

BLOOD-ORIENTED DRAMATURGY IN SHAKESPEARE'S
TITUS ANDRONICUS, OTHELLO, AND CYMBELINE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In medieval and Renaissance England coexisted two opposing ideas--egalitarianism and blood-based hierarchy. The latter strictly observes the class distinction between gentry and peasantry, whereas the former disregards or even spurns it. William Langland's Piers Plowman (1362), for example, strikes a fine balance between egalitarianism and hierarchy. Conscience's sermon early in the poem lists the duties of different ranks in society, urging the importance of each rank performing its appropriate duties; the latter division of the poem focuses on the common-man protagonist, a plowman, who plays a central role in the whole pilgrimage. In fact, primeval Christians emphasized brotherhood and classlessness among themselves, just as the First Clown in the Gravediggers' scene of Hamlet argues, "There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave makers. They hold up Adam's profession" (5.1.29-31).¹ In 2 Henry VI, when Stafford ridicules the lowly pedigree of Jack Cade --"Villain, thy father was a plasterer, / And thou thyself a shearman, art thou not?"--Cade retorts, "And Adam was a gardener" (4.2.128-30).²

Likewise, many medieval and Renaissance writers present egalitarianism. Geoffrey Chaucer, for instance, basically regards *gentillesse* as a God-given disposition to moral virtues which both the gentle and the plebeian can share. In Chaucer's version of The Romance of the Rose Love proclaims that "Though he be not gentil born . . . he is gentil, because he doth / As longeth to a gentelman" (ll.2196-97); Chaucer also relates the cross-class marriage of the Marquis Walter and his peasant wife Griselda in "The Clerk's Tale." Thomas More's Utopia presents a strong egalitarian spirit, although his story might appear quite outrageous to his contemporaries. The prince of Utopia is selected by the members of the island council and his role is so limited that he seems to be only a nominal ruler; every person, gentle or base, spends two years working as a farmer in a shire near his home. Christopher Marlowe also embraces the egalitarian spirit in presenting the base-born protagonists, such as Tamburlaine, Barabas, and Doctor Faustus. They ridicule or make a fool of authority figures including kings, emperors, and the Pope. To a large extent, Marlowe tries to show the potentialities for good or evil of the common man as base-born protagonist. In the opening exposition of Doctor Faustus, the Chorus indiscriminately addresses his general audience as "Gentles" and remarks that Faustus' ancestry is "base of stock" but "graced with Doctor's name, / Excelling all" (ll. 11, 17-18).

On the other hand, a great number of authors in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance tended to portray the aristocratic heroes and heroines in their major works, partly because their major readers, audiences, and patrons were aristocratic, partly because they acknowledged the hierarchical class division of human society as well as the universe. Malory's heroes and heroines in Morte Darthur (1485) are kings, knights, ladies of gentle blood, for chivalry belongs entirely to the aristocratic sphere. King Arthur's knights--Torre, for example--are all conscious of their blood. Ladies favor the gentle knights as their champions. In Baldassare Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier (1528; trans. 1561), many participants in a series of dialogues specify noble birth as the foremost prerequisite for perfection in the courtier. Sir Frigoso argues that "so many Gentlemen and noble personages" are worthy and excellent in "sundrie things," besides the principal profession of chivalry (29). Count Lewis agrees with him and concludes, "I wil have this our Courtier therefore to bee a gentleman borne and of a good house" (31). When Pallavicin points out that some noble persons are "full of vices" and many commoners possess some virtues, Count Lewis does not deny his observation completely, but stresses the old saying--"good should spring of good"--in order to fashion a perfect courtier "without any maner default or lack in him" (33-34). James Cleland, influenced

by Castiglione, subordinates peasantry to nobility in The Institution of a Young Noble Man (1607), where he declares that "wee are ouver-runne by our betters, and of necessitie must needes confesse that some excell & are more noble then others" (3). Henry Peacham in his Complete Gentleman (1622) catalogues the plebeians who earn "greatest dignities," including Pope John II, Nicholas V, Cicero, Virgil, and Horace, but his main concern is to suggest the ideals to be pursued and the evils to be shunned by young gentlemen. He quotes Justinian's famous dictum--*Sordes inter praecipuos nominari non merentur*--"Base persons do not deserve mention among persons of distinction" (15, 18-19).

Shakespeare also acknowledges this tendency. The dignity of the base-born and a cross-class marriage are absolutely alien to the Shakespearean canon. The poet abhors the revolt of peasants and upstarts. Most of the low-born characters are ignored, ridiculed, or killed for their ambition to surpass their class, except for the English plebeian soldiers under King Henry V, who promises them the status of gentlemen on the eve of Agincourt (Henry V 4.3.63-64). A careful study of the Shakespearean canon leads to the inevitable conclusion that, as David Shelley Berkeley cogently asserts in his seminal book Blood Will Tell in Shakespeare's Plays, the poet is "the arch-conservative, the most obdurate insister" on "the merits of the gentry and the demerits of the base-born" (7). The main

purposes of this study, then, are these: first, to examine the *status quo* of Shakespeare's period in relation to the hierarchical social order constructed on the genetic bipolar division of gentry and peasantry; second, to compare Titus Andronicus, Othello, and Cymbeline with their major sources and influences to illustrate how he intensifies the theme of blood-consciousness; and, most important, to analyze the blood-oriented dramaturgy in Shakespeare's plays with the suggestion that his plays are better plays partly because of blood-based conflicts.

Emergence of Gentlemen

Elizabethan society was, in many ways, built on blood-based hierarchy. Probably most Elizabethans including Shakespeare were concerned with the bipolar distinction between the gentle and the base. Lawrence Stone in The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641 writes that "the division between the gentleman and the rest was basic to Elizabethan society" (50). The upper class comprising the top two percent or so of the whole population divided into three groups: the plain gentleman, the county *élite*, and the titular peerage (51-52). Ralph Berry in Shakespeare and Social Class also acknowledges "the great divide" between these two classes and concludes that "*Gentleman* is the key term in the stratification of classes" (xii). Most of the Elizabethan courtesy books, such as Sir Thomas Elyot's Book

Named the Governour (1531) and Peacham's Complete Gentleman, aimed at providing materials for gentlemen only to fashion their manners and behavior.

The term "gentleman" first appeared as a member of a class of gentry--as a designation of rank--in Henry V's era. Sir George Sitwell in The Ancestor maintains that no one "ever described himself or was described by others as a gentleman before 1413" (69-70). In The Merchant Class of Medieval London the medievalist Sylvia Thrupp also dates the term from 1413 because a statute of that year (Henry V) required the giving of the "estate, degree or mystery" of the defendant in all writs and appeals concerning personal action and in all indictments. In the same year, "the premier gentleman of England"--one "Robert Erdeswyke of Stafford, gentleman"--was charged with murder, assault, and robbery; Thrupp indicates that he was no anomaly because there was a class of gentlemen who were professional criminals in the fifteenth century (236). In Shakespeare's time, "gentleman" technically designated the people who possess a heraldic coat of arms and the right to bear arms, just as Kate associates the gentry with a coat of arms in The Taming of the Shrew: "And if no gentleman, why then no arms" (2.1.223). In The English Gentleman David Castronovo states that the Herald's College, the "fountainhead of all legal gentility in England," sold certificates and coats of arms to families who were "known ultimately for prowess of

arms and proximately for their landholdings and long time residence and maintenance of a certain style of life" (5-6) The Herald's College set up a series of visitations between 1529 and 1686 to decided on matters of gentlemanly status. Every thirty years, Castronovo explains, the "king of arms" traveled the countryside and confirmed those gentlemen who were "armigerous"--who had the legal right to display a coat of arms and to sign themselves "Gent" (6). Lawfully gentles inherited their status and title, from their fathers. Shakespeare himself became technically gentle when "Garter King of Arms" was finally granted to his father, John Shakespeare, on October 29, 1596. The legal document reads:

Signifying hereby and by the authority of my office aforesaid ratifying that it shall be lawful for the said John Shakespeare, gentleman, and for his children, issue and posterity (at all times and places convenient) to bear and make demonstration of the same blazon or achievement on their shields, targets, escutcheons, coat of arms, . . . according to the Law of Arms, and customs that to gentlemen belongeth without let or interruption of any other person or persons for use of bearing the same. ³

Except for the technical designation, the term "gentle" defies exact definition. Berkeley asserts that the term first appeared in thirteenth-century English, denoting some

ethical and moral virtue in personal description, such as *generosus* and *nobilis* (Blood Will Tell 5). The anonymous book The Institution of a Gentleman (1555) distinguishes between "gentle gentle," "gentle ungentle," and "ungentle gentle" and defines the term in purely ethical terms. In English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama, C. S. Lewis believes that it is a "failing" to define the word only in the ethical sense because the word "gentleman" never simply means "a good man" (290). Ruth Kelso holds that "nobility," "gentility," and "generosity" were used in two senses: in the general sense to mean "excellence of kind" and in the special sense to indicate "position in society" (18). In Shakespeare's time "gentle" and "noble" were almost interchangeable. Kelso, however, notices the difference between "nobility" and "gentility." By the end of the sixteenth century, she observes, common usage restricted "noble" to the upper ranks, that is, of baron and above, thus associating it with titles rather than with qualities of personhood. "Gentility" or "Gentry" took the place of "nobility" as the general term. In an attempt to support her observation, Kelso cites Sir William Segar's fivefold division of Englishmen delineated in Honor, Military, and Civill (1602):

We in England doe divide our men into five sorts:
Gentlemen, Citizens, Yeomen, Artificers, and
Labourers. Of Gentlemen, the first and principal

is the King, Prince, Dukes, Marquesses, Earls, Vicounts, and Barons. These are the Nobilitie, and be called Lords, or Noblemen. Next to these be Knights, Esquiers, and simple Gentlemen, which last number may be called *Nobiltas minor*.⁴

Cleland also offers two Aristotelian concepts of nobility: "civil nobilitie" and "proper nobilitie." The former designates those who are "borne in some ancient contrie or citie" like Egytians, Athenians, and Romans. The latter is divided into two again: "natural nobilitie" for Jewes who descended from the twelve tribes and Grecians from Hercules and Achilles and the like; and "personall or inherent nobilitie" for those who attain it by their own proper virtuous means (6-7). According to Kelso, medievalists classify nobility into three kinds: Christian or theological (given by God to the elect), natural or philosophical (for those who live according to reason and who are virtuous), and civil or political (based on custom, given by princes to men of honor) (21). Bailey's Dictionary (1707) defines the gentleman as "one who receives his nobility from his ancestors, and not from the gift of any prince or state."⁵ This definition suggests the distinction between a man of blood and a man of rank. The king conferred the ranks in the peerage, but even in his name the Herald's College could not "make" a man of blood: ancestry was supposedly recognized by the college. The Herald's gentleman was also

recognized by the college. Cloten in Cymbeline exemplifies the man of adventitious rank because he seems to be base but King Cymbeline intends to make him his heir by marrying his only daughter to him. But no gentlemen in the court think of Cloten as a gentleman. Nor he is. These various definitions and explanations reveal the elusiveness of the terms "gentle" and "noble." But in what sense the terms are used, I think, depends on the context.

In the Shakespearean canon, according to Marvin Spevack's research, "noble" is used 655 times, "gentle" 366 times, and "gentleman" 295 times. The poet also uses these terms in different senses on different occasions. One general rule is that Shakespeare stresses inborn qualities rather than outward titles and appearances. To be sure, as Berry suggests, "birth, education, wealth, behavior, and values" are major factors in the Elizabethan class-consciousness (xii), whereas schooling, money, and social status appear to be adventitious in Shakespeare's plays. Many gentlemen in his canon do not necessarily possess formal education, wealth, or social status. Orlando in As You Like It, the mountain princes in Cymbeline, and Perdita in The Winter's Tale are ignorant or robbed of their rightful status for different reasons; nonetheless, they demonstrate their high blood (bravery, intuition, wisdom, beauty, sophisticated language, etc.), and at the end of each play their lost status is restored in accordance with

their innate blood-quality. Inborn blood-quality plays a great part in Shakespeare's plays; much of the Tudor mind took it for granted that a gentleman inherits not merely the title but also good blood, which endows its possessor with transmitted virtues. Shakespearean gentlemen, if not degenerate, are noted for moral and spiritual loftiness as well as high birth. They are always conscious of their high blood, and their action and language accord with their blood-quality. Of course, regenerate or repentant gentles like Cymbeline and Polixenes reveal their weaknesses while they are degenerating, but their high-blood leads them to repent for their transgression and finally to recover their gentility. Another group of Shakespearean heroes like Prince Hal and Hamlet dissemble, and heroines like Imogen, Portia, and Rosalind disguise themselves as men or boys. But, except for the degenerate gentles like Richard III, they can justify their mask and disguise, since they are searching for meaning, truth, love, justice, and peace.

Villein and Villain

On the other side of society were the base-borns, or "wretched plebians" as J. Horace Round puts it (313). They seldom mention their pedigree and rank because they are ignoble. Various terms denote non-armigerous classes with no coats of arms: "non-gentles," "churls," "peasants," "the base," "plebeians," and "villeins." The term "villein" has

the same root as "villain." In Shakespeare's period, the word "villain" designated the base birth as well as the base morality. Wilfred Funk offers a detailed definition and the history of the word "villain":

The *villain* whom we used to hiss on the stage started as a quite honest son of the soil. The word *villa* in Latin stood for a farm or house. This entered Old French as *vilein* and Middle English as *vyleyn*, and until that time this "villain" of ours was just a rustic fellow, half free, and bound to the country estate or *villa* of some lord. Of course he was of low birth, and hence, to the aristocrats, was a person of low morals and *villainy* in general. Shakespeare employed the word *villain* in both its ancient and modern uses, but after him the bad sense of the term took over (110-111).

Shakespeare also often uses the word "villain" both in the ethical sense and in the class sense. In his plays the word "villain" thus has the double meaning, and it is also interchangeable with "villein." In this dissertation, when used separately on purpose, the villein simply means the base-born, while the villain signifies the evil character. Villeins are often described as villains like Aaron in Titus Andronicus and Iago in Othello, both of whom epitomize the notorious Michiavellian villains. Of course, some villeins

are by no means villains; for instance, Adam in As You Like It and the First Servant of Cornwall in King Lear exhibit their estimable moral vision. Yet most of the villeins in the Shakespearean canon play marginal roles in the gentry-dominated society, and they reveal their lowly nature in accordance with their lowly social rank. The gentles address villeins as "thou"--"Thou art a villain"--and "honest"--"Honest Iago" as a class discrimination. They are usually notorious for their gross language, cowardice, foul smell, immorality, and impenitence. Having no social rank, the base-borns lack social authority and graces in the gentry-dominated society.

Hierarchical Order in Class and Blood

Shakespeare's class-consciousness is in many ways a product of the medieval concept of hierarchical order. His idea of hierarchy mirrors the concept of the "Chain of Being" metaphor that was introduced into England in the Middle Ages, became prevalent in the Renaissance, and was comprehensively espoused with further philosophical refinement in the eighteenth century. Although the term "Chain of Being" derives from Pope,⁶ the origins of this idea, according to E. M. W. Tillyard, go back to the Old Testament and Plato's Timaeus as brought together by the "hellenising Jews of Alexandria" (The Elizabethan World Picture 21, 26). Pseudo-Dionysius, who is thought to have

lived in Syria in the fifth and sixth centuries, developed this idea further in The Celestial Hierarchies, and his arrangement of the angelic creatures into three hierarchies was accepted even by the Church. ⁷ Tillyard expounds the Elizabethan understanding of this concept in Chapter 4, "The Chain of Being," of The Elizabethan World Picture. Nearly all imaginable objects were hierarchically classified in Shakespeare's day, especially man. Man is the multi-faceted species in the precise middle of the "Chain of Being"--above the animals but below the angels, providing an abundance of things to be ranked, such as his government (a king being the primate), his physical body and its parts, his virtues, his foods, and virtually everything else pertaining to humankind. Shakespeare often classifies his characters by linking them to their counterparts of the universe in the light of hierarchy; for example, royal families are associated with oak trees or cedar trees, whereas the low-class persons are compared to weeds.

In relation to the hierarchical concept, theories of the Four Elements and the Four Humors are important for the modern readers to understand Shakespeare's characterization. Empedocles and Hippocrates (5th-4th centuries B. C.) and other Greek medical philosophers like Galen (A. D. 130-201?) developed these theories, and they came to be widely accepted not only in medieval times but also in the Elizabethan period. These thinkers insisted that the

universe consists, in different proportion, of major elements: air, fire, water, and earth. Each element was characterized by two primary and opposite qualities--warmth or coolness, moisture or dryness. Among others, Galen exercised an authority in medical science and philosophy that endured over centuries, from the fourteenth century through the Elizabethan era. The doctrine of the Four Humors first occurs in De natura hominis (On the Nature of Man), a treatise that Aristotle attributed to Hippocrates' son-in-law, Polybos.⁸ But it is Galen who experimented with the theory and developed it with his philosophical sentiments. Under the Galenic influence, the theory of the Four Elements applied both to the cosmos at large or macrocosm and to the microcosm of man, presenting an intricate series of relationships between the world of man and the universe. Thus Sir Toby Belch in Twelfth Night reminds Sir Andrew in a rhetorical question--"Does not our lives consist of the four elements?" (2.3.9). Man, the Elizabethans assumed, is compounded of the four humors: hot and moist blood (like air), hot and dry cholera or yellow bile (like fire), cold and moist phlegm (like water), cold and dry melancholy or black bile (like earth).

Closely related to the theory of Four Humors, the doctrine of the Four Temperaments--sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic--developed during the Middle Ages. Each of the temperaments results from the dominance of one

of the humors, after which it is named. Even though this doctrine departs from Galen's and Ibn Sina's (Avicenna's) earlier doctrine of nine temperaments, it predominated in the popular mind and in literature.⁹ The temperaments were closely linked to the four humors in terms of medieval physiology. In the illustrations of the humoral theory taken from a medieval manuscript, the sanguine man, who has blood as the dominant humor, was supposed to love "mirth and musick, wine and women," whereas the phlegmatic man prefers "rest and sloth." "A heavy looke, a spirit little daring" characterizes the melancholy type, and the "choleric" individual is identified as being "all violent, fierce and full of fire."¹⁰

In terms of hierarchy, just as fire and air were believed to be higher than earth and water, so were choler and blood regarded as higher than melancholy and phlegm. According to Berkeley, the Elizabethans held that gentry, high by legal status, have the heat of the higher elements, whereas peasantry, low by legal status, have the coldness of the lower elements (Blood Will Tell 10). Berkeley and Karimipour distinguish between the good blood of the gentry and the base blood of the plebeian: "Good blood is red, abundant, hot, thin, fast-flowing, and sweet-tasting . . . Base blood is of reduced quantity, cold, slow-flowing, sour-tasting, dark, heavy with melancholy and phlegm, separate humors, not sanguinary constituents" (89). Shakespeare

links blood to the gentleman: the Duke in The Two Gentlemen of Verona addresses Valentine as "gentleman of blood" (3.1.121); Bolingbroke in Richard II refers to Richard as "a happy gentleman in blood and lineaments" and "the King in blood" (3.1.9, 17). Henry V calls their courtiers "gentlemen of blood and quality" (Henry V 4.8.90). Similarly, King Duncan is noted for his "golden blood" (Macbeth 2.3.114) and Caesar for his "rich blood" (3.1.107), "most noble blood of all" (3.1.156), and "sacred blood" (3.2.132).

"Choler" is also associated with the gentles who become angry because of their hot and dry temperaments. Petruchio in The Taming of the Shrew says to Katharina: "ourselves are choleric" (4.1.162). Cassius' "rash choler" (Julius Caesar 4.3.40), York's "boiling choler" (1 Henry VI 5.4.120), Fluellen's "choler, hot as gunpowder" (Henry V 4.7.177), Kent's choler (King Lear 1.2.23) and Timon's bursting choler (Timon of Athens 4.3.372, 374) are all good examples.

"Phlegm" does not appear in the Shakespearean canon, and "phlegmatic" occurs only once in The Merry Wives of Windsor (1.4.79). The only use of the word, as David Bevington perceptively suggests in his edition of The Complete Works of Shakespeare (1992), is Mrs. Quickly's blunder for "choleric" because Caius is not in a cool mood, but rather hot-tempered. Shakespeare prefers to use another temperament, "melancholy," to describe those who are noted

for coldness. As Jaques enumerates various types of melancholy (As You Like It 4.1.11-19), Shakespeare takes liberty in associating melancholy with many different groups of people. But his references to melancholy can be categorized in the light of blood-based hierarchy. Edmund's self-portrayal--"My cue is villainous melancholy" (King Lear 1.2.138)--epitomizes Galenic melancholy as a disease of the non-gentles. Aaron's "cloudy melancholy" (Titus Andronicus 2.3.33) is another example. It causes the degeneration of the gentle blood by infecting it (Timon of Athens 4.3.204-05), by baking and making it heavy and thick (King John 3.3.42), and by congealing it ("Induction" of The Taming of the Shrew 2.135). Melancholy even wastes a gentlewoman's life (Love's Labour's Lost 5.2.14). As Berkeley delineates it, Galenic melancholy differs from "the fashionable pseudo-Aristotelian melancholy" in that the latter is linked to the gentle characters like Olivia, Orsino, and Viola in Twelfth Night and many royal persons like Hamlet (Blood Will Tell 9). Jaques' melancholy "in a most humorous sadness" (As You Like It 4.1.18-19) also belongs to this kind of melancholy.

During the Middle Ages, Galenic concepts of humors and temperaments became interwoven with the astrological belief that the particular planet ascendant at the time of a person's birth influenced his temperament. Jupiter was related to blood, the sanguine humor, which was considered appropriate to princes; the sun was related to yellow bile

or choleric, appropriate to rulers and self-willed women, and, in conjunction with Mars, to soldiers, roisterers, and drunkards; Saturn was believed to cause excessive black bile promoting melancholy; Venus was related to the phlegmatic humor and was thought proper to women, children, and voluptuaries; and Luna (the moon) was associated with mental illness, as the word "lunacy" implies.¹¹ Shakespeare takes advantage of these astrological references in portraying his characters. For instance, Aaron and Tamora are associated with Saturn and Venus, respectively (Titus Andronicus 2.3.30-31), and the name "Saturninus" implies the horoscopic influence of Saturn; Caesar and Antony are linked to Jupiter (Antony and Cleopatra 3.2.9-10); and in the Prologue of Henry V the Chorus states, "Then should the warlike Harry, like himself, / Assume the port of Mars" (5-6).

Shakespeare's plays therefore mirror the prevalent idea that, as Francis Markham in The Book of Honour: or Five Decades of Epistles of Honour (1625) asserts, "there are severall degrees in bloud" (46). The poet tends to distinguish between the gentle and the base by linking them to their counterpart elements, humors, temperaments, and planets in terms of hierarchy. Moreover, he intimates that, if gentles lose their dominant humor, that is, blood, then they lose balance or order in humors and temperaments, which effects their degeneration. This degeneration is, in turn, accompanied with ungentle traits.

Besides humors and temperaments, the poet also uses natural objects to categorize the characters in accordance with their human counterparts. For the true gentility, he deliberately selects only highly estimable ones in each species of animals (lions and eagles), plants (cedars and oaks), fruits (queen-apples), flowers (roses) stones (diamonds), and metals (gold and silver), while he chooses for the plebeians the lower and abominable objects like toads, chicken, bushes, weeds, and dirt. Shakespeare's felicitous imagery--especially faunal and floral imagery--plays a great part in his characterization of the heroes and heroines and their antipodes.

In some cases, Shakespeare's blood-consciousness coexists with, or is reconciled to, Christianity. Of course, they contradict each other in theory. But as Berkeley and Zahra Karimipour observe, they dwell in the Shakespearean plays often separately, sometimes in parallel, or individually (90). Berkeley in Chapter 3 of Blood Will Tell--"Blood Consciousness, Christianity, and Politics"--develops this idea further and enumerates many examples, even though he basically underscores the importance of the poet's penchant for blood-consciousness. J. A. Bryant, Jr., in his study of the thematic structure of Cymbeline, asserts that "genuine nobility" is equivalent to "being of the elect" who "have the grace to see their errors and repent" (199). That is to say, degenerate gentles and plebeians

fail to recognize their misdoing and fail to make amends. Accordingly, the baser the blood, the more its possessor is akin to Satan and fools (in the Biblical sense, e.g. five foolish bridesmaids in Matthew xxv) and punished with inability to repent and finally with death or symbolic death. By contrast, Honor M. V. Matthews describes many of the Shakespearean regenerating gentles in the light of the Christian pattern of sin-penitence-redemption. Moreover, most of the true gentles in the Shakespearean canon are associated with the classes superior to mankind in the "Chain of Being," that is, the angels and even the Deity. The Tudor mind, thus, considers the King of noble birth--the primate of the humankind--as the divine representative or deputy of God. Ernst H. Kantorowicz holds that from the Middle Ages until the Tudor period, the king was considered as an ontological type of Christ and that the king "represented and imitated the image of the living Christ" (87). On the other hand, according to Gervase Markham's The Gentleman's Academie (1595), Jesus, the highest rank of divinity, has traditionally been described as "the king" or once as the "only absolute gentleman" who has the best blood. Markham also labels Cain and Cham "churls," Seth and Noah "gentlemen" and continues to categorize Biblical characters in the light of class-consciousness:

From the of-spring of gentlemanly Iaphet came
Abraham, Moyses, Aaron and the Prophets, and also

the king of the right line of Mary, of whom, that only absolute gentleman Iesus was borne, perfite God and perfite man. (44)

Even the Geneva Bible occasionally uses the terms "fellow" (Acts 7:5), "churl" (Isaiah 32:5), and "goodman" (Acts 12:39) in similar spirit. Shakespeare presents no direct references to Biblical names in this sense. Sometimes, he uses Biblical names for his gentle characters like Maria in Love's Labor's Lost and in Twelfth Night. But in many cases, Biblical names are given to a bastard (Don John in Much Ado About Nothing), to a servant or an attendant (Adam in As You Like It, and Abraham and Peter in Romeo and Juliet), and even to a base-born, diabolic character (Aaron the Moor in Titus Andronicus). That Shakespeare does not manipulate the Biblical names in differentiating gentles from plebeians does not necessarily mean that he espouses Christian egalitarianism. Rather, no matter what names he gives to his characters, he tends to portray the gentry as the "elect" linking them to Jesus or God, while describing degenerate gentles and the base-born as damned or ignoble and associating them with Satan or fools, with only a few exceptions.

Review of Literature

The modern egalitarian or democratic spirit is instinctively at odds with the genetic differentiation in

Shakespeare's plays, which might result in misunderstanding or ignoring his blood-oriented characterization and his whole dramaturgy. To be sure, modern critics' efforts to derive Shakespearean themes from modern philosophical and critical perspectives have proved fruitful to some extent. But they often ignore, misunderstand, and misinterpret the themes in Shakespeare's plays, thus departing from what the poet intended to articulate and what his contemporaries might have understood. Walt Whitman, a staunch champion of American democracy, is a case in point. With a strong prejudice against old Elizabethan aristocracy in favor of new American democracy, Whitman bluntly declares that "The great poems, Shakespeare included, are poisonous to the idea of the pride and dignity of the common people, the life-blood of democracy" (5:90). Whitman's prejudice is, I surmise, neither against Shakespeare himself nor against his plays themselves, but rather against the gentry-dominated class-system of Elizabethan England. This bias ends with a ludicrous, futile effort to discover, in Stephen J. Brown's expression, "a radical, egalitarian Shakespeare" in his Preface to the 1855 edition of Leaves of Grass, and this effort entails "discarding of our old liberal humanism, with its rootedness in class distinctions and class rule" (236). Ernest Crosby, in "Shakespeare's Working Class" (1903), also tries to understand Shakespeare from the viewpoint of the working class, hence missing the points the poet wants to

make. He, for example, complains about the lack of instances in Shakespeare's works of "serious and estimable behaviour on the part of individuals representing the lower classes." ¹² Albert H. Tolman in his essay "Is Shakespeare Aristocratic?" refutes Crosby's observation with sympathetic attitudes toward Shakespeare's class-consciousness, but he also offers wrong assumptions in several cases. He argues that Act 4, Scene 1 of Henry V is "soundly democratic in spirit" on the ground that the King on the eve of Agincourt goes in disguise among the common soldiers, discussing the situation with them, learning their sentiments, and inspiring them with bravery (291). This conclusion seems wrong because Tolman overlooks the King's dissembling posture: in 2 Henry IV he as Prince Hal dissembles, in order not to equate himself with the common people, but instead to rule his people effectively and justly in the future when he succeeds to the throne. By the same token, King Henry's visit with the plebeian soldiers in disguise aims not to express his democratic sentiments, but to encourage them to win the war for the sake of his kingdom's prosperity, in this case, for the sake of the victory over France and of his claim to the French throne. Samuel A. Tannenbaum, in Chapter X of Shakespearian Scraps (1933)--"Shakespeare's Caste Prejudices: A Reply to Ernest Crosby"--also attempts to refute Crosby, but he mistakenly considers Posthumus as coming from "an obscure and humble family" (154), and

erroneously insists that the poet's "caste prejudices" were not so deep-rooted as to prevent a cross-class marriage of Posthumus and Imogen (158). Thus, this study loses some of its value. Marxist critics like Elliot Krieger also reveal fallacious reasoning when they, dismissing the aristocratic claims to hereditary superiority as "fantasy" from the Marxist viewpoint, decline to view Shakespeare's plays from an Elizabethan perspective. Gareth Lloyd Evans complains that in the latter half of the twentieth century "the sickening coils of modern racism . . . the intellectual and emotional impoverishment of political egalitarianism . . . has distorted and almost inevitably diminished the inherent qualities which constitute his [Shakespeare's] genius" (vi). When we overemphasize one thing, we are naturally apt to deemphasize other elements. And if a prejudice is added to this distortion, the result will be much worse. To find a truth or meaning, I believe, is to discard personal biases for the sake of the truth itself. Therefore, to understand Shakespeare's artistic values, we need to focus on the Elizabethan and Jacobean contexts in which Shakespeare hears, speaks, and writes, by eliminating modern prejudices and biases.

This elimination being rather rare, only a few modern critics offer fruitful and accurate observations on Shakespeare's penchant for blood-consciousness. Probably, David S. Berkeley is the first modern scholar who thoroughly

deals with the theme of blood-consciousness from the poet's viewpoint and from the Renaissance (especially Elizabethan) perspective in his book Blood Will Tell in Shakespeare's Plays. Berkeley examines many Shakespearean characters and their blood-qualities. However, he does not touch on the thematic conflict between the two bipolar classes or the relationship between blood-consciousness and the doctrine of predestination. He also excludes from his study some interesting plays like Titus Andronicus. His followers and students also have examined the significance of blood, focusing on one or a few plays. In collaboration with Berkeley, for example, Donald Eidson lightly touches on the blood-consciousness in 1 Henry IV (1968), Zahra Karimapur more comprehensively on The Winter's Tale (1985), and recently Donald Keese on All's Well That Ends Well (1991). My master's thesis of 1989 concentrates on Cymbeline from a similar perspective. Woong Jae Shin, in his doctoral dissertation of 1990, discusses Shakespeare's class-oriented modifications of the major sources, selecting carefully five plays--Two Gentlemen of Verona, 1 Henry IV, 2 Henry IV, King Lear, and The Winter's Tale. But the scope of his study is limited to source study. Berry's Shakespeare and Social Class (1988) offers valuable information about the milieu of the gentry-dominated English society in Shakespeare's time as well as a good number of gentlemanly and noble traits and language in Shakespeare's plays. Yet his study almost

ignores Renaissance understanding of four elements, humors, and temperaments; he even overlooks the innate blood-quality as a determinant the characterization in the Shakespearean canon. I suggest in the present study that Shakespeare's characters can be categorized in terms of their blood-quality and that the poet's characterization of their major traits and the dynamics of dramaturgy largely depend on his conflicting tensions between the two classes.

Blood-Based Hierarchy of Shakespearean Characters

In the light of blood-based hierarchy, I shall divide Shakespeare's characters into two types genetically: gentles and villeins. The gentry can be classified into five groups, and the villeins into five. The first group of the gentry consists of the ideal heroes and heroines endued with wit, bravery, innocence, fidelity, chastity, and intuitive knowledge (Lucius in Titus Andronicus, Henry V in Henry V, Portia in The Merchant of Venice, Perdita in The Winter's Tale, and Imogen, Guiderius, and Arviragus in Cymbeline). The second is composed of the innocent victims who inherit good blood, but unfortunately become victims of evil (Lavinia in Titus Andronicus, Desdemona in Othello, Ophelia in Hamlet, Cordelia in King Lear, Humphrey, the Duke of Gloucester in 2 Henry VI, and King Duncan in Macbeth). These first two groups are not committed to sin or vicious

plotting, and their blood-quality seems only perhaps a little inferior to the quality of Jesus' "best blood." They are rewarded with the vision of rebirth (for example, marriage, reunion, or heavenly vision) for their innocence and excellence. They are, as Tillyard suggests, Shakespeare's version of the "orthodox encomia of what man, created in God's image, was like in his prelapsarian state and of what ideally he is still capable of being" (Shakespeare's History Plays 7).

The third gentry group consists of the regenerate gentles who experience the pattern of sin-repentance-regeneration-reward. Leontes in The Winter's Tale, Cymbeline and Posthumus in Cymbeline, King Lear, and Othello--to name a few--are good examples. They are gentle of blood but lose high qualities of blood temporarily for various reasons; therefore, they temporarily reveal degeneracy. Their gentle blood, however, eventually permits them to repent of their transgression or sin, and like the innocent gentles, they are almost always rewarded with the vision of rebirth (literal or metaphorical; earthly or heavenly).

The degenerate gentles fall into the fourth group. They were once gentle of blood but degenerate later owing to poor diet, vengeance, foul ambition, jealousy, tears, sorrows, or evil spirits; therefore, they end up with disgraceful banishment, death or symbolic death without

repentance. Emperor Saturninus and his brother Bassianus, Queen Tamora and her sons in Titus Andronicus, Eleanor in Henry VI, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in Macbeth, King Antiochus in Pericles, Regan and Goneril in King Lear, the evil Queen in Cymbeline, Richard II, and Richard III are examples. These characters, because of their degeneracy, exhibit debased blood and attendant ill qualities similar to those of the base-borns. They are given no vision of rebirth either literally or metaphorically. Titus and Coriolanus in the Roman pagan plays reveal their tragic flaws and become victims of evil or are punished with death for their flaws. They show no qualms of conscience with regard to their sins or flaws (revenge, pride, political myopia); they defy repentance and are obviously not given any vision of rebirth.

Minor gentle characters constitute the fifth group: nameless gentlemen and gentlewomen in many Shakespearean plays, and other gentles who have names and/or titles but play minor roles. Their roles include a chorus (Gentlemen in The Winter's Tale and Cymbeline), a messenger (Aemilius in Titus Andronicus and the Gentleman, the two messengers, and the Ambassador in Hamlet), a new ruler (Young Fortinbras in Hamlet and Cassio in Othello), a mentor (Marcus in Titus Andronicus, a relative (Young Lucius in Titus Andronicus and many Queens, princes, and princesses in various history plays) or a friend and confidant of the protagonist (Horatio

in Hamlet and Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet). Their blood seems to be high, but because of their limited roles, their characters do not fully unfold. Among these characters, Cassio is more like an ideal hero because his role is more important than other minor gentles. But he reveals several weaknesses such as the lack of self-control and immoral liaison with a courtesan, Bianca.

There exists a wide gap between the gentles and the base. The base-borns in the Shakespearean canon are humiliated or severely punished for their obtuseness and villainy. I shall divide Shakespeare's base into five groups. The first group comprises the villainous base-borns whose antagonism against the gentles' happiness and power is so great that they become agents of villainy. Aaron the Moor in Titus Andronicus, Iago in Othello, and Jack Cade in 2 Henry VI belong to this group. The second group embraces the less villainous but more foolish base-borns who do not know what they are doing and reveal their malapropisms and general foolishness. Mrs. Quickly in Merry Wives of Windsor and Malvolio in Twelfth Night are good examples. The third group is applied to the cowardly base-borns, such as the Roman Plebeians in Coriolanus, the Shepherd and the Clown in The Winter's Tale. To the fourth group belong the braggarts like Cloten in Cymbeline. The fifth group includes rustic clowns like the unnamed Clowns in Titus Andronicus and in Othello and the professional clown or Fool in King Lear.

And the last group, unlike other base groups, exhibits limited but highly estimable virtues. Cornwall's First Servant in King Lear, Adam in As You Like It, and Pisanio in Cymbeline exemplify this group. All plebeian characters except the last group are cursed for their evil, humiliated for their laughable aspiring and cowardice, or defeated if they venture to fight with those of high blood. The blood-quality of the last group is much higher than that of other base groups as well as in some ways that of the degenerate gentles: "Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds" (Sonnet 94). Nevertheless, this group is endowed with only limited virtues (except Cornwall's First Servant, who must die, one supposes, to escape gentling) as compared with gentles of blood, and their rewards are usually neither obvious nor mentioned in the play.

Categorizing Shakespeare's characters according to their blood-quality will help us to understand the poet's blood-oriented characterization and the whole dramaturgy. In the Shakespearean canon, I suggest, blood-quality and the blood-consciousness of its owner determine his or her character, personality, thoughts, actions, and language; many of the thematic structures are built on their acute consciousness and response to various blood issues--degeneration, regeneration, patriarchy, primogeniture, legitimacy, heirdom, inheritance, pedigree, sibling rivalry, family bond, cross-class marriage, clash of the classes.

The dynamics of Shakespeare's dramaturgy largely lies in his skillful handling of these blood themes. This study centers on three plays: Titus Andronicus (early tragedy), Othello (mature tragedy), and Cymbeline (late tragicomedy or romance). Like many other Shakespearean plays, these plays exhibit bipolar conflicts between the base and the gentle in various forms. In the two tragedies selected here, major women characters turn out to be victims of evil base-borns or villeinized gentles; the Moors assume central roles in the conflicts (Aaron in Titus Andronicus and Othello in Othello), but Shakespeare faults Aaron for his base blood and blackness in appearance and in reality, whereas he portrays Othello as a noble character of royal blood despite his black complexion. The early tragedy depicts major characters as blood-oriented revengers and their bipolar oppositions which create dramatic tensions and conflicts; the mature tragedy shows Shakespeare's skillful handling of the Elizabethan prejudice against blacks and his own bias against the base-born. Unlike the tragedies, Cymbeline portrays a gentlewoman (Imogen), not as a victim of evil, but as a central character in the conflict with the foreigner whose parentage is obscure (Cloten). In Cymbeline Shakespeare intensifies the beauty and vivacity of the heroine Imogen and the innate gentle traits of the mountain princes as opposed to her new evil stepmother (the evil Queen) and her son by former husband of obscure origin--

Cloten, the braggart and villain. These three plays present foreigners (Goths or Moors) or the man of obscure origin; these characters play major roles in each play. A close examination of these characters will shed light on the poet's blood-oriented characterization and dramaturgical power.

Notes

¹ All Shakespearean quotations are from The Complete Works of Shakespeare, ed. David Bevington, 4th ed. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1992).

² These remarks derive from the couplet which John Ball took as the text of his revolutionary sermon at Blackheath in 1381: "When Adam delved, and Eve span, / Who was then the gentleman?" Quoted in Carl Van Doren, The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations (London: Oxford UP, 1941) 527. The revolting peasants of the French Jacquerie about 1356 declared the same idea: "*Nus n'est vilains, s'il ne vilaine. / Se gentis hom mais n'engendroit . . . / Tout le monde vivrait en paix.*" See Sir Ernest Barker, Traditions of Civility (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1948) 126.

³ Quoted in Anthony Burgess' biographical study, Shakespeare (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972) 155.

⁴ Sir William Segar, Honor Military, and Civill (London, 1602) 51. Quoted in Kelso's The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century, 19. Segar's 5-sort division differs slightly from an earlier fourfold division by Sir Thomas Smith illustrated in De Republica Anglorum (London, 1583): first, the nobility; second, the gentry or "minor nobility"--knights, esquires, and gentlemen; third, citizens, burgesses, and yeomen; and "The fourth sort of men which do not rule"--laborers, husbandmen, and artificers. Quoted in Peter Laslett's The World We Have

Lost, 3rd ed. (London: Methuen, 1983) 31; see also Ralph Berry's Shakespeare and Social Class (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, Inc, 1989) xi.

⁵ Quoted in Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy (London: Oxford UP, 1967) 38.

⁶ In "Epistle I" of An Essay on Man, Alexander Pope coins the term "Chain of Being" and explicates this concept:

Vast Chain of Being! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach! from Infinite to thee,
From thee to nothing. (ll.237-41)

⁷ Pseudo-Dionysius holds that the angels exist between man (imperfection) and God (perfection) as a correspondent between them. He divides the angels into three main orders and each order into three ranks. The highest order is contemplative, consisting of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; the second is more active than contemplative and this order embraces Dominations, Virtues, and Powers; the third, which is most active and least contemplative in the angel class, consists of Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. (For detailed information see C. S. Lewis' The Discarded Image, 70-72 and Tillyard's The Elizabethan World Picture, 41-42)

⁸ See W. H. S. Jones' translation of Hippocrates, Vol 4 of Loeb Classical Library (1927): 11-13; see also F. David

Hoeniger's Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance, Newark: U of Delaware P, (1992): 103. Polybos stresses the balance of the four humours, or "duly proportioned" elements in the body:

The body of man has in itself blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile; these make up the nature of his body, and through these he feels or enjoys health. Now he enjoys the most perfect health when these elements are duly proportioned to one another in respect of compounding, power and bulk, and when they are perfectly mingled. Pain is felt when one of these elements is in defect or excess, or is isolated in the body without being compounded with all the others.

⁹ In his treatise De temperamentis, Galen explains human temperaments on the basis of the peculiar mixture of the four elements with qualities that constitutes everything material including the whole human body. For instance, the various organs in the body have different temperaments. He categorizes nine different temperaments: the first represents an ideal state in which the four qualities are perfectly balanced. The next four are characterized by the dominance of one of the four qualities of dryness, moisture, cold, or heat. The last four define states in which a pair of qualities is dominant: cold and dryness, cold and moisture, warmth and dryness, or warmth and moisture. For

more details see Oswei Temkin's Galenism (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1973) 19, and F. David Hoeniger's Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1992) 108. For the complex history of the development of the doctrine of four temperaments, see Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxi's Saturn and Melancholy (London: Nelson, 1964).

¹⁰ For the illustrations of the Four Humors in the medieval manuscript, see Figure 15 of Irving I. Edgar's Shakespeare, Medicine and Psychiatry (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970).

¹¹ Irving I. Edgar, Shakespeare, Medicine and Psychiatry, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970) 215. See also the opening chapter of C. A. Mercier's Astrology in Medicine (London: Macmillan & Co., 1914); John W. Draper, The Humors & Shakespeare's Characters (Durham: Duke UP, 1945); and Hoeniger's Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance, 109.

¹² Ernest Crosby, "Shakespeare's Working Classes," The Craftsman April (1903): 43. This essay was republished as an appendix to Tolstoy's attack on Shakespeare--Tolstoy on Shakespeare (1906)--with George Bernard Shaw's similarly biting introduction.

CHAPTER II

"VENGEANCE ROT YOU ALL!": BLOOD-ORIENTED REVENGERS IN TITUS ANDRONICUS

Titus Andronicus, Shakespeare's first attempt at tragedy, portrays major characters as revengers, motivated by their staunch and spontaneous blood-consciousness. The poet's dramaturgical power in this play arises from his creation of vigorous conflicts between the antipodes: revengeful gentry and spiteful peasantry. Shakespeare, according to Ralph Berry, sees revenge as a "recurring human motive," for each of his plays except for Love's Labor's Lost exhibits at least one instance, sometimes many, of revenge or revenger (51). The American College Dictionary defines *revenge* as "retaliation for injuries or wrongs," distinguished from *retribution*, which "suggests just or deserved punishment, often without personal motives." In the Renaissance, according to Ronald Broude, the word *revenge* had not only the same negative meaning as the modern one but a more extended meaning, one that is nearly equivalent to today's *retribution* (39). The word indicated either retribution effected directly by an individual or family, or "public vengeance" executed by magistrates

("common revengers"), or "vengeance of the Lord" (41). The wide-sweeping entries of The Oxford English Dictionary include a good sense of the word as illustrated in a phrase "in revenge of" meaning "in recompense for." On the one hand, some religious minds might stress such passages as Romans 12:19--"Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance [sic] is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord." ¹ On the other hand, other religious minds might remember such justified avengers as Samson (Judges 16:28-30) and the passage of Numbers 35:19--"The revenger of the blood him selfe shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him." With pejorative overtones, Francis Bacon in "Of Revenge" says, "Revenge is a kind of wild justice . . . Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy, but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon." He, however, cautiously adds, "The most tolerable of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy" (15-16). Linda Anderson argues that Hieronimo in Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy and Hamlet are justified revengers because they wreak revenge on evil-doers where "there is no law to remedy," and that these justified revengers seem to have been the most popular in revenge tragedy (17). In short, the Elizabethans neither universally condemned nor universally condoned all revenges.

The Shakespearean gentles, if not degenerate, appear to be justified revengers whose sense of honor drives them to courageously withstand and rectify social injustice and evil. David S. Berkeley in Blood Will Tell in Shakespeare's Plays observes that high blood was practically synonymous with courage--the *sine qua non* of gentility (20)--and that the Shakespearean gentles have inherited the four classical virtues--prudence, temperance, courage, and justice--through the excellent blood of their parents (84). Whereas the base-borns bear injustice in a humiliating and cowardly manner, the gentle demonstrate their courage to fight against evil, restore good, and correct wrongdoings inflicted on them and their families. In Titus Andronicus, it is a base act for gentlemen to bear dishonor without retribution, just as the new Roman Emperor Saturninus declares in a rhetorical question, "Be dishonored openly, / And basely put it up without revenge?" (1.1.433-34). Lucius also wreaks vengeance on Saturninus when the Emperor stabs Titus, Lucius' father, justifying his revenge: "Can the son's eye behold his father bleed? / There's meed for meed, death for a deadly deed!" (5.3.65-66). After his assassination of the Emperor, the "common voice" hails him "Rome's royal emperor!" (140-41). Rather than enduring insults, gentlemen often seek revenge on the insulter or evil-doer in a judicial combat or a duel, just as Bolingbroke and Mowbray try to do in a judicial combat but

are stopped by Richard II. By contrast, the base-borns like Aaron, though spiteful or revengeful, are always too cowardly or deceitful to fight face to face against the gentles in a duel or judicial combat or other gentlemanly manner. They are promptly defeated if they venture to fight with the bloods. So they cannot but rely on tricky schemes --concrete expressions of Machiavellian policy and the art of dissembling. Most of the major characters in Titus Andronicus emerge as revengers for blood-based reasons: they dauntlessly confront such genetic issues as sibling rivalry, primogeniture, patriarchal authority, cross-class union, and racial and genetic bias. They know their status in the family and state, and their unyielding mind to keep or advance themselves to their status creates various conflicts, which in turn shape the structure of the whole play.

The characters of Titus Andronicus can be roughly divided into six groups according to their blood-quality: the four gentry groups--the ideal heroes (Marcus and Lucius), the innocent victims (Bassianus and Lavinia), degenerate gentles (Titus, Saturninus, Tamora, Demetrius, and Chiron), and other minor gentles (Young Lucius, Aemilius, a Roman Lord, etc.); and the two plebeian groups--the rustic clowns (the unnamed Clown and nurse), and evil peasantry exemplified by Aaron the Moor. Shakespeare uses his large cast to define characters by antithesis. The

contention between the Andronici (noble Romans) and Aaron (the evil Moor) offers a dramatic contrast in the play. The contrast between gentility (Lavinia) and degeneracy (Tamora) intensifies this conflict, inasmuch as vice in degenerate gentles is far worse than virtue in the plebeians. The sibling rivalry between the degenerate Emperor Saturninus and his virtuous brother Bassianus serves as another thematic contrast. Titus' rigid sense of patriarchal authority and his belief in primogeniture function as the pivot of all the contrasts and oppositions, which lead to the destruction of Rome: Aaron's voice resonates throughout the play--"Vengeance rot you all!" (5.1.58). And this voice, I imagine, will be echoed by another voice springing from the inner heart of Shakespeare--"Vengeance rot your bloods all!"

The whole structure of Titus Andronicus hinges on this authorial voice: "Vengeance rot your bloods all!" The first act opens with the sibling rivalry between the sons of the late Emperor of Rome--Saturninus and Bassianus--over primogeniture, rightful inheritance, and legitimacy of the new emperorship. The first stage direction suits the mood of this conflict. As the Roman Tribunes and Senators gather on a higher level of the stage, Saturninus enters with his followers at one door, and Bassianus and his followers at the other door, with drums and trumpets. Saturninus first claims the throne by right of primogeniture, reminding them

that he is the late Emperor's "firstborn son" (1.1.5). Saturninus' claim is based on the idea that the eldest son, begotten by the father's youthful blood--hence healthy, rich, abundant--is more like his father than other sons. Oliver in As You Like It is spiteful because his younger brother challenges his authority as the first-born son; Orlando is discomfited because his brother abuses the authority.² The conflicting tension between Saturninus and Bassianus appears to be much worse than that of Oliver and Orlando. Saturninus is conspicuously vengeful toward his younger brother's challenge to an election. Bassianus, on the other hand, bases his own claim on his superior merits--"And suffer not dishonor to approach / The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate, / To justice, continence, and nobility" (13-15). This controversy is calmed temporarily by Marcus, who announces that his brother Titus has already been elected by the Roman citizens as the new Emperor for his victory over the Goths. The issue of primogeniture continues when Titus gives up the crown in favor of Saturninus--the late "emperor's eldest son" (1.1.225), and when he selects Alarbus, "the eldest son" of the Queen of the Goths (1.1.103) to be sacrificed for his dead sons. Tamora, Queen of the Goths, entreats Titus to spare her "firstborn son" by insisting that "Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge" (119). Titus rejects this appeal on the ground that Alarbus, representative for the Goths as being the

firstborn son of the Queen, must be a suitable sacrifice for the Roman ritual to "appease their groaning shadows that are gone" (124).

The sibling rivalry concerning primogeniture grows more complex and dangerous when Saturninus vows to take Lavinia (Titus' only daughter) for his empress, although Lavinia has already been betrothed to Bassianus. As a token of gratitude for Titus' selection of him as emperor, Saturninus promises to promote his "name and honorable family" by requesting Lavinia as his bride and empress. But this seems to be only one of the reasons for his proposing to Lavinia. Shakespeare intimates that Saturninus also knows of his brother's alliance with Lavinia, for all the brothers of Lavinia and even her uncle Marcus apparently know of their betrothal. When Saturninus is about to leave with Lavinia, Bassianus seizes her and declares, "this maid is mine" (1.1.277). Marcus endorses Bassianus by saying, "*Suum cuique [To each his own] is our Roman justice. / This prince in justice seizeth but his own*" (281-82), and Titus' sons convey Lavinia away with Bassianus. Only Titus seems to be ignorant of the prior pledge of Lavinia to Bassianus, probably because of his long absence from Rome. If Titus knows of the betrothal and disregards it, then the couple must have been engaged without his approval. Whether or not Titus is informed of their betrothal, almost everyone else including Saturninus appears to know it. Why, then, does

Saturninus claim his brother's "betrothed love" to be his own? To be sure, his outspoken reason is to honor the Andronici by marrying Lavinia. But he has more reasons: he envies his brother for winning Lavinia, "Rome's royal mistress," because he too deeply falls in love with her-- "mistress of my heart" (1.1.242). Frequently Elizabethan writers associate organs with emotions: for example, love with the heart. Saturninus' words--"mistress of my heart"--strongly suggest that he has already fallen in love with Lavinia, though his brother won her heart. Falling in love is characteristic of the sanguine people or gentles, as shown in the illustration of the sanguine man who embraces a fair gentlewoman in a medieval manuscript about the Four Humours.³ Their sibling rivalry is thus twofold: competing for Lavinia and emperorship. Saturninus may be entitled to neither of these, considering his reputation. Thanks to Titus' retirement and endorsement, however, Saturninus can earn one trophy--emperorship. The other trophy (Lavinia) is also valuable for him. When Titus nominates him to be Emperor, Saturninus' emotions are mixed with love for Lavinia and spite for Bassianus. One reason for Saturninus' claim to Lavinia, as Max H. James perceptively suggests, is to "spite Bassianus, who had challenged his right to be emperor" (31). He has already been revengeful since his brother won Lavinia and even more spiteful because of Bassianus' challenge. So the first action he takes as

emperor is to claim Lavinia. Only if he could win Lavinia, would Saturninus defeat his brother completely.

Shakespeare complicates the selection of Emperor by fusing two different principles. The only legitimate way to be king in Elizabethan England is, as C. G. Thayer holds, "by fair sequence and succession" (80). But the Rome of Saturninus, like the Denmark of Hamlet, does not secure him emperorship on the basis of primogeniture. It is an anachronism to conform the selection of Roman Emperor to an English practice. Titus and Saturninus are, in this sense, anachronistic to rely on the English principle. In Shakespeare, however, "fair sequence and succession" cannot always guarantee a good king, or even a tolerable one, as exemplified by Saturninus and Richard II. What matters to Shakespeare is the blood-quality of the ruler. Having high blood--"red, abundant, hot, thin, fast-flowing, and sweet-tasting,"⁴ such ideal heroes as Henry V, Guiderius, and Lucius are morally innocent and can maintain peace and order of the kingdom and rule the people successfully. The degenerate rulers like Saturninus, Richard II, Richard III, Macbeth, to name only a few, ruin not only their lives but also their countries.

Both Saturninus and Bassianus are royal by birth, being sons of the late Emperor. Although the elder brother suffers from a bad reputation, he still seems to be gentle of blood at the beginning of the play. He articulates his

blood-based reason for his claim--"to let my father's honors live in me" as "his firstborn son," and so he considers his younger brother's challenge as "indignity" (1.1.7,8). His pride in his high blood is aroused by his younger brother's challenge, which makes him even more vengeful and spiteful to Bassianus, a complication adding to the love-triangle conflict. His high blood begins to deteriorate when he becomes enchanted by Tamora at first sight, even though he just avowed his love for Lavinia. Just as the wicked queen's beauty enchants Cymbeline, Tamora's erotic beauty bewitches Saturninus. Torn between two beauties (noble and erotic), he moans in an aside, "A goodly lady, trust me, of the hue / That I would choose, were I to choose anew.--" (1.1.262-63). Indeed, when Bassianus claims Lavinia, he unhesitatingly makes his "sudden choice" of Tamora as his wife and empress (319).

In many ways, Tamora, Queen of the Goths and the mistress of Aaron the Moor, serves as the main cause of Emperor Saturninus' degeneration, which embodies the decline of Rome. Tamora's royal blood seems to have become degenerate by reason of her cross-class alliance with the evil plebeian--Aaron the Moor, an "incarnate devil" (5.1.40). Aaron, then, is the real cause of Saturninus' degeneration and of the corruption of Rome, as well as of Tamora's tainted blood. The idea of degenerating blood derives from Aristotelian and Galenic conceptions. Galen in

his On the Natural Faculties mentions the functions of blood as determining the formation of all parts of the human body. Thus Thomas Walkington in The Optick Glasse of Humours (1607) says, "In the elements consists the body, in the body the blood, . . . It [blood] is a nutriment for all and singular parts of what qualities soever" (58). According to Aristotle in Generation of Animals, semen is concocted blood" (I.xix.91). So Thomas Cogan delineates the transformation of blood into semen in The Heaven of Health (1584):

After the third and last concoction: which is doone in everie part of the bodie that is nourished, there is left some part of profitable bloud, not needfull to the partes, ordeyned by nature for procreation, which . . . is woonderfullie conveighed and carried to the genitories, where by their proper nature that which before was plaine bloude, is now transformed and changed into seede. (240)

Semen, thus, is in the Elizabethan conception "a form of white blood," as Berkeley maintains in Blood Will Tell (37). During copulation both men and women influence each other by mingling their *sperma*. In The History of Biology F. S. Bodenheimer elucidates Aristotle's conception: "Male and female particles mingle and they both exercise their influence, according to their relative strengths,

transmitting characteristics of structure, of function, and of behaviour in the developing young" (55). It is not clear when Tamora begins to mingle her *sperma* with Aaron's semen. Yet one can surmise that their relation has developed since they met in the land of the Goths, on the grounds that Aaron was brought to Rome along with the Queen, and that in his soliloquy Aaron in a sexual innuendo he gloats over Tamora's ascension to the Roman Empress and over his sexual relationship with her:

Then, Aaron, arm thy heart and fit thy thoughts
To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress,
And mount her pitch whom thou in triumph long
Hast prisoner held, fettered in amorous chains
And faster bound to Aaron's charming eyes

Than is Prometheus tied to Caucasus. (2.1.12-17)

Therefore, through their continuing clandestine dalliance, Aaron's base white blood (semen) is mingled with Tamora's royal *sperma*, which leads to her degeneracy, including that of her ethical standards. Francis Markham in Book of Honour (1625) maintains that noble blood mingled with base blood produces "an imperfect generation" and that many generations are needed to "raise a gentleman of good quality" (47-48). The "imperfect generation" of Aaron and Tamora is the blackamoor child or, as the nurse describes it, "A joyless, dismal, black, and sorrowful issue! . . . the babe, as loathsome as a toad" (4.2.67-68).

Tamora's villeinization by Aaron the Moor parallels that of the evil Queen by her first nameless--almost surely plebeian--husband in Cymbeline and that of Queen Gertrude by the villein King Claudius in Hamlet. Considering the ages of their children--Demetrius and Chiron (of Tamora), Cloten (of the evil Queen), and Hamlet (of Gertrude)--one may easily conclude that they are in their late forties, if not fifties. Despite their status as old widows, probably because they are still beautiful, they can still charm their new husbands (Saturninus, Cymbeline, and Claudius). Though comparatively old, these two queens are still beautiful and speak in blank verse, both of which are signs of gentility. Berkeley and Karimipour argue that "Class-originated beauty is usual in Shakespeare's plays" (92). They regard Perdita's singular beauty as "an effect of her high blood" (91). Admittedly, all of the Shakespearean heroines are gentle of blood and remarkably beautiful: Silvia, Perdita, Juliet, Imogen, Rosalind, and Portia, to name only a few. And they speak in blank verse, another sign of their gentility. Berry observes that "Class identification is confirmed through language. . . . As a general rule, blank verse is the natural medium of gentry, as with nobility and royalty. It is the language of passion, dignity, and moral elevation, hence is equated with social elevation" (xv-xvi). But their gradual villeinization takes place as they have copulation with their villein husbands. In his interesting

article entitled "Claudius the Villein King of Denmark," Berkeley argues that "night after night she [Queen Gertrude] is becoming less consanguineous with him [the elder Hamlet, her first husband] . . . and becomes villeinized with Claudius' thick, cold, sluggish, ill-tasting, darkish blood (and therefore acquiring all his vicious and ugly qualities)" (9). In the same manner Cloten's mother seems to have been much villeinized with her first nameless husband's base blood. Tamora is no exception. From the outset of the play, her moral depravity is evident in her role as a Machiavel (to the Andronici), as an enchantress or a witch (to Saturninus), as a mistress (to Aaron, an adulterer who makes Saturninus a cuckold), as an avenger (to the Romans in general, to the Andronici, in particular), as a mother of a bastard (to a blackamoor), and as an encourager of rapists and murderers (to her sons). All of these evil doings are closely related to Aaron and are putative results of her villeinization by him. Her villainy is stopped only when Titus stops her life. She deserves no heavenly hope or vision of rebirth.

Tamora's corrupt morality has a bad impact on her new husband, Saturninus. When Bassianus and Lavinia enter again, now as husband and wife, Saturninus' pride is hurt and his desire for vengeance is renewed. His royal blood makes him become angry or choleric--a gentlemanly temperament--at their marriage against his wish. Tamora

pretends to plead with him to "pardon what is past." The naive Saturninus shouts, "What, madam? Be dishonoured openly / And basely put it up without revenge?" (1.1.433-34). He is still so strongly conscious of his royal blood as to openly and honorably seek revenge on the Andronici and Bassianus for taking Lavinia away from him. In an aside, however, Tamora teaches him a Machiavellian policy: "My lord, be ruled by me, be won at last; / Dissemble all your griefs and discontents. . . . I'll find a day to massacre them all" (443-44, 51). Like the degenerate King Richard III and the evil Queen of Cymbeline, Tamora is notorious for her Machiavellian dissembling. Her perverted character reflects her debased blood. Tamora exercises her vicious influence on the Emperor night after night, while still keeping her secret rendezvous with Aaron. Bewitched by his Queen Tamora's beauty and ineffable black charms (mostly coming from her witchcraft like the evil Queen of Cymbeline or the witch-Queen in the fairy tale Snow White), Saturninus fails to recognize his own villeinization and the corruption of his empire as well. Like Tamora, he deserves no vision of heavenly rebirth. His death by the ideal hero Lucius marks the end of the corrupted Rome.

Since Saturninus' marriage to Tamora, the Empress and her paramour, collaborators of the Emperor's villeinization, have emerged as threats to the Roman empire. Leslie Fiedler in The Stranger in Shakespeare argues that Shakespeare

presents Jews, witches, blacks, and savages as strangers who threaten destruction rather than offer hope of salvation, literal or metaphorical (15). Then, Tamora as a Gothic witch and Aaron as a black Moor are strangers who threaten destruction of the long-descended Andronici as well as of the Emperor and his brother, that is, of the whole Roman Empire. Unlike the noble Moor Othello, these strangers are mostly base by birth and do evil deeds, which destroy some innocent victims, but Shakespeare never blesses base-born strangers in his plays. With no exception, they are all punished by being humiliated or even killed by the bloods. And the poet has the ideal hero or heroine restore peace and order to the society, not solely in comedy but also in tragedy and in the histories.

Admittedly, Shakespeare almost always dramatizes the bipolar contention between the two classes--armigerous and base. In Titus Andronicus the Andronici epitomize the armigerous class and Aaron the Moor the evil plebeian. Titus takes pride in his honored family whose "monument five hundred years hath stood" (1.1.351)--the longest regularly descended family in the Shakespearean canon. Titus' glorious victory over the Goths heightens the fame and the pride of his family. But Aaron the Moor not merely threatens destruction of his family but also effects the villeinization of Tamora and her traitorous sons through the Machiavellian policy and violence. In fact, these Goths and

Saturninus join Aaron in competing with the gentle Andronici. Especially by highlighting the blackness of Aaron's skin and character, Shakespeare maximizes the visual and thematic effects. G. K. Hunter in "Othello and Colour Prejudice" states that the Elizabethans have the basic and ancient prejudice against the color black: they think of black as "the colour of sin and death" (182). In Love's Labor's Lost, the King of Navarre declares: "Black is the badge of hell, / The hue of dungeons and the school of night" (4.3.250-51). Aaron's blackness suggests not only his devilish character as well as his inferior blood; as a proverb says, "Three Moors to a Portuguese; three Portuguese to an Englishman." ⁵ Most Elizabethans seem to have a hierarchy of nations in mind when they distinguish between England and other countries such as the lands of Goths and Moors, and Turkey, in accordance with the dictum of Francis Markham: "there are severall degrees in bloud" (46).

Not only Aaron's black appearance but also his base humor--"my cloudy melancholy" (2.3.33)--suggest his base blood. Aaron's "cloudy melancholy" and Edmund's "villainous melancholy" (King Lear 1.2.138) exemplify Galenic melancholy as a disease of the non-gentles. As Berkeley delineates it, Galenic melancholy differs from "good melancholy" of Bertram's father (All's Well That Ends Well 1.2.56) or "the fashionable pseudo-Aristotelian melancholy" (Blood Will Tell 9), a dominant humor in the gentle characters like Bertram's

father, Olivia, Orsino, Viola, Romeo, Jacques, and Hamlet.

Unlike the gentles, plebeians such as Aaron and the degenerate gentles like Richard III suffer from Galenic melancholy, as John W. Draper holds, are "all in revolt against established order, and therefore conspirators, usurpers, and villains" (63). Galenic melancholy was linked to the planet Saturn, and phlegm was related to Venus during the Middle Ages, when the astrological belief became widespread that the particular planet ascendant at the time of a person's birth influenced his temperament. Irving I. Edgar explains that Saturn was believed to cause excessive black bile, promoting melancholy, and Venus associated with the phlegmatic humor was thought proper to women, children, and voluptuaries.⁶ The influences of Saturn and melancholic humor in Aaron engender his vengeful spirit, as he confides it to Tamora, a woman of Venus or phlegm:

Madam, though *Venus* govern your desires,
Saturn is dominator over mine.

What signifies my deadly-standing eye,
 My silence, and my *cloudy melancholy*,

. . .

No, madam, these are no venereal signs.
Vengeance is in my heart, *death* in my hand,
Blood and *revenge* are hammering in my head.

(2.3.32-39, emphasis mine).

Aaron's vengeful spirit partly results from his Galenic

melancholy--the humor of base-borns--because Saturnine men "will never forgive till they be revenged," ⁷ and it partly results from his jealousy as his mistress became Saturninus' empress. The first two lines contrast Tamora's erotic desire and Aaron's melancholic and vengeful mood. The phlegmatic women under Venus, as C. Dariot in Astrologically Judgement of the Starres (1583) suggests, are "louers of delights." ⁸ "Louers of delights" or "voluptuaries" like the evil Queen of Cymbeline and Tamora; they sharply contrast with true romantic lovers like Juliet, Portia, and Lavinia. The evil Queen and Tamora are not unlike the "wanton Maidens" and Malecasta, the lustful Lady of Castle Joyeous, whose "hasty fire" and "fickle heart" are devoid of the sense of chastity, in the second and the third books, respectively, of Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene. Being melancholic and revengeful, Aaron restrains Tamora's carnal desires: "No, madam, these [melancholic traits] are no venereal signs." He knows that her sons also inherit "that coddling spirit" from their mother (5.1.99). Galenic melancholy and phlegm are base humors in contrast to the gentle humors, blood (sanguinity) and choler; Aaron's melancholy signifies his lowly birth, and Tamora's phlegm implies her villeinization, as Aaron perceptively connects her to the planet Venus. Even Saturninus belongs to the planet Saturn and hence to melancholy, because, as Eugene M. Waith suggests, the name reflects Shakespeare's interest

in the astrological theory that saturnine men were "false, envious . . . and malicious." ⁹ Then, his name seems to imply his villeinization as well as his inability to exercise justice as the Emperor. The Moor now compares himself to the poisonous snake which is ready "To do some fatal execution" (2.3.36). Thomas Walkington in his Optick Glasse of Humors (1607) connects Saturnine men with "dangerous Matchiavellisme" (129): Aaron also reveals his Machiavellian policy to vent his fury and desire for revenge.

The major target of Aaron's villainy is, of course, the Andronici, but virtually every Roman including Bassianus falls victim to his villainy; thus Marcus concludes that Aaron is the "Chief architect and plotter of these woes" (5.3.122). The black Moor has been spiteful and vengeful throughout the play toward the Romans who are gentle by birth, sanguine or white in color, and Roman in citizenship. Aaron rages when Demetrius and Chiron attempt to kill his blackamoor son, and he launches a harsh attack on their sanguine temperament and white skin: "What, what, ye sanguine, shallow-hearted boys! / Ye white-limed walls! Ye alehouse painted signs! / Coal black is better than another hue" (4.2.98-100). He goes on to condemn the white complexions of Chiron and Demetrius as "treacherous hue" because they "will betray with blushing / The close enacts and counsels of thy heart!" (118-19). Similarly, later as a

captive of Lucius, Aaron takes pride in being black, referring to a proverb--"[To blush] like a black dog" (5.1.122). Aaron also has so strong an aversion to Romans that he has dug up dead men from their graves and on their white skins carved with a knife in Roman letters--"Let not our sorrow die, though I am dead" (135-39).

Aaron vents his strong antagonism against Romans by encouraging Tamora's sons to ravish the chastity of Lavinia, a representative gentlewoman in Rome. Demetrius and Chiron vie for Lavinia; they even draw rapiers and quarrel over her. A kind of mock sibling rivalry between the Gothic lustful brothers now parodies the sibling rivalry between the Roman imperial brothers. These brothers' arguments for their claim to the crown parallel the ludicrous and fallible reasoning of Demetrius and Chiron. Chiron, the younger brother, belittles the difference in age and emphasizes ability:

'Tis not the difference of a year or two
 Makes me less gracious or thee more fortunate;
 I am as able and as fit as thou
 To serve, and to deserve my mistress' grace.

(2.1.31-34)

And he demonstrates his resolution: "I care not, I, knew she and all the world. / I love Lavinia more than all the world" (71-72). On the other hand, Demetrius stresses that he is the elder brother: "Youngling, learn thou to make some

meaner choice. / Lavinia is thine elder brother's hope" (73-74). He goes on to explain how he can win Lavinia in a quasi-syllogism:

She is a woman, therefore may be wooed;
 She is a woman, therefore may be won;
 She is Lavinia, therefore must be loved.
 (2.1.82-84) ¹⁰

While Tamora teaches Machiavellian policy to Saturninus, Aaron directs Demetrius and Chiron to use Machiavellian "policy and stratagem" in order to satisfy their lust for Lavinia by raping her in turn (2.1.104). This heinous scheme they pursue, the elder brother first and younger one next. Thus, Tamora and her sons are under the Moor's evil influence, although of course in different ways. Later captured by Lucius, Aaron confesses, "Indeed, I was their tutor to instruct them [in rape, mutilation, and murder]. / . . . That bloody mind I think they learned of me" (5.1.98,101).

Because of his vital villainy and blackness, Aaron attracts many critics' attention. Bernard Spivak regards him as the Vice figure of medieval allegorical drama (380). Muriel C. Bradbrook stresses his blackness as an "outward symbol of his diabolic nature" by comparing him both to the medieval Vice and to the "conscienceless Machiavel," thus being the precursor of Richard III and Iago (107). H. Bellyse Baildon sees Aaron as a crude version of Iago,

Regan, Goneril, and Richard III, each of whom is a embodiment of a "lost soul" (xliii). Fredson Thayer Bowers compares him to the Marlovian protagonist and villain Barabas (118). Irving Ribner considers him as "the manipulator of the evil action, the specific author of Titus's misfortunes . . . a symbol of evil itself" (18).

But none of these critics examine Aaron as the main cause of Tamora's villeinization and as the leader of the devil's party. Therefore, they fail to perceive Aaron's influence in Tamora and their close relationship, and thus they miss many dramatic effects Shakespeare aims at. Bowers, for example, rightly considers Aaron as the central villain from Act Two onward, but he faults the poet for diverting attention from Tamora--the original instigator of the villains' revenge--and thus the "symmetry of the plot was disturbed" (118). The shift of emphasis from Tamora to Aaron by no means destroys the structural unity of the play, but instead intensifies the bipolar contrast and conflict between the two classes: gentle and base. Indeed, most of the base and evil deeds of Tamora and her broods--cuckoldry, rapes, mutilations, murders, and other atrocities--hinge on Aaron. Not only does he offer vicious counsels to them, but also he causes Tamora's degeneracy. A product of her villeinization is the "imperfect generation"--a blackamoor child, or "the base fruit of her burning lust," as Lucius puts it (5.1.43).

Aaron's only behavior pattern which might earn the reader's sympathy is his natural impulse to protecting his blackamoor baby. Aaron is the only villein in Shakespeare to have a visible child, though black and ugly. Just as Titus' ability to beget many children (twenty-five sons and a daughter) is a strong testimony of his rich and abundant blood, Aaron's begetting a child indicates his somewhat enriched blood. When Lucius taunts the blackamoor baby-- "the fruit of bastardy," Aaron shouts, "Touch not the boy. He is of royal blood" (5.1.49). Just as Cloten in Cymbeline erroneously thinks of his blood as royal because his mother is Queen, Aaron falsely believes the baby's blood to be royal because his mother is Queen. Although the baby's blood is not royal--maybe slightly gentle--Aaron desperately tries to protect this child. His protectiveness toward his own child is noteworthy because it implies that his heart is not totally inhuman. This may reflect Tamora's positive influence in him; that is, some of Tamora's initial gentle blood is transmitted through her *sperma* to Aaron's base blood and somewhat ameliorates it, as "Male and female particles mingle and they both exercise their influence" (Bodenheimer 55). Tamora's earnest pleas for mercy on her son, Alarbus, in the opening scene of the play may deserve the audience's sympathy, and this, I think, is a sign of her initial gentility. And her order to kill the blackamoor shows her degeneracy. Tamora's degenerated blood does not

allow her to repent of her evil doings; she is punished by being stabbed by Titus. Owing to his innate base blood, Aaron rejects any possible opportunities to repent of sins and delivers his last words: "If one good deed in all my life I did, / I do repent it from my very soul" (5.3.189-90). He is punished with a most humiliating and painful death--being captured by a soldier of Lucius's army and condemned to death by starvation, set breast-deep in earth. Aaron's unrepentant last words parallel those of the evil Queen of Cymbeline. The degenerate Queen also repents lost opportunities to effect her villainy; Cornelius reports that before death she grieves that "the evils she hatch'd were not effected" (5.5.60).

Aaron and Tamora, thus, represent the party of strangers whose blood is villein or villeinized, as opposed to the Andronici, Roman bloods. The conflict between gentle and villein is visualized concretely in the literal opposition between Aaron's blackness of skin and morality--"Aaron will have his soul black like his face" (3.1.205)--and Lavinia's assailed whiteness of body and spirit. The differences between black and white, dark and light, barbarian and civilized, evil and innocent specify the bipolar opposition between the evil base-born Aaron and the innocent gentlewoman Lavinia. The floral imagery reinforces this binary opposition, especially when the innocent Lavinia is victimized by Aaron's villainy in the forest. According

to Aaron's "policy and stratagem," Demetrius and Chiron ravish Lavinia and cut off her tongue and hands in the dark forest, which as a microcosm embodies the corrupting of the Roman Empire by the evil villeins--as Titus groans, "Rome is but a wilderness of tigers" (3.1.54).

The garden and the forest are Shakespeare's favorite metaphors for society, and an individual tree or flower embodies a family or a single person. Hamlet pictures the corrupt Danish court as the "unweeded garden" which is overgrown by weeds--corrupt courtiers led by his uncle Claudius, who usurped his brother's throne and committed incest ("incestuous sheets") with his sister-in-law. In Titus Andronicus the prosperous and peaceful Rome deteriorates into a wilderness full of animals of prey. The fair trees and flowers (innocent victims--Lavinia and Bassianus) lose their limbs and even life by the "ungentle hands," and the unfortunate prey with its broods (the gentle Titus and his children) awaits their doom by tigers (the devil's party led by Aaron). In Albert H. Tricomi's expression, the devil's party are "the panther and the tigress with her whelps overrunning the forest" destroying "its initial pastoral identity" (100).

Copious floral images, which poetically characterize the gentle and the base metaphorically, reflect the poet's understanding of the prevailing Elizabethan sense of hierarchy. The Elizabethans used to categorize various

kinds of trees, fruits, and flowers according to their literal and symbolic characteristics. Sir Walter Raleigh in his Preface to History of the World puts the cedar on the highest rank and the shrub the lowest. Henry Peacham in his opening chapter of The Complete Gentleman identifies the oak tree as "the forest's king," esteems the rose most of all the flowers, and admires "the pomeroy and queen-apple" among other fruits. Likewise, Shakespeare links the gentles to the highly valued objects corresponding to their human counterparts. In contrast, the shrub and weeds, belonging to all seasons except winter, represent the base in many occasions. The garden flowers, roses and lilies, stand on the pinnacle of the hierarchy of flowers, partly because of their remarkable fragrance and beauty on the literal level, partly because they are symbolic of chastity, beauty, and purity--gentlewomen's traits. In other words, lilies and roses, among other garden flowers, symbolize beautiful and chaste gentlewomen both in terms of physiognomy and figure, and in the morality and ethics of the Elizabethan period. In Titus Andronicus, when Marcus first notices Lavinia's injuries in the forest, he asks his "gentle" niece which "ungentle hands" mutilated her limbs and tongue, employing arboreal and floral imagery:

Speak, gentle niece, what stern ungentle hands
Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare
Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments.

Whose circling shadows kings have sought to
sleep in . . . (2.4.16-19)

Marcus associates his gentle niece with a tree and flowers which accord with her femininity and gentility. The tree's branches offer "circling shadows" to the gentle of blood--kings being the primates. And the intimacy between the tree and kings is evident. He describes how the gentle blood of the "deflowered" Lavinia flows down between her "rosed lips," and he also reminisces how her "lily hands" trembled like "aspen leaves" upon a lute--a musical instrument of the gentle--before the mutilation (44-45). Shakespeare's plays and poems abound in these kinds of floral images. In The Rape of Lucrece before Tarquin steals into Lucrece's chamber and ravishes her, she sleeps with "Her lily hand her rosy cheek lies under" (1.386). Rosy cheeks always import vitality in Shakespeare's works. Friar Laurence explains how his distilling liquor will cause Juliet's roses in her lips and cheeks to fade away (Romeo and Juliet 4.1.99). Othello regrets that he "plucked the rose [Desdemona]" (Othello 5.2.13). Guiderius says on seeing what he supposes to be Imogen's dead body, "O sweetest, fairest lily!" Lilies, a symbol of purity and chastity, Shakespeare himself relates to gentry, while the base he figures as weeds (Sonnet 94).

Marcus describes Lavinia's rich, warm, red, fast-flowing blood: "Alas, a crimson river of warm blood, / Like

to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind" (2.4.22-23). Just as King Duncan's abundant blood despite his old age horrifies Lady Macbeth--"Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?" (5.1.37-38)--the ample blood of Lavinia even in a state of triple amputation astounds Marcus:

And notwithstanding all this loss of blood,
As from a conduit with three issuing spouts,
Yet do thy cheeks look red as Titan's face
Blushing to be encountered with a cloud.
(2.4.29-32)

Like other innocent victims exemplified by Ophelia, Cordelia, Desdemona, Duncan, Humphrey, the Duke of Gloucester, Talbot, and Bassianus, Lavinia fails to survive evil forces--agents of social corruption and destruction. Her death, however, will be enshrined in her household monument and mourned by the new Emperor Lucius, her brother --a pagan form of vision of rebirth. By contrast, as for Tamora, the "ravenous tiger," the Emperor orders, "No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weed, / No mournful bell shall ring her burial; / But throw her forth to beasts and birds to prey"--a pagan form of damnation (5.3.196-98).

Titus Andronicus shares the pivotal roles with Aaron in the conflict between the gentle Romans and the Gothic and Moorish strangers. Opposed to the devil's party inspired by Aaron, Titus plays a central role in the Andronici and the

Roman Empire as the head of the Andronici and the general of the Roman army. Criticisms have split about Titus' character. H. Bellyse Baildon thinks of Titus as a rough pattern for the characters of Lear, Coriolanus, and Hamlet in the light of his tragic faults.¹¹ Ribner also regards him as a forerunner of Coriolanus, but in terms of his virtues; like Coriolanus, he maintains, "Titus embodies all the ancient Roman virtues." When exaggerated, his virtues become faults and his destruction is guaranteed by his failure to alter his behavior and accept salvation: "He is a great and initially Virtuous man, the first of Shakespeare's heroic figures whose very virtues are the source of their sins. By the life journey of his hero, Ribner surmises, "Shakespeare explores in imaginative terms the universal way of damnation, for Titus becomes a prototype of erring humanity" (17). E. M. W. Tillyard approvingly examines the Janus-faced character of Titus in his Shakespeare's History Plays: in his madness, Titus comes close to Kyd's Hieronimo, but in his sanity he is "an elderly Talbot"--a brave warrior, unswerving servant of his royal master (139). By contrast, H. B. Charlton depreciates the role of Titus, regarding him as the "nominal hero" while considering the villains, Aaron and Tamora, to be the real protagonists (21): indeed, they light up several notable facets of Titus' character. The diversity of criticisms reflects Titus' dual character, a mixture of gentility and degeneracy. But the

critics ignore his pivotal role as the blood-oriented revenger who seeks vengeance on the devil's party which consists of base and veilled strangers inspired by Aaron the Moor.

The degeneracy of Titus darkens the future of the whole Roman society. He appears in the opening scene as the quintessential virtuous gentleman. When Titus returns home victorious from a long war against the Goths, the Romans unanimously select him as their new Emperor because, as Marcus sums up, "A nobler man, a braver warrior [than Titus], / Lives not this day within the city walls" (1.1.25-26). A captain also eulogizes him: "The good Andronicus, / Patron of virtue, Rome's best champion, / Successful in the battles that he fights, / With honor and with fortune is returned" (64-67). He lost his twenty-one sons out of "five-and-twenty valiant sons," and their family tomb becomes "Sweet cell of virtue and nobility" (93). His victory secures Rome's prosperity, and the bond of his family mirrors the order of the Empire. However, the family union of the Andronici and the order of Rome collapse, both because of Titus' self-subverted retirement in favor of the Saturnine man, and because of his adamant espousal of primogeniture and his ruthless exercise of patriarchal authority. The familial discord surfaces first when Titus' sons back Bassianus' claim to Lavinia's hand in spite of the new emperor's proclamation that he will marry the maid.

Titus becomes furious, not only because the sons rebel against his patriarchal authority, but also because he prefers the firstborn son to the second son as his son-in-law. In Titus' mind, it is intimated, to keep the traditions of primogeniture and patriarchal authority--that is, to support the blood-based hierarchy--is to guarantee the order and peace of his family as well as of the state. Titus also regards breaking these traditions as dishonorable to the noble blood of his family. So Titus becomes angry at his daughter's betrothal to Bassianus without his approval, partly because Bassianus is not the first-born prince. And he hates the idea of burying Mutius, who brandished the sword before his father in an attempt to help Lavinia marry Bassianus, in the "monument [where] five hundred years hath stood" (1.1.351). His view seems sound but not infallible. In the Elizabethan era, for a daughter to give a pledge to a man without her father's approval and for a son to lift up a sword against his father are equal to treason against the state and to satanic rebellion against God. The Mosaic law, for example, prescribes death for striking a parent. These three types of rebellion equally represent the violation of the hierarchical order in a family, in a state, and in heaven. In this sense, Titus acts like an Elizabethan father and courtier.

But Shakespeare does not servilely embrace these Elizabethan standards. Shakespeare's plays present many

romantic lovers who betroth themselves without paternal approval--Bassianus and Lavinia, Othello and Desdemona, Romeo and Juliet, Lorenzo and Jessica, Lysander and Hermia, Florizel and Perdita, and Posthumus and Imogen. They withstand the fathers' menacing threats, confinements, and banishments; they even run away from home for love. Denton J. Snider in his discussion of Othello observes:

Shakespeare everywhere justifies the right of the daughter's choice when it is the sole issue, because it "belongs to the woman to say who shall be her husband, for she, and not her father, has to form with him the unity of emotion which lies at the basis of the Family. . . . He [Shakespeare] always mediates such a conflict by the triumph of the daughter (88).

With regard to betrothal, Shakespeare seems to subordinate paternal authority to mutual love within the same class: these lovers are all gentle of blood. In the Shakespearean canon there is no cross-class marriage. If not a cross-class union, it seems, the betrothal of the lovers deserves authorial blessing as well as the audience's identification, with or without paternal endorsement. In Shakespeare's plays, in brief, rebellion against paternal authority can be excused, only if it is for the sake of mutual love within the same class--an integral harmony or order in a family. A rigid exercise of paternal authority often thwarts a

prospective love (the incestuous Antiochus' control on his nameless daughter's possible match with Pericles and Polonius' influence in Ophelia's love for Hamlet). These fathers are partly responsible for the deaths of the young lovers (for example, Romeo and Juliet).

As the plot develops, Titus' rigid insistence on patriarchal control in the matter of his daughter's marriage turns out to be a delusion or a fancy. Attached to this illusory perspective, Titus disapprovingly calls Mutius the "villain boy" and stabs him as he tries to hinder his father's pursuit of Lavinia and Bassianus. To be sure, the word "villain" is a common curse in Elizabethan and modern English. In Shakespeare, however, the word is often interchangeable with "villein."¹² Titus thinks of his son's rebellion against him as a villein/villainous act. In other words, he condemns him as a villeinized bastard or no longer thinks of him as his son. So he repudiates the pleas of his other sons to bury Mutius in the centuries-old family tomb:

Traitor, away! He rests not in this tomb
 This monument five hundred years hath stood,
 Which I have sumptuously re-edified.
 Here none but soldiers and Rome's servitors
 Repose in fame, none basely slain in brawls.
 Bury him where you can, he comes not here.
 (1.1.350-55).

Only after his sons and his brother Marcus plead for mercy does Titus reluctantly allow the burial. This deed echoes Tamburlaine's cold-blooded murder of his own cowardly son Calyphas, who plays cards with his soldier Perdicas instead of joining his brothers. Tamburlaine refers to Calyphas as "this coward villain, not my son, / But traitor to my name and majesty" (2 Tamburlaine 4.1.91-92). He calls Calyphas and Perdicas "ye base, unworthy soldiers" (102), and stabs his own son, because in him was "neither courage, strength or wit, / But folly, sloth, and damned idleness" (128). Despite the Marlovian egalitarianism--Tamburlaine himself was a villein/villain because he was a Scythian shepherd--Tamburlaine as emperor is suddenly conscious of his class.

In these similarly bloody scenes, both Tamburlaine and Titus clearly become the protagonists with whom the audience cannot identify or for whom the audience cannot feel pity and fear. The audience's detachment from them is more clarified as they are associated with references to lunacy and damnation. Orcanes calls Tamburlaine's murder "thy barbarous damned tyranny" (4.1.152); Quintus thinks his father, Titus, "is not with himself" (1.1.369). Titus' murder of Lavinia also is analogous to Olympia's honorable murder of her son and her own suicide to prevent the Scythians from tyrannizing over them (2 Tamburlaine 3.4.18-33). Just as Tamburlaine's family and his empire decline rapidly after his murder of Calyphas, Titus' family and Rome

decay promptly after his murder of Mutius. Titus' killing of his two children epitomizes his failure as a father figure. His incapability as a patriarch is proven again by the failure of his role as the surrogate father to Saturninus, who calls him "noble Titus, father of my life!" (1.1.254), and to whom Bassianus also refers as "a father and a friend to thee [Saturninus] and Rome" (424). Now Saturninus rejects the Andronici: "No, Titus, no. The Emperor needs her [Lavinia] not, / Nor her, nor thee, nor any of thy stock" (300-01). Titus' failure in playing a father figure hints at the collapse of Roman hierarchical order; the discord of the Andronici as a representative noble Roman family foreshadows the disorder of the Roman Empire. Saturninus' immediate rejection of Lavinia after a dispute and his "sudden choice" of the degenerate Tamora signify the speedy downfall of the Empire. Titus' hasty retirement and speedy nomination of Saturninus as the Emperor, along with Saturninus' "sudden choice" of Tamora, lead to the quick corruption of Rome. Rape (Lavinia), mutilation (Lavinia and Titus), murder (Bassianus and Titus' two sons), and banishment (Lucius) occur in fast succession in Rome--"a wilderness of Tigers."

In this wilderness, all the animals are so revengeful and spiteful that they prey on one another, and even the fiendish tiger Aaron moralizes, "Vengeance rot you all" (5.1.58). Not until these ensuing tragic incidents does

Titus discover the reality of human animals of prey. The discovery torments him so deeply that he falls into a state somewhat similar to Lear's real insanity and Hamlet's feigned madness. But the difference between him and Lear lies in his vigorous attitude toward revenge: he decides to return "all these mischiefs" and "swears unto my soul to right your wrongs" (3.1.273, 278). Although Tamora and her sons suppose him to be insane, he, like Hamlet concerning Claudius, knows all about them now. As the banished Lucius wins the hearts of the Goths and directs them to advance against Rome, events finally conspire to prompt Titus' revenge in the weird scene in which Tamora and her sons, disguised as Revenge, Rape, and Murder, come to Titus, who, they believe, has become demented. Now, he knows their reality--their dissembling nature, as he recapitulates, "I know thee well enough" (5.2.21); "I know thee well" (25); "I know them all" (142). Martha Tuck Rozett observes that, as in Hamlet, there exists an "ironic and accidental quality" to the circumstances leading to revenge: Tamora, though pretending to be a temptation figure, does in fact become one, and she, through providential intervention, falls into becoming the agent of her own destruction, and Titus turns out to be the instrument of revenging gods (198). The tragic hero is now completely transformed into a bloody revenger--he cuts the throats of Demetrius and Chiron, bakes their flesh in a pie, and serves it to their own mother.

Should Titus' bloody revenge be condemned or tolerated, or, as Bacon terms it, is it "a kind of wild justice" or "the most tolerable sort" of revenge? This question is not easily answered because the question about the validity of revenge is very delicate. For example, in His Practice in Two Bookes (1595) Vincentio Saviolo approvingly asserts, "the revenge ought to be done honorably"; on the other hand, he holds that one has to avoid vengeance even if his own wife has been ravished by an offender because "God, who (as S. Paul saith) will judge the Adulterer, will by means thereof give most severe judgement." ¹³ If Titus avenges the adultery forced upon Lavinia and the murder of Bassianus simply to assuage his own wrath, it would be wrong because mere revenge for its own sake is alien to the honor code of the gentry. Max H. James argues that Titus "not only can but should seek to eliminate this evil in the name of the greater good of society" (37). To be sure, like other gentles in the Shakespearean canon, Titus demonstrates his sense of honor and courage by seeking revenge on those who ruined his family. His revenge is a product of his belief that failure to withstand the injustice and wrongs forced on his family is dishonorable for his gentle blood, and that this failure will lead to chaos and destruction in the family and the state. Titus' high blood makes him fight against evil and restore good. Especially as a noble avenger his tragic choices and actions deserve the

audience's identification and sympathy, but only after the deflowering and mutilation of Lavinia, his own mutilation, and the deaths of his two sons as the victims of Aaron's Machiavellian "policy and stratagem."

Yet the question still remains moot: Is Titus' bloody revenge on Tamora and her brood tolerable, either because "there is no law to remedy" for Titus, or because he actually eliminates the agents of evil for the sake of the whole Roman society?" Christian teachings, Renaissance concepts of revenge, and classical ideas of honor and virtue cannot either condemn or condone Titus explicitly. Some may condemn him; some may identify with him. This question, however, may be answered more clearly in relation to his blood-quality. Degeneracy means not only corrupt morality but also debasement of the royal blood in quantity as well as in quality. His sorrows, tears, and worries consume the quantity of his noble blood. When the judges and senators take Titus' two sons away to the place of execution, Titus weeps and says, "in the dust I write / My heart's deep languor and my soul's sad tears. / Let my tears stanch the earth's dry appetite" (3.1.12-14). As they do not hear him but pass by him, he laments, "In winter with warm tears I'll melt the snow / And keep eternal springtime on thy [earth's] face, / So thou refuse to drink my dear son's blood" (20-22). Jaques Ferrand in Erotomania or a Treatise of Love (1640) cites the opinion of Empedocles that "when any one

was surcharged with any strong passion of the Mind, the Blood was troubled, and from thence followed Teares, in like manner as whey comes from Milke" (129). Romeo says to Juliet as he leaves her chamber, "Dry sorrow drinks our blood" (3.5.59). In his edition of Shakespeare's works, Bevington explicates this passage: "The heat of the body in sorrow and despair was thought to descend into the bowels and dry up the blood." The Queen in 2 Henry VI speaks of "blood-consuming sighs" and "blood-drinking sighs" (3.2.61, 63). Titus says to his weeping grandson, "tears will quickly melt thy life away" (3.2.51). The loss of the quantity of blood leads to degeneracy: the Queen of Henry VI soliloquizes, "Oft have I heard that grief softens the mind / And makes it fearful and degenerate" (4.4.1-2). Titus' tears are so abundant--as his blood is abundant (he has abundant blood enough to have begotten twenty-five sons)--that Marcus' napkin "cannot drink a tear of mine [Titus']" (3.1.140). The consuming of blood by weeping and lamenting results in the debasement of his blood. In order to avoid such degeneracy, the Queen of 2 Henry VI says to herself, "Think therefore on revenge and cease to weep" (4.4.3).

When the revengeful Titus comes to know the agents of evil, he weeps no more. Instead, he declares, "I have not another tear to shed. / Beside, this sorrow is an enemy," and he swears upon his soul to right their wrongs (3.1.266, 278). But it seems that by "revenge" the Queen means

retribution, which "suggests just or deserved punishment," whereas Titus means personal *retaliation*. Shifting from weeping to thinking of revenge signifies Titus' deeper degeneration--from physical to moral--from being a victim to being a revenger. Innocent victims like Talbot, Duncan, Ophelia, Lavinia, and Desdemona still keep their high blood; no one denies their heavenly vision of rebirth. But personal revengers who seek retaliation for injuries and wrongs deserve no heavenly vision. Marcus worries about the nature of Titus' revenge. He embraces what a sixteenth-century Christian, rather than a pagan Roman, might have with regard to revenge. When Lavinia writes down the names of the rapists, he wants to see "What God will have discovered for revenge" (4.1.76). And when he sees the transformation of Titus from a weeper (victim) to a revenger, Marcus wishes, "Revenge the heavens for old Andronicus!" (131).

Unfortunately, Marcus cannot prevent his brother's further degeneration because Titus never listens to his choric voice. The audience may sympathize, if not identify, with Titus for stabbing his daughter to avoid her individual as well as family shame, but he deserves damnation for killing his son to uphold paternal authority and for his private and brutal retaliation against Tamora and her sons. His brutality is a product of his degeneracy. The causes of Titus' degeneracy are not so clear as those of

Tamora and Saturninus, but, as mentioned earlier, the main cause seems to be the consuming of his gentlemanly humor and temperament due to his "bitter tears" and blood-consuming groans and sorrows. The excessive loss of humor and temperament leads him to lose his temper. In other words, he loses the balance in body as well as in mind. His monomaniacal involvement in brutal cannibalism reflects his unbalanced mind and degeneracy. And as a microcosm his transformation from innocence and gentility to corruption and degeneracy mirrors the degenerated Roman Empire. Thus, Aaron's only one reliable dictum--"Vengeance rot you all!" (5.1.58)--rings again.

But with a glimmer of hope Titus Andronicus closes, as if a phoenix rises renewed from its ashes. Lucius, ideal hero of the play, ascends as the new Roman Emperor chosen by the "common voice," as his father was at the beginning of the play. Titus has been too tainted to rule the new empire; his blood has to be purged and renewed in the frame of his son. A Gothic soldier does not distinguish Titus from Lucius, but thinks of them as one--"the great Andronicus." He glorifies the family and, quite surprisingly, curses his former Queen, Tamora:

Brave slip, sprung from the great Andronicus,
 Whose name was once our terror, now our comfort,
 Whose high exploits and honorable deeds
 Ingrateful Rome requites with foul contempt,

Be bold in us. We'll follow where thou lead'st,

.

And be avenged on cursed Tamora. (5.1.9-13, 16)

Earlier, when Saturninus exiled him without a cause, he promised Lavinia, "Now will I to the Goths and raise a power / To be revenged on Rome and Saturnine" (3.1.299-300). Now the ideal hero, Lucius, leads the Goths to wreak revenge on Aaron ("the incarnate devil"), Saturninus (the villeanized emperor), and the corrupt empire ("Ingrateful Rome"). He captures Aaron and his blackamoor son, and kills Saturninus when the degenerate Emperor stabs Titus, saying, "Can the son's eye behold his father bleed?" (5.3.65). Not only does he avenge his father's death, but he also plays the role of magistrate: "There's meed for meed, death for a deadly deed!" (66)--which echoes the justification of revenge in Numbers 35:19. Now being chosen the new Emperor, Lucius as the incarnate state punishes evil-doers and amends the wronged: he orders his attendants to "Set him [Aaron] breast-deep in earth and famish him" (5.3.179); to bury the dead Emperor in his father's grave; and to enshrine his sister and father in his family's monument. As for the "ravenous tiger" (Tamora) he orders, "No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weed, / No mournful bell shall ring her burial; / But throw her forth to beasts and birds to prey" (196-98). Thus, peace and order are restored not only to the Andronici but to Rome. Being the weak and degenerate

ruler, Saturninus foreshadows Richard II, who banishes Bolingbroke for an obscure reason but is dethroned by him. As Lucius pauses over his father's body he describes Titus to his young son as a loving paternal figure who danced his grandson on his knee and told him many a pretty tale. This is a loving and tender man whom the audience never really knew, the image mirroring the initial gentility of Titus before his degeneracy. This intimacy seems to revive in the relationship between Lucius and Young Lucius. Now as the new patriarch of the Andronici and the new Emperor of Rome, Lucius epitomizes the Shakespearean gentleman. No one can demur to the verdict that Lucius' revenges are tolerable and even justified, like Hamlet's murder of Claudius, an incestuous usurper.

Thus the conflicts between blood-oriented revengers structure Shakespeare's first tragedy, Titus Andronicus. These conflicts precipitate crude violence--ravishment, mutilation, carnage, and cannibalism--and end with the ascension of the ideal hero (Lucius) at the cost of degenerate gentles (Saturninus and Tamora) and the evil base-born (Aaron). Poetic justice is thus maintained in accordance with Shakespeare's propensity to blood-consciousness. The characterization, structure, and themes of Titus Andronicus, like those of other plays by Shakespeare, are regulated by "an invisible but firm line between gentility and plebeianism," as Berkeley cogently

argues in Blood Will Tell (95). Overlooking such a thematic and structural unity of Titus Andronicus, many critics have condemned this play as "a heap of Rubbish" and even questioned its authorship.¹⁴ Primarily because of the crude violence of the play, a number of "gentle minded" critics have hesitated to admit that the "gentle" Shakespeare¹⁵ could have invented this "jumble of horrors."¹⁶ As compared with mature tragedies, of course, Titus Andronicus lacks the depth and subtlety of motivation of the major characters' actions. But in this play Shakespeare exhibits the ability to create dramaturgical dynamics and vitality by means of bipolar contrasts and oppositions between blood-based revengers, which shape the structure of the play. A close examination of major characters' blood-based revenges, thus, sheds light on such thematic and structural unity in the play that otherwise may be overlooked or ignored.

Most of the blood-oriented issues--such as conflicts between the gentle and the base, patriarchal authority, sibling rivalry, primogeniture, physiological and astrological references--seem to be solely Shakespeare's, for these issues were alien to several sources of the play. Ovid's Metamorphoses provides the source for the rape, mutilation, and serving human flesh in a meal: Tereus rapes his sister-in-law Philomel and deprives of his tongue; Procne avenges his sister Philomel by serving Itys, her own son by Tereus, to him in a meal. Seneca's Thyestes also

gives Shakespeare a structure of sibling rivalry and revenge by serving human flesh in a banquet: Thyestes seduces his brother Atreus's wife and usurps his crown, which prompts Atreus to take revenge on his brother by murdering his two sons and serving their flesh to their parent in a banquet. These classical sources provide Shakespeare with ideas of bloody scenes, but are reticent about blood consciousness. In many ways, they are not immediate sources for Titus Andronicus. Major critics have regarded the anonymous prose chapbook The History of Titus Andronicus (1764) as closest to the lost main source of Shakespeare's play. Yet, this prose chapbook includes no sibling rivalry between the brothers; the unnamed Emperor is old and has a nameless prince who falls in love with Titus' daughter Lavinia. Titus Andronicus, the captain-general of the Roman army, kills the king of the Goths and captures the Queen, Attava. Her sons still continue the struggle against Rome. The Emperor wants to marry Attava, not because he is enchanted by her beauty, but because he wants to make peace with the Queen's sons, Alaricus and Abonus. The nameless Moor has clandestine dalliance with Attava but does not play the pivotal role in the chapbook; hence, the prose lacks the dramatic conflicts between the gentle and the base. The wicked Queen Attava lets her sons and the Moor kill the prince, in an attempt to make "her two sons emperors jointly." The prose work has nothing to do with blood-

oriented revenges: Titus never mentions his pride in a five-hundred-year-long family legacy or his rigid paternal authority or his preoccupation with primogeniture. He appears a simple avenger for his daughter's rape by the Queen's evil sons. From such a simple plot, Shakespeare creates many dramatic effects by adding blood-oriented issues and blood-oriented revengers.

These blood-conscious characters are the key not only to the thematic and structural unity of Titus Andronicus but also to the poet's characterization in later plays. Indeed, major characters in this play foreshadow many later Shakespearean characters: Aaron is a prototype of Iago and Edmund; Tamora, of Cymbeline's evil Queen; Lucius, of Hamlet; Titus, of Lear; and Saturninus, of Richard II. This play should be read and studied more closely and approvingly, in relation to the poet's keen interest in the significance of blood.

Notes

¹ All the Biblical quotations in this dissertation are from The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1969).

² Oliver stresses the validity of primogeniture as a main reason for his control over his younger brother, Orlando: "Know you before whom, sir?" (1.1.41). Orlando also acknowledges it when he answers, "The courtesy of nations allows you my better, in that you are the firstborn" (44-46).

³ See Figure 15 of Irving I. Edgar's Shakespeare, Medicine and Psychiatry (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970) and the front book jacket of Aubrey C. Kail's The Medical Mind of Shakespeare (Sydney: Williams & Wilkins, 1986).

⁴ David S. Berkeley and Zahra Karimipour, "Blood-Consciousness as a Theme in The Winter's Tale," Explorations in Renaissance Culture 11 (1985) 89.

⁵ M. P. Tilley, A Dictionary of Proverbs (Ann Arbor, 1950) M. 1132.

⁶ Jupiter is associated with blood, the sanguine humor, which was considered appropriate to princes, accepted lovers, and to the jovial and fortunate; the sun is related to yellow bile or choler, appropriate to rulers and self-willed women, and, in conjunction with Mars, to soldiers, roisterers, and drunkards. The moon is associated with

mental illness, as the word "lunacy" implies. Irving I. Edgar, Shakespeare, Medicine and Psychiatry (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970) 215. See also the opening chapter of C. A. Mercier's Astrology in Medicine (London: Macmillan & Co., 1914); John W. Draper, "The Humors" Journal of American Medical Association 188 No. 3 (April 20, 1964) 259; and F. David Hoeniger's Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1992) 109.

⁷ Kalendar of Shepherds: Kalendar and Compost of Shepherds (1518), ed. G. C. Heseltine, 1930: 141-42. In Examen de Ingenios (1590), J. Huarte also asserts that some melancholic men are "blasphemers, wily, double, friends of ill-doing; and desirous of revenge" (147). See also Lawrence Babb, The Elizabethan Malady (East Lansing: Michigan State College P, 1951) 57-58.

⁸ C. Dariot, Astrologically Iudgement of the Starres, trans. F. Wither, (London, 1583). Quoted in John W. Draper's The Humors & Shakespeare's Characters (Durham: Duke UP, 1954) 37.

⁹ Eugene M. Waith quotes the characteristics of a Saturnine man--"false, envious . . . and malicious"--from Kalendar of Shepherds in his edition of Titus Andronicus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) 83.

¹⁰ Demetrius' quasi-syllogism reminds one of Richard of Gloucester's similar reasoning when he decides to seduce Lady Ann, widow of Edward, in Richard III:

Was ever woman in this humor wooed?

Was ever woman in this humor won?

I'll have her, but I will not keep her long.

(1.2.230-32)

¹¹ Baildon states that both Lear and Titus fancy that they have a true and disinterested love for their children, from which the whole tragic situation arises; that both Coriolanus and Titus have the same military and warlike qualities; and that Titus has points of resemblance to Hamlet in regard to feigned madness. "Introduction" to The Works of Shakespeare: The Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus (London: Methuen and Co., 1904) xxxiii-xxxv. Baildon's observations are sound but it is not clear whether or not Titus does feign madness, although Tamora and her sons obviously believe his madness.

¹² Bevington in a footnote suggests that Marcus' reference to Aaron as "the Empress' villain" (4.3.73) signifies "both servant and villain in the modern sense" (967). Berkeley also capitalizes on the interchangeability of the words "villein" and "villain" in his essay "Claudius the Villein King of Denmark," Hamlet Studies 11, 1 and 2 (Summer and Winter, 1989): 9-21. For the origin and the development of the word *villain*, see Wilfred Funk, Word Origins: An Exploration and History of Words and Language (New York: Wings Books, 1992) 110-111.

¹³ Vincentio Saviolo, His Practice in Two Bookes: The

First Intreating of the Use of the Rapier and Dagger; The Second, of Honor and Honorable Quarrels (London, 1595) Y4, verso and Z, recto. Quoted in Max H. James, "Our House is Hell": Shakespeare's Troubled Families (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989) 37.

¹⁴ Edward Ravenscroft, whose adaptation of Titus Andronicus was first performed in 1678, is the first critic to doubt its authorship. In the preface to his adaptation, he contends that he was once told by "some anciently conversant with the Stage" that it was written by an unknown author, and Shakespeare gave only "some Master-touches to one or two of the Principal Parts or Characters." Ravenscroft believes this because the play is "the most incorrect and indigested piece" in the Shakespearean canon, and its structure seems rather "a heap of Rubbish." Edward Ravenscroft, "Preface" to Titus Andronicus, rpt. Brian Vickers, ed. Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage, 1 of 4 Vols (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974) 319.

¹⁵ Ben Jonson referred to Shakespeare as "My gentle Shakespeare" in "To the memory of my beloved, The Author Mr. William Shakespeare," which Jonson prefixed to the First Folio of 1623.

¹⁶ See Gareth Lloyd Evans, The Upstart Crow: an Introduction to Shakespeare's Plays (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1982) 39, and Oscar J. Campbell, ed. The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare (New York: Thomas Y.

Crowell Co., 1966) 880. For more detailed discussions about the controversy over the authorship of Titus Andronicus, see Eugene M. Waith's introduction to his edition of Titus Andronicus, 11-20.

CHAPTER III

"I FETCH MY LIFE AND BEING / FROM MEN OF ROYAL SIEGE";

"THOU ART A VILLAIN": CLASS DISTANCING BETWEEN

OTHELLO AND IAGO IN OTHELLO

Shakespeare almost always widens the social distancing between classes found in his primary sources, and the dramaturgical force in many of his plays arise from the thematic conflict between the armigerous and the base. Othello is a case in point. Shakespeare creates dramatic conflicts between the two opposing major characters--Othello and Iago as representatives of the gentry and the villein class, respectively--by sharpening their class distinction. He intensifies every single factor of the class-consciousness in modifying the primary source of Othello--G. Cinthio's novella Hecatommithi (1565). In this respect, the class-oriented characterization in Othello is a major factor of the poet's dramaturgical power. Shakespeare transforms Cinthio's passionate but crude villein Moor into the noble hero Othello, who is royal in blood, valiant in war, Christian in piety, romantic in love, eloquent in speech, and repentant in conscience. On the other hand, Shakespeare intensifies the ungentle traits in Cinthio's

unnamed Ensign, while deleting his "handsome figure," his "lofty, elegant language" and his potentiality to be "a Hector and an Achilles." ¹ Cinthio does not make clear whether the Ensign is gentle or base, but the poet clarifies his social status as a villein. Consequently, Shakespeare's Iago becomes a villein/villain, cowardly in sword-fighting, atheistic in piety, abusive in love, gross in language, and impenitent in conscience. But the poet does not change their colors. Othello has a black appearance but behaves himself as a noble hero protecting Venice from the infidels (Turks), a white Christian community, whereas Iago as a white Venetian hates and threatens destruction of Othello's family and even white gentlemen like Cassio and Roderigo. An oxymoronic expression is probably relevant in describing their opposing natures--"the contrast between the white devil and the black noble." Victimized by this opposition is the innocent heroine Desdemona, who belongs to the white community by birth, but is related to the Moorish heritage by marriage. Thus, Othello epitomizes a luminous dramatization of Shakespeare's penchant for blood-consciousness at the cost of color prejudice, and the dramaturgical dynamic of the play lies in the binary opposition between the white villein/villain Iago and the black noble Othello. The social and military distancing between their ranks manifests itself in their appellations and designations, their uses of language and imagery, their

attitudes toward love, their senses of honor and courage, and their moral and ethical standards.

The characters in Othello consist of four gentle groups and two base groups based on their blood-quality. The gentle groups include the innocent but victimized gentle (Desdemona), the regenerate gentle (Othello), the degenerate gentle (Roderigo), and the minor gentles (Cassio, Duke of Venice, Senators, Brabantio, Lodovico, Gratiano, and Gentlemen of Cyprus). Among the minor gentles, Cassio appears to be the ideal hero at the end of the play despite his some weaknesses. The base groups embrace the evil and cowardly villain (Iago), Iago's wife and Cassio's mistress (Emilia and Bianca), and the rustic clown (the nameless Clown). This blood-oriented characterization mirrors the poet's blood consciousness. By comparison with their originals in Cinthio, Shakespeare heightens the noble traits of gentle persons (except for the villainized gentleman Roderigo) manifest in their elaborate language, bravery, goodness, intelligence, and wit; however, he faults base groups for their cowardice, villainy, gauchery, and ignorance. The poet's blood-consciousness is a fruit of the concept of hierarchical order inherent in the ranked angelic creatures in Pseudo-Dionysius' The Celestial Hierarchies, the ranked elements and humors of Galen, and especially the ranked blood-qualities implied in Francis Markham's dictum-- "there are severall degrees in bloud" (46). The higher

blood they have, the more human frailties they are exempted from. In terms of socio-military ranks, the hierarchical order is evident: Othello is the highest, being the commander; Cassio, the second to Othello, is Lieutenant; and Iago, the lowest, is Ancient or Ensign (a standard bearer). The blood-based hierarchy also accords with a social caste based on their military ranks; their manners, language, and behavior manifest their blood-quality. But in terms of color prejudice Othello has disadvantages, while Iago and Cassio have no comparable difficulty. And in terms of their birth place or citizenship, Iago has most advantages because only he is a native Venetian (3.3.215-16; 5.1.90), whereas Cassio comes from Florence (1.1.21) and Othello from Africa. Unlike other plays, Othello presents a very complex pattern of the thematic contrast between the base and the gentle because of the blending of color prejudice with blood bias. Iago has racial prejudices against the black Moor Othello. With regard to skin color, Iago is better from an Elizabethan point of view than Othello; however, concerning blood-quality and social or military rank, Othello is Iago's superior. This complex relationship creates dynamic dramatic conflicts between Iago and Othello as well as between Iago and Cassio.

The clash between Iago and Othello resonates throughout the play. Othello begins with Iago's pronouncement of his hatred for and alienation from the Moor. Roderigo questions

Iago's pronounced hatred for the Moor and wonders why he follows the commander whom he hates so much. Iago answers, "In following him, I follow but myself" (1.1.60). He also assures Roderigo that he follows Othello not for "love or duty," but pretends to do so for his "peculiar end" (61-62). Iago's "peculiar end" indicates his Machiavellian policy of dissembling his hatred by making Othello falsely believe in his love for him and his sense of duty. Iago feigns his love for Othello but gradually aims at his ruin. The villain manipulates Roderigo--a "gulled gentleman"---for the sake of his "peculiar end." Roderigo's lustful desire for a beautiful and chaste gentlewoman, Desdemona, makes him vulnerable to Iago's Machiavellian "end." The villain also extends his villainy to his poisoning relationship with Othello, whose blood is noble but vulnerable not only to jealousy of his wife's friendly attitude toward Cassio but also to Iago's deception and spite. Social discriminations against his black color, Brabantio and Iago being the most vigorous antagonists, partly cause him to recoil from his native nobility. Being a foreigner--a black Moor--is his weak point where Iago starts his villainy. He manipulates the vulnerability of this wavering gentle (Roderigo) and the black gentle (Othello); the villain cultivates ego-centric Machiavellianism by capitalizing on their vulnerability cunningly and boldly. His success, however, does not depend on his assumed ability or intelligence in exercising his

policy. His achievements are owing to the vulnerability of his victims and to Shakespeare's contriving of coincidences. Iago, of course, demonstrates a remarkable ability to fabricate a believable fiction or illusion out of his distorted imaginations based on his antipathy against Othello in particular and against the gentry in general. But such an ability turns out to be immoral and destructive to the social norm, hence reflecting his moral emptiness or "spiritual bankruptcy," as Jane Adamson terms it (79).

From the outset of the play Iago's immediate enmity is directed to Othello, a representative of the whole gentry group. But his class antagonisms are also strongly felt in his vindictive, vengeful, and alienated attitudes toward such gentles as Roderigo, Cassio, and Brabantio. Even his estranged relationship with his wife Emilia partly results from her deep attachment to the gentlewoman Desdemona while she detaches herself from her villein husband. Iago, in this sense, is a lonely man in his conflict with the gentles as a whole; therefore, his language and behavior appear to be ignoble or evasive, if his intention is concealed, and repulsive, if his reality is revealed, to the gentle characters on stage and the gentle Jacobean audiences. The "gentle" Shakespeare invents this superb villain by adding the villainy in the class sense to the character of Cinthio's evil Ensign.

Shakespeare creates the thematic contrast between Iago

and Othello by giving them class-conscious appellations and designations. Iago is the only character designated as "villain" in the *dramatis personae* in the whole Shakespearean canon. But most modern critics focus only on the ethical sense of the word. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for example, portrays Iago as a fiendish villain whose "motiveless malignity" is manifest in his soliloquy in Act 1, Scene 3. William Charles Woodson views Iago as a villain without conscience like other cater-cousins--Barabas, Aaron, Richard III. Joyce Sexton stresses Iago's root in traditional allegorical images of envy; Charles Norton Coe examines all the Shakespearean villains including Iago. And Bertrand Evans describes Iago as an irrational practiser of villainy who seeks to destroy everyone.² These critics ignore the class meaning of the word "villain" as understood in Shakespeare's period. Accordingly, they fail to grasp one of the poet's most significant, though little studied, dramatic themes and techniques--the distancing between the classes and the dramaturgical dynamic of the thematic conflict between the gentle and the base. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *villain* as "originally, a low-born base-minded rustic; a man of ignoble ideas or instincts; in later use an unprincipled; led or depraved scoundrel; a man naturally disposed to base or criminal actions." C. S. Lewis in Studies in Words also recognizes that the word in the Shakespearean canon contains "some

implication of ignoble birth, coarse manners, and ignorance" (122). Wilfred Funk observes that until the Middle Ages, a villain "was of low birth, and hence, to the aristocrats, was a person of low morals and *villainy* in general," and that Shakespeare used the word villain in "both its ancient and modern uses" (110-111). In fact, the Elizabethans employed the word "villain" in the ethical and the class senses. In Shakespeare the word "villain" thus has the double meaning, and it is often interchangeable with "villein." The pronunciation of the two words is identical: they are homonyms. The double meaning and the interchangeability are major factors in understanding the poet's portrayal of the base-borns, especially Iago in Othello. Overlooking this background, many modern readers and critics slight a focal point of Othello--the class-oriented characterization of Iago as a typical villein/villain.

Iago's designation or status as villein/villain is evidenced by his obscure parentage. David Castronove perceptively states that "Nobility means notability; to be ignoble is to be unknown" (5). Sir Thomas Smith in De Republica Anglorum (1583) asserts that "Gentlemen be those, whom their blood and race doth make noble or known." ³ In the Shakespearean plays, the base-borns neither mention their blood nor keep their genealogy, whether or not they know their fathers. Aaron in Titus Andronicus and Cloten in

Cymbeline never refer to their fathers or genealogy, but their cowardice and villainy mirror their fathers' base qualities, just as Belarius declares, hitting all Shakespearean villains--"Cowards father cowards and base things sire base" (Cymbeline 4.2.26). Foolish Lancelot is probably the son to foolish Old Gobbo in The Merchant of Venice; the cowardly Clown is supposedly the son to the cowardly Shepherd in The Winter's Tale. Iago never mentions his lineage or legacy in the play. One may conclude that the Ancient's father was a villain both genetically and ethically, considering that the father begot his base and cowardly son Iago, who attacks Cassio from behind and stabs his own wife.

Unlike Iago, Othello is referred to as "noble" Othello, and he himself is strongly conscious and proud of his lineage and articulates it. The Herald cogently points to Othello's nobility by addressing him as "our noble and valiant general" (2.2.1-2). The general takes pride in his noble birth. He does not shudder at his ancient's warning that Brabantio's powerful position as a senator may enable him to dissolve his marriage to Desdemona. Othello replies that he can overcome his influence because he as the commander is equal to the senator both in the significance of his services to the Venetian state and in his blood-quality:

Let him do his spite.

My services which I have done the seigniory
 Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know--
 Which, when I know that boasting is an honor,
 I shall promulgate--I fetch my life and being
 From men of royal siege. (1.2.17-22)

Here Othello probably refers to his royal ancestors, the valiant Moors, who in the eighth century conquered Spain and made a valiant effort to overpower all of western Europe--a historical fact that the original audiences of this play might know. Therefore, Othello argues, he deserves to "love the gentle Desdemona" (25). Moreover, his past renowned achievements and his military rank make him confident and proud--"My parts, my title, and my perfect soul / Shall manifest me rightly" (31-32). Departing from Cinthio, Shakespeare has his hero's blood-quality agree with his social and military status. The spectacle of a foreign commander of Italian forces was nothing remarkable for Cinthio and his readers as well as for the Venetians in Othello.⁴ And to be a commander did not necessarily mean to be a noble man by birth. Cinthio mentions the Moorish hero's bravery and nobility, but he is mute about his genealogy or blood quality. Neither does he clarify the pedigree of the Ensign. Yet Shakespeare attributes royal blood to the commander while adding more base traits to the character of Iago, in keeping with the poet's preoccupation with social distancing between classes in his primary

sources.

Another appellation or epithet--"honest"--distinguishes social classes of Iago and Othello. The Shepherd in The Winter's Tale refers to his father as "honest" and wishes to "lie close by his honest bones" (4.4.456). In his essay "The Best Policy," William Empson suggests various meanings of this word for different people: for example, a "faithful" friend (used for Cassio), and a "chaste" woman (for Desdemona). Empson also briefly touches upon the class signification of this word: Iago is conscious of the patronizing use applied to him: "low-class, and stupid, but good-natured" (23). In his essay "Iago--An Extraordinary Honest Man," Weston Babcock focuses on the significance of this word in the class sense and suggests that it refers to a man of inferior social status like Iago, who "constantly attempts to denigrate his 'betters' by 'vicious,' or spiteful, detraction," and who is "constantly embittered by recognition of his social inferiority in a rank-conscious society" (298). Though not pursued thoroughly, Babcock's observation sheds light on Iago's motivation for his actions and also endorses my thesis in this study--Shakespeare's dramaturgical force inherent in the class distinction between Othello and Iago. After nobly defending his love for Desdemona in the senate, Othello bids Iago escort Desdemona and Emilia to Cyprus, using this patronizing nuance: "Honest Iago, / My Desdemona must I leave to thee"

(1.3.297). At a seaport in Cyprus, Othello survives "the high-wrought flood" which destroys the Turkish fleet, and the triumphant commander is joyously reunited with Desdemona. When the Moor embraces and kisses her in front of Iago, the villain says in an aside: "O, you are well tuned now! / But I'll set down the pegs that make this music, / As honest as I am" (2.1.200-02). Here the ancient applies this word "honest" to himself.

Of course, he hates this appellation implying "low-class, and stupid, but good-natured"; however, he cannot but bear this humiliation because of his low blood and consequent villein status. His color bias makes him more resentful of the Moor's romantic love for the white Venetian lady. He wishes to "set down the pegs" so that he can untune the instrument of love music. The noble lovers being gone, Iago, resentful of his rank, attempts to simultaneously denigrate and manipulate the gentles. He defames Desdemona's pure love by lying about her friendly relationship with the gentle Cassio. He reasons that "her eye is fed" of the black face of the Moor, because Othello's blackness signifies the devil. Based on his color prejudice, Iago degrades the Moor's blood-quality. He assures Roderigo that the Moor's blood is not abundant, so it is defective in the light of sexual compatibility:

When the blood is made dull with the act of sport,
there should be, again to inflame it and to give

satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favor,
 sympathy in years, manners, and beauties--all
 which the Moor is defective in. (2.1.228-32)

Now Iago goes on to say about Desdemona's natural reasons for adultery with Cassio: "Very nature will instruct her in it and compel her to some second choice" (235-36). Iago thus slanders the noble blood of Othello, besmirches the pure love of Othello and Desdemona, and vilifies the gentle Cassio's courtesy toward Desdemona. The villain also manipulates Roderigo's unrequited love for Desdemona by suggesting that he must eliminate the "devillish knave" Cassio in order to commit adultery with Desdemona. The purpose of deceiving Roderigo is three-fold: one is to trick the fool out of his money; the second is to eliminate Cassio, a decisive obstacle to his aspirations for socio-military climbing; and the third is to take revenge on the "black ram" "tupping" with a "white ewe." Overall, Roderigo functions as a handy tool for "honest Iago" to denigrate and manipulate his superiors in social and military classes.

Later when Cassio calls him "honest Iago" (2.3.329), Iago becomes more resentful of his social rank and vengeful toward the upper-class men. He determines to play the villain: "How am I then a villain . . . Divinity of hell! / When devils will the blackest sins put on, / They do suggest at first with heavenly shows, / As I do now" (342, 344-47). While he is referred to as "honest Iago," he disguises

himself as an honest (faithful) low-class soldier, but left alone he voices class antagonisms against those who address him as "honest Iago." In a soliloquy, he denigrates Cassio by calling him "honest fool" (347). Whereas his superiors call him "honest"--in the sense of "low-class, stupid, but good-natured," he designates Cassio as the "honest fool"--in the sense of naïve and gullible fool, though adventitiously higher in social rank. Thus, the appellation "honest" mirrors Iago's conscious and unconscious aspirations for being upper-class, on the one hand, or defaming the gentry by linking them to his own appellation, on the other. Like Roderigo, Cassio falls victim of Iago's villainy. When Cassio is discharged from his lieutenancy for drinking and being involved in a brawl while on guard duty, Iago approaches him with affected honesty and feigned overconcern. Too easily--surprisingly too easily (because gentles were supposed to be perceptive)--the ancient manipulates the lieutenant's reliance on him so that Cassio seeks Desdemona's suit for his reappointment. And too easily, Cassio becomes a determining tool to implant seeds of jealousy in the Moor's mind. When his villainy is about to be exposed, Iago decides to exterminate the tools at the same time by prompting Roderigo to attack Cassio. As Roderigo fumbles with the sword and is wounded by Cassio, the cowardly villain Iago stabs Cassio from behind. Still with his superb art of histrionic guile and affected

honesty, Iago pretends to worry about Cassio's wounds. Iago's resentment of the gentry as a whole never ceases--indeed it literally never ceases--until the Moor smothers Desdemona and kills himself after he sees the reality of the villain. Thus, Cassio, Desdemona, and Othello, who are all honest in the sense of "faithful," "chaste," and "truth-telling," fall victims to the "honest Iago," who has been resentful of and vengeful toward the bloods as a whole with his affected honesty.

In addition to the designation "honest," Shakespeare's deliberate use of the second personal pronoun "thou" designates Iago's villainy in the class sense. Ralph Berry in his Shakespeare and Social Class explains that the distinction between "you" and "thou" is an indicator of social rank (xvi). G. L. Brook regards "you" as "the usual pronoun used by upper-class speakers to one another," whereas "thou" is used "by lower-class characters in speaking to other members of the same social class" (73). Except for intimate relations, Berry states, a master or an upper-class man commonly addresses his servant or lower-class man as "thou," but it is not for the servant to reciprocate (xvii). Almost of all the gentles are condescending toward Iago by using "thou," but he calls them "you": Roderigo, though "a gulled gentleman," uses the pronoun "thou" to address Iago in the opening lines. Later, when they join together as accomplices in ruining Othello's

family, they often address each other as "thou," not because of their equal social rank, but because of their intimacy. Kristin Linklater in Freeing Shakespeare's Voice mentions the intimate effect of a "thou/thee/thy" regardless of the ranks of the speaker and the listener in Shakespeare's plays (115). Their intimate relationship suggests the gradual villeinization of Roderigo by Iago's evil spirit and manner. On hearing Iago's gross language and manner, Brabantio addresses him as "thou," even though he does not know yet his social status:

Brabantio: What profane wretch art thou?

Iago: I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your
daughter and the Moor are now making the beast
with two backs.

Brabantio: Thou art a villain.

Iago: You are--a senator.

(1.1.117-121)

Because of his lowly birth, Iago must address the gentle Venetians as "you," "sir," or "gentleman." That is a norm of the gentry-dominated society for a marginal figure to follow. E. A. J. Honigmann notes that Iago "continues to caress the Venetians with the word 'gentlemen'" (83). As Honigmann suggests, Iago may be eager "to be accepted as an equal by gentlemen" (84). But Iago has been treated throughout the play as a base-born by other gentlemen, who seldom address him as "you." Nobody calls him a "gentleman"

or "gentle Iago."

By contrast, all the people including the Duke of Venice and senators address Othello as "you" (1.3.76, 113), a sign of his gentle birth and his high social rank. Of course, Brabantio uses "thou" to call Othello when he is enraged at his elopement with Desdemona: "O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my daughter? / Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her!" (1.2.63-64). But his use of "thou" reflects the speaker's anger and hate rather than the listener's low social status. Emilia, who is Desdemona's attendant and Iago's wife, addresses everyone as "you" throughout the play, but she shifts from "you" to "thou" as she bursts into rage while accusing Othello of murdering the innocent Desdemona:

You hast not half the power to do me harm
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! *Thou* hast done a deed--
I care not for *thy* sword; I'll make *thee* known,
Though I lost twenty lives.--Help! Help, ho, Help!
(5.2.169-73, emphases added)

In addition, the shift of the pronouns indicates Emilia's understanding of the social norm that the gentleman should be addressed as "you" only as long as he behaves himself as a gentleman. As the imagery suggests in her cry--"O gull! O dolt! / As ignorant as dirt!"--Emilia now realizes Othello's villeinized status. As Linklater suggests, if one

carelessly disregards the significance of the variations on the second personal pronoun, he or she will miss a great deal of interesting social "topography" of Shakespeare's England (117). The failure to grasp the social milieu in a play may result in missing an important factor or in misunderstanding the whole play.

Shakespeare also intensifies the class distance between Iago and Othello by contrasting their uses of language and imagery. Berry observes that "class identification is confirmed through language," and "the imagery a speaker employs often reveals something of his background" (xv). These statements are true for Iago and Othello. Iago's vulgar and crude language indicates his low base blood and his low class status and his base blood. His frequent references to sex in vulgar animal imagery epitomize his baseness in the ethical and social senses. In the opening scene, Iago describes to Brabantio the interracial union of Othello and Desdemona with a muddy fountain of obscene references to Othello's color and race by means of animalistic images: "An old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe" (1.1.90-91); "You'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse" (113). This gross language and imagery shock and prompt Brabantio to inquire, "What profane wretch art thou?" Iago answers, still using animal images: "your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs" (118-19). As might be expected of a gentleman,

Brabantio naturally feels repulsion at Iago's obscenities, especially as applied to his daughter, whether or not the statement is true. Of course, the senator frowns upon sexual alliances between black men and white women as unnatural sexual yearnings, especially on the part of white women. But no gentlemen would even think of calling up a senator at night and of speaking about his daughter in such a gross manner. Only a "villain" (Iago) and a degenerate gentle (Roderigo) can think of and possibly say such base things. Iago's obscene imagery and his manner of speech reveal his status as "a villain" both in the ethical sense and in the class sense. Brabantio now perceives Iago's nature--"Thou art a villain" (120). This appellation is echoed by other gentlemen: fully aware of Iago's evil scheme, Montano addresses him as "a notorious villain" (5.2.249) and Othello exclaims, "O villain!" (321). Lodovico's final assessment of Iago is "this hellish villain" (379). They utter the word "villain" in the class sense in addition to the ethical sense, implying that base behavior results from base blood. Elsewhere Iago uses other animalistic images which reflect his lowly nature. Caroline Spurgeon in her Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells Us holds that more than half the animal images in Othello are Iago's, and that they are "contemptuous or repellent" images like "a plague of flies, a quarrelsome dog, the recurrent image of bird-snaring, leading asses by the nose, a spider

catching a fly, beating an offenceless dog, wild cats, wolves, goats and monkeys" (335). Iago's base blood makes him instinctively dehumanize human beings. He uses these animalistic images to describe other personages scornfully, but, ironically enough, they are also used against him to describe his own base nature. Iago himself, for example, compares his own scheme to the plague of "flies" (1.1.73); when Iago stabs Roderigo, the latter shouts "O damned Iago! O inhuman dog!" (5.1.63); in the eye of Othello the villainous Iago is "the circumcisèd dog" (5.2.365); and Lodovico rightly calls Iago a "viper" (293) and a "Spartan dog" (372).

By contrast, Othello's language and images accord with his innate gentility. "Helping gentles triumph over difficulties," Berkeley maintains, "is the figurative richness, the musicality, and in sum, the memorable quality of their language" (Blood Will Tell 22). Othello's competence for speech unfolds first when he stands publicly to defend himself against Brabantio's accusation of applying "witchcraft" to win Desdemona. In this severe predicament, Othello confidently and suitably refutes Brabantio's accusations. Othello first confesses "the vices" of his "blood"--his passionate nature or sanguine humor--a gentle trait (1.3.125). Then he tells the Venetian senators and the Duke the story of his life and explains how his exotic adventures appealed to Desdemona and Brabantio. Othello

first defuses Brabantio's rage with the friendly statement--
 "Her father loved me, oft invited me / Still questioned me
 the story of my life" (1.3.130-31). He then elaborates
 poetic expressions in describing his adventures filled with
 horrible battles, "hairbreadth scapes," slavery, and
 cannibalism:

And portance in my travels' history,
 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
 Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch
 heaven,
 It was my hint to speak--such was my process--
 (1.3.141-44).

This highly charged expression of nature makes his whole
 story romantic in tone and imagery. As Berkeley remarks,
 Duke Senior in As You Like turns his predicament into words
 and so the forest of Arden becomes a "landscape of the mind"
 (22). Othello also transcends his plight through poetic
 style. These imaginative objects become a landscape of his
 romantic mind. He is also very careful about choice of
 words, as exemplified by such words as "Anthropophagi"
 (145), "a pliant hour" (152) and "pilgrimage dilate" (155).
 He suggests that not only the story itself but the manner
 and competence for narrative moved Desdemona's tender heart
 and won her love:

My story being done,
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs.

She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing
strange,
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful.
She wished she had made her such a man. She
thanked me,
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake.
She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used.
(1.3.160-71).

Othello here simultaneously becomes the narrator and the hero of a romance or a travelog: he tells his own tale as a Renaissance gentleman peruses a romance, Greek or medieval, or a travelog like the tales of Sir John Mandeville. He skillfully shifts his role from a hero of a romance or of a travelog to a Renaissance lover. Helen Gardner in her essay "The Noble Moor" views Othello as "a hero of the ancient world" who seems "born to do great deeds and live in legend" because of his obvious "heroic qualities of courage and strength" as well as the "heroic capacity for passion" (163-64). Gardner's observation is exemplified by the hero's romantic background and endorsed by his survival of the terrifying storm at sea near Cyprus. Just as his adventure story won Desdemona's love, this romantic love story now

moves the noble Renaissance listeners. Othello aptly underlines the mature and mutual love between himself and Desdemona, by which he repudiates any connection with "witchcraft." The Duke as the authoritative voice of Venice declares, "I think this tale would win my daughter too" (1.3.173). When Desdemona confirms her husband's words, Brabantio says reluctantly, "God be with you! I have done" (192). Finally, the Duke concludes, "Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (293), which matches Desdemona's earlier declaration--"I saw Othello's visage in his mind" (255). His noble language supports his nobility and the validity of his marriage to Desdemona. Thus, Othello's story is double--the story of his love and the story of his noble blood.

Unlike Othello's coherent and moving speech, Iago's discourse lacks coherence and truth. Complaining about his denied lieutenancy in the opening scene, Iago argues that he deserves the lieutenancy ("I am worth no worse a place"). Although "Three great ones of the city" visited Othello in "personal suit to make me [Iago] his lieutenant," the general rejects their suit "with his wordy evasion." Iago reasons that the rejection results from Othello's personal preference for Cassio, "a great arithmetician" who comes from Florence and demonstrates only "the bookish theoretic" without practice (1.1.9-25). As David Young rightly points out in The Action to the Word, Iago gets the necessary

information across, but the audience cannot admire his poise as a coherent and reliable narrator (48). A perceptive reader can find the basic difference between Othello's moving and convincing discourse replete with truth and genuine emotions and Iago's threatening and deceptive discourse full of fabrications and half-truths. Iago deceives Roderigo by alluding to the infidelity of Venetian women, hence making him falsely brood over the possibility of his consummating adultery with Desdemona. Iago cunningly tells lies or half-truths using the equivocal and incomplete conditional "if" or "--like." In the so-called temptation scene, Iago pretends to be ignorant of the identity of the man who had been talking intimately with Desdemona and stole away from her, but tempts Othello to believe it by using "if" and "guiltylike":

Iago: Ha? I like not that.

Othello: What doest thou say?

Iago: Nothing, my lord; or *if*--I know not what.

Othello: Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

Iago: Cassio, my lord? No, sure, I cannot think it,

That he would steal away so *guiltylike*,

Seeing you coming. (3.3.35-37 emphases added)

As Madeleine Doran cogently states, Iago's "if" is "the small hole in the dike [of suspicion] which, persistently widened by Iago, will let in the destroying flood" (63). The suggestive word "guiltylike" and the conditional "if"

are the prelude to Iago's temptation. He thus plants seeds of suspicion in Othello's mind. But Othello is not yet convinced about what Iago tries to say. In order to prove the reliability of his words, Iago has to provide concrete evidence: the handkerchief becomes the "ocular proof" for Iago to cultivate the seeds of suspicion, and he needs to have Othello overhear Cassio's talk about his love affair with a woman to make the Moor believe the woman to be Desdemona.

Why, then, does Iago have to tell lies and half-truths with concrete evidence when speaking to other people? Of course, a ready answer will be "because he is a villain." It is quite right, but only if it has the double meaning--a villein/villain. These fabrications reveal not merely his moral corruption but also his lowly class status. Iago is well aware of his marginal status, and he also knows that his language has no inherent power or authority in the gentry-dominated society. So he had to rely on the gentlemen--"Three great ones of the city"--who can tell his superior Othello what he wanted to say, instead of directly addressing the commander. To his dismay, however, Othello dismissed, in favor of Cassio, their suit for Iago. It is not clear why Othello preferred Cassio to Iago. But the noble Moor, I think, had already perceived the gentility in Cassio and the vulgarity and baseness inherent in Iago. Even though the ancient argues that "I am worth no worse a

place" and criticizes his rival Cassio's weaknesses, the audience can neither side with Iago nor blame Othello for choosing Cassio as his lieutenant. Of course, Cassio is not a perfect soldier, but he is gentle of blood and is evidently of more worth than "the bookish theoretic." His abilities as a soldier are confirmed when the Third Gentleman estimates him an equal to the "worthy governor" (Othello)--"this same Cassio" (2.1.33). Moreover, he is selected as the new governor of the city after Othello's death. This may be in some point recognition that he would be apt at civil government. Desdemona's assessment of him as "thrice-gentle Cassio" (3.4.124) also nullifies Iago's argument against Cassio. Because Iago's language lacks authority and validity, even his gull Roderigo does not easily believe him. Therefore, Iago has to repeat what he said before: "I have told thee often, and I retell thee again and again" (1.3.366-67). Thus Iago's villainy in the ethical and class senses permeates his unreliable and redundant language. In this society an argument full of grace and gracefully delivered has the ring and authority of truth.

Another linguistic feature confirming class distancing between Othello and Iago is blank verse. As a general rule, blank verse is the province of the gentry, whereas prose is the vehicle of the base class. Berry observes that blank verse is "the language of passion, dignity, and moral

elevation, hence is equated with social elevation," while prose is "the medium of those who, for reasons which include the social, fall beneath the dignity of verse" (xvi). In Shakespeare's plays, of course, this general rule is not always maintained. In many cases, however, the reader can perceive the social distancing between the binary classes. In the council chamber scene, most noble men--the Duke, the senators, Lodovico, and Gratiano--speak in blank verse. Desdemona almost always delivers her speech in blank verse throughout the play--her gentility never changes; her blood-quality never deteriorates. Othello also speaks in blank verse, but only before his noble blood is poisoned by Iago's villainous guile. Lear and Ophelia speak prose when insane. Envenomed or villeinized, Othello's language also loses its dignity, musicality, and regularity: in Act 4, Scene 1 he speaks in prose, which indicates his degenerating blood. Cassio employs blank verse but speaks in prose when he is drunk. Roderigo also speaks in prose especially when he talks with Iago in an intimate mood (4.2.183-252). Only base-borns like the Clown, Emilia, and Iago usually rely on prose. Iago, of course, uses both prose and blank verse and even soliloquizes in blank verse. In his essay "Style and Characterization in Tudor Drama," Herbert Propper suggests that Iago's character is individualized stylistically by quick changes in speech, repetition, and a reliance on prose, among other things. Indeed, Iago's dissembling and

pretense are mirrored in his quick changes in speech and in repetition in order to make his listeners believe his lies and half-truths. In many scenes he usually speaks in prose. Intent on tempting Roderigo to sell his land for his mercenary lust for Desdemona, Iago employs repetitious and quickly-changing prose:

Put money in thy purse. Follow thou the wars;
defeat thy favor with an usurped beard. I say,
put money in thy purse. It cannot be long that
Desdemona should continue her love to the Moor--
put money in thy purse--nor he his to her. It was
a violent commencement in her, and thou shalt see
an answerable sequestration--put but money in thy
purse. These Moors are changeable in their wills
--fill thy purse with money. . . . She must have
change, she must. Therefore put money in thy
purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a
more delicate way than drowning. Make all the
money thou canst. . . . thou shalt enjoy her.

Therefore make money. (1.3.342-50, 354-57, 360)

Iago quickly touches on Othello's Moorish and thus changeable mind and moves to Desdemona's changing mind. Only mercenary love is the recurrent and stable theme. Inasmuch as gentle listeners do not easily believe marginal voices (base-borns' words), Iago repeats redundant words in order to persuade Roderigo to sell his land. His prose

speech is accompanied with lies, sexual innuendoes, and immoral temptations--signs of Iago's villainy in the ethical and class senses.

Iago's blank-verse soliloquies appear to be unusual because blank verse is the province of the gentry but alien to the villains like Iago. To develop Iago's character, the poet needs soliloquies. Because of Iago's dissembling villainy and ambiguous actions, the audience is apt to be misled without soliloquies. In this respect, Iago resembles Richard III and Edmund. Unlike dialogues, soliloquies are usually spoken in blank verse because they are addressed to the audience in the theater, rather than other characters on stage. In the modern self-reflexive drama characters often address the audience in colloquial speech. But in the Renaissance drama soliloquies are much more formal than dialogues. Usually soliloquies in Shakespeare's plays are used to help the audience understand what a character has in mind, as Berkeley in Blood Will Tell observes that the poet's soliloquies function "as vehicles of truth" (72). Whatever Iago says in his soliloquies, asserts Kenneth Muir in his "Shakespeare's Soliloquies," "ought to be accepted as a true reflection of his feelings or delusions" (53). Nevill Coghill in Shakespeare's Professional Skills observes that Iago's eight soliloquies alienate the audience, rather than creating sympathy. By contrast, Othello's soliloquy before the murder of Desdemona puts him right with the

audience and re-establishes his heroic character. Iago's first two soliloquies, spoken in blank verse, come at the close of Act 1, Scene 3 and of Act 2, Scene 1, respectively. Coleridge assesses the first soliloquy as "the motive-hunting of motiveless malignity" (45). But many critics demur at Coleridge's observation despite its popularity. Denton J. Snider holds that his dictum has obtained its currency "more from its epigrammatic point than from its accuracy" (86). It is mistaken to say Iago's villainy has no motivation. This phrase should be changed to "the victim-hunting of class-motivated malignity." The first soliloquy reveals Iago's jealousy of his assumed adultery of Othello with Emilia, his deep disappointment at shattered aspirations for social climbing, and his obsession for revenge upon his upper-class enemy:

Thus do I ever make my fool [Roderigo] my purse;

.

But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor,

And it is thought abroad that twixt my sheets

He's done my office. . . .

Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now:

To get his place and to plume up my will

In double knavery--How, how?--Let's see:

After some time, to abuse Othello's ear

That he is too familiar with his wife.

(1.3.384, 387-89, 393-97)

The villain broods over how he can gain revenge for Othello's assumed adultery with Emilia and his rejected lieutenancy by the general. By making Othello jealous of the presumed love of Cassio and Desdemona, Iago thinks he can victimize all the major gentles at the same time. Surprisingly, he virtually succeeds in pursuing his evil plan up to the Moor's suicide, except for his rival Cassio, at the close of the play. However, he never crosses the line into the gentry group although he destroys some of their members. He aspires to the rank and authority of this upper-class but can never attain or understand social graces, courage, and generosity, inherent in the gentry.

Besides linguistic features, cowardice and bravery are touchstones for distinguishing the gentle and the base in Shakespeare's plays. Berkeley remarks that "high blood" is "practically synonymous with courage--the *sine qua non* of gentility" (20). In the Shakespearean canon, where most base-borns and some degenerate gentles turn out to be either cowards or braggarts in fighting, the bloods fight well and bravely. In As You Like It, Orlando is willing to wrestle with the base-born professional wrestler Charles, and beats him against the expectation of the spectators (1.2.206 ff.). Most Shakespearean heroes, such as Henry V, Pericles, Romeo, Guiderius, Arviragus, Hamlet, and Othello are valiant and skillful in fighting, and they are all gently born. The noble general of Venetian forces, Othello is the

quintessence of valor. Othello once survived all the adventures in the past and, as Cassio wishes, like a legendary hero he defends against "the elements"--a fundamental elements of the universe (2.1.47). Many people mention his bravery and mastery of war and thus refer to him as "the valiant Moor" (1.3.49), "Valiant Othello" (50), "brave Moor" (294), "the warlike Moor Othello" (2.1.29), "a worthy governor" (32), and "a full soldier" (38). In contrast, Iago represents a cunning but cowardly soldier. He never issues an open challenge; he never bravely stands up for himself when confronted with his rival or enemy. He rather chooses to apply the art of guile and villainy: he manipulates his gull to attack his valiant rival Cassio, and then uses Cassio to destroy the formidable foe or "a full soldier"--Othello. Whenever he brandishes his weapon, he uses it in a cowardly and damnable way. His attack on Cassio from behind and his stabbing of Emilia epitomize his cowardice and villainy.

Another thematic contrast between the villein/villain Iago and the gentle Othello lies in their quite opposing attitudes toward love. Ruth Kelso in Doctrine of the English Gentleman argues that there is a difference in the treatment of love: love is an essential part of the Italian courtier's life as Castiglione and Bembo assert; however, no one in England who sets forth the complete gentleman includes the art of loving among the accomplishments (85).

She also states that Renaissance writers embrace the two opposing ideas of love: divine and human. Divine love was assigned wholly to the realm of contemplation mostly in Italian literature, whereas human love was recognized as a mixture of the rational and animal elements in man in English literature (138). Shakespeare's attitude toward love lies somewhere between the Italian and English views, in that he describes neither divine love or Platonic love in the pure sense nor ignores it entirely. Like Renaissance thinkers, however, Shakespeare regards love--but not lust--as the province of the gentle. Francesco de Vieri, a sixteenth-century Italian humanist, maintains that love is the concern only of "well-born persons of lofty minds, and is a noble, useful, and fortunate thing." ⁶

Love is a key word to the gentility. The gentles in Shakespeare's plays naturally display "a wider range of emotions than the base enjoyed"--mature and mutual love--as Berkeley observes (17). The cult of male friendship and the mature heterosexual love including courtly love epitomize aristocratic passions. If male friendship aims at one soul in two bodies, the mature heterosexual love establishes the union within one soul and one body. Many Shakespearean gentlemen enjoy their male friendship as exemplified by Hamlet and Horatio in Hamlet, Bassanio and Antonio in The Merchant of Venice, Valentine and Proteus in Two Gentlemen of Verona. The first part of Shakespeare's "sugar'd"

sonnets (1-126) mirrors the poet's aspirations for the friendships with noble companions, not to mention their aristocratic patronage. The loss and restoration of the male friendship (between Leontes and Polixenes) along with the union of gentle lovers (Perdita and Florizel) is a notable theme in The Winter's Tale. Both the friends and the loves are of royal blood. But Othello presents the devastation of aristocratic love (between Othello and Desdemona) by an unequal friendship (the noble commander and the base ancient). In this light, Othello can be read as a tract against unequal male friendships--that is, gentle and base. Though thwarted by evil, the union of Othello and Desdemona demonstrates their gentle emotions--love being the highest. Shakespeare's plays abound in remarkable gentle lovers--Romeo and Juliet, Orlando and Rosalind, Orsino and Olivia, Florizel and Perdita, Ferdinand and Miranda, and Posthumus and Imogen, to name only a few. To be sure, one hardly can find the ideal, divine, or Platonic love in the strict sense among these lovers; their love can be considered to be human love full of romantic sentiments and even sensual passions, though it is pure and innocent. But no Shakespearean plebeians share mutual love with the gentles; occasionally base males aspire to love gentlewomen but are always ignored or dismissed by them because Shakespeare has a strong bias against a cross-class marriage (for example, the steward Malvolio's ridiculous wooing of

the beautiful countess Olivia in Twelfth Night). It may be surprising to notice that there is no cross-class marriage in Shakespeare's plays even though he himself was a product of a cross-class marriage.⁷ Other base-borns and degenerate gentles expose their lust, rather than love, for gentlewomen: the base-born Cloten's lust for Imogen in Cymbeline, the monstrous Caliban's lust for Miranda in The Tempest, and the degenerate Chiron and Demetrius' lust for Lavinia in Titus Andronicus. Levinus Lemnius in Touchstone of Complexions (1565) argues that a person's lust results from the influence of the devil's minions, which "incite and egg those that abound with Bloud, and be sanguine complexioned, to riot wantonnesse . . . horrible lusts, incest and buggerie."⁸ The devilish Iago has also lustful desire for Desdemona, though he calls it "love." It is surprising to hear Iago delivering a lecture on love to Roderigo (2.1.322-335), for it contains "good Elizabethan ethics," as Lawrence Babb assesses it (155). Of course, Iago's notion of the conflict between love and reason sounds reliable, but this lecture comes from his mouth, not from his heart. He probably repeats what he has heard from various gentlemen, without understanding or practicing it. Moreover, his depraved morality leads to a distorted conclusion: "It [Love] is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will" (337-38). Because he has not been brought up to exercise gentlemanly manners and courtesy, he

is confused about the concepts of love, lust, and courtesy. When Cassio kisses Emilia and stands closely to Desdemona while conversing with her, Iago never understands his manner or courtesy, but thinks of this behavior as "love" in the sense of adulterous lust: "That Cassio loves her, I do well believe 't; / That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit" (2.2.287-88). Suddenly he declares that "Now, I do love her [Desdemona] too" (92). If Iago truly loves her, this love may ennoble him, as he himself cites a proverb: "base men being in love have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them" (2.1.217-19). But his concept of love is not unlike that of lust or that of license, as he is convinced that love is "merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will." Iago's lust for Desdemona is a another reason for his hatred for Othello.

Iago's inability to understand and exercise true love exemplifies his base nature, as opposed to Othello and Desdemona's capacity for mature and mutual love. His ungrounded fancy about Othello's adultery with Emilia discloses his inability to understand love. Iago falsely conjectures that Othello has destroyed the chastity of his wife: "I do suspect the lusty Moor / Hath leaped into my seat" (2.1.296-97). Such a fancy gnaws at his heart and poisons his soul--hence worsening his base blood--and it spurs him to revenge:

The thought whereof

Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my innards;
 And nothing can or shall content my soul
 Till I am evened with him, wife for wife.

(2.1.297-300)

Because he suffers from jealousy, Iago knows well how deeply Othello will be agonizing over jealousy if he suspects Desdemona's chastity. So he cunningly plants seeds of suspicion and jealousy in Othello's mind. For this purpose, he abuses and manipulates his own wife Emilia: unwittingly she aids Iago in this deception by providing him with Desdemona's handkerchief, a love token from Othello, who believes it to be "an antique token / My father gave my mother" to keep her chaste (5.2.223-24). Although jealous of her assumed adultery with Othello, Iago never loves his wife but abuses and manipulates her loyalty and innocence. Theodore Spencer perceptively says that Iago knows nothing about love (133). Robert B. Heilman also observes that "in his barnyard view of life, Iago instinctively dehumanizes the human being, especially by treating love as a mechanical animality" (105). The notion of mature and mutual love is alien to Iago's married life, which reflects Iago's inhuman character derivative from his base blood.

However, Othello's married life with Desdemona transcends major conventional taboos about marriage: the union of the old husband and the young wife, interracial marriage, and espousal without parental consent. Iago

pinpoints these drawbacks of Othello's union with Desdemona when he condemns their miscegenation as "an old black ram" tugging a "white ewe" (1.1.90-91). Of course, the marriage of an old man and a young girl has been traditional material for comedy or farce, as exemplified by January and May in Chaucer's "Merchant's Tale." Yet Shakespeare capitalizes on his audience's conventional concepts about marriage to create a dramatic effect. To true and divine lovers, the difference in age does not matter. Their love is pure, romantic, and mutual, transcending all the obstacles: differences in race, color, and age. In The Courtiers Academie (1598) Annibale Romei, an Italian humanist, writes: "With such [divine] love, not onely young men, but olde, religious, and men married may be inamored; and it is in the highest and most perfect degree of temperature." ⁹ Othello and Desdemona, like other Shakespearean lovers, mean to be one in spirit and in flesh. Their romantic love differs from what Iago describes from his animalistic perspective. Whereas Iago sees their love only through his bodily eyes, Desdemona perceives the true character of Othello behind his black and old face: "I saw Othello's visage in his mind, / And to his honors and his valiant parts / Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate" (1.3.255-57). Desdemona is presumably disinherited by her father, who still frowns upon their marriage without his consent. Hence, her love for Othello is quite free from mercenary associations, unlike that of

many other aristocratic women in the Renaissance.

Immediately after the war at Cyprus, Cassio observes that even the natural forces--tempests, high seas, winds, rocks, and sands--have a "sense of beauty" of "the divine Desdemona" and allow her to pass by safely to the supposed battlefield where she can be with her husband (2.1.73-75). They enjoy their happy married life, until Iago intrudes on it by poisoning Othello's soul for his "peculiar end."

The conflict between Iago and Othello becomes dangerous as Iago poisons Othello's soul and ultimately villeinizes his blood, too. Under the pretense of "love or duty," Iago dissembles his hatred for Cassio, Desdemona, and Othello. He cunningly makes Othello jealous of Desdemona's pleas for Cassio by creating cloudy half-truths in his gutter-like speech about the relation between Cassio and Desdemona. Iago's base mutterings work toward a physiological change in Othello; the white villain attempts to cause jealousy in Othello's mind to alienate the "old black ram" from the "white ewe." As James Hirsh rightly suggests, Iago argues about Desdemona's infidelity in a double syllogism: "(1) Venetian women are deceptive; Desdemona is a Venetian woman; therefore, Desdemona is deceptive; (2) Desdemona deceived her father; people are consistent; therefore, Desdemona is deceptive" (139). Iago's slander of Desdemona's chastity affects Othello's ears like a disease or poison--"I'll pour this pestilence into his ear" (2.3.350). Iago's pouring of

pestilence strikingly recalls Claudius' pouring poison into the porches of King Hamlet's ears: "And in the porches of my ears did pour / The leprous distillment, whose effect / Holds such an enmity with blood of man" (Hamlet 1.5.64-66). Poison, if strong, defies and eliminates blood; if not strong enough, it degenerates blood to some degree. As for Othello, Iago's superb talent of lying poisons Othello's ears, his soul, and ultimately his blood. As the jealousy grows worse and worse, his blood also deteriorates more and more. Robert Burton in his The Anatomy of Melancholy (1621) mentions the close relationship between mind and body: "the minde most effectively workes upon the body, producing by his passions and perturbations, miraculous alterations" (82). Berkeley also points out that all things including thoughts and actions "register in the blood, rendering this element the cause and talisman of what may be expected of human beings" (14). Moreover, Iago's tricks with the handkerchief make Othello deeply brood over the imaginary dalliance of the seeming adulterers (Cassio and Desdemona); Othello's blood begins to degenerate. Iago gloats over this change:

The Moor already changes with my poison.
 Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,
 Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
 But with a little act upon the blood
 Burn like the mines of sulfur. (3.3.341-45)

Now Othello's language reflects his degenerating blood. His speech loses poetic rhythm and articulation: "By the world, / I think my wife be honest and think she is not; / I think that thou art just and think thou art not. / I'll have some proof" (3.3.399-402). He even thinks of murdering his wife: "I'll tear her all to pieces" (447); his vengeful soul springs up, "Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell!" (462); and he feels a devilish spirit arising from his degenerating blood: "O, blood, blood, blood" (467). His blood deteriorates further with this vengeful death wish, for, as Berkeley explains, "even involuntary participation in crime caused gentle blood to become somewhat gross" (48). Being villeinized by Iago's poison, Othello becomes a fool just as Roderigo has been deceived by Iago's tricks and lies. Iago boasts his control over Othello: "Work on, / My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught" (4.1.44-45). As his poisoned mind becomes worse, most statements of Othello in Act 4, Scene 1 become short and fragmentary (one or two lines long) and even long statements are no longer in blank verse. His speech loses its regularity and coherence and sounds like gibberish:

Lie with her? Lie on her? We say "lie on her"
 when they belie her. Lie with her? Zounds,
 that's fulsome.--Handkerchief--confessions--
 handkerchief!--To confess and be hanged for his
 labor--first to be hanged and then to confess.--I

tremble at it. . . . Pish! Noses, ears, and lips.
 --Is 't possible?--Confess--handkerchief!--O
 devil! (4.1.35-39, 42-44)

And then he falls in a trance or "epilepsy" (50).

This epilepsy suggests the climax of Iago's poisoning of Othello's soul and blood. Some of Shakespeare's most prominent characters like Julius Caesar, Macbeth, and Othello--"a remarkable trio of epileptics" in Aubrey C. Kail's term--suffer from epilepsy (88). When the Roman people offer a crown to him, Caesar suffers an epileptic seizure: "He fell down in the market place, and foamed at mouth, and was speechless" (Julius Caesar 1.2.252-53). On hearing of the escape of Banquo's son from the murderers, Macbeth worries that "then comes my fit again," and when the ghost of Banquo appears at a banquet, he suffers from a fit, but it may be metaphorical or psychological because his epileptic seizure is not presented on stage; Lady Macbeth mentions it as a momentary fit (Macbeth 3.4.21, 55). And Henry IV suffers from "fits" on his deathbed (2 Henry IV 4.4.111, 114). Othello's epilepsy occurs immediately after his mental confusion and senseless muttering, which is "the pre-epileptic aura," as Kail puts it (89). R. R. Simpson in Shakespeare and Medicine comments on this episode:

The epileptic attack served admirably to increase the pathos of the impending and, by now, inevitable tragedies. . . . This use of a medical

situation to enhance the dramatic effect is an absorbing theme worth more detailed study (160).

Kail and F. David Hoeniger agree with Simpson's observation. In Hoeniger's opinion, Othello's physical collapse affects the audience "as a dramatically symbolic climax of Iago's triumph over the noble Moor" (203). Indeed, Othello's falling into a fit before Iago is an ocular dramaturgical technique that Shakespeare uses effectively to describe the conflict between the villein/villain Iago and the gentle. Epilepsy is a visual sign of Othello's degeneracy: his sound mind and body are now conspicuously poisoned.

Othello's epileptic fits hint at his devil-possession, another sign of degeneracy. According to Hoeniger, since Hippocrates's first comments on epilepsy in The Sacred Disease, it has been regarded as a malady caused by evil spirits, and in the Middle Ages and still in Shakespeare's time, the symptoms of epileptic fits were often attributed to possession by devilish spirits (199). In late 1602, there arose a controversy over epilepsy. A certain Elizabeth Jackson was accused of causing a fourteen-year-old girl named Mary Glover to be possessed. The possession manifested itself by the symptoms of her hystero-epilepsy. Several members of the London College of Physicians were deputed to examine the young girl. She was so terrified of Elizabeth Jackson that she fell in a bad fit right at the beginning of the trial. Physicians split in the decision,

but Sir Edmund Anderson (Lord Chief Justice) and the jury found Elizabeth guilty of witchcraft.¹⁰ It is not clear whether or not Shakespeare came to know about this trial. But the early scene of Brabantio's accusation of Othello's witchcraft forced on Desdemona is strongly reminiscent of this trial, since Othello was probably written and performed in 1604.¹¹ The Duke of Venice resembles the Lord Chief Justice, and other senators parallel the jury. As accuser, Brabantio argues that Othello won his daughter "with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood, / Or with some dram conjured to this effect, / He wrought upon her" (1.3.106-08). The Duke requires "proof"; the First Senator inquires if the Moor "poison[s] this young maid's affections" by "indirect and forcèd courses" (113-14). Because of Othello's own economic and impressive defense and Desdemona's adequate testimony, the Duke and the senators decide to nullify Brabantio's allegation. This semi-witchcraft trial indicates that Shakespeare's play embraces the idea of the devil's influence on human blood as well as on the human soul. And this trial intimates that Shakespeare took an interest in witchcraft and sorcery around 1603 and 1604. It is noteworthy that King James, who had once published his own Daemonologie in Edinburgh, assumed the English throne in 1603. Shakespeare's expressed interest in witchcraft is reflected in Macbeth, where Lady Macbeth invokes the spirits of darkness:

Come, you spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
 And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
 Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood.

(1.5.40-43).

In this scene Shakespeare suggests that devil-possession causes blood to be thick, a form of degeneration. Othello refers to Cassio as "the devil" (because he falsely believes him to have committed adultery with Desdemona) two times before his epilepsy, and the reference implies that his epilepsy results from demonic influence. And after recovering from the "lethargy" or coma, Othello compares himself as a cuckold to "a monster and a beast" (62). In truth, however, Iago is the devil who poisons his soul and blood. If Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's ambition makes them vulnerable to the influence of the witches, Othello's naïveté and jealousy make him vulnerable to Iago's devilish influence. If Macbeth and Lady Macbeth willingly receive the devil's influence, Othello is absolutely unaware of Iago's influence in his devil possession and the poisoning of his blood. One might add that Iago, Richard II, Richard III, the Macbeths, and Edmund are childless and that witches traditionally have given their blood to devils rather than to children. Aaron is Titus Andronicus is an exception. In other words, witchcraft and devil-possession hover over Shakespearean villains and degenerate gentry.

During Iago's "a little act upon the blood," Othello resembles Iago's baseness. His vengeful mind thinks of poisoning Desdemona, just as Iago has been poisoning the soul of Othello. Not surprisingly, Othello discusses with Iago how to eliminate the assumed adulterers. Both of them speak in prose, the medium of non-gentry:

Othello: Get me some poison, Iago, this night.

I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body
and beauty unprovide my mind again. This
night, Iago.

Iago: Do it not with poison. Strangle her in her
bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

Othello: Good, good! The justice of it pleases.
Very good.

Iago: And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker.
You shall hear more by midnight.

Othello: Excellent good. (4.1.203-210).

Othello's degeneracy continues until he learns the whole truth about Iago's Machiavellian guile and Desdemona's chasteness from Emilia's testimony, but only after killing his innocent wife. When the villain stabs Emilia to prevent her from revealing his lies, before death she testifies to her mistress' innocence: "Moor, she was chaste. She loved thee, cruel Moor. / So come my soul to bliss as I speak true" (5.2.258-59). Othello argues that he is an "honorable murderer," for he, ignorant of Iago's deception, kills

Desdemona not "in hate, but all in honor" (302-03). Now fully knowing of Iago's villainy, Othello asks Cassio's pardon first and then pleads with him to demand of "that demi-devil" (Iago) why he poisoned his "soul and body" (306-08). Iago never answers the questions or repents of his villainy. Othello's sense of honor and his willingness to ask Cassio's pardon indicate that his royal blood has not completely degenerated yet. Villains (both in the ethical and class senses) or non-regenerate gentles hardly repent of their sins or errors in the Shakespearean canon. But Othello's high blood makes him immediately beg pardon for his sins and choose an honorable death instead of living a disgraced life. In being a repentant gentle, Othello is like Olivia of As You Like It, Laertes of Hamlet, and Iachimo, Cymbeline, and Posthumus of Cymbeline.

No doubt, committing suicide is alien to Christianity. In "The Damnation of Othello: An Addendum," Paul N. Siegel, arguing on the basis of orthodox Christianity, states that Othello's repentance lacks faith in the merciful forgiveness of God through Christ, and that his suicide affirms his damnation (279-80). Michael J. C. Echeruo says that Christian eschatological tradition, which regularly equates blackness and evil, makes Othello's damnation clear. Paul Ramsey admits that the evidence is conflicting but says that Othello is damned because he fails to ask for forgiveness, although Othello expresses contrition and recovers his lost

dignity. On the other hand, many other critics raise questions about such a rigidly "Christian" reading of the play. In "The Damnation of Othello: Some Limitations on the Christian View of the Play" Edward Hubler refutes Siegel's observation as a misreading because Shakespeare's plays do not always reflect "orthodox" Christianity, nor did his audiences expect to find it there. Irving Ribner in his Patterns in Shakesperian Tragedy says that although Othello dies accepting damnation as his just desert, Shakespeare by his careful delineation of Desdemona as a symbol of mercy has prepared the audience for the salvation of Othello in spite of all. Othello dies truly penitent. He takes the step which Claudius in Hamlet cannot take, in spite of his fears of damnation (113). Shakespeare by no means reflects orthodox Christianity in the death-bed scenes in his canon. He describes suicides of the heroes and heroines honorably without irony. In Shakespeare, repentance seems to be the touchstone for regeneration, while suicides function as a dramatic convention for a gentleman or a gentlewoman to avoid the disgraced life in favor of honor. Most gentles, except degenerate gentles like Titus Andronicus and Macbeth, repent of their sins or errors, if any, at end of the play. Penitent gentles are given a heavenly vision, literally or metaphorically. Like Antony and Cleopatra, Othello prefers the Roman sense of honorable death to a shameful life. The tragic hero seems to believe that suicide is the only way to

punish himself for murdering his innocent wife: "I kissed thee ere I killed thee. *No way but this, / Killing myself, to die upon a kiss*" (5.2.369-70; emphasis added). To be with his beloved Desdemona is to leave this world for heaven, where he can meet her again. By contrast, like other Shakespearean villains and degenerate gentles, Iago-- "this hellish villain"--shows no qualms of conscience or sign of repentance. His thick and base blood does not allow for such human feelings. Lodovico, a noble Venetian, allows Cassio to decide on "the censure of this hellish villain, / The time, the place, the torture" (379-80). Thus, the conflict between Iago and Othello ends with a tragic but honorable death of the Moor and the dire punishment for the villain's evil doings.

In describing the struggle between the noble black Moor and the white villein/villain in Othello, Shakespeare defies the conventional color prejudice and instead grasps the notion that all men are black in their sinfulness, but become white in their repentance and redemption. Hunter states that evangelically tinted voyage literature treats black-faced foreigners as creatures whose innocence made them close to God and naturally prone to accept Christianity (195-96). Othello's baptism and heavenly vision are understandable in this sense. In the Song of Solomon, the bride (the church) says, "I am blacke, O daughters of Jerusalem, but comelie, as the frutes of Kedar, & as the

curtines of Salomon" (1:4). Matthew Henry cogently interprets this verse: "True believers are black in themselves, but comely in Christ" and points to "the people of Israel's blackness when they made the golden calf and their comeliness when they repented of it" (1058). With a specific reference to the blackamoor, Bishop Joseph Hall expresses a similar opinion in his meditation "on the sight of a blackamoor" in 1630:

This is our colour spiritually; yet the eye of our gracious God and Savior, can see that beauty in us wherewith he is delighted. The true Moses marries a Blackamoor; Christ, his church. It is not for us to regard the skin, but the soul. ¹²

Iago's color prejudice, along with other class-oriented motivations, drives him to rebel and even scheme against his superior in authority--the black Othello--and ends by causing him to be condemned. His skin is white but his soul is black. He never thinks of repentance; thus he deserves damnation. Othello is portrayed as a regenerate gentle, whose outward blackness and sinfulness are washed white by his baptism and repentance; his high blood makes him repent of his sins, and he is given a heavenly vision. Iago, however, is depicted as a villein/villain, whose outward whiteness only temporarily hides inner blackness--thick, obtuse, and dark blood as well as an evil and black soul. The theme of white appearance vs. black reality is

successfully dealt with by John Webster in his masterpiece The White Devil (1612). But, unlike the villein/villain Iago, the main characters of Webster's tragedy (the Duke of Brachiano and Vittoria Corombona) are all degenerate gentles; their outward whiteness contradicts the inner blackness. It is a notable example of the epigram: "Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds" (Sonnet 94).

Desdemona is the innocent victim of the dreadful clash between Iago and Othello. Like other innocent gentles such as Ophelia, Lavinia, and Duncan, she commits no sins, except for her marriage without parental consent, but fails to survive the evil force--Iago, who poisons Othello's soul so thoroughly as to kill his own innocent wife. Throughout the play Desdemona appears as a charming and beautiful woman, a mature lover, a warm and gentle mistress, and a faithful wife. Brabantio boasts about his "tender, fair, and happy" daughter who "shunned / The wealthy curled darlings of our nation" (1.2.67-69). She is, in Arthur Kirsch's term, "an incarnate ideal of marital love" (55). But her role changes as the plot develops, from a strong-minded lover to a helplessly passive victim.

At the opening of the play, her strong-mindedness and powerful language predominate in her persona. Desdemona never shrinks before the Senators including the Duke and even her father, and her language is solid in expressing her love for Othello, the black Moor. A white Venetian

gentlewoman's elopement with a black Moor and their marriage without parental consent undoubtedly deserve a severe accusation or condemnation from the conventional point of view in the Elizabethan period. To be sure, patriarchal authority as a traditional order was still the norm for most Elizabethans, especially the gentles. But we may laugh at Thomas Rymer's oversimplified reading of the play as "a caution to all Maidens of Quality how, without their Parents consent, they run away with Blackamoors" (132). By the same token, we cannot accept Lawrence Stone's similar view of the tragedies of Romeo and Juliet and Othello as examples of young people who "brought destruction upon themselves by violating the norms [here filial obedience] of the society in which they lived" (87). Snider says that such a view "will not bear investigation . . . for he [Shakespeare] always mediates such a conflict by the triumph of the daughter" (87-88). In most of his plays, Shakespeare subordinates parental authority to the daughter's mature and mutual love. To a great extent, Desdemona's convincing speech testifies her mature love for Othello and earns not only the spectators' sympathy in the theater but also the characters' on stage (the Duke and the Senators). To be sure, Othello succeeds in defending himself against Brabantio's accusation of witchcraft in his winning of Desdemona's heart. But without her testimony, Othello's defense loses its ground. Desdemona's speech is thus

pivotal in the whole web of her relationships with her father, her lover, and other people in her society. As Desdemona enters immediately after Othello's moving speech, her father publicly demands her filial duty: "Do you perceive in all this noble company / Where most you owe obedience?" (1.3.180-81). The moment, as Arthur Kirsh cogently states, is "charged both for those on stage and for the audience," and the impact and importance of her response cannot be overemphasized (48). Echoing Cordelia's bold defiance of Lear's demand for her flattering obedience (King Lear 1.1.95-103), Desdemona begins with her filial duty as a daughter but undercuts it by shifting emphasis to her responsibility to her husband as a wife:

My noble father,
 I do perceive here a divided duty.
 To you I am bound for life and education;
 My life and education both do learn me
 How to respect you. You are the lord of duty;
 I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my
 husband,
 And so much duty as my mother showed
 To you, preferring you before her father,
 So much I challenge that I may profess
 Due to the Moor my lord. (1.3.182-91)

These radiant lines evoke the scriptural injunction to marry: "Therefore shal man leaue his father and his mother,

and shal cleave to his wife, and they shal be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24), and her invocation of her own mother as a role model reveals Desdemona's growth from a girl to a woman and a wife. At this confident and solid affirmation, her father cannot but say, "God be with you! I have done" (1.3.192). She shatters her father's traditional prejudices against the black Moors by focusing attention on Othello's gentlemanly traits--his quality, honors, and valiancy:

My heart's subdued

Even to the very quality of my lord.

I saw Othello's visage in his mind,

And to his honors and his valiant parts

Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.

(1.3.253-57)

Desdemona is not the only character who sees a person's visage in his or her mind in the Shakespearean canon. Berowne in Love's Labor's Lost and Mark Antony in Antony and Cleopatra see their lovers' "visage" in their minds, penetrating the dark skins of their lovers--Rosaline and Cleopatra, respectively. Rosaline's anticipated marriage with Berowne is no cross-class marriage and therefore deserves the authorial blessing. Cleopatra's love for Antony is virtually adultery because Antony still has first Fulvia, then Octavia in Rome while he enjoys Cleopatra's dalliance in Egypt. For the sake of their true and mature love, their love is condoned, if not blessed, by others. It

should be mentioned that theirs is by no means a cross-class union. In the light of blood-quality, Cleopatra as the Queen of Egypt is equal, if not superior, to Antony. In Othello Desdemona loves the Moor for "his very quality" and "his honors and his valiant parts" (1.3.254, 256) which are inherent in his royal blood, while undermining the importance of color prejudices -- "I saw Othello's visage in his mind" (255).

While Othello suspects Desdemona's chastity, her role becomes "helplessly passive," in A. C. Bradley's expression (145). Though innocent, she cannot prove her chasteness because of Iago's lies and Othello's poisoned mind. Envenomed by Iago, Othello has a distorted view of his wife. In order to ask about the whereabouts of the handkerchief, he takes her hand and realizes that her hand feels "hot and moist"--a sign of her sanguinity or gentility in medieval and Renaissance physiology.¹³ Othello's distorted mind interprets it as a sign of wantonness: "This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart. / Hot, hot, and moist" (3.4.38-39). Othello advises her to exercise "fasting and prayer, / Much castigation" as a remedy for the "young and sweating devil here" in her hand (40-41, 42). He refers to Desdemona as a young adulteress and himself as an old cuckold: "A liberal hand. The hearts of old gave hands, / But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts" (46-47). The innocent Desdemona does not understand these insinuations

against her but simply turns her attention to Cassio's plight, a *contretemps* which makes her husband more jealous and suspicious about her chastity. But when Othello demands that she tell where the handkerchief is, Desdemona becomes helplessly passive and deeply at loss. The husband's degenerating blood makes him impervious to rich human feelings--passions and compassions toward his beloved wife. The audience, who was impressed by Desdemona's logical and solid speech in the beginning, may be surprised by her ineffable passiveness at the close of the play. But in terms of her role as an innocent victim or a martyr, there is no better solution to this tragic situation than the murder of the heroine by her beloved.

In Shakespeare's plays, the murder of the gentle by the base is a shameful death; only degenerate gentles such as Suffolk in 2 Henry VI, Cornwall in King Lear and Roderigo in Othello deserve this kind of disgraceful death. Suffolk, who engineers the murder of the Duke Humphrey, declares against the threat of the captain of the pirates that "It is impossible that I should die / By such a lowly vassal as thyself" (4.1.110-11). But he is brutally beheaded by Walter Whitmore, another pirate. In King Lear, when Cornwall "grinds out" one of Gloucester's eyes with his boot, the First Servant brandishes his sword and wounds his inhuman master; Roderigo attempts to kill Cassio from ambush but is wounded by Cassio and murdered by Iago, the

villein/villain, under the pretense of having stumbled on Cassio's murderers. The poet avoids the death of Desdemona by the Ensign in Cinthio's Hecatommithi, and has Othello smother her to death, for Othello kills Desdemona not "in hate, but all in honor" (5.2.302-03) as her executioner. Her death is described as a "guiltless death," as Desdemona herself asserts (5.2.126), but when Emilia asks "who hath done this deed?" she desperately tries to defend her husband even though he murders her: "Nobody; I myself" (128). M. D. Faber suggests that Desdemona's consistent subordination of herself to her husband would have been praised as altruistic by Elizabethan audiences because of the commonly held view that the perfect wife is the self-sacrificing one. "The ideal Renaissance wife," Faber maintains, "was willing to embrace self-destruction for her husband's sake" (87). Shakespeare's audience would have viewed her in the context of holy martyrs, perhaps even of Christ himself. Paul N. Siegel, in "The Damnation of Othello," suggests that Desdemona represents Christ, Iago Satan, and Othello Adam. As Diane E. Dreher suggests, Desdemona is "an innocent, loving martyr" (88). No doubt she deserves a heavenly vision.

The heroine Desdemona's blood-quality seems to be the highest in Othello because she is innocent of any sin and villainy, except for her defiance of her father. She demonstrates her fidelity when she declares for chastity in

her temptation scene with the base Emilia, who is not committed to marital chastity. Desdemona also exhibits her capacity to exercise human emotions like compassion, love, and sacrifice. Her espousal to Othello ennobles his blood not only metaphorically but also physically, because her high blood is mixed through copulation with her husband's blood, which is royal. As a victim Desdemona is much effaced by the whole thematic conflict between Iago and Othello, but she is a part of Othello's identity. As Lawrence Stone states in The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, "By marriage, the husband and wife became one person in law--and that person was the husband" (195). Not only in law but also in physiology Desdemona and Othello become one person; hence the conflation of two characters into one. The family's whole identity is represented by the husband Othello in the male-dominated society. Accordingly, to kill his wife Desdemona is for Othello is to kill himself. In a sense, the tragic stance in Othello is built on Iago's poisonous influence upon Othello's soul and blood, which results in his separation from his other half.

Like Desdemona and Othello, Cassio suffers from Iago's guile and villainy. Trapped by Iago's Machiavellian policy, Cassio disgraces himself by brawling drunkenly while on guard duty in Cyprus. Iago incites Roderigo to start a fight with Cassio, and when Montano, the former Governor of Cyprus, restrains the lieutenant from striking Roderigo, the

intoxicated Cassio fights and wounds Montano. These brawls enrage Othello, who immediately relieves the lieutenant of his rank and post. Though still loving his lieutenant, Othello must take this action in order to set an example: "Cassio, I love thee, / But nevermore be officer of mine. / Look if my gentle love be not raised up. / I'll make thee an example" (2.3.242-245). Othello sacrifices his private interests for the sake of public justice. Cassio's flaw is that he foolishly drinks wine against his will and is easily involved in brawls with a stranger (Roderigo) and even with the former Governor (Montano). When Cassio becomes sober, his gentle blood makes him regret his flaw and concern himself about his blemished reputation: "Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial" (2.3.256-59). As a gentleman, honorable reputation is his "immortal part," but his intoxication results in a shameful discharge. He condemns wine as an evil spirit: "O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil" (275-77).

Wine was an aristocratic beverage and thought to be virtually sanguified in the Elizabethan period, partly because its cost was expensive, whereas beer, cider, and ale were for the base-born. Wine was considered as genetically estimable by the Elizabethans,¹⁴ but excessive drinking--like a evil spirit--impairs the soul and blood. Timon

refers to wine as "the subtle blood o' the grape" (Timon of Athens 4.3.434) and describes the effect of excessive drinking of wine to the three bandits: "the high fever seethe your blood to froth" and hence leading to death (435-36). While the devilish Iago poisons Othello by planting suspicion and jealousy in his mind, the villain makes Cassio drink too much wine--another form of deviltry. Cassio is represented as being much more susceptible to drunkenness from wine than other men in the play. Another of Cassio's flaws is that he falls into Iago's next trap so easily and quickly. Cassio has to rely on Iago because the latter promises to help him to regain Othello's favor through Desdemona's influence. Iago convinces Othello that his wife commits adultery with Cassio by planting on Cassio a handkerchief, Othello's love token for Desdemona.

To be sure, Cassio is no perfect gentleman. He keeps a relationship with Bianca, a loose woman listed as a "courtesan." Even though she seems deeply attached to him, Cassio's attitude toward her is very nonchalant and casual. Moreover, losing control with wine, he starts a brawl with Roderigo and even with Montano. Yet Cassio is basically innocent of the villainy forced on Othello's domestic tragedy. Moreover, he exhibits soldierly dignity and good fighting skills--when he is attacked by Roderigo, he swiftly defends himself, and the villain Iago can wound him only by attacking from behind. Unlike the unfortunate lovers--

Desdemona and Othello--Cassio survives Roderigo's and Iago's ambush and even Iago's villainy, though he has suffered from the wound inflicted by Iago's cowardly attack from behind. Cassio's gentle blood--abundant and rich--implies that his non-mortal wounds will heal easily. Desdemona also refers to him as "thrice-gentle Cassio" (3.4.124). This high praise reflects Cassio's sense of honor. He seeks her "virtuous means" to regain Othello's love "with all the office of my heart, / Entirely honor" (115-16). Whereas Iago seeks the lieutenantcy for his social climbing by any means, Cassio wants to regain the post by "virtuous means" in an effort to regain the love of the noble Moor. In a large sense, what Iago envies is not the lieutenantcy but true gentle status--not the visible goal but the innate and intangible value--that is gentility, which he will never be able to earn. That is why he is little satisfied even after Othello discharges Cassio for the brawl and appoints Iago as new lieutenant. On account of his lack of quality, the ancient says of Cassio that "He hath a daily beauty in his life / That makes me ugly" (5.1.19-20). One may assume on the basis of this passage that Cassio is not only a *schöne Seele* but has more graceful movement than Iago, since his beautiful soul Neoplatonically would be a reflection of his "daily beauty." These concepts, of course, are class discriminants. Cassio is innocent of any adulterous relationship with Desdemona: he shows a quiet assurance in

insisting to Othello, after the jealous husband murders his beloved wife: "Dear General, I did never give you cause" (5.2.308). He is the only person to recognize the grandeur of the suicidal general, declaring "he was great of heart" (361-62)--hinting at Othello's great love for Desdemona and his bravery in suicide. And Cassio's reputation and soldierly dignity are restored at the end of the play: Lodovico gives him the command of Cyprus--an obvious reward for his gentility and soldierly dignity.

Thus, major characters in Othello are directly or indirectly involved in the thematic contrast between Iago (the white Venetian villein/villain) and Othello (the black noble Moor). This contrast mirrors the poet's emphasizing the significance of blood at the cost of color prejudice. No matter what color a character has, his or her nature depends on his or her blood-quality. Many critics have overemphasized color prejudice or racism in Shakespeare, but ignoring another significant factor in his canon--blood consciousness--distorts the play. In his earliest tragedy Titus Andronicus, blood bias coexists with color prejudice in the character of Aaron, the black and evil base-born Moor. In later plays like The Merchant of Venice and Love's Labor's Lost, Shakespeare demonstrates ambivalent attitudes toward these issues. But in his mature tragedy Othello he obviously intensifies the significance of blood and social distancing between the binary classes: the armigerous and

the base. Othello's mature and mutual love for the white Venetian gentlewoman Desdemona epitomizes the poet's penchant for the significance of blood at the cost of color prejudice. Though she loses her father because of their miscegenation, their love seems to earn the authorial blessings like other Shakespearean gentles who attain their happy and harmonious marriage despite the lack of parental consent. If the Machiavellian villain Iago had not intervened, they would have enjoyed happiness and blessing. The vengeful and villainous Iago destroys not only the foolish Roderigo but also Othello's family. Cassio, the innocent gentle, takes over the governorship of Othello and restores the peace and order to Cyprus. Thus, another gentle hero--"this same Cassio"--takes control in the class-conscious society, eclipsing Iago's class-oriented *ressentiment* and villainy. In this manner Shakespearean plays end--with rewards for high blood, with humiliation, death or simply dismissal for the degenerate and the base.

Notes

¹ Cinthio's Ensign, though evil in nature, looks as if he were a gentleman in appearance and in language:

Among the troops there was an ensign, a *handsome* figure of a man but with the most *evil* character in the world. The Moor liked him very much, knowing nothing about his wickedness. For although he had the vilest soul, his appearance and his *lofty, elegant language* so masked the evil of his heart that on the surface he seemed a *Hector* or an *Achilles*. (emphasis added)

Giovanbattista Giraldi Cinthio, "Decade Three, Story Seven," Hecatommithi, trans. Joseph Satin, Shakespeare and His Sources (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966) 431.

² Samuel T. Coleridge, "Notes on the Tragedies of Shakespeare: Othello," vol. 1 of Shakespearean Criticism, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor, 2nd ed. (Dutton, 1960) 44; William Charles Woodson, Elizabethan Villians and the Seared Conscience: The Application of a Theological Concept to Suggest the Credibility of Barabas, Aaron, Richard III, and Iago Ph.D. diss. (U of Pennsylvania, 1969); Joyce Sexton, "Villainy in Othello: Shakespeare's Anatomy of Evil," The Slandered Woman in Shakespeare (Victoria: English Literary Studies, 1978) 50-60; Bertrand Evans, "The Villain as Practiser: Othello," Shakespeare's Tragic Practice (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) 115-146.

³ Quoted by Sir James Lawrence, On the Nobility of the British Gentry (Paris: A. W. Galignani, 1828) 15. See also David Castronovo, The English Gentleman: Images and Ideals in Literature and Society (New York: Ungar, 1987) 3.

⁴ According to Lewes Lewkenor's translation The Commonwealth and Government of Venice (1599) of G. Contarino's De Magistratibus et Republica Venetorum (1543), the city of Venice by long custom "held it a better course to defend their dominations upon the Continent with foreign mercenary soldiers, than with their homeborn citizens." According to Geoffrey Bullough, there was a law that ensured that the general of the army was always foreign born. Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, 7 of 8 vols. (New York: Columbia UP, 1973) 235. See Norman Sanders' edition of Othello (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985) 10.

⁵ Roderigo and Iago sometimes address each other as "thou" because of their intimacy rather than because of their equal social rank. On the other hand, Brabantio uses "thou" to call Othello when he is enraged at his elopement with Desdemona: "O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my daughter? / Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her!" (1.2.63-64). Linklater observes that "in portraying the turmoil of love and jealousy the sensitive actor can discover exquisite shadings of rage, hate and grief in assessing the distancing effect of a 'you,' and the intimate effect of a 'thou/thee/thy.'" Kristin Linklater, Freeing

Shakespeare's Voice: the Actor's Guide to Talking the Text (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1992) 115.

⁶ Quoted in Ruth Kelso, Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1956) 139.

⁷ In 1557 William Shakespeare's father John married Mary Arden, youngest daughter of Robert Arden, the aristocratic landlord of Snitterfield. See S. Schoenbaum, Shakespeare's Lives, New Edition, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 7.

⁸ Levinus Lemnius, Touchstone of Complexions, trans, T. Newton (London, 1576) f. 23v. Cited by F. David Hoeniger, Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1992) 201.

⁹ Annibale Romei, Discorsi del Conte Annibale Romei Gentilhuomo Ferrarese di nuovo ristampati, ampliati, e con diligenza corretti (Urbino, 1586). The Courtiers Academie, John Kepers' English translation, was published in 1598. This passage is quoted by Ruth Kelso in her Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance, 138.

¹⁰ Cecil Henry L'Estrange Ewen records this trial in his Witchcraft and Demonianism (1933), facsimile ed. (London: Muller, 1970). According to Ewen, this trial marks the earliest record in England of medical evidence being used in court to assist in examining a case of possession (122). See also Hoeniger's Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance, 201-202.

¹¹ Many editors like David Bevington and George Lyman Kittredge agree that Othello was performed at court by the King's men on November 1, 1604. Kittredge suggests that this play was probably written in the same year. See his introduction to Othello in his edition of The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, vol.2 (New York: Grolier Incorporated, 1958) 1241.

¹² Bishop Joseph Hall, Occasional Meditations (1630). Quoted in G. K. Hunter's "Othello and Color Prejudice," Interpretations of Shakespeare, ed. Kenneth Muir (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 180-207: 196.

¹³ Influenced by Galen, the Elizabethans assumed that man consists of the four humors: hot and moist blood (like air), hot and dry cholera or yellow bile (like fire), cold and moist phlegm (like water), cold and dry melancholy or black bile (like earth). Blood (hot and moist) was believed to be the gentlemanly humor in terms of blood hierarchy--as Francis Markham puts it--"there are severall degrees in bloud" (46).

¹⁴ Berkeley states that such foods as soft eggs, partidges, pigeons, and especially wine, were "genetically estimable" because they possessed interior heat and so they "went readily into good blood through decoction in the stomach, then through sanguinification in the liver, and then to semen by action of the organs of generation" (Blood Will Tell 16).

CHAPTER IV

"HOW HARD IT IS TO HIDE THE SPARKS OF NATURE!";

"BASE THINGS SIRE BASE": MAN OF BLOOD AND

MAN OF ADVENTITIOUS RANK IN CYMBELINE

Shakespeare in his late tragicomedies or romances centers on the significance of innate excellence transmitted to the blood of the gentle-born, while he comically or pejoratively dramatizes the genetic obtuseness inherent in the villeins. The base-borns disclose their despicable traits inherited from their progenitors, no matter what radiant titles and ranks they appropriate. By contrast, true gentles exhibit their noble traits, notwithstanding any inauspicious circumstances, portentous events, or detrimental nurture--hence the old saying "blood will tell." Cymbeline is a prime model for this theme. In this play, Shakespeare intensifies innate virtues transmitted by the royal blood of the mountain princes--Guiderius and Arviragus--despite their long life in an uncivilized environment, destitute of courtly education or training. Their princely bearing--an effect of their royal blood--appears to their foster-father as a "miracle itself" and makes him exclaim, "How hard it is to hide the sparks of

nature!" (3.3.79). In contrast, Cloten represents the man of adventitious rank without substance. In spite of his base birth, he becomes the son of the Queen and has a chance to be the King of Britain, only because his mother becomes Cymbeline's second wife. Yet Cloten perhaps epitomizes the villain against whom Shakespeare, through Belarius' mouth, articulates his blood bias--"cowards father cowards and base things sire base" (4.2.26). Besides the thematic contrast between the mountain princes and Cloten, another conflict structures the play--the clash between Cloten and Posthumus. The crisis occurs when Cloten ventures to woo Princess Imogen, Posthumus' wife, not only to satisfy his lustful desire, but also to succeed Cymbeline as sovereign of Britain by marrying the Princess. Thus Imogen, Posthumus, Guiderius, and Arviragus--representatives of the man of blood--struggle against Cloten and his mother--both representative of adventitious rank. The blood-oriented characterization of these major persons mirrors Shakespeare's life-long interest in the significance of blood, and conflicting tensions between the man of blood and the man of adventitious rank shape the whole structure and establish the dramatic force of Cymbeline.

The man of blood and the man of substantial rank often equally refer to the gentleman, but sometimes these two terms--"blood" and "rank"--are not interchangeable or synonymous when the rank turns out to be adventitious.

Bailey's Dictionary (1707) defines the gentleman as "one who receives his nobility from his ancestors, and not from the gift of any prince or state." ¹ This definition strongly suggests the distinction between the man of blood and the man of rank. The king in his wisdom sometimes saw fit to confer the ranks in the peerage, but even in the king's name the Herald's College could not "make" a man of blood without the recognition of ancestry. In fact, as Ruth Kelso observes in The Doctrine of the English Gentleman, some kings often granted the high ranks not only to the base-born but to wicked and worthless men, and hence arose the often repeated boast, "The king cannot make a gentleman" (20). An example was George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, ennobled by James I. On the other hand, according to David Castronovo's The English Gentleman, there were the men of blood who ignored the Herald's College altogether but who were recognized as gentlemen in their locality (7). The true gentility has long been thought of as transmitted from blood to blood. Aristotle argues in Politics that those sprung of better stock are likely to be better men, inheriting an inclination to do well (481); J. B. Nenna in Nennio (1595) declares the preeminence of "bloud" derived from their ancestors (16); similarly, Henry Peacham in Complete Gentleman (1622) says that the "inward excellence and virtues" are transferred to "their species successively" (11). In this respect, Shakespeare was not a man of blood,

though a man of rank, when "Garter King of Arms" granted a patent of gentry to his father, John Shakespeare, in 1596. But surprisingly, in view of his villein birth, the poet draws a solid line between the man of blood and the man of adventitious rank, and faults the latter for his base traits inherent in his base blood, whereas he esteems the former's inborn merits in Cymbeline.

Historically, of course, there was no gentleman in the technical sense in Cymbeline's Britain.² In essence, however, the gentles in Cymbeline's Britain do not appear to be different from those in Shakespeare's England and those in other Shakespeare's plays. In Cymbeline there are five gentle groups and three villein groups in the light of blood-quality. The first and foremost gentle group consists of the ideal heroine and heroes (Imogen, Guiderius, and Arviragus) who possess good blood, only perhaps a little inferior to the "best blood" of Jesus. Their virtues are all revealed in the web of relationships: the relation between wife and husband, between parents and children, between king and courtier, and between suitor and his inamorata. The second group is composed of regenerate gentles who experience the pattern of sin-repentance-regeneration-reward (Cymbeline, Posthumus, and Iachimo) who are gentle of blood but lose high qualities of blood temporarily for some reasons; therefore, they temporarily reveal degeneracy. Their gentle blood, however, eventually

permit them to repent of their sin, and like the innocent gentles, they are finally rewarded with the vision of rebirth and reunion. Belarius belongs to the innocent gentle who does not commit sins and deserves a reward. The degenerate gentle (Cymbeline's second wife) falls into the fourth group, who was once gentle of blood but degenerate later owing to her foul ambition and her copulation with her base first husband; therefore, she ends up with disgraceful death without repentance. The last and minor gentle group is constituted of the unnamed Gentlemen, Caius Lucius, Lords, and Senators, and Tribunes, who function as mentors, the chorus, or messengers. The base-borns are divided into three groups. The first group comprises the evil, cowardly, and foolish villein (Cloten) who holds the titular rank as the Queen's son. The second group is constituted of the faithful servant (Imogen's attendant and Pisanio). The ideal heroes and heroine as well as the regenerate gentles are all men of blood, and the degenerate gentle (the evil Queen) and the evil and cowardly villain (Cloten) are men of adventitious rank. Especially, Cloten's envy and spite against the gentles' happiness and power (for example, Imogen's marriage to Posthumus and the crown of Britain) is so great that he becomes the main agent of villainy, along with his mother. Just as Iago threatens destruction of Othello's family. Cloten emerges as a major threat to Imogen's married life to Posthumus--his attempts to woo

Imogen and even to rape her in Posthumus' clothes. But a principal difference between Othello and Cymbeline lies in that the tragedy shows the clash between the two classes results in the victimization of the heroine, whereas the romance exhibits the heroine plays a pivotal role in the thematic contrast between the two classes. In the tragedy, the hero's villeinization becomes a major factor; in the romance, the heroine's high blood is a major factor. And in Othello the villain Iago effects the downfall of some gentlemen who are vulnerable to his villainy; in Cymbeline the bloods survive Cloten and his mother's evil schemes. The men of blood possess innate, unlabored excellences, such as beauty, intuitive intelligence, and courage; they are associated with the estimable floral and faunal images and even heavenly powers; and the bloods are rewarded with reunion, recognition, and a heavenly vision. In contrast, the men of adventitious rank resemble the men of blood in appearance but lack inborn excellences; they are linked to despicable objects; and they are punished by being killed by the bloods for their villainy.

Many evidences classify Cloten as a villain in the genetic sense and the ethical sense. His behavior and traits parallel those of many other base-borns in the Shakespearean plays. While these villeins expose only one or two base characteristics, Cloten reveals many of them: villainy, folly, cowardice, obtuseness, and braggadocio.

Such characteristics of the base Cloten are sharply contrasted to those of the bloods in Cymbeline, especially Guiderius, Arviragus, Imogen, and Posthumus. Cloten's base blood cannot endue him with the sense of morality or conscience. The first part of play, roughly speaking, involves itself with the thematic contrast between Posthumus and Cloten especially with regard to a love triangle involving Imogen; the second part concerns itself with the contrast between Cloten and the mountain princes. Indeed, the whole structure of the play is built on the conflicting tensions between men of titular rank and men of blood. Between these antipodes, Cymbeline wavers while being villeinized by Cloten's mother, but recovers his place as his high blood again prevails. His movement from the party of rank to the party of bloods parallels the gradual rising of the bloods eclipsing the false gentles--Cloten and his mother.

At the beginning of the play, Cymbeline, villeinized by the evil Queen, dismisses the man of blood (Posthumus) in favor of the man of adventitious rank (Cloten). The two Gentlemen like a chorus relate the severe conflict between these two men. The First Gentleman reports that Cymbeline tries to force Imogen, "the heir of 's kingdom," to forget Posthumus and to marry Cloten--"his wife's sole son" (1.1.4-5). The King confines the Princess and banishes Posthumus in order to marry his daughter to Cloten because the Queen

"most desired the match" (12). Entirely because of his mother's status as Queen, Cloten enjoys many advantages for which only the genuine gentry are allowed--a rank (the Queen's son with the possibility to be heir apparent), wealth, the royal favor, and courtly life, including first-class foods. But Posthumus, an orphan, appears to be poor and has no formal title. Cymbeline is drawn by the treacherous evil Queen to chide Imogen, "Thou took'st a beggar; wouldst have made my throne / A seat for baseness" (1.1.143-44). Moreover, the King repudiates any relation with Posthumus, "Thou basest thing, avoid hence, from my sight! (1.2.127). Thus, the poet establishes a dramatic tension with Cymbeline's misleading assessments of the opposing characters. On a broader level, the thematic structure of Cymbeline is built on the restoration of the familial and national order both by the reunion of the separated royal family members and by the elimination of the threats or challenge from the men of adventitious rank. On a narrower level, the plot of Cymbeline develops as Shakespeare gradually makes the audience realize that Cymbeline's estimation of Cloten and Posthumus is erroneous as much as his blood is poisoned or villeinized by his evil Queen. Cloten's political opinion regarding political relationship with Rome and his physical similarity to Posthumus with the exception of the head--the most important part of the body--are all ridiculous or meaningless, just as

his base blood signifies nothing. Posthumus' gentility manifests itself in his survival from King Cymbeline's persecution, Cloten's challenge, Iachimo's wager, the banishment, and a desperate battle with the Romans. Moreover, he dedicates himself to the victory of Britain over Rome. Cymbeline appreciates the significance of Posthumus' blood only after he is free from the Queen's influence.

Because the play begins with Cymbeline's repudiation of Posthumus in favor of Cloten, many readers and even several critics have difficulty in identifying their classes. One may falsely conjecture that Cloten may be a degenerate gentle or that he has been a base-born but later became gentle by fiat of the King after the Queen's coronation. Harold C. Goddard, for example, considers Cloten as "merely the dark consummate flower of a nobility" (639). Similarly G. Wilson Knight in The Crown of Life regards Cloten as a "foolish nobility" like Sir Andrew Aguecheek in Twelfth Night and Roderigo in Othello. Knight erroneously evaluates Cloten's quality as "more intelligent, full-blooded and forceful" than these two cater-cousins, on the grounds that Cloten's wooing of Imogen seems to be "a genuine appreciation" of her and that his serenade for her is "with taste" (132). Their conjectures may be based on the following facts: first, the King thinks of him as more suitable for his daughter than Posthumus; secondly, Cloten's

bodily contours of physique are so similar to Posthumus' that even Imogen fails to distinguish between them; and thirdly, Cloten, along with his mother, favors repudiating Lucius' demand for tribute with a glimmer of patriotism at the reception of Lucius as Caesar Augustus' envoy.

In reality, however, Cloten is the issue to the base father and the degenerating mother. In Blood Will Tell in Shakespeare's Plays, David S. Berkeley classifies Cloten's father as "technically base" (71). One can infer that her husband was a base-born from the following facts: first, unlike Sicilius, Cloten's father is absolutely unknown-- "Nobility means notability; to be ignoble is to be unknown" (Castronovo 5); second, his issue Cloten, who inherited the qualities of his base blood, is a foolish, evil, and cowardly braggart--"Cowards father cowards and base things sire base" (4.2.26). In the Shakespearean plays, the base-borns, such as Aaron and Iago, neither mention their blood nor keep their genealogy, and indeed they do very well to know their fathers. Cloten never mentions his father or genealogy, nor does the Queen mention her former husband. Cloten tries to link himself to his mother only and refers to his mother as Queen rather than as mother, a woman who becomes the Queen after remarrying Cymbeline. Moreover, Cloten's base traits mirror his father's qualities. Unlike Cloten's father, his mother seems to be genetically gentle. Her gentle birth is probably suggested by the facts that she

is beautiful ³ and that she speaks in blank verse. ⁴ If so, then one can infer that her first husband caused her to degenerate. In a large sense, her villeinization parallels that of Queen Gertrude in Hamlet and that of Saturninus in Titus Andronicus, for during sexual copulation both men and women influence each other by mingling their *sperma*. ⁵ Cloten's mother seems to have been much villeinized with her first husband's base blood. And Cloten is the product of these parents.

Posthumus' bloodline sharply contrasts with Cloten's obscure genealogy. Since the King thinks of Posthumus' blood is lesser than his, Cymbeline growls at the secret marriage of Posthumus and Imogen--"Thou'rt poison to my blood" (1.1.130). Of course, Posthumus' blood is of lesser quality than the royal blood. However, Cloten's base blood cannot cross the taut line of Posthumus' gentle blood. According to the First Gentleman's exposition of the antecedent action, Posthumus' parents were both gentle of blood. Posthumus' father is Sicilius, who was Cymbeline's friend and attained honor and titles through the victory over the Roman army and loyal service to Cymbeline's father. Sicilius lost his two sons in the war; therefore, he laments over the loss as well as his age because he was so much "fond of issue" that he dies of heartbreak. That Posthumus' father Sicilius had gentle blood is attested by the facts that he died of heartbreak and that he begot a son in old

age, for both of these facts are signs of his high blood. Berkeley argues that "the ability to experience heartbreak" is the sign of high blood: for instance, King Lear's abundant blood causes his heartbreak when he rejoices extremely over Cordelia's salvation and experiences anger at her innocent death (88). And the king's anger is a symptom of a predominance of cholera over other humors. King Lear and Cordelia's husband France are noted as possessing cholera (King Lear, 1.1.300; 1.2.23). Blood and cholera were the two gentlemanly humors according to the humoral theory that prevailed in Shakespeare's day. Sicilius' begetting Posthumus in old age is another sign of abundant blood like Duncan's. Sicilius could not see his third child because he died of heartbreak "whilst in the womb he [Posthumus] stay'd" (5.5.37). His unnamed wife seemed to have serious difficulty in being delivered of Posthumus. The First Gentleman says about her difficult delivery: "his gentle lady, / Big of this gentleman our theme, deceas'd / As he was born" (1.1.38-40). And the apparition of Posthumus' mother says, "Lucina lent not me her aid, / But took me in my throes, / That from me was Posthumus ripp'd" (43-45). Aubrey C. Kail suggests that this delivery is "post-mortem caesarean section" (108). Such a difficult delivery, I think, resulted mainly from her age. It is not clear how old Posthumus' mother was when she was delivered of Posthumus, yet the fact that her two sons were grown up

enough to participate in the wars and died on the battlefields implies that she was almost beyond the age of childbirth--probably in her late forties, or perhaps in her early fifties. Her age seems to have caused her difficult delivery and finally her death. Admittedly, her ability to conceive a son in her age is a sign of her gentility. The First Gentleman also classifies her as a "gentlewoman."

Through gentle courtiers' mouths, Shakespeare suggests a thematic contrast between Posthumus' gentility and Cloten's baseness. Although Cymbeline slights Posthumus as a "beggar," all other people--except the Queen and Cloten--appreciate Posthumus' inborn gentility. Not a single nobleman in Cymbeline has a word to say against him, or his marriage with the Princess. To be sure, wealth is a part of gentlemanly life, as Berry suggests that "birth, education, wealth, behavior, and values" are major factors in the Elizabethan class-consciousness (xii). Nonetheless, wealth is not a determinant factor in Shakespearean gentles; neither does gentility necessarily presuppose wealth. Instead, the latter often constitutes a reward for the former in a happy ending. Bassanio in The Merchant of Venice and Helena in All's Well That Ends Well are poor but gentle and, thanks to their high blood, are finally rewarded with marriage to the wealthy and gentle partners--Portia and Bertram, respectively. Though orphaned and poor, Posthumus loves and is loved by Princess Imogen. The First Gentleman

calls Posthumus "a poor but worthy gentleman" (1.1.7).

Cloten's baseness and Posthumus' gentility are manifest in the first physical confrontation between Cloten and Posthumus. In the court, Cloten attacks Posthumus suddenly like a coward, a *contretemps* which precipitates impromptu fighting between them. Other gentlemen at hand intervene immediately to stop this fighting. Pisanio, Posthumus' servant, reports this occurrence to the Queen, saying that Posthumus did not consider Cloten's attack seriously but "rather play'd than fought" (1.1.164). Pisanio's remarks imply Cloten's ineptness at sword-fighting--a base trait--and Posthumus' efficiency at fighting--a gentle trait. Cloten's inability and Posthumus' mastery at fighting are later confirmed when Cloten encounters Guiderius in the forest and when Posthumus takes part in the battle against Rome. Cloten loses his life because of this ineptness; Posthumus earns honor because of efficiency at fighting.

As the Second Gentleman describes Posthumus' gentle parentage in the opening scene, the Second Lord depicts Cloten's baseness in asides in the second scene. Because of Cloten's rank, the flattering First Lord addresses him as "Sir," "you," and "lordship." Through the appropriate combination of dialogues (between Cloten and the First Lord full of flattery, lies, and braggadocio) and asides (of the Second Lord replete with biting criticisms of Cloten), Shakespeare shows the duality of Cloten. After the

impromptu fighting with Posthumus, the First Lord flatters Cloten that "His [Posthumus'] body's a passable carcass, if he be not hurt; it is a throughfare for steel, if it be not hurt" (9-11). Such a flattery possibly inflates Cloten's self-ignorance concerning his fighting skill, and therefore he acts like a braggart. But the fact that he attacks Posthumus suddenly in the court suggests that he may have feared Posthumus' fighting skill, for he probably knows well that Posthumus has received "all the learnings" including martial arts in the court (1.1.43). Yet he may not realize that Posthumus does not take Cloten seriously in the fight; this self-ignorance is supported by the First Lord's flattery. Trying to feign his cowardice and to show off his assumed courage, Cloten brags, "The villain [Posthumus] would not stand me . . . I would they had not come between us" (1.2.14, 22). The Second Lord in an aside charges Cloten with cowardly bragging or lying: "So would I, till you had measur'd how long a fool you were upon the ground" (23-24). Later, also in an aside, he links Cloten to the professional fool, "You are cock and capon too, and you crow, cock, with your comb on" (24-25). Here the "comb" functions as a metonymy for a professional fool. He deliberately compares Cloten's foolish and cowardly bragging to the crow of the capon with cockscomb, insinuating the professional fool's ridiculous and pompous words on stage. Later, when Cloten, hearing of Iachimo's arrival, asks

whether or not he would "derogate" if he met Iachimo, the Second Lord answers in an aside, "You are a fool granted; therefore your issues, being foolish, do not derogate" (2.1.47-48). From the Second Lord's point of view, Cloten has already reached the nadir of derogation and has become the most perfect fool, in the class sense, a completely base fellow, despite his status as Queen's son.

Imogen's choice of Posthumus and her rejection of Cloten also suggest the genetic distinction between them. As the First Gentleman aptly points out, "his virtue / By her election may be truly read / What kind of man he is" (1.1.52-54). Imogen loves Posthumus for his noble virtues descended from his gentle parents, though he lacks any formal rank or wealth. Since Posthumus has been living with her since their childhood, she knows all about him. Her decision is by no means careless or deluded. Her father, her step-mother, and her step-brother are all against her love for him, which leads her to marry Posthumus secretly. Their secret marriage in turn makes the King order Posthumus' banishment. As they bid each other farewell, they exchange tokens of love: Imogen gives Posthumus her late mother's diamond ring and he gives her a bracelet. From his banishment to their reunion, these tokens and Posthumus' garments symbolize their union and love. On the other hand, Imogen has been annoyed by the unwanted courtship of the boorish Cloten, but she never thinks of

him as her possible consort. In the Shakespearean canon there exists no cross-class marriage. No matter what ranks or ornaments embellish a person's outward life style, if he is not gentle of blood, he is no match for a gentlewoman. In spite of the royal favor and the status as the Queen's son, Cloten appears by no means attractive to the Princess.

Cloten's obtuseness and immorality are revealed when he tries in vain to woo the married woman--Imogen. As Imogen's husband is banished from the court, the obtuse villain Cloten, supported by the King and the Queen, more vigorously woos Imogen. Like a parody of romantic serenade, Cloten hires musicians to sing a serenade to Imogen but with no effect. A gentleman would here do his own singing. So he demands her love by insisting on her obedience to the King and her father, "You sin against / Obedience, which you owe your father" (2.3.113-14). Imogen retorts sarcastically: "Profane fellow! / Were thou the son of Jupiter and no more / But what thou art besides, thou wert too base / To be his groom" (126-29). Here the epithet "profane" signifies Cloten's moral baseness; the noun "fellow" implies his genetic baseness; and the pronoun "thou" also here denotes his baseness in the class sense. Imogen classifies Cloten as genetically base and morally corrupt so as to woo a married woman by asserting that she should betray her husband in order to obey her father.

In addition to his failure in courting Imogen, Cloten's

sexual incapability evidences his baseness. In his article "Sexuality in Cymbeline," David M. Bergeron deals with Cloten's sexual inability. He suggests that Cloten may be "a eunuch" on the level of metaphor (160), referring to such metaphorical phases as "a capon" (2.1.24). Cloten, he asserts, suffers from "his own brand of incomplete sexuality" and is sexually aware but "thwarted or perverted in purpose, thereby fulfilling no natural sexual function" (161). William B. Thorne equates "sexual fulfillment" with "national well-being" in terms of regeneration in this play (150). Bergeron becomes more specific by pointing out that "Cloten's sexual deficiency signals his general personality deficiency, as incapable of sexual performance as he is in incapable of social intercourse" (161). Sexual inability, as far as blood-consciousness is concerned, might, if not confirm, suggest degenerate or base blood. Degenerate gentles such as Lady Macbeth and Cloten's mother have probably consumed their blood owing to their foul ambition, among other evil traits, and thereby fail to produce a child, whether or not they had a child in the past. Yet Posthumus' gentle mother gave birth to a child when she was almost beyond child-bearing age. In this respect Cloten's mother embodies "a sterile world" (Bergeron 166) and is responsible for his sexual deficiency. Bergeron's observation helps suggest Cloten's sexual deficiency, a sign of his base blood.

Cloten's sexual and genetic deficiency may be summed up by Imogen's judgment that the "meanest garment" of Posthumus is dearer than "all the hairs" on Cloten's head. Cloten ruminates over the words "His [meanest] garment" and determines to avenge this humiliation. The vengeful Cloten threatens to force Pisanio to provide him some of Posthumus' "garment[s]" in order to rape Imogen in it--"With that suit upon my back will I ravish her" (3.5.138-39). To Cloten, the garment is a synecdoche for Posthumus and a symbol of his gentility. He in a soliloquy determines to have "thy [Posthumus'] mistress enforced, thy garments cut to pieces before her face" (4.1.17-18). To ravish Imogen and to cut Posthumus' garments into pieces can be a physical and symbolic destruction of the man of blood by Cloten, the man of adventitious rank. His disguise under Posthumus' clothing signifies not only his dissembling attitudes but also his unconscious desire to compete with, and to equate himself with, the gentleman Posthumus. Even though his rank and the fine clothing can ornament his social status and his body, but his true nature--the base birth--is in his body, and it will show itself. As his mother conceals her degeneracy under her beautiful appearance, Cloten tries to effect his vicious scheme and his base blood under the fine clothing. As Nancy K. Hayles asserts, every evil action in Cymbeline depends upon false appearance. Hayles continues, "Perhaps this helps explain why Shakespeare has Cloten, who

plans to murder [Posthumus] and rape [Imogen], first put on a disguise" (237).

Suffering from the strife between two classes is Pisanio. The servant of Posthumus comes to face Cloten's threats when Imogen, disguised as a boy, steals away from the court in an attempt to shun the boorish courtship of Cloten and to find her husband. The servant cannot withstand Cloten's command to disclose Imogen's whereabouts and to provide Posthumus' "garments." He has to provide Cloten with his master's letter and clothing; moreover, in the manner of a servant he takes money from Cloten for these services. While he was with Posthumus and Imogen, Pisanio exhibits his virtues, and his blood-quality seems to be higher than that of Cloten and even that of the degenerate Queen--"Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds" (Sonnet 94). However, when Pisanio is under the influence of Cloten, his virtues become blemished and he follows the villain's order. Despite his earlier faithfulness to his master and mistress, he is effaced at the end of the play without any mention of his reward: he is, after all, a villein.

When he has Posthumus' garment in hand and knows of Imogen's whereabouts, Cloten chases her route in the clothing to exercise his villainy. But no evil actions in this play reach the point where the base or degenerate schemers rejoice in their success over the true gentles.

Cloten's villainous scheme comes to naught when Guiderius defeats him in an impromptu fight in the woods, where he hopes to kill Posthumus and rape Imogen. The conflict between the man of blood and the man of adventitious rank begins with Posthumus' impromptu fight with Cloten, but reaches the climax with the sword-fighting between Cloten and Guiderius, another representative of the blood. In this fight scene Cloten again reveals his villainy, foolishness, and cowardly braggadocio. He tries vainly to frighten Guiderius not only by showing off his fine clothing-- actually Posthumus'--but also by mentioning his rank as a prince, an act marking his pusillanimous bravado. Like Perdita in The Winter's Tale and his brother Arviragus, Guiderius does not wear upper-class clothing in the forest, but "blood will tell" his nobility. And in the Shakespearean period a child was supposed to inherit his father's status, not his mother's. Cloten, however, is possessed by a delusion that his relationship to the Queen and upper-class clothing *ipso facto* endow him with gentility. In this sense Cloten is not unlike the Clown in The Winter's Tale. The Clown has a delusion that he is gentled by wearing upper-class clothing and by being called "brother" by the King: "and then the two kings call'd my father brother; and the Prince my brother and the Princess my sister call'd my father; and so we wept, and there was the first gentleman-like tears that ever we shed" (5.2.142-

46). Likewise, Cloten's delusion is that he is gentled by calling the Queen his mother, the king father, and the princess sister, and that his fine clothing signifies his rank.

Surprisingly, Posthumus' fine clothing fits well for Cloten, too. Cloten observes this fitness as evidence of his physical resemblance to Posthumus. Imogen mistakes the former's decapitated corpse for the latter's, not merely because of the clothing, but because of their physical similarity except for the head--the most important part of a body. When he himself finds out such a physical similarity, Cloten's delusion develops to the extent that in his soliloquy he classifies himself as high as or even above Posthumus:

I mean, the lines of my body are as well drawn as his; no less young, more strong, not beneath him in fortunes, beyond him in the advantage of the time, *above him in birth*, alike conversant in general services, and *more remarkable in single oppositions*. (4.1.9-13; emphases added)

Cloten's soliloquy conveys what he thinks and believes, because, as Berkeley observes, Shakespeare's soliloquies function "as vehicles of truth" (72). The first two remarks regarding his physical similarity to Posthumus and his age may be true, yet the last three remarks reveal his delusions.

Cloten identifies himself as "a gentleman" (2.3.78) only once in the play but without recognition. When he knocks the door of Imogen's room, he introduces himself as "a gentleman" to an attendant on Imogen. But the lady seems not to approve his identity and so asks him "No more?" He has to add, "and a gentlewoman's son." This remark is ridiculous, for he cannot become a gentleman by being a gentlewoman's son. Indeed, no one confirms Cloten's superiority to Posthumus in birth; his general services turn out to be misleading in relation to insisting on fighting against Rome; his inept fighting skill has already been the target of the Second Lord's satire. His delusion concerning fighting skill results partly from his self-ignorance, partly from his parasite-like flatterers in court. Under such self-ignorance or delusion, Cloten brags in a pompous, arrogant tone like a would-be hero when he encounters Guiderius in the forest. Regardless of Cloten's assertiveness and bragging, Guiderius intuitively knows not merely his base character but his unskillfulness in fighting and so jocosely disparages him: "Cloten, thou double villain, be thy name, / I cannot tremble at it. Were it Toad, or Adder, Spider, / 'Twould move me sooner" (4.2.90-93). They fight and exeunt, and Guiderius easily handles him offstage and beheads him there. Cloten's obtuseness and villainy in the genetic and ethical senses are graphically exposed in this impromptu scene, and the villain is removed

by the man of blood. Guiderius' elimination of Cloten symbolizes a period mark for the man of adventitious rank by the man of blood.

Punishment and reward are touchstones for classifying gentility and villeiny in Cymbeline. Berkeley rightly observes that "the business of his drama is suiting rewards and punishments to blood quality" (Blood Will Tell 10-11). Reward and punishment have strong Christian tones in this play. J. A. Bryant, Jr., argues that "Genuine nobility" is equivalent to "being of the elect" who "have the grace to see their errors and repent," with the suggestion that the base have no grace to repent their sins and therefore deserve damnation (199). Cloten, like Satan or fools in the Biblical sense, possesses neither intrinsic virtue nor sign of outward improvement despite many of his extrinsic advantages and his seeming similarities to the gentles. Therefore, he is punished with dying unrepentant. Throughout the play Cloten's baseness shows no glimpse of amelioration. Many other base traits in Cloten's base blood justify his punishment. ⁶

Unlike Cloten, Posthumus' genuine nobility allows him to "have the grace to see their errors and repent," hence becoming one of the "elect." Many critics have focused on the thematic structure of sin-repentance-regeneration, implying the Christian doctrine of the "fortunate fall." M. V. Matthews, for example, describes many of the characters

in Cymbeline in the light of the Christian pattern of sin-penitence-redemption (180-82). Carlos W. Durret and Lila Geller share Matthews' view, but they advance the most extreme version of this view, claiming that this play is an allegory of Christian salvation. These views might throw light on the characterization of Cymbeline and Posthumus because they experience a "fortunate fall" or a pattern of sin-repentance-regeneration. While he is in Italy separated from Imogen, Posthumus experiences villeinization and degeneracy, but his gentility comes back in Britain. That is to say, his frailties or errors are revealed in his wager during his banished life in Italy. To win the wager, Iachimo secretes himself in Imogen's bedroom, steals her bracelet, and even notes a mole under her breast. Deceived by Iachimo's false evidence of Imogen's adultery, Posthumus simply becomes jealous and indicts all women including Imogen and vows to take revenge. He sends a letter to his servant Pisanio commanding him to murder her. Posthumus' foolishly revengeful behavior implies that his blood is degenerating. Like Othello, Posthumus suffers from jealousy and wounded honor, which causes him to plan on the brutal projects of revenge. Like Othello with the "ocular proof"--the handkerchief--Posthumus has seemingly apparent "ocular proof"--the bracelet--at hand. His hatred falls upon the whole female sex; everything "that tends to vice in man" seems to him "the woman's part" (2.5.21, 20), every crime

and sin to be inherited from her.

Not only Iachimo's tricks concerning the wager but also his melancholy, his sudden change of diet, and the southern atmosphere of Italy also cause his degeneracy. Jacques Guillemeau in Childbirth, or the Happy Diliverie of Women (1612) states that evil airs--particularly the south wind--can be the possible causes of degeneracy: "such winds as bring with them ill smells and vapors, which being drawn in together with the air we breathe, into the lungs, so many times breed very dangerous and troublesome disease" (19). Although Guillemeau is referring to the south wind affecting a child's health, any adult can be affected by the wind to some extent. The sudden change of diet may be another cause of his temporary degeneracy. This change possibly causes the imbalance of the humors in Posthumus and finally the obtuseness of his blood. His sorrowing and sighing during the banished life in Rome contribute to his temporary degeneracy. According to Jacques Ferrand's Erotomania, or a Treatise of Love (1640), sorrow, sighing, weeping, and groaning were believed to reduce the amount of blood in the human system and so to be possible causes of degeneracy in Shakespeare's time (129). The poet also often mentions this matter in his plays: "Our blood-consuming sighs," "blood-drinking sighs" (2 Henry VI, 3.2.61, 63); "Dry sorrow drinks our blood" (Romeo and Juliet, 3.5.59). The temporary degeneracy, however, cannot cause Posthumus to lose his

inherited high blood for good because his high blood eventually prevails, and he as one of the elect repents his sins and hence restores his lost status. He comes back to his country where he can recover his natural diet, his native air, and the religious peace which he earns after repenting.

Posthumus' genuine gentility is revealed when, although still believing Imogen's infidelity and her death, he repents of his order for her death and wishes for Imogen's salvation: "Gods, if you / Should have ta'en vengeance on my faults, I never / Had liv'd to put on this; so had you sav'd / The noble Imogen to repent, and struck / Me, wretch more worth your vengeance" (5.1.9-11). Joan Carr holds that Posthumus' remorse in this phase is remarkable because "his attitude parallels the Christian doctrine of forgiveness: 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you'" (321). Posthumus is a basically good gentleman. Along with the mountain princes, Guiderius and Arviragus, and Belarius, Posthumus rescues Cymbeline, who banished him from the court but now is almost captured by the Romans; even after rescuing the king, Posthumus does not boast that he saved the king but instead confesses that he was once affiliated with the Roman army and is willing to be a prisoner. Even though he appears to possess a peasant-like obtuseness in the early part of the play, his consciousness of guilt, his merits in battle, and his honesty suggest that the blood of

his noble parents runs strongly in his veins.

The appearance of Posthumus' noble parents with their two dead children attests that Posthumus is not yet deeply degenerate. In this *deus ex machina* scene the apparitions appear in hopes of helping him out of predicaments while he is sleeping in the prison. They relate his past, including his suffering from Iachimo's villainy, and go on to appeal to Jupiter's justice on the behalf of Posthumus. Jupiter appears on an eagle and reminds these apparitions that "Our Jovial star reign'd at his [Posthumus'] birth," and that Posthumus married Imogen in Jupiter's temple (5.4.105-06). Jupiter delivers a tablet in which he prophesies not only the reunion of Posthumus and Imogen but also Cymbeline's familial reunion and international harmony (138-44).

Posthumus' association with the lion also hints at his gentility. In the oracle Posthumus is described as a "lion's whelp" in accordance with his family name Leonatus. Robin Moffet calls attention to the prophecy of Jacob in Genesis 49:9 in which Jacob says that "Judah, as a lions whelpe shalt thou come vp from the spoile, my son." Since Judah is considered as the root or tribe of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:2; Hebrews 7:14), this Biblical allusion intimates the relation between Posthumus and Jesus. Furthermore, Naseeb Shaheen suggests that eleven allusions in Cymbeline relate Posthumus to Christ, and argues that "Shakespeare seems to have had especially the person of

Christ in mind as a model when developing Posthumus" (304). Posthumus is associated with another heavenly power: earlier in this play Imogen compares him to an "eagle," whereas she links Cloten to a "puttock" (1.1.141). The eagle is known as Jupiter's "holy" and "royal" bird (5.4.115-17).

Posthumus' high blood permits him to feel the prick of conscience when he finds his own guilt. The repentant Posthumus desires to die in battle to punish himself for ordering the murder of Imogen--just as the penitent Othello wants to die as a punishment for murdering his wife. Posthumus, hearing Iachimo's confession with regard to their wager, bewails Imogen's innocent death and deeply repents his folly and sin. On hearing his repentance, Imogen unconditionally forgives him for his foolish jealousy and lack of faith in her. Posthumus also forgives Iachimo for his trickery. Posthumus' magnanimity thus matches Imogen's generosity. Now King Cymbeline acknowledges him as his "son-in-law"--obviously the King condones Posthumus' marriage to Imogen of which he severely disapproved (5.5.423-24). Thanks to his virtues attached to high blood, Posthumus is rewarded--another vision of rebirth--with reunion with his wife Imogen, whom he has thought to be killed by his servant Pisanio.

The conflicting tension between Posthumus and Cloten causes Imogen various troubles, but this ideal heroine, unlike the tragic heroines or innocent victims such as

Lavinia and Desdemona, survives her predicaments. Imogen possesses an abundance of qualities attached to high blood: tested chastity, fidelity, beauty, intuitive intelligence, and other virtues. Because of these excellences, not only can she survive all the challenges and dangerous situations, but also she earns admiration from the critics and the audience. Of course, some critics question the charming qualities of Imogen. E. K. Chambers, for example, dismisses Imogen as a "puppet." Brander Matthews also thinks of her as inferior in "vibrating femininity" to other romantic heroines like Juliet and Viola (346). Yet most critics favor her qualities. Algernon C. Swinburne calls her "the woman best beloved in all the world of song and the tide of time" (227). Harley Granville-Barker regards her as "the life of the play" (511). G. G. Gervinus esteems Imogen as "the most lovely and artless of the female characters which Shakespeare has depicted" (657). Anna B. Jameson also praises Imogen's "the bloom of beauty, the brightness of intellect, and dignity of rank" and considers her to be "the most perfect" of Shakespeare's female characters (181). Indeed, many factors evidence her nobility. She is the daughter of the king of Britain, and has long been thought of as "the heir of 's kingdom" (1.1.4), since her two brothers disappeared twenty years ago. There are three persons who assail her marriage with Posthumus; when her husband has to flee, being banished by the king, Imogen is

left alone to withstand the anger of her father, the machinations of her step-mother, and the rude courtship of Cloten. She faces them in the most heroic manner, aided and comforted by a servant, Pisanio, who is a "leading mediatorial character of the drama" in Denton J. Snider's expression (515). Posthumus boasts to a Frenchman about his wife's qualities of high blood. The Frenchman speaks to Iachimo about Posthumus' vouching for Imogen's excellences: "more fair, virtuous, wise, chaste, constant, qualified and less attemptable than any the rarest of our ladies in France" (1.4.59-61). This invidious description moves Iachimo, an Italian gentleman, to wager that he can seduce Imogen. Yet Iachimo, at first sight of Imogen, realizes that she deserves Posthumus' vouching and says in an aside, "She is alone th' Arabian bird, and I / Have lost the wager" (1.6.17-18). The Arabian bird denotes a phoenix, a symbol of beauty and resurrection and a type or symbol of Christ as in Lactantius' De Ave Phoenice.⁷ Iachimo tries to seduce Imogen by saying that "I dedicate myself to your sweet pleasure" (1.6.137). But Imogen, shifting from "you" to "thou" in addressing him, severely rebukes the Italian for his "beastly mind" and for slandering her husband--"Thou wrong'st a gentlemanly who is as far / From thy report as thou from honor" (146-47). At her denouncement, Iachimo exclaims, "O happy Leonatus! . . . For the most worthiest fit!" (157, 163)

This wager episode reflects Shakespeare's patriotic view that British blood is better at its best than comparable blood of France. This view has been exhibited in Henry V, where the valiant English soldiers--though ill, improperly dieted, and few in numbers--are victorious over the French, and King Henry V rewards the base amongst his army by bestowing gentility on them. In 1 Henry VI the Duke of Alencon mentions that one English soldier, owing to his "courage and audacity," is worth ten French ones (1.2.34). Shakespeare's contemporary Thomas Gainsford in his The Glory of England (1622) argues for England's superiority to all other nations for various reasons, including the strength of her monarchy and the beauty of her women. In Cymbeline, Shakespeare seems to deliberately have Posthumus certify Imogen's superiority to Italian and French ladies in terms of beauty and other virtues, and has the Italian Iachimo consciously admit Posthumus' assertion of Imogen's virtues, which mark her high blood, to the extent that he must depend upon his trickery to win the wager.

Imogen demonstrates her firm morality and fidelity in her treatment of Iachimo's vain attempt to seduce her. All the gentlewomen, if not degenerate, in Shakespeare's plays are noted for their high morality and fidelity. Imogen keeps her fidelity to her husband despite all obstacles. Like Lavinia, Desdemona, and Cordelia, she considers fidelity to husband as much estimable as or even more

important than loyalty to father. In her case, Cymbeline, villeinized by the evil Queen, resembles many fathers of the Renaissance by stubbornly asserting his own power in response to his daughter's love for another man. John Stockwood in Bartholomew Fairing (1589) severely criticizes fathers for tyrannizing over their children:

Beware that they turne not their fatherlie jurisdiction and government into a tyrannical sowernesse and waywardnesse, letting their will goe for a lawe and their pleasure for a reason. . . . The parentes do sometimes abuse their power and authoritie, and will compel their children to marie with those, whom they love not. ⁸

Some Shakespearean heroines withstand the pressures of their fathers when their marriage is at stake: Desdemona in Othello, Jessica in The Merchant of Venice, and Juliet in Romeo and Juliet run away from home in pursuit of their love. Imogen also secretly married Posthumus (antecedent action) to withstand Cymbeline's pressures and later leaves the palace for Milford-Haven in an effort to find Posthumus. She has high blood that helps her overcome dangers and that exempts her from common frailties and helps her remain innocent and virtuous throughout the play. For her innocence and virtue, Imogen is rewarded with a vision of rebirth: she meets Posthumus again, finds her lost brothers, and restores her father's love. Imogen, in brief, appears

as a paragon of a married woman's chastity.

Imogen is also associated with highly valued flowers, another evidence of her high blood. In the forest near Milford-Haven, Guiderius says on seeing what he supposes to be her dead body, "O sweetest, fairest lily!" (4.2.203). Lilies, a symbol of purity and chastity, Shakespeare himself relates to even degenerate gentry, while the base he figures as weeds (Sonnet 94). Like a rose, a lily was used as a metaphor for a beautiful gentlewoman in terms of physiognomy in the Shakespearean period. In Ben Jonson's Volpone, for example, a beautiful and chaste gentlewoman, Celia, is linked to lilies as well as other symbols of gentility and chastity: "The blazing star of Italy! / . . . Whose skin is whiter than a swan all over, / Than silver, snow, or lilies!" (1.5.108-11). As Guiderius likens Imogen to a lily, Arviragus, putting fairest flowers around her, links her face to the "pale primrose" (4.2.222), her veins to "the azur'd harebell" (223), and her breath to "the leaf of eglantine" (224). As Arviragus compares her breath to the perfume of "the leaf of eglantine," Imogen is noted for her fragrance as other Shakespearean gentle ladies. Shakespeare often distinguishes between gentry and peasantry by expressing the fragrance of the former and the body odor and foul breath of the latter. Coriolanus describes the changeable Roman mob as "rank-scented meiny" (Coriolanus, 3.1.66); the Second Lord remarks Cloten's having "smelled

like a fool" in the sense of rankness of smell in this play (2.1. 17). In The Taming of The Shrew, Lucentio exclaims at Bianca's sweet breath: "I saw her coral lips to move, / And with her breath she did perfume the air. / Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her" (1.1.164-66). Likewise, in the bedchamber scene, Iachimo remarks that Imogen's breathing "perfumes the chamber" (2.2.19).

Whereas the evil Cloten is linked to Satan, Imogen appears as an angelic figure, another evidence of her qualities of high blood. Though ignorant of her real identity, Belarius exclaims: "By Jupiter, an angel! Or, if not, / An earthly paragon! Behold divineness" (3.6.44-45). Iachimo, also previously ignorant of her real quality, contrasts her angelic innocence with evil around her: "Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here" (2.2.50).

Unlike Cloten's obtuseness and delusion, Imogen and her royal brothers possess the remarkable instinct and intuitive intelligence, which mark their high blood. Albert H. Tolman praises the mountain princes' "almost magical power of royal blood" (288). When she meets her lost brothers for the first time, though ignorant of their real identities, Imogen instinctively rates their quality as being equal to that of her siblings: "Would it had been so, that they / Had been my father's sons!" (3.6.76-77). Like Imogen, Guiderius and Arviragus possess intuitive intelligence: at first sight they instinctively cherish Imogen, alias Fidele, not just as

a friend but as if she were their sibling. Guiderius welcomes her in a very friendly mood. Arviragus also says, "I'll make my comfort / He [Imogen] is a man; I'll love him as my brother" (72-73). Observing their princely bearing, Belarius (Old Morgan), their foster-father, exclaims "How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature!" (3.3.79) He also notices their "royalty," "honor," "civility," and "valor"--effects of their "invisible instinct" (4.2.178-80). When Guiderius encounters Cloten in the forest, he intuitively discerns Cloten's baseness in spite of Cloten's fine clothes and his assumed rank as the Queen's son. Later, when Cymbeline accuses him of murdering Cloten--"a prince," Guiderius points out that Cloten's language and behavior are "a most incivil one" (5.5.294) and "nothing prince-like" (295), although Guiderius has neither learned nor experienced courtly manners and courtly language in its fullest sense. Belarius, a *habitué* of the court, seems to have used quasi-courtly language in speaking to Guiderius and Arviragus. These two princes' intuitive intelligence is reminiscent of that of Orlando in As You Like It, who lacks education but has intelligence and knowledge. Oliver remarks that his brother Orlando is "gentle, never school'd and yet learned, full of noble device, of all sorts enchantingly belov'd" (1.1.157-59). Furthermore, the royal brothers speak in blank verse, another evidence of their intuitive intelligence and their harmonious minds. Using a

metaphor and a classical allusion in blank verse, Guiderius after killing Cloten ridicules his foolishness and bragging:

This Cloten was a fool, an empty purse;
 There was no money in 't. Not Hercules
 Could have knock'd out his brains,
 for he had none.

Yet I not doing this, the fool had borne
 My head as I do this. (4.2.114-18)

And their dirges at Imogen's seeming death contain rhymes and meters (259-70), albeit they had no formal schooling.

As opposed to Cloten's cowardice and ineptness at sword-fighting, Guiderius and Arviragus show remarkable bravery and mastery at fighting. In the Shakespearean canon, where most base-borns and some degenerate gentles turn out to be either cowards or braggarts in fighting, the bloods fight well and bravely. In As You Like It, Orlando is willing to wrestle with the base-born professional wrestler Charles, and beats him against the expectation of the spectators (1.2.206 ff.). Most Shakespearean heroes--such as Henry V, Pericles, Romeo, Hamlet, and Othello--are all valiant and skillful in fighting, and they are no doubt gently born. Guiderius and Arviragus are also brave, excellent fighters. Guiderius wins the impromptu fight with a braggart Cloten. His younger brother, Arviragus, is equal to him in bravery. They willingly enlist in the battle against Rome and take on the Roman army so valiantly as to

miraculously turn defeat into a British victory. As Berkeley remarks that "high blood" is "practically synonymous with courage--the *sine qua non* of gentility" (Blood Will Tell 20), the fortitude and valor of mountain princes mark their high blood.

Because of their valor in the war, King Cymbeline praises Guiderius and Arviragus by calling them "the liver, heart, and brain of Britain" (5.5.10) and knights them. In terms of Elizabethan physiology, the liver, heart, and brain were the most important organs in the body. In his Anatomy of Melancholy (1621), Robert Burton compares the head to "a Privy Counsellor, Chancellor," the heart to the "King," and the liver to "a hidden governor" (131). Especially, Irving Edgar maintains, Elizabethan physiologists believed that the liver is the seat of blood-formation and heat-generation, and that love and courage spring out of the heat-generating function of the liver (45). Thus, Cymbeline compliments Guiderius, Arviragus, and Belarius--Posthumus also deserves this compliment--on their bravery. With Elizabethan physiological references, Shakespeare aptly has Cymbeline connect these brave soldiers--the King still does not know their true identities--to the highest ranks in the hierarchy of the body: the head, heart, and the liver. These complimentary words, in fact, suit their real gentle status. They soon rejoice at their reunion with Imogen as well as with their real father Cymbeline. Their valor and other

virtues, with which their high blood endows them, lead them to regain their rightful posts (Guiderius as the heir to the throne; Arviragus as a prince) and familial reunion, a vision of rebirth.

Like Posthumus, Cymbeline experiences the Christian pattern of degeneration-repentance-regeneration-reward. He commits errors and makes wrong decisions under the bad influence of his second wife. They are two of many regenerate gentles in the Shakespearean canon. Leontes in The Winter's Tale, King Lear, and Othello, to name a few, are good examples. They are gentle of blood but lose their high qualities of blood temporarily for many reasons. Their prevailing gentle blood, however, eventually permits them to repent their sins, and like the undeviating innocent gentles, they are finally rewarded with the vision of rebirth. Cymbeline, along with his first Queen, must have had pure and royal blood in that the purest and highest blood of their offspring attests to their gentle parents' gentility, whereas the lower blood of the base-borns mirrors their base ancestors' baseness. At first, Cymbeline's royal blood endowed him with benevolence and good will: he took an orphan (Posthumus) and reared him in the court like his family (1.1.40-43). His villeinization occurs when he marries the evil Queen and mixes his royal blood with her degenerate blood. Her degeneracy manifests itself in her foul ambition to make her base, foolish son Cloten the heir

to the throne. As Lady Macbeth influences her husband to unhesitatingly murder King Duncan, this Queen tries to allure Cymbeline to banish Posthumus and to marry Imogen to Cloten. She wins over the King by "watching, weeping, tendance, kissing" and other means (5.5.53). In fact, the Queen causes Cymbeline's temporary derogation, especially in terms of moral status.

While being villeinized, Cymbeline acts like a fool. He is foolish because he fails to distinguish right from wrong concerning his daughter's marriage and the Queen's scheme. He cannot rightly perceive Posthumus' virtues; instead, he downs him *vis-à-vis* by calling Posthumus "Thou basest thing" (1.1.126) and referring to him as a "beggar" (143). Ironically enough, he argues that his royal blood degenerates with Posthumus' lesser blood: "With thy unworthiness, thou diest. Away! / Thou 'rt poison to my blood" (1.1. 128-29)--probably a reference to Posthumus' supposed villeinizing of Imogen. As a matter of fact, it is his Queen who tries to poison his royal blood and even plots to kill Imogen with poison. Further, Cymbeline foolishly estimates Cloten's blood more suitable for Imogen than that of Posthumus. Just as the Redcrosse Knight in Spenser's The Faerie Queene is deceived by Duessa's false beauty and fine raiment,⁹ Cymbeline does not see the Queen's poisonous reality behind her beautiful appearance. He lives a seemingly happy life with the degenerate Queen, whose evil

spirit debases his qualities of high blood, until Guiderius kills Cloten--Cloten's death causes the evil Queen to commit suicide--and then Cymbeline through Arviragus, Belarius, and Posthumus attains the victory over the Roman army. Both Redcrosse and Cymbeline repent their sins and are rewarded with the vision of rebirth: a vision of heavenly Jerusalem (or the Faerie Queene) and marriage to Una for the Redcrosse Knight; a vision of personal, familial, and national reunion and future national greatness and harmony for Cymbeline. When the real identity of Duessa is exposed, the Redcrosse realizes his folly; when the evil Queen reveals her real identity as the agent of evil doings before madly dying with horror, Cymbeline comes to clearly see his absurdity. Like that of the Knight, Cymbeline's repentance entails admitting his folly and gaining the power to distinguish between reality and appearance:

Mine eyes

Were not in fault, for she was beautiful;
 Mine ears, that heard her flattery; nor my heart,
 That thought her like her seeming. It had been
 vicious

To have mistrusted her. Yet, O my daughter,
 That it was folly in me thou mayst say,
 And prove it in thy feeling. Heaven mend all!

(5.5.63-69)

Cymbeline's high blood prevails as he finally repents his

folly and sin and so restores his lost status. As Bryant suggests, true gentles are equivalent to the elect who have "the grace to see their errors and repent" (199).

Only after Cymbeline's repentance, the true meaning of Jupiter's oracle--given to Posthumus earlier--is made known to these repentant gentles by a soothsayer. Jupiter's prophecy of their rewards ahead of their repentance suggests the existence of the omnipotent and omniscient power over them--like the Redcrosse's heavenly power--and alludes to Calvin's doctrine of predestination. They are true gentles, meaning "being of the elect." As Bryant says, this oracle is comparable to "a revelation given directly by God under the aspect of Jupiter" (200). This oracle foretells the reunion of Cymbeline and his lost sons; it intimates the reunion of Posthumus and Imogen; and it suggests peace between Rome and Britain:

When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown,
without seeking find, and be embrac'd by a piece
of tender air; and when from a *stately cedar* shall
be *lopp'd branches*, which, being dead many years,
shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock,
and freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his
miseries, Britain be fortunate and flourish in
peace and plenty. (5.4.138-44; emphases mine)

Here a cedar tree, like lilies, is symbolic of the gentle whereas a shrub, like weeds, symbolizes the base-born in the

Shakespearean canon: "The cedar stoops not to the base shrub's foot, / But low shrubs wither at the cedar's root" (The Rape of Lucrece, 664-65). The cedar is described as "upright" (Lover's Labor's Lost, 4.3.85), as "proud" (Coriolanus, 5.3.60), and as "seem[ing] burnish'd gold" in the twilight (Venus and Adonis, 858). In Cymbeline the cedar is accompanied by such epithets as "stately" (5.4.141), "lofty" (5.5.455), and "majestic" (5.5.459). All these epithets of the cedar imply the cedar's human counterpart--the upper gentry. "Lopp'd branches," along with "lopp'd limbs," are used as a symbol of lost or dead family members in Shakespeare's plays.¹⁰ In this play the cedar tree with lopped branches symbolizes royal Cymbeline, who has lost two princes of the blood, Guiderius and Arviragus. On a metaphorical level, this cedar tree is connected with Christ. J. S. Lawry links the image of the cedar tree that represents Cymbeline to "the Christian sacrificial tree," probably implying Christ's sacrifice (191). Robin Moffet also suggests that the cedar tree with branches stands for "the Messiah" (216). Although both Lawry and Moffet derive the relationship between Cymbeline and Christ very inferentially and loosely, their suggestions lead to my hypothesis that Cymbeline is often related to heavenly powers, another sign of his high blood. Besides his connection with the symbolic cedar tree, Cymbeline is implicitly connected to Christ in other ways. Raphael

Holinshed's Chronicles, the historical source of Cymbeline, draws attention to the historical fact that during Cymbeline's reign "the Sauour of the world our Lord Iesus Christ the onelie sonne of God was borne of a virgine" (I:479). Another reference to the relationship between Jesus and Cymbeline is that both of them agree to pay tribute to Caesar. In answer to the Pharisees' question about the tribute unto Caesar, Jesus says, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). Although Cymbeline was influenced by his Queen and Cloten not to agree about the tribute, he finally decides to give the tribute to Caesar (5.5.462 ff.). Cymbeline is thus closely related with Christ, though he is not a Christ figure. John W. Crawford compares the high blood-qualities of Cymbeline and his sons to divinity by emphasizing that much of the Tudor mind considered the king and hence his heirs as "divine representatives of God, shedding light to their ministers as God sheds light to his subordinates" (76). In this light, then, it is very natural that Cymbeline, the king of high blood or "the elect," should possess the ability to repent his sin and therefore be rewarded with the vision of rebirth.

In Cymbeline, thus, Shakespeare focuses on a thematic contrast between the man of titular rank and the man of blood, which shapes the whole structure of the play. Cloten

is at odds against three types of men of blood: the ones whose gentility matches their substantial ranks (King Cymbeline and Princess Imogen); their highest blood does not change at all notwithstanding breeding, learning, clothing, age, dietary deprivation, money, and any other influences; ones whose gentility unfolds naturally in spite of their unknown identities and ranks (Princes Guiderius and Arviragus); and the one whose gentility is revealed despite the lack of social rank (Posthumus). In contrast, the man of rank indicates the base-born who is granted a high rank--the Queen's son and the possible heir apparent--without quality (Cloten) or the degenerate gentle who holds a high status as Queen but with degenerate blood (Cymbeline's second wife). These two classes of men and women are, consciously or unconsciously, involved in various conflicts mainly on the basis of blood orientation. But whenever they meet in a physical combat or in a battle of intelligence and of love, Cloten exposes his villainy, obtuseness, stupidity, and cowardice, while the men of blood--if not degenerating temporarily--demonstrates their solid moral vision, mastery, intelligence, and valor. Spiteful and vengeful toward the happiness and prosperity of the bloods, Cloten aspires to be matched with the woman of substantial rank and royal blood (Imogen)--that is the only way to be gentle physically and socially. But Shakespeare does not allow the genetic base-born to enjoy a cross-class marriage. Thus Shakespeare

shows his biases against Cloten and his mother--representatives of the man of adventitious rank--by portraying them as the threats to the men of blood in a narrow sense and to the society and the human beings in a broader sense. The poet always suits rewards and punishments to blood-quality; the man of blood is usually rewarded with a heavenly or earthly vision (reunion, recognition, and restoration of the lost status, etc.), whereas the men of adventitious rank enjoy a temporary success or recognition, but are ultimately left to their own devices and end up being severely punished or killed by the bloods, without any glimmer of heavenly vision.

The dramaturgical dynamics manifest in the thematic conflicts between the two classes are alien to the possible sources of Cymbeline: Raphael Holinshed's Chronicles, Giovanni Boccaccio's Decameron, and the anonymous Frederike of Jennen. Holinshed offers the historical backgrounds of the play, but is mute about Cymbeline's degeneration and regeneration or about his sons' innate excellences despite the long life in a mountain cave. He simply records that Cymbeline was brought up in Rome under the favor of Caesar Augustus and during his reign the Nativity took place. As for the princes, Holinshed writes that Guiderius succeeds Cymbeline to the throne but is slain in a battle against the Roman army--quite contrary to his heroic valor and decisive commitment to the victory over the Romans and to saving the

father-king in Shakespeare's play. Decameron and Frederike of Jennen, sources for the wager scene, portray merchants' wives without comments on their blood-qualities. In order to reinforce the significance of blood Shakespeare gives the plebeian wives noble birth, thus transforms them into Imogen --the paragon of beauty, courage, and fidelity. These two sources also ignore the pattern of sin-repentance-regeneration on the basis of blood orientation. All of these three sources have nothing to do with the dynamic conflicts between the man of blood and the man of rank; by adding and modifying his sources in the light of his blood-consciousness, Shakespeare achieves his unique dramaturgical force in Cymbeline.

Notes

¹ Quoted in Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy (London: Oxford UP, 1967) 38.

² According to Sitwell, there was no gentleman in the formal sense before 1413 (Henry V's era). Sir George Sitwell, Ancestor (London, 1902) 69-70. Quoted in David Castronovo, The English Gentleman The English Gentleman, (New York: Ungar, 1987) 9.

³ In "Blood-Consciousness as a Theme in The Winter's Tale," Berkeley and Zahra Karimipour argue that "Class-originated beauty is usual in Shakespeare's plays" (92). They regard Perdita's singular beauty as "an effect of her high blood" (91). In Cymbeline Imogen's angelic beauty and her evil stepmother's beauty--like Lavinia's pure beauty and Tamora's lustful beauty--parallels the relationship between Snow White and her beautiful Evil Queen in the fairy tale Snow White. Tamora and the evil Queen's beauty is probably a major reason for Saturninus' and Cymbeline's marriage, although these evil Queens are widows with a child or children. While Cymbeline is concerned with the revelation of Cloten's villainy behind his adventitious rank on the one hand, this play also deals with the exposition of the ugly morality and debased blood behind the beautiful appearance of the Queen.

⁴ Berry observes that "Class identification is confirmed through language" and that "blank verse is the

natural medium of gentry, as with nobility and royalty. It is the language of passion, dignity, and moral elevation, hence is equated with social elevation" (xv-xvi). For more discussions about blank verse as a province of the gentry, see the previous chapter in which Othello's uses of speech in blank verse as opposed to Iago's prose.

⁵ Semen or *sperma* is considered to be a form of blood in Galen in his On the Natural Faculties mentions the functions of blood as determining the formation of all parts of the human body. Thus Thomas Walkington in The Optick Glasse of Humours (1607) says, "In the elements consists the body, in the body the blood, . . . It [blood] is a nutriment for all and singular parts of what qualities soever" (58). Aristotle's Generation of Animals (I.xix.91), Thomas Cogan's The Heaven of Health (240), Berkeley's Blood Will Tell (37), and F. S. Bodenheimer's The History of Biology (55). See Chapter II of this present study, 48-49.

⁶ Cloten's villainy in the ethical and class senses has been treated thoroughly in Berkeley's Blood Will Tell. Cloten reveals the following features--characteristic of the base-born class: "customary speech in prose" (72), body odor like a plebeian's "putrid effluvia" (74), and "[Galenic] melancholic and phlegmatic" blood (76).

⁷ This work of Lactantius, an eloquent Latin Father of the latter part of the third century, influenced many sixteenth-century writers, such as Joachim Camerarius,

Horapollo, Claude Paradin, and Gabriel Symeoni, from whom Shakespeare might have borrowed with regard to "the Arabian bird." They, according to Henry Green, make the bird typical of many Christian doctrines--"of Christ's resurrection from the dead, and of the resurrection of all mankind" Shakespeare and the Emblem Writers, (New York: Burt Franklin, 1869) 383. Green also points out that the phoenix is often compared to a noble lady as an Italian writer Giovio's quatrain writes:

Lost had she her faithful consort,
The noble Lady, as a Phoenix lonely,
To God wills every prayer, every word
Giving life to consider death with others. (235)

⁸ John Stockwood, Bartholomew Fairing (London, 1589) 79. See also the footnote in 174 of Diane Elizabeth Dreher's Domination and Defiance: Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare. The controversy over marriage without parental consent is a recurrent theme in Shakespeare's plays. In King Lear Cordelia, arguing against her sisters' cajolery, singles out women's two duties as far as she is concerned:

Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Happily, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall
carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,

[To love my father all.] (1.1.99-104)

Unlike Titus, Capulet, Brabantio, and Lear, Cymbeline appears to be influenced by his wife in his tyrannical enforcement of the patriarchal authority upon Imogen's marriage. Lavinia, Juliet, Desdemona, and Cordelia becomes tragic heroines--their tragic endings partly result from their conflicts with their fathers. Only Imogen overcomes all the obstacles including her father's tyranny, and even Cymbeline heartily blesses her marriage at the end of the play.

⁹ In many ways, Cymbeline resembles the Redcrosse Knight in Spenser's The Faerie Queene, although the former is the pagan king in a pagan country and the latter is a Christian knight and the patron saint of England. The Redcrosse Knight fails to perceive the real filthiness of Duessa, alias Fidessa, behind her false beauty and fine raiment so that when he enjoys erotic dalliance with Duessa and drinks the water from the fountain which causes whoever drinks to be powerless, he becomes the prisoner of the gigantic Orgoglio, an image of Satan, until Arthur slays the giant and saves him (Book I, Canto vii).

¹⁰ See 1 Henry IV, 4.1.43; 2 Henry VI, 2.3.42; 3 Henry VI, 2.6.47; and Titus Andronicus, 1.1.146.

CHAPTER V

"SEEDS SPRING FROM SEEDS, AND BEAUTY BREEDETH BEAUTY":

CONCLUSION

The conflicting tensions between the armigerous and the villein resonate in Titus Andronicus, Othello, and Cymbeline establishing diverse dramaturgical forces. In a gentry-dominated society, the base-borns occupy only the marginal places, fulfill minor functions, and utter inarticulate voices. Justinian's famous dictum offers a cogent picture of the social norm: *Sordes inter praecipuos nominari non merentur*--"Base persons do not deserve mention among persons of distinction." Of course, the world history records many plebeians who earn great dignities, and some thinkers and authors embrace egalitarianism in their literary career. Yet Shakespeare defies egalitarianism and avoids any cross-class marriage in his canon, even though his parents' was a cross-class union and the poet himself was designated as a villein until 1596, when his father became gentle. Shakespeare's plays draw a taut line between the two binary classes. He almost always faults the base-borns for their obtuseness, folly, cowardice, and villainy, while

heightening the gentle figures' excellences inherent in their high blood.

Shakespeare's gentles, as the Elizabethan and Jacobean gentry actually did, enjoy the gentry-dominated social norm. They condescend to the low-class persons by using various appellations and designations suggesting class distinction, such as "Honest Iago," "thou," and "villain." The base-borns often aspire to cross the demarcation line of classes by marrying gentlewomen or by climbing a social ladder at any cost, but they almost always end up being ignored, humiliated, or killed by the bloods. Sometimes, they deceive gentles by employing Machiavellian policy. In some cases, the spiteful and vengeful minds of the base-borns aim at destroying a family or the whole society which has been controlled by the gentry. Tensions arise from this spirit of revenge and spite. Sometimes, Shakespeare juxtaposes blood bias and color prejudice, as exemplified in the characterization of Aaron whose blackness in appearance suggests his base blood in reality. Sometimes, the poet underscores the significance of blood at the cost of color prejudice, as he portrays Othello as a noble character of royal blood despite his black complexion.

In tragedies (Titus Andronicus and Othello) the base-born Machiavels demonstrate some kind of intelligence, though evil and destructive. Aaron controls Tamora, the former Queen of Goths and the new Queen of Rome, and her

sons; Iago gulls Roderigo and deceives Othello and Cassio. The victimization of an innocent gentlewoman is a tragic result of the conflict between the two classes. Lavinia and Desdemona fall victims of evil. Their beloved father and husband, respectively, kill the heroines, but to prevent further dishonor. It is surprising that too easily Lavinia and Desdemona fall victims to the conflicts evil and innocent males, despite their gentility and vitality in their beauty and chastity. But this tragic victimization may be read as a dramatic device for catharsis and as a part of the poet's aesthetic intentions to create dramaturgical conflict. In a sense the villains achieve a certain aim. But they cannot survive the clash, either. Furthermore, their achievements are not the products of their assumed ability or intelligence, but they largely depend on the vulnerability of the gentles and on the playwright's contriving of coincidences. Blood degeneracy is a major factor in the vulnerability. Sighs, tears, jealousy, foreign diet, Galenic melancholy, and many other causes physical as well as mental and spiritual degeneracy, for virtually every thought and action register in their blood.

In comedies and romances like Cymbeline the heroine plays a pivotal role in the thematic conflict between the classes. Imogen courageously faces the challenge of the villain Cloten, the evil Queen's curse, and even her father's wish to dissolve her marriage to the gentle

Posthumus. Despite his adventitious rank, Cloten exposes his villainy in the genetic and ethical senses. Despite his adventitious rank as prince and the son of the Queen, his inborn villainy unfolds as he is confronted with men of innate nobility. Imogen's ruthless rejection of his courtship and his inability at fighting exemplify his native obtuseness. His clash with Guiderius in the forest and his death in a single fight with the blood is characteristic of the conflict between the bloods and the base. In contrast, the mountain princes, Guiderius and Arviragus, epitomize the dictum--"Blood will tell"--exhibiting their innate noble traits, notwithstanding any inauspicious circumstances, portentous events, and detrimental nurture.

Shakespeare employs diverse situations and characters in dramatizing the confrontation between the classes. Titus Andronicus depicts major characters as blood-oriented revenger and their bipolar opposition between the villein or villeinized foreigners and the noble Romans; Othello shows how Shakespeare capitalizes on the Elizabethan prejudices against the blacks and his own bias against the base-borns. The genuine beauty and love of the gentlewoman are often compared with the lustful beauty and immoral adultery of the degenerate gentles. Lavinia's chaste and innocent beauty and her love for the royal Bassianus, Desdemona's pure beauty and mature love for the noble Othello, and Imogen's fidelity, ingenuity, and vitality in her love for the gentle

Posthumus sharply contrast with Tamora's lustful liaison with the Aaron the black Moor, and the Evil Queen's lustful love for Cymbeline.

This study also suggests that in the Shakespearean canon blood can be villeinized or heightened for various reasons; however, the highest or lowest blood does not change at all notwithstanding breeding, learning, clothing, age, dietary deprivation, money, and adventitious social rank. The highest and purest blood (like those of Imogen and her brothers in Cymbeline), just like Jesus Christ's best blood, is not made by learning or breeding but innate and given by God, and this blood endows them with unlabored virtues, which lead them to be rewarded with the vision of rebirth. However, the lowest blood-qualities of Aaron, Iago, and Cloten, like that of Satan or fools in the Biblical sense, permit neither intrinsic virtue nor sign of outward improvement despite many of their extrinsic advantages and his seeming similarities to the gentles. Therefore, they are punished by death or torture and given no heavenly vision.

Shakespeare almost always widens the social distancing between classes found in his primary sources. Most of the blood-oriented issues--such as conflicts between the gentle and the base, patriarchal authority, sibling rivalry, primogeniture, physiological and astrological references--seem to be solely Shakespeare's, for these issues were alien

to the major sources of the play. In Titus Andronicus, Othello, and Cymbeline, as in other many plays, he modifies and adds many factors of class distinction, especially in order to create thematic conflicts between the base and the gentle. Unlike their sources, the Shakespearean plays are replete with many gentles who are strongly conscious of their blood and social status. The consciousness determines their character, personality, thoughts, actions, and language; many of the thematic structures are built on their acute consciousness and response to various blood issues-- miscegenation, marriage without parental consent, cuckoldry, degeneration, regeneration, patriarchy, primogeniture, legitimacy, inheritance, pedigree, sibling rivalry, family bond, cross-class marriage, and the clash of the classes. The dynamics of Shakespeare's dramaturgy largely lies in his skillful handling of these blood themes. Although this study focuses mainly on the three plays--Titus Andronicus, Othello, and Cymbeline--many other Shakespearean plays can be read from this perspective: the dramatic tensions arising from the bipolar conflict between the Jew Shylock and the Venetian gentlemen Bassanio and Antonio in The Merchant of Venice; the clash between the British royal authorities and Jack Cade, the leader of the peasants' rebellion in 2 Henry VI; the virulent rivalry between the legitimate son Edgar and the bastard Edmund in King Lear; fatal oppositions between Coriolanus and Roman plebeians--"The mutable, rank-

scented meiny" (3.1.69) in Coriolanus; and the turbulent conflict between the noble Prospero and Caliban, an illegitimate son of a witch and a devil. Besides the thematic conflict between the base and the gentle, various forms of feuding between the two opposing blood lines--the Yorkists and the Lancastrians--for predominance in the British court (the Wars of Roses) offer another recurrent theme and a dramaturgical force in Shakespeare's history plays. And even his poetry reveal the similar blood theme--the validity of primogeniture and legitimacy, etc. As mentioned earlier, those who ignore one of the most pivotal issues in Shakespeare's period--the significance of blood--can hardly grasp the themes and dramaturgical forces inherent in the plays and even in the poetry of Shakespeare, whose obsession with blood-consciousness permeate throughout his literary career. In every conflict between the two bipolar classes, Venus' and Belarius' declarations resonate --"Seeds spring from seeds, and beauty breedeth beauty" (Venus and Adonis 1.167); "Cowards father cowards and base things sire base" (Cymbeline 4.2.26). I hope this present study can broaden the horizon of the Shakespearean scholarships.

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