification. Let it suffice to say that in Shakespeare's heroines a match for Marina's aforementioned qualifications would be hard to find.

So at length the conclusion here is reached. Marina's outstanding ability to learn with alacrity is based on her well-nourished, well-descended blood, and Philoten's lack of this same ability is due to a corresponding dearth of these same qualities. What, then, of it?

For one thing, acceptance of this conclusion will allow the modern to approach Pericles with an approximation of the mind-set that at least partly informed the audience of that time, a very necessary appurtenance for full appreciation of the work at hand. Also, it is something like a debt owed by serious scholars of Shakespeare to be aware of the world-order in which he wrote, and of the idea that "blood will tell," both in the prophylactic sense of prenatal parental aid, and in the "seeds of goodness" aspect of inheritable noble virtues, that was important for the time, pervading the milieu subtly, like the music Pericles hears at the end of the play. Neither is it any derogation of the poet to know a little of what was perhaps in his mind when he composed. Better it is to know than by "Rubbing the poor itch of . . . opinion/Make yourself scabs" (Coriolanus, I. i. 171). And to stand in the way of worse opprobrium, it is only a mere fool who has ". . . been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps" (Love's Labour's Lost, V. i. 39). Those, then, who wish to partake of this feast would do well to learn something of the language of the blood.



END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>The Crown of Life (London, 1947), p. 162.
- <sup>2</sup>Albert H. Tolman, "Is Shakespeare Aristocratic?" PMLA, XXIX (1914), p. 228.
- <sup>3</sup>Tr. Richard Carew (London, 1594), pp. 20, 305.
- <sup>4</sup>Tr. A. Hatfield (London, 1612), pp. 21, 76.
- <sup>5</sup>(London, 1630), p. 72. A massive work of eight volumes.
- <sup>6</sup>A Description of the Bodie of Man (London, 1638), p. 60.
- <sup>7</sup>Erotomania, or a Treatise of Love, Tr. E. Chilmead (London, 1640), p. 261. The French original of this work first appeared in 1612.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 83.
- <sup>9</sup>Huarte, Examination, p. 321.
- <sup>10</sup>P. 178.
- <sup>11</sup>Tr. J. K. London (London, 1598), p. 194.
- <sup>12</sup>The Institution of a Young Noble Man (Oxford, 1607), pp. 11-12.
- <sup>13</sup>(London, 1563), p. 91.
- <sup>14</sup>Gentlewoman, pp. 179-180.
- <sup>15</sup>Courtiers Academie, p. 197.
- <sup>16</sup>(London, 1572), p. 10.
- <sup>17</sup>The Byrthe of Mankynde (London, 1589), sig. XV.

- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., sig. XVI.
- <sup>19</sup>The Haven of Helth (London, 1589), p. 240.
- <sup>20</sup>(London, 1541), p. 31.
- <sup>21</sup>J. E. Thorold Rogers, A History of Agriculture and Prices in England (Oxford, 1866-1902), IV, 756-7; V, 672, 829-32. As quoted by William Younger in Gods, Men, and Wine (Cleveland, Ohio, 1966), p. 308.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid., V, 472; VI, 312, 395, 418, 442. Also quoted in Younger.
- <sup>23</sup>H. M. C. Middleton MSS. 461. As quoted by Lawrence Stone in "Anatomy of the Elizabethan Aristocracy," Economic History Review, XVIII (1948), p. 7.
- <sup>24</sup>B. M. Lansd. MSS. 33/69, 71. Also quoted in Stone.
- <sup>25</sup>The Derby Household Books, F. R. Raines, ed., pp. 1-5. As quoted by A. L. Rowse in The England of Elizabeth (New York, 1951), p. 255.
- <sup>26</sup>H. M. C. Various Coll. II. 76, 78, 85. As quoted by Rowse, p. 255.
- <sup>27</sup>Lawrence Stone, "The Elizabethan Aristocracy - A Restatement," Economic History Review, IV (1951), p. 304.
- <sup>28</sup>Stone, "Anatomy," p. 3. It is made clear in this article that much of this "waste" is in the form of expensive foodstuffs. See also B. E. Supple, Commercial Crisis and Change in England 1600-1642 (London, 1959), p. 23, and Rowse, p. 254.
- <sup>29</sup>H. M. C. Middleton MSS., pp. 418, 456. Quoted by Rowse, p. 256.
- <sup>30</sup>(London, 1577), pp. 144-145.
- <sup>31</sup>Examination, p. 303.
- <sup>32</sup>Young Noble, pp. 13-14.
- <sup>33</sup>Examination, p. 272.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 305.

<sup>35</sup>Tr. T. Newton (London, 1565), p. 2.

<sup>36</sup>The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, ed. William Aldis Wright (Garden City, New York, 1936), p. 996. Subsequent quotations from Shakespeare's works will be taken from this edition; act, scene, and line numbers will appear parenthetically in the text.

<sup>37</sup>Pp. 295, 310.

<sup>38</sup>P. 241. See also Roesslin, *Mankynde*, sig. xviii

<sup>39</sup>This is the candied root of the sea holly (N. E. D.).

<sup>40</sup>Cf. Troilus and Cressida: "How the devil luxury, with his fat rump and/Potato-finger, tickles these together! Fry, lechery, fry!" (V. ii. 55-57). These foods are mentioned consistently throughout William Vaugahn's Approved Directions for Health, Naturall and Artifi- ciall (London, 1612), Elyot's Castell of Helth, and Cogan's Haven of Helth. See also Ferrand, Erotomania, pp. 247, 251, 292; Guillaume La Perriere, The Mirror of Policie, tr. unknown (London, 1599), sig. Cc; Christofer Langton, An Introduction into Physicke (London, 1598), sig. IXVIII.

<sup>41</sup>Examination, p. 295.

<sup>42</sup>Tr. T. Kirten (London, 1577), sig. IIf.

<sup>43</sup>Tr. R. Hyde (London, 1540), sig. viii.

<sup>44</sup>Touchstone, pp. 2, 137.

<sup>45</sup>Examination, p. 321.

<sup>46</sup>(London, 1612), p. 65.

<sup>47</sup>Erotomania, p. 83.

<sup>48</sup>Examination, p. 292.

<sup>49</sup>Tr. T. Bowes (London, 1586), p. 13.

<sup>50</sup>Directions, p. 23.

<sup>51</sup>Darrell Hall, Society in the Elizabethan Age (London, 1887), pp. 216, 223, 226; Rogers Prices, V. 470; VI, 414. As quoted in Younger, who notes that an Elizabethan wine gallon held 104 fluid ounces, or about three quarters of an American gallon (p. 486).

<sup>52</sup>Fynes Moryson, An Itinerary (Glasgow, 1907-1908), IV, 176, 184. As quoted by Younger.

<sup>53</sup>(London, 1930), p. 89.

<sup>54</sup>Pp. 37-38.

<sup>55</sup>Praxis Medicinae Universalis, Tr. Jacob Mosan (London, 1598), p. 783.

<sup>56</sup>Erotomania, pp. 238-240.

<sup>57</sup>Directions, p. 20.

<sup>58</sup>Castell, p. 35.

<sup>59</sup>Mankynde, sig. cxxxv.

<sup>60</sup>J.E.G.P., LVII (1958), pp. 708-720.

<sup>61</sup>P, 158.

<sup>62</sup>Directions, p. 54.

<sup>63</sup>(London, 1609), p. 71.

<sup>64</sup>Castell, p. 19.

<sup>65</sup>I am aware that, as the O. E. D. notes, from the earliest period the word "apples" was "used with the greatest latitude." However, I am convinced what is meant here is the hard, round, red, juicy fruit of Pyrus Malus, and not otherwise. In the Elizabethan texts that fell under my purview, whenever "apples" was used to mean something besides the orchard-variety, this intention was noted parenthetically: viz., "apples of Pomir" for pomegranate.

<sup>66</sup>Haven of Helth, pp. 87-88.

<sup>67</sup>Directions, p. 58.

<sup>68</sup>Erotomania, p. 244.

<sup>69</sup>One wonders if Shakespeare's "small latine" was too small to have made the pudenda/impudence equivoque here.

<sup>70</sup>Cf. Lord Cerimon, of Marina: "She's such a one that, were I well assur'd/Came of gentle kind and noble stock, /I'd wish no better choice, and think me rarely wed" (V. i. 67-69).

<sup>71</sup>Erotomania, p. 251.

<sup>72</sup>"Moulded" is descriptive of the Elizabethan idea of the early stages of fetal formation. Vide Langton, Physicke, sig. Liii.

<sup>73</sup>Castell, p. 56.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>75</sup>Touchstone, p. 44.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. Leonato, Governor of Messina, in Much Ado. Up to the point of Cleon and Dionyza's infamous murder attempt, Shakespeare gives the reader good reason to conflate "governor" with "king" in Cleon. The poet elevates this character from a rich bourgeois in both Gower and Twine to governorship in the play. If nothing else, Cleon's machtpolitik in dealing with Pericles in Act IV, scene iv, shows a true Machiavellian princely mindset. See also Act III, scene ii, line 165 of The Merchant of Venice, Act V, scene ii, line 138 of The Taming of the Shrew, and Act II, scene i, line 220 of Richard II.

<sup>77</sup>A majority opinion. Sir John Ferne, in The Blazon of Gentry (London, 1586), sets the number at five generations (p. 87).

<sup>78</sup>(London, 1638), p. 72.

<sup>79</sup>p. 694.

<sup>80</sup>Pp. 181, 193.

<sup>81</sup>(London, 1595), p. 43.

<sup>82</sup>Tr. William Blandie (London, 1576), p. 7.

<sup>83</sup>(London, 1597), p. 31.

<sup>84</sup>A case might be made out for Dionyza's baseness from the fact that, though she relates of her husband that he "is of a noble strain" (Act IV. iii. 24-25), of Dionyza's ancestry nothing is known. But she may be only baselessly flattering her husband in this line, and it does not matter which of the pair is not noble, as the result is the same for Philoten in either case.

<sup>85</sup>P. 232.

<sup>86</sup>P. 11.

<sup>87</sup>(London, 1622), p. 13.

<sup>88</sup>P. 13.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., pp. 6, 23.

<sup>90</sup>(London, 1597), p. 2.

<sup>91</sup>P. 30.

<sup>92</sup>P. 187.

<sup>93</sup>Tr. W. P. (London, 1598), unnumbered introduction.

<sup>94</sup>P. 52.

<sup>95</sup>(Urbana, Illinois, 1956), p. 42.

<sup>96</sup>Pp. 4, 11.

<sup>97</sup>(London, 1592), p. 3.

<sup>98</sup>Sigs. vii, viii.

<sup>99</sup>P. 52.

<sup>100</sup>P. 74.

<sup>101</sup>Sig. iii.

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