Shakespeare and the Anagram

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'I WAS WELL ENOUGH TREATED at Cambridge, but glad to leave it, it made me "*lemancholy*" for many reasons'.[1] Byron, to Hobhouse, 2 November 1811. *Lemancholy*: melancholy because of something's having gone askew, thanks to a lover, a leman. The disorder is real but it does manage to arrive at a new order. The anagrammatic shuffling is characteristically Byronic in its combination of discomposure and composure, a state of mind intimate with a state of body, love-sick.

The terms of the British Academy's Shakespeare Lecture ask for some Shakespearian subject, philosophical, historical, or philological. One focus for a loving study of words might legitimately be a device of which the legitimacy is often impugned: the anagram.

The anagram, which may be seen and not heard, may be seen as a historical phenomenon, as a religious intimation, and as a poetic device. Shakespeare's sonnets are one place to look for and at anagrams. This, not in the interests of showing that A. N. Other wrote the sonnets or that they are coded, but because the anagram—with which the minor poets of the late sixteenth century and the seventeenth century were fascinated (and of which Donne, Jonson, and Herbert signally availed themselves)— may be understood as one form that metaphor may take, in its bringing together (as does rhyme) likeness and unlikeness revelatorily.

My hope is, first, to make good a claim on behalf of anagrams as capable of being a true assistance to art, this claim then asking that I proffer

something of an anthology; second, to recollect that the particular period, the Shakespearian moment, is the heyday of the anagram, especially in its religious intimations; and third, to illustrate from Shakespeare's Sonnets the secular felicities to which the anagrammatic may variously give rise.[2]

Sonnet 14 writes of reading, and it sets something before our eyes:

> But from thine eies my knowledge I deriue,
> And constant stars in them I read such art
> As truth and beautie shal together thriue

It is not only 'from thine eies' that knowledge is derived, but from mine eyes too, since it is they that do the reading—and that read the word 'art' as derivable from the word 'stars'.

Of commentators on the Sonnets, it is Helen Vendler who has been quick-eyed when it comes to anagrammatic filaments, and in *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1997) she adduces in Sonnet 14 'the graphic overlaps among *stars*, *astrology*, *constant*, and *art*'. Since vowels and consonants are manifestly both visual and audible, there will always be an overlap of the two (phonemic or phonetic, and graphic, in Vendler's terms). I should want only to point out that the overlapping can be seen to crystallise in *stars/art*, and that this enjoys the manifest guidance of 'my knowledge I deriue' and of 'I read'. Colin Burrow, in his edition of the Sonnets, remarks that 'Vendler is a fine study of the poems' aural magic';[3] true, but given that it is Vendler's emphasis on the graphic, not on the phonetic, that most distinguishes her commentary, it comes happily to mind, within a lecture today, that my voice cannot make clear the difference between 'aural' and 'oral', the eared and the mouthed, though the eye is in no doubt as to which word is proffered.

No one knows how trustworthy is the text of the 1609 Quarto of the Sonnets, but 1609 remains all that we have, and for this first instance of mine there is no need to appeal even to old spelling. Yet the word 'read' does distinguish the art of the page from that of the stage. And the positioning of the anagrammatic turn, there at the line-ending with 'art',

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[2] I wrote briefly on anagrams in Shakespeare's Sonnets and elsewhere, in *The Balcony* (Sydney, March 1965). Helen Vendler, in *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1997), says of the line in Sonnet 87, 'In sleepe a King, but waking no such matter': 'the rhyme internally present in *a king* and *waking* (the only internal words in the poem ending in -*ing*) is therefore necessarily foregrounded, rendering the pun noticeable—though it does not seem, for all its flagrantness, ever to have been noticed'. The present writer noted it in the past, back in 1965.
[3] *The Oxford Shakespeare: Complete Sonnets and Poems* (2002), p. 108.

bears out the aptness of William Drummond of Hawthornden, in his 'Character of a perfect *Anagram*':

> An Anagram, which turneth in an Hemistich or half Verse, is most pleasant. However it be, in an Epigram or Sonnet it fitly cometh in mostly in the Conclusion, but so that it appeareth not indented in, but of it self naturally.[4]

In the Conclusion, the anagram can the more saliently take to itself something of the effect of a rhyme, a clinch.

People often speak as though there were something inherently trivialising about the anagram, as against the rhyme. This, as though there were sound effects and then those other things, unsound effects. Anagrams, it must be granted, may be trivial, flippant, or empty, but then so may be rhymes, or apt alliteration's artful aid. That 'room' rhymes with 'doom' is in itself no more arbitrary than that 'room' anagrammatises into, or may form a palindrome with, 'moor', or that 'doom' may form a palindrome with 'mood'. An anagram is no more and no less arbitrary than a rhyme. Anyway artists are arbiters, with a gift for convincing us that their acts of arbitration amount to more than the capricious or whimsical. An anagram is a coincidence, true—but you should hear the voice of the bard, and take what you have gathered from coincidence.

The anagram has been in a few respects the beneficiary of the crossword puzzle (with its incitements to be alert to what can alter), but it has mostly been the victim of the pressure from the crossword puzzle and its entertainment value, pressure to disrespect the anagram, to take it to be no more than the occasion for an ephemeral puzzlement, an item with which to kill time.

For there is a prejudice against anagrams, including on the parti pris of many poets who use them. (Not that it is unusual for poets to practise what they inveigh against; Pope deplores amphibologies, and Samuel Johnson puns.) Practice is here at odds with asseveration in three poets, in three distant ages born.

First, Ben Jonson, of whom Drummond reported that 'he scorned Anagrams & had ever in his mouth *turpe est, difficiles amara Nugas. / et stultus labor est ineptiarum*'.[5] But in *Hymenaei* (1606), Jonson put the following lines in another's mouth:

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[4] *Works* (1711), pp. 230–1.
[5] *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, i (1925), 144. In 'An Execration upon Vulcan', Jonson mentions 'those hard trifles Anagrams'. He refers to anagrams in *A Pleasant Comedy* (II. viii), *Epicoene* (III. iii), and *The New Inne* (I. vi).

> And see, where Ivno, whose great name
> Is Vnio, in the *anagram*,
> Displays her glistering state, and chaire,
> As she enlightned all the *ayre!*[6]

The masque, aware that it is for the stage, not the page, spells out 'in the *anagram*', while urging 'see' and while displaying the word 'Displayes'. Again, this poet who scorned anagrams avails himself of an intricate one, scarcely available to the ear (one would have thought), in *The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers* (1610):

> Now when the Iland hath regain'd her fame
> Intire, and perfect, in the ancient name,
> And that a *monarch* æquall good and great,
> Wise, temperate, iust, and stout, *claimes Arthurs seat*.

In the Conclusion, he who claimes Arthurs seat is Charles James Stuart, James I; the anagram is from Camden, 1605, and it recurs in Jonson's *For the Honour of Wales* (1618), where it is seconded by '*Charles Stuart, cals true hearts*'.[7] Jonson may scorn anagrams, but it is not scorn that he is using them to pour here.

The second such poet is A. E. Housman, who poured scorn on wit in poetry whenever it depended, in Dr Johnson's words, upon the 'discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike': 'Such discoveries are no more poetical than anagrams; such pleasure as they give is purely intellectual and is intellectually frivolous.'[8] True, there is a frivolous Housman poem that speaks in mock-anguish of the finite intellect, and yet how inspired it was of Housman to ensure that a poem on 'The Amphisbæna' should include a palindrome:

> The question which bereaves of bliss
> My finite intellect is this:
> Who, who, oh, who will make it clear
> Which is the front and which the rear?

'Oh who' doesn't know whether it is coming or going. But there are occasions when the anagrammatic turn is anything but frivolous. Take the opening of *A Shropshire Lad* XLI, a great evocation of the enduring wishfulness that is the pathetic fallacy, nature in sorrowing sympathy with me:

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[6] *Ben Jonson*, vii (1941), 217.
[7] *Ben Jonson*, vii. 323, 509.
[8] *The Name and Nature of Poetry* (1933), p. 13.

> In my own shire, if I was sad,
> Homely comforters I had:
> The earth, because my heart was sore,
> Sorrowed for the son she bore;

The earth is no more and no less than his heart, reconfigured and seen under a different aspect; and his heart's being 'sore' (there at the line-ending, 'in the Conclusion') then finds itself dilated, and doubly so: first, into the immediate expansion of 'sore' into 'Sorrowed', at the head of the line, and then into the expansion in the Conclusion of successive lines, 'sore' into 'son she bore'. Both 'Sorrowed' and 'son she bore' put before us, in order, s o r e. Heartfelt, the dilation, and creating, in its different way, something of the effect that Keats achieved in those lines of his that speak of 'mysteries / That made my heart too small to hold its blood'.[9]

The third such poet is T. S. Eliot, who, constraining his admiration for Marvell's 'The Definition of Love', declared: 'compared to the twistings of the brain of Donne, this is mere parroting of anagrams'.[10] Yet Eliot is the poet who opens the landscape that is 'Rannoch, by Glencoe' with a patient succinctness that profits from something anagrammatic. Not the 'parroting of anagrams', but the crow, and the company it keeps.

> Here the crow starves, here the patient stag
> Breeds for the rifle. Between the soft moor
> And the soft sky, scarcely room
> To leap or soar.

'Scarcely room': no more than there is room for a main verb in the second sentence. Room only for a word to re-arrange itself, in the moment when 'moor' ('in the Conclusion', to value Drummond yet again) turns to occupy the space of 'room', the perfectly fitting and patient anagram, or re-tracing of the steps, as a type of rhyme.[11] One way to appreciate Eliot's calm leap here is to recall the wrong softness, the lack of tautness, in the lines of Swinburne that went to the making of Eliot's moment, Swinburne's 'Prelude' to *Songs before Sunrise*, from stanza 9:

> Ah, see, between soft earth and sky,
> What only good things here are ours!

Then again Eliot would not have promptly admitted an accusation—along Housman's lines—of being intellectually frivolous, since Eliot

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[9] 'The Fall of Hyperion', i. 253–4.
[10] *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, ed. Ronald Schuchard (1993), p. 135 (the Clark Lectures, 1926).
[11] Here I draw upon my book *T. S. Eliot and Prejudice* (1988), p. 214.

delighted in making art out of what others deemed intellectual and frivo-
lous. For this or such was Eliot's way. As in 'The Love Song of J. Alfred
Prufrock':

> No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
> Am an attendant lord, one that will do
> To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
> Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
> Deferential, glad to be of use,
> Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
> Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;

Everyone can sense that this invokes Polonius. Not everyone consciously
notices, although many may unconsciously register, that the line 'Politic,
cautious, and meticulous' is one that can swell a progress as it moves from
its opening *Pol* to its Conclusion *us*, via—in sequence—o n i. Polonius
lurks behind the arras of the line.[12] In the vicinity of the arras, the metic-
ulous became the metrical in this same year in which Eliot published
Prufrock and Other Observations (1917), when he wrote: 'We may there-
fore formulate as follows: the ghost of some simple metre should lurk
behind the arras in even the "freest" verse; to advance menacingly as we
doze, and withdraw as we rouse'.[13] And in due course metre was to be
transformed again, this time into motto, when the arras shook in the duly
undulating line of 'East Coker' (1940): 'And to shake the tattered arras
woven with a silent motto'.

I

The anagram has lived as a poetic device through the ages.[14] Within
Romantic poetry, for instance, it is one of Byron's resources.[15] The Queen
had wanted to keep to herself handsome young Don Juan (who is dis-
guised as a woman and ensconced in the harem); now the eunuch Baba is
being quizzed by her about his dereliction of duty:

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[12] I have a note on this, in relation to a source for the estaminet in 'Gerontion', in the *TLS*, 14
March 1997.
[13] 'Reflections on "Vers Libre"' (1917); *To Criticize the Critic* (1965), p. 187.
[14] The 1911 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on anagrams is enduringly informative.
[15] For Byron and anagrams, see the essay in my book *Allusion to the Poets* (2002), on which I
draw here.

> But there seemed something that he wished to hide,
>   Which hesitation more betrayed than masqued;—
> He scratched his ear, the infallible resource
> To which embarrassed people have recourse.
>
> (*Don Juan*, canto VI, stanza 100)

Resource / *recourse*: this is itself both a resource and a recourse, an anagram as well as a rhyme (in the Conclusion not only of the lines but of the stanza). There is something that the lines wish both to hide and to betray (but then 'masqued' is exactly right for this duplicity). 'Resource' pulls itself together, albeit differently, as 'recourse'. Baba is recourseful and resourceful. As is Byron. Just how much, may be appreciated if one contrasts his art with a pious anagram that mentions a resource instead of realising one:

> When *I cry that I sin* is transposed, it is clear
> My resource *Christianity* soon will appear.

Byron likes to throw in an allusion and then guide it with something of an anagrammatic turn. As when a wife is eager to berate her husband. Of husbands:

> And even the wisest, do the best they can,
>   Have moments, hours, and days, so unprepared,
> That you might 'brain them with their lady's fan;'
>   And sometimes ladies hit exceeding hard,
> And fans turn into falchions in fair hands,
> And why and wherefore no one understands.
>
> (*Don Juan*, canto I, stanza 21)

The allusion is to Hotspur's contempt for 'a shallow cowardly Hinde': 'By this hand, if I were now by this Rascall, I could braine him with his Ladies Fan' (*1 Henry IV*, II. iii). Such was Byron's inspiration for the lines, but what then inspires them is his extravagantly witty play with the little letters. A fan can be expanded into a flutter or a flirt of feeling, so Byron expands the word, with a flick and a shake, into 'falchions' (swords): *fans* / *fa*lchio*ns*; and then manages to trump even this hand with the expansion into two words, again preserving the sequence of the letters: '*f*air h*and*s'.

> And fans turn into falchions in fair hands

—*turn into*, yes, you can say that again, and Byron does, twice. Or rather, he does better than say, he sets it flutteringly before our eyes. 'And why and wherefore no one understands'? But the *how* at any rate we can understand.

Byron is a master of indelicacy, Keats of delicacies. These, sometimes anagrammatic:

> for, every minute's space,
> The streams with changèd music interlace:
> Sometimes like delicatest lattices,
>   (*Endymion*, ii. 612–14)

A space of time ('every minute's space') remains at once clear and mysterious, and so is the interlacing by which 'lace' is woven into both of the words 'delicatest lattices', and this again 'in the Conclusion' of the lines. Keats creates both a 'changèd music' for the ear and fluid streams for the eye.[16]

Again, Victorian poetry delights no less, albeit differently, in what the anagram may effect. George Meredith enforced a thorough-going finality for the closing lines of the closing sonnet (L) of *Modern Love*:

> In tragic hints here see what evermore
> Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
> Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
> To throw that faint thin line upon the shore!

This conclusion may speak of hints and of that faint thin line but there is a force here that goes beyond hints and beyond anything faint and thin. Two pairs of rhymes, prised open (*evermore* / *shore* enfolding *force* / *horse*), are compounded not only by the obdurate assonance of all four conclusive lines (*more* / *force* / *horse* / *shore*) but by the final anagram, the plural *horse*, wave upon wave of them in regiment, pounding the *shore*. Ben Jonson: 'And see'; Meredith: 'here see', with the alerting of the eye to the page, 'see' being at one with the homophone 'sea' that is the groundswell of 'yonder midnight ocean's force'.

Against the tragic force of such a Victorian anagram might be set the comic darkness of the singularly different nineteenth-century poet, Emily Dickinson. A poem of hers opens:

> The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants—
> At Evening, it is not
> At Morning, in a Truffled Hut
> It stop opon a Spot
>
> As if it tarried always
> And yet it's whole Career
> Is shorter than a Snake's Delay—
> And fleeter than a Tare—

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[16] In 'Musicks Empire', Marvell, extraordinarily, brings music into apposition with the least fluid of the visual arts: 'Then Musick, the Mosaique of the Air'.

Why did she not parallel 'it is not' with the due syntax 'It stops'? *It stop*?
Answer to this riddling: because of the sudden surprise, like that of the
mushroom's dawning, that moves from 'stop' to 'Spot'—and this via the
Dickinson spelling of 'upon' as 'opon'.[17] The closing word of the line, of
the stanza, 'Spot', has no stop after it (the syntax continuing into the next
stanza with 'As if'), so that the absence of punctuation is evenly at odds
with the anagrammatic deftness. Meanwhile, 'Elf' has perhaps found
itself in reverse, in reserve, within 'Truffled', and in the second stanza 'tar-
ried' is to find itself both 'shorter' and 'fleeter' in the form of a 'tare'. Yet
once more, both the turn upon *stop* / *Spot* and that upon *tarried* / *Tare* are
precipitated 'in the Conclusion'.

'It stop opon a Spot': the relation there of the graphic to the phonetic,
at once congruent and discrepant, may be apprehended if we think of the
sound effect of the sequence, at once alike and unlike, in Beatrix Potter's
The Tale of Peter Rabbit: 'Mr McGregor came up with a sieve, which he
intended to pop upon the top of Peter; but Peter wriggled out just in time,
leaving his jacket behind him'.

Like Hopkins, Dickinson may feel more of a twentieth-century than a
nineteenth-century poet. Within recent poetry the anagram has unobtru-
sively flourished. I think, first, of Charles Tomlinson and 'A Meditation
on John Constable':

> If delight
> Describes, which wrings from the brush
>   The errors of a mind, so tempered,
> It can forgo all pathos; for what he saw
>   Discovered what he was, and the hand—unswayed
> By the dictation of a single sense—
>   Bodied the accurate and total knowledge
> In a calligraphy of present pleasure.

A poem on a painter, especially by a poet who is himself a visual artist, does
well to invite us to consider these different ways of seeing and believing. In
the apophthegmatic sequence 'what he saw / Discovered what he was', the
simplest of reversals, *saw* into *was*, can effect the most complex of appre-
hensions, and this because of the refusal to be swayed 'By the dictation of
a single sense'. Knowledge is at one with intuition and with happy acci-
dent; Tomlinson's quiet effect (there in the Conclusion of the line at 'saw')
is both continuous with and crucially different from what William Blake

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[17] Five manuscripts have the opening quatrain with no variants of wording, all with the spelling
'opon' (the usual spelling by Dickinson; see R. W. Franklin, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*
(1998), iii. 1333). Thomas H. Johnson's inaugurative edition (1955) had 'upon'.

effected when he set before our eyes and ears not an anagrammatic effect but a turn of a different kind: 'terrifid at the Shapes / Enslavd humanity put on he became what he beheld'.[18]

The instances that I shall now offer deserve more than their being reduced to instances, but my duty today is less to them than to Shakespeare. So, in brief, there is the art of Richard Morgan, who ends his 'De Provinciis Consularibus':

> The sleek roofs shine after the rain like keels
> In the rich sun which sometimes shines also on London.
> Men find it difficult not to hate this town.

I find it impossible not to love the fluidity (of water and of light) that slides with ease from 'sleek' to its reversal, in the Conclusion, as 'keels'. Contemplating again a rainscape, I am moved by the very different dislocation in the Conclusion of Ted Hughes's 'Heptonstall':

> Life tries.
>
> Death tries.
>
> The stone tries.
>
> Only the rain never tires.

The double spacing is Hughes's, following upon three quatrains that were single-spaced. Such is the conclusion of the poem, never tiring. There's indefatigability for you.

Fortunately, as Austin Clarke reminds us in 'Martha Blake', the anagram may repay prayer:

> Afflicted by that love she turns
> To multiply her praise,
> Goes over all the foolish words
> And finds they are the same;
> But now she feels within her breast
> Such calm that she is silent,
> For soul can never be immodest
> Where body may not listen.[19]

Here 'silent' is metamorphosed, with effortless felicity, in the Conclusion, into 'listen'. The stanza's succession is a combination of assonances (*turns* / *words, praise* / *same*), first with a rhyme where the stress falls upon

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[18] *Vala, or the Four Zoas: Night the Fourth.*
[19] I praised this irresistible achievement in *A Tribute to Austin Clarke on His Seventieth Birthday* (1966).

different syllables (*breast* / *immodest*) and then with assonance likewise falling upon syllables differently stressed (*silent* / *listen*) issuing furthermore in this simply miraculous anagram. (The poem had earlier apprehended: 'The word is said, the Word sent down, / The miracle is done'.) When 'silent' becomes 'listen' before our very eyes, our ears may listen for ever to or for the silent intimation. There is at this point in the poem no need for the clinching that a rhyme may be, whereas at this turn in the preceding stanza (the sixth line into the eighth), there had been the full rhyme *them* / *hem*, and in the stanza before that, the full rhyme *tongue* / *sung*.

An anagram may assist a poem in its largest movements of mind but then in its tender miniatures too. I think of the moment in Nabokov's translation of *Eugene Onegin* when Tatiana is seen *not* to embroider:

> Her delicate fingers
> knew needles not; over the tambour bending,
> with a silk pattern she
> did not enliven linen.[20]

Agreed, there is a sound-link in 'enliven linen', but it would be misleading not to see another link (in the Conclusion); the word 'linen' is glimpsed in 'enliven' in a way that is delightfully apt to the process of embroidery. The tone is one of banter, not of barter—'enliven' is, after all, a generous word, so that the shuffling of, and selection from, the letters has its own dignity, and even has something of an eighteenth-century mock-heroic manner:

> If DIAN at the Frame display'd her Power,
> And charg'd the Needle with the future Flower.[21]

The anagram may enliven poetry; there will always remain a proper doubt as to whether it can, to the same degree or in anything like the same way, enliven poetic drama. Yet Geoffrey Hill, in his masterly translation of Ibsen's *Brand*, feels free to call not only upon off-rhyme (*not* / *throat*) but upon the compounding of off-rhyme with a wrung anagram (*groan* / *organ*):

> What have I made? Not music, not
> music! Cries wrung from music's throat!
> Splayed chords of discord, a groan
> rising in the place of praise, the organ
> stormed, faltered;[22]

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[20] *Eugene Onegin*, Chapter Two, stanza XXVI; tr. Vladimir Nabokov (1964), i. 142.
[21] Phanuel Bacon, *The Kite* (1722), Canto I.
[22] *Brand: A Version for the Stage* (1978; third edn., 1996), Act V, p. 123.

Not music, in part because these cries are to be evoked by the mind's eye
as well as heard by the ear. Hill has recently urged, in section 85 of his
sequence *Speech! Speech!*, 'Develop the anagram', and in section 97 he set
before our eyes

> millennial
> doom-mood, nihilism's palindrome,

—a palindrome that dislikes the doomster's complacency, even while it
manages to call up the millennium with its central *m-m*, confirmed by all
those o/zeros. And there in sequence may be O O O O, for all the world
as though we were hearing again that Shakespeherian Rag.

There will always hang about the conversion that is anagram the pos-
sibility of something perverse, but then again it is Hill who in *The
Orchards of Syon* XXV has said broodingly 'Perverse / to persever'. Not
persevere, but the good old form, persever, ever-lasting. John Kerrigan, in
his edition of Shakespeare's sonnets, invited us to remember, though not
apropos of anagrams, that 'In our own time, the work of Geoffrey Hill
strikes the same troubled note.'[23]

II

The gravity accorded to the anagram, as a historical phenomenon within
the Renaissance, may be both seen and heard in George Chapman's
dedication of *The Iliad*:

> An Anagram of the Name of our dread Prince,
>   my most gracious and sacred Mæcaenas:
>   Henrye Prince of Wales
>   Ovr Sunn, Heyr, Peace, Life
>
> Be to us as thy great Name doth import,
>   (Prince of the people;) nor suppose it vaine,
> That in this secret, and prophetique sort,
>   Thy Name and Noblest Title doth containe
> So much right to us; and as great a good.
>   Nature doth nothing vainly; much lesse Art
> Perfecting Nature. No spirit in our blood,
>   But in our soules discourses beares a part.
> What Nature gives at random in the one,
>   In th'other, orderd, our divine part serves.

[23] *The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint* (1986), p. 29.

> Thou art not HEYR then, to our state alone;
>> But SUNN, PEACE, LIFE. And what thy powre deserves
> Of us, and our good, in thy utmost strife;
>> Shall make thee to thy selfe, HEYR, SUNN, PEACE, LIFE.

With the anagram not only at the head but, as so often, in the Conclusion.

For Matthew Arnold, this dedication by Chapman was immitigably unHomeric:

> All the Middle Age, with its grotesqueness, its conceits, its irrationality, is still in these opening pages; they by themselves are sufficient to indicate to us what a gulf divides Chapman from the 'clearest-souled' of poets, from Homer; almost as great a gulf as that which divides him from Voltaire.[24]

There is a certain comedy, given the anagrammatism by Chapman, in Arnold's mentioning Voltaire here, Voltaire who chose his name as an approximate anagram of his surname at birth, Arouet.

Religion or its sibling superstition is everywhere to be found in the onomastic divination that constituted so much of the Renaissance fervour for anagrams. James Stuart: a just master. Marie Stuvarte (Mary Stuart): Sa vertue m'attire; Tu as eu martire. It was pointed out by H. B. Wheatley that anagrams were common on tombs, 'as if the character or the fortunes of the person were providentially hidden in the name'.[25] There is the cry that one would like to think is apocryphal:

> What needs an anagram
> Since that her very name is Anna Grame?[26]

And there is the preposterous inextricability of Crashaw and his friend Car:

> CRASHAWE
> THE
> *ANAGRAMME.*
> HE WAS CAR.

> Was CAR then Crashawe; or WAS Crashawe CAR,
> Since both within one name combined are?
> Yes, Car's Crashawe, he Car; t'is loue alone
> Which melts two harts, of both composing one.
> So Crashawe's still the same: so much desired
> By strongest witts; so honor'd so admired.
> CAR WAS but HE that enter'd as a friend

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24 *On Translating Homer* I; *On the Classical Tradition*, ed. R. H. Super (1960), p. 113.
25 H. B. Wheatley, *Of Anagrams* (1862), p. 122.
26 Wheatley, p. 110.

—and so for another forty lines or ad infinitum. Still, nil desperandum, for comic relief is at hand, in Wheatley's adducing

> one of the most delightful anagrams on record. It contains all the requisites of a perfect one, every word is appropriate, and all must be charmed to find the qualities displayed in the name of such an honour to human nature as Miss Nightingale:
>
> > Flit on, cheering angel[27]

It is by no means certain that the Lady of the Lamp was one to flit; rather a heavy tread, fortunately, I'd have said. But what is clear is that the complimentary anagram has always liked the company of the satirical one, the opposite of a compliment though often with an element of reluctant admiration, especially for the natty turncoat.

> Harold Wilson: Lord Loinwash
> Tony Blair, MP: I'm Tory Plan B

Arnold's belief that between the world of Homer and that of Chapman there loomed a great gulf, and that the anagram can represent this, might have to be modified if the classical world were not that of Homer but of Lucretius. For it is a long time ago that Paul Friedländer wrote on 'Pattern of Sound and Atomistic Theory in Lucretius',[28] demonstrating that what had been thought to be jingles in Lucretius were anagrammatic effects that derived from the congruence of atoms and letters within *elementa*. Of such a turn as *Ennius / perenni*, he argued that 'Ennius *is* an eternal poet. A similar chance joined the atoms into the shape of this poet and the atoms of language into his name expressing his eternity.'[29] Friedländer's arguments persuaded the Oxford editor of Lucretius, Cyril Bailey: 'a permutation of the letters changes the meaning, just as a rearrangement of the atoms in wood may produce fire'; 'The atomism which the Epicureans found in matter, time, and space, is extended also to language.'[30] Etymology is on good terms with atomology.

The linguistic theory of the last hundred years has been drawn into this. Cratylism became execrated.[31] The poets, or some of them, remon-

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[27] Wheatley, p. 138.

[28] *American Journal of Philology* 62 (1941), 16–35.

[29] Similarly, *mater / terram* and *ligna / ignis*.

[30] *De Rerum Natura*, ed. Cyril Bailey (1947), i. 158–9.

[31] See Michel Pierssens, *La tour de Babil* (1976), perversely translated as *The Power of Babel* (1980), which attends to Plato's Cratylus, and to Saussure, Mallarmé, and onomatopoeia. Also Josué V. Harari (ed.), *Textual Strategies* (1979). The outstanding essay on the ancient argument is by Hans Aarsleff, 'Locke on Leibniz on Language' (1964), collected in his *From Locke to Saussure* (1982).

strated, especially when it came to onomatopoeia and the linguists' claim
to have shown (they have done no such thing) that, even if onomatopoeia
existed, it would constitute nothing more than a peripheral or trivial
objection to their dissociation of words from meanings. Claudel averred:

> I know only too well the objections philologians could raise. Their arguments
> would be even more crushing as regards the symbolical value of written signs
> than that of phonetic signs. And yet, no proof would convince a poet that there
> is no rapport between the sound and the meaning of a word, for if there were
> none, he might as well give up his trade straight away. And is it really so absurd
> to believe that the alphabet is the epitome and image of all acts, all gestures, all
> attitudes, and in consequence, all feelings of humanity in the midst of the vast
> creation which surrounds us?
>
> Should one believe that between phonetic movement and written sign,
> between expression and that which is expressed, throughout linguistic history,
> the rapport is purely arbitrary?[32]

Saussure notoriously pursued anagrams.[33] In pursuing Saussure,
Charles Rosen was moved to elicit explicitly what Valéry had been
realising within his poetic art:

> To conceal a word phonetically within a set of different words is a legitimate
> poetic effect; there is a famous example in Valéry's "Cimetière Marin":
>
> > La mer, la mer, toujours recommencée
> > O récompense après une pensée
> > Qu'un long regard sur le calme des dieux.
>
> The second line literally illustrates the preceding word *recommencée* by hiding
> it and expanding it over the entire line, like a larger wave that builds itself up
> and breaks after a moment's tension, broadening the faster and more regular
> rhythm that preceded it.[34]

This is exquisitely noticed. One might add that 'recommencée' does then
itself inaugurate a recommencing; that wittily this word is positioned not
at a commencing but 'in the Conclusion' of the line; that the calm of the
gods is Lucretian in a way that might be apt to atomology; and that
Rosen's word 'phonetically', though true, does less than justice to the
element that is graphic, the intimation to the eye that—giving weight to
'literally' as of the letters, and to 'illustrates' as for the eye—'literally
illustrates the preceding word *recommencée* by hiding it and expanding it'.

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[32] Quoted in Massin, *Letter and Image* (1970), p. 127.
[33] See Jean Starobinski: *Les mots sous les mots: les anagrammes de Ferdinand de Saussure* (1971);
perversely translated as *Words upon Words* in 1980.
[34] 'Concealed Structures' (1971), in *Romantic Poets, Critics, and Other Madmen* (1998), p. 196.

Rosen moves on to make two general points, both strong although the first need not, I continue to believe, narrow itself to a *phonetic* pattern:

> The significance of Saussure's ninety-nine notebooks is to show the intimate relationship between poetry and the processes of language and, above all, to demonstrate the power of a phonetic pattern to demand a meaning, the right to exist as a truly functioning part of language.

> Saussure thought he was investigating not an attribute of language, but an esoteric technique of poetry. Ironically, what he found was an attribute of language which is a necessary condition for the existence of poetry.[35]

The poets, no less than the linguists, have a way of havering. Valéry avers that 'There is no relationship whatsoever between the sound and the meaning of a word.' But this thoroughgoing insistence is modified, irreparably albeit evasively, when Valéry also claims: 'We realize that there is hardly an instance in which the connection between our ideas and the groups of sounds that suggest them each in turn is anything more than arbitrary or purely fortuitous.'[36] 'Hardly an instance' is easily said.

But I should return from this controversy, ancient and modern, to the historical phenomenon and the Shakespearian moment. For the cult of the anagram, both occult and overt, is markedly a phenomenon of the half century that begins by nursing Shakespeare and his art. The *OED* can be seen to concentrate the word *anagram* and its cognates.

1589	anagram	Puttenham
c.1590	anagrammatized	Marlowe
1591	anagrammatize	Nashe
1605	anagrammatical	
	anagrammatically	
	anagrammatism	Camden, all three words
1613	anagrammatist	Gamage
	anagrammist	Hoby
1630	anagram [verb]	Taylor
1636	anagramize	Sampson

There is an intense topicality, then, attending upon the anagrams of this period; one might comparably imagine the annotation that, in times to come, will be needed by a future reader who stares blankly at a cartoon that shows a man in front of a computer screen and the words Waiting for Godot.com.

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[35] Rosen, pp. 197–8.
[36] Both quoted by Gérard Genette, *Textual Strategies*, pp. 369–70.

Moreover, this concentration is furthered if one adds to it, from these same years, the nouns *transposition* (especially of letters in a word, 1582) and *transpose* (1589, Puttenham). It is Puttenham who in *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), the second book, chapter XII, writes at some length 'Of the Anagrame, or Posie transposed':

> One other pretie conceit we will impart vnto you and then trouble you with no more, and is also borrowed primitiuely of the Poet, or courtly maker we may terme him, the *posie transposed*, or in one word a *transpose*, a thing if it be done for pastime and exercise of the wit without superstition commendable inough and a meete study for Ladies, neither bringing them any great gayne nor any great losse, vnlesse it be of idle time. They that vse it for pleasure is to breed one word out of another, not altering any letter nor the number of them, but onely transposing of the same, wherupon many times is produced some gratefull newes or matter to them for whose pleasure and seruice it was intended: and bicause there is much difficultie in it, and altogether standeth vpon hap hazard, it is compted for a courtly conceit.

Puttenham inadvertently bears witness to the wrangle as to whether the anagram is pastime or providence. This paragraph may limit its pleasure in the anagram to 'pastime and exercise of the wit without superstition commendable inough and a meete study for Ladies, neither bringing them any great gayne nor any great losse, vnlesse it be of idle time'. Yet in no time Puttenham himself is marvelling at the divinations of which he was the conduit, manifest in the anagrams in Latin with which he honoured Queen Elizabeth:

> Both which resultes falling out vpon the very first marshalling of the letters, without any darknesse or difficultie, and so sensibly and well appropriat to her Maiesties person and estate, and finally so effectually to mine own wish (which is a matter of much moment in such cases), I took them both for a good boding, and very fatallitie to her Maiestie appointed by Gods prouidence for all our comfortes. Also I imputed it for no litle good luck and glorie to my selfe to have pronounced to her so good and prosperous a fortune . . .[37]

'Gods prouidence' is promptly and prudently seconded by 'no litle good luck', a playing of both sides of the street which is called Straight such as is worthy of Benjamin Jowett's famous sermon in Balliol Chapel in 1874: 'We owe this to Providence, and a series of happy accidents'.[38]

To Puttenham in these years should be added William Camden, likewise on onomastic 'Anagrammes', where again there is a reluctance either to credit or to discredit the religious and superstitious claims:

[37] *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith (1904), ii. 112, 114–15.
[38] *Geoffrey Madan's Notebooks*, ed. J. A. Gere and John Sparrow (1981), p. 114.

The onely *Quint-essence* that hitherto the *Alchimy* of wit coulde draw out of names, is *Anagrammatisme*, or *Metagrammatisme*, which is a dissolution of a Name truly written into his Letters, as his Elements, and a new connexion of it by artificiall transposition, without addition, substraction, or change of any letter into different words, making some perfect sence appliable to the person named.

But some of the sower sort will say it is nothing but a troublous toy, and because they cannot attaine to it, will condemne it, lest by commending it, they should discommend themselves. Others more milde will grant it to be a daintie devise and disport of wit not without pleasure, if it be not wrested out of the name to the reproach of the person. And such will not deny, but that as good names may be ominous, so also good *Anagrammes*, with a delightfull comfort and pleasant motion in honest mindes, in no point yeelding to many vaine pleasures of the body.[39]

III

The contrast between the anagram as a religious intimation and as a secular device may be seen if one sets Herbert beside Donne. Herbert, as everyone knows, has several poems that incorporate such effects, whether as a diagonal italicising ('*My* words & thoughts do both express this notion'), as an echo-poem ('Paradise', GROW / ROW / OW), or as a spelling-out ('JESU', *I ease you*). But one poem of his can be seen to turn entirely upon an anagram.

$$Ana\text{-}\left\{\begin{matrix} \text{M A R Y} \\ \text{A R M Y} \end{matrix}\right\} gram.$$

How well her name an *Army* doth present,
In whom the *Lord of Hosts* did pitch his tent!

The title in 1633 divides *Ana* from *gram*, these then enfolding the anagram *Mary* / *Army* as though pregnant with it, miraculously pregnant.[40]

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[39] Camden, 'Anagrammes', *Remains Concerning Britain* (1605), ed. R. D. Dunn (1984), pp. 142–3; 'will condemne it, lest by commending it' has something of the anagrammatic about it. Drummond of Hawthornden begins his 'Character of a perfect *Anagram*' with '*Anagrams* are Names turned', and he reports: 'One will say, it is a frivolous Art and difficult' (*Works*, 1711, pp. 230–1).

[40] Randall McLeod, writing as Random Cloud, comments: 'when Herbert constructs a title like

$$Ana\text{-}\left\{\begin{matrix} \text{M A R Y} \\ \text{A R M Y} \end{matrix}\right\} gram.$$

The name *Mary* does not appear in the poem itself; it is known and is to be divined.[41] In the title, the palindrome *ana* is consummated, in due course, by *gram*, which does have much of the look of *mary* spelt backwards (a lower-case y is all but a g).

It is odd, and to me a disappointment, that Herbert's great editor F. E. Hutchinson says nothing at all about anagrams in this period (but then he has no notes at all to the poem, other than textual variants); the providential compliment that was so often the *raison d'être* of the anagram would seem worth adducing, as would the recency of the vogue or cult in English poetry. But Rosemond Tuve did much to rectify Hutchinson's neglect, and her account of Herbert's poem is a *locus classicus* not only for it but for many such contextualisings:

> Two traditional associations made this poem both less startling and more enjoyable to its writer and its first readers than to us. The first is the image of an army with banners for the Virgin Mary, in biblical commentary, in the liturgy of many of her feasts, and in the motets which a person knowledgeable about church-music would know.
>
> The anagrammatic point, possible only in English, is (to my knowledge) Herbert's own; but it would not be easy for even an ill-read seventeenth-century Anglican cleric to avoid thinking of Mary and Army as belonging together, and, moreover, to think of that Army as 'The Church Militant' *as well as* Mary. I wish I knew how many of my readers had caught on first reading the whole new spread of meaning which this double operation of the metaphor gives to a poem that is not so tiny after all—Herbert is constantly preoccupied with how the Lord of Hosts has 'pitched his tent' in the heart of his *familia*, and Mary is the great allegory of that descent and union. The last line is not only, in other words, a reference to the event of the Incarnation, but to the Incarnation as itself a great metaphor.
>
> It is also, of course, a reference to the Incarnation as an event, and in most conventional terms, novel and witty as they may seem to us. They are wittier than we see. 'Pitched his *tent*' has for us various unsuitable reverberations; for Herbert it held pretty certainly the different and much deeper implications of

he throws together different spacial modes. This uneasy combination resists our accustomed strategies of reading. Do we read "*Anagram*" and then the contents of the brackets, which sunder it? And do we read "ARMY" then "MARY", or "MARY" then "ARMY"? ('Enter Reader'; *The Editorial Gaze: Mediating Texts in Literature and the Arts*, ed. Paul Eggert and Margaret Sankey (1998), pp. 5–6.)

[41] A very different not-naming from Herbert's has been adduced in 'The Triumph of King James and his August Descendants', where—writing as Ana Mary Armygram—Randall McLeod comments on a detail in Willem van der Passe's engraving of the family of King James, where the revisions to the plate brought about some strange substitutions as to names and faces: 'the royal consort What's-her-Face was never even *named*? In life, her name was Henrietta Maria' (*Shakespeare Studies*, 28 (2000), 184–8).

some common Vulgate phrase like 'extendit *tabernaculum* suum', which it translates. 'Pitched his *tent* in' appears a dozen times as the King James translation of '. . . tabernaculum'. Durandus explicitly glosses *tabernaculum* as 'tent' or 'womb of Mary'.[42]

To this ample account, what might be added? First, I should desire—I would, wouldn't I?—a fuller context for the anagram, and in particular for the anagram that divines a providential truth within a name. There is more to be furnished than simply 'The anagrammatic point, possible only in English, is (to my knowledge) Herbert's own.' Second, the contrast of the Church Militant with the Prince of Peace and with peace upon the face of the earth. Third, the extraordinary wealth of the noun *presentation* and of the verb *present*, its presenting so many aspects that are germane to the poem's contrasts and to the one far-off divine effect from which the whole creation moved. These, from the *OED*, are apt aspects devout, humble, generous, clerical, and military.

> *presentation* 1a. The formal bringing or presenting of a person before God, as a religious act. Specifically, the *Presentation of Christ in the Temple*, as recorded in Luke ii. 22–39, and *Presentation of the Virgin Mary*, as a child, narrated in the Apocryphal Gospels. 1400. [including] The Book of Common Prayer (1662) The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, commonly called, the Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin.
>
> *present* 1a. To bring or place (a person) before, into the presence of, or under the notice of another . . . *spec*. to introduce at court, or before a sovereign or other superior. *c*.1290
>
> 1b. To bring before or into the presence of God; to dedicate by so bringing. 1387
>
> 5b. To offer (battle or the like). 1600
>
> 9a. To point (a weapon, esp. a fire-arm) at something; to hold (it) out in the position of taking aim, so as to be ready to fire immediately. 1579
>
> 11 To bring or place (a thing) before or into the presence of a person . . . give (usually in a formal or ceremonious manner). With various connotations: as (*a*) to offer or give as a gift; (*b*) to offer as an act of worship, as a sacrifice; (*c*) to offer or hand something in ministration, service, or courtesy; (*d*) to deliver or hand a letter; (*e*) to offer a book or literary work to readers.
>
> 11c. To deliver, convey, give (something non-material, esp. a message, greeting, or the like). 1385
>
> 12 To give, make presentation of (a benefice) *to* a clergyman. 1390

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[42] *A Reading of George Herbert* (1952), pp. 138–40.

All of these senses of the verb, variously and proportionately alive to and in the poem, come together with yet one more, one that gravitates to this earthly birth:

> 9b. *Obstetrics*. Of the fœtus: To direct (a particular part) towards the *os uteri* during labour. Usually *intr.* for *refl.* said of the part so directed, or of the fœtus in relation to its position during labour.
> 1597 Followinge the naturall Childebirth, the childe allways præsenteth first his heade.

There remains perhaps one further play within Herbert's succinct success. For a poem that both is and announces an anagram, and that begins 'How well her name . . .', may wish us to see that not only the name *Mary* but the word *name* may present an anagram: *amen*. And several filaments could be plaited together to strengthen this. First, the sequence of sound in 'her name an *Army*', with '*Army*' setting out as though it might issue in *Amen*. Second, the fact that the phrase 'Army doth present' contains, in sequence, the letters a m e n. Third, that if we bear in mind that Herbert's poem invokes the Church Militant, it may be worth pondering the one occasion on which the word 'Amen' is invoked in a poem of his (and this 'in the Conclusion', at the end of a line and of a sentence): in, of all poems, 'The Church Militant' (53–6):

> *Plato* and *Aristotle* were at a losse,
> And wheel'd about again to spell *Christ-Crosse*.
> Prayers chas'd syllogismes into their den,
> And *Ergo* was transform'd into *Amen*.

Spelling is succeeded, not by a spell, but by a miracle, the language of pagan philosophy transformed into that of the Christian religion: 'And *Ergo* was transform'd into *Amen*.' Now that is what you might call a miracle. The third line—'Prayers chas'd syllogismes into their den'—contains within itself, in sequence, a m e n, from the first word to the last (or, if you prefer a slightly later *a*, from the second word, 'chas'd', to the last). But no amount of anagrammatic ingenuity could have transformed Ergo into Amen. That asked a miracle.[43] 'Name' into 'Amen' is a different story. And it may well be that one heartfelt response to Herbert's poem—

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[43] Frances Whistler has brought home to me the further anagrammatic teasing in these lines: the *Plato* / *Aristotle* overlap, and *risto* taken up within *Christ-Crosse*. To spell *Christ-Crosse* was to rehearse the alphabet.

> How well her name an *Army* doth present,
> In whom the *Lord of Hosts* did pitch his tent!

—would be the subtle simplicity of *Amen to that*.[44]

The anagram, then, may lend itself to deep and haunting suggestive-ness. There is the explicit question and the implicit answer that (in the spirit of Herbert though not by him) sees within Pilate's scepticism, *Quid est veritas?*, the profoundest faith: *Est vir qui adest*—'It is the man who is in your presence'.[45] It is not for Christ to reply to Pilate's 'What is truth?', with anything of pride or vanity: 'I am', or 'Me, actually'. Or even to tap His finger upon His chest. Rather, there is alive within Pilate's question, if only Pilate had ears to hear, the tacit answer itself. And how finely the anagram has Christ speak of himself, not only in the third person (as in Herbert's line, with its turn from 'I' to the 'he' who is both Son and Father: 'Why, he that built the world can do much more'),[46] but as a man: *vir*. To me it would be a wanton prejudice for anyone to deny imaginative power to such a feat of inspired simplicity as *Quid est veritas? Est vir qui adest*.

It is not Herbert but Donne whose ways with the anagrammatic are securely secular. The practice of dubbing 'The Anagram' what was in Donne's posthumous volume of 1633 'Elegie II' is ill-judged for two rea-sons. First, neither 1633 nor any of the manuscripts can lend authority to

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[44] Mary was the beneficiary of the best-known religious palindrome, the angel's salutation to her as the second Eve: *Ave* / *Eva*. Robert Southwell, 'The Virgins salutation', opens:

> Spell *Eva* backe and *Ave* shall you finde,
> The first began, the last reverst our harmes,
> An Angels witching wordes did *Eva* blinde,
> An Angels *Ave* disinchants the charmes,
> Death first by womans weakenes entred in,
> In womans vertue life doth now begin.

'In womans vertue' there is, in sequence, a v e.

[45] The *OED* has this under 'anagrammatically', from Chambers, *Cycl.*, 1751. The feat feels medieval. H. B. Wheatley, *Of Anagrams* (1862), p. 87, uses the word 'elements' in duly mar-velling: 'When Pilate asked the question, "What is truth?" Jesus returned him no answer, but, strange to say, the words themselves contained the elements of the best and most appropri-ate reply: *Quid est veritas?* / *Est vir qui adest*'. A triumph for the Latin Vulgate, not for the Greek.

[46]
> Some said, that I the Temple to the floore
> In three days raz'd, and raised as before.
> Why, he that built the world can do much more:
>   Was ever grief like mine?
>   ('The Sacrifice' 65–8)

'The Anagram' as title.[47] Second, the titular announcement 'The Anagram' reduces to predictable anticlimax what ought to be the sudden surprise of the cruel crux in mid-poem:

> Though all her parts be not in th'usuall place,
> She'hath yet an Anagram of a good face.[48]
> If we might put the letters but one way,
> In the leane dearth of words, what could wee say?

Donne himself likes to counteract the lean dearth of words with the adipose comedy that the anagrammatic can tickle, as in 'Loves diet':

> To what a combersome unwieldinesse
> And burdenous corpulence my love had growne,
>   But that I did, to make it lesse,
>   And keepe it in proportion,
> Give it a diet, made it feed upon
> That which love worst endures, *discretion*.

Here 'corpulence', 'had growne', and 'feed upon' are set against 'to make it lesse'—and what better way could there be of feeding this contrarious process than by having *diet* grow corpulently into *discretion*? 'In the Conclusion', too, of line, sentence, and stanza.

But let me do no more than point to this kind of life in Donne from word to word. In 'Elegie VIII: The Comparison', the 'beauty-keeping chest' is constituted not only of the lodging of *urne* within *fortunes* but of *best* within *brest* (in the Conclusion):

> Like Proserpines white beauty-keeping chest,
> Or Joues best fortunes urne, is her faire brest.

In 'Elegy XII: His parting from her', the impossibility that you and I might ever be sundered is manifest in the way in which *Rend us* is reconstituted as

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[47] So I have to dissent from the titular decision in the magnificent achievement that is *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne, Vol. 2: The Elegies* (ed. Gary A. Stringer, Ted-Larry Pebworth, Ernest W. Sullivan, II, John R. Roberts, Diana Trevio Benet, Theodore J. Sherman, and Dennis Flynn, 2000): 'we have supplied the heading popular in the poem's printed sources (*The Anagram*)'. Not in the printed source 1633.

[48] 'She'hath yet an Anagram of a good face': there is a candidate for an anagram of 'good face', one that might have occurred to the poet whose quizzical blasphemy gives us, in 'The Relique', 'Thou shalt be a Mary Magdalen, and I / A something else thereby'—inviting 'A Jesus Christ'. The editions of Donne have seen, or mis-seen, no need to tell us anything about the vogue or passion for anagrams at the time (with its possible relevance to dating this Elegy), whether the editor be Herbert Grierson, Helen Gardner, A. J. Smith, C. A. Patrides, John Shawcross, or, most crucially, those of the Variorum edition of the Elegies.

sunder, and this in the immediate vicinity not only of 'canst not divide' rhyming with 'ty'd', but of a quiet pun on 'letters' and a hint of the anagrammatic in the word 'shifts':

> Rend us in sunder, thou canst not divide
> Our bodies so, but that our souls are ty'd,
> And we can love by letters still and gifts,
> And thoughts and dreams; Love never wanteth shifts.

Elsewhere, still preoccupied with 'thoughts', Donne relishes the idea that an honest lover's thoughts need never fear their being transparent to others. The interaction is between his loved word for the transparent, 'through-shine', and the thought:

> This, as an Amber drop enwraps a Bee,
> Covering discovers your quicke Soule; that we
> May in your through-shine front your hearts thoughts see.
> <div align="right">('To the Countesse of Bedford')</div>

There 'through-shine front' can help us to see, without misgiving, 'thoughts'. And in 'The first Anniversary: A Funerall Elegie' we meet again an enwrapping, a covering and a discovering, a rejection of disguise when it contemplates a body's honest relation to thought and to mind:

> One, whose clear body was so pure and thinne,
> Because it need disguise no thought within.
> 'Twas but a through-light scarfe, her minde to'inroule;

—where 'thought' is duly inrouled within 'through-light'.

Expansion and contraction alternate happily. In 'Elegie XIX: Going to Bed', *far fairer* enacts its comparative before our very eyes and ears, with its diffusion (set paradoxically against the girdle, the zone, the incompassing) enacted doubly, as *far* first is expanded into *fair* and then, incompassing the whole happy sigh, yet again into *fairer*:

> Off with that girdle, like heavens Zone glittering,
> But a far fairer world incompassing.

In 'To the Countesse of Salisbury', there is not dilation but contraction, there in the rhyme that makes abridgement and that draws to less:

> All trying by a love of littlenesse
> To make abridgments, and to draw to lesse,

It was Geoffrey Hartman who did so much to create the terms of such elicitings, when he attended to the opening of 'A Hymne to Christ, at the Authors last going into Germany'.

The qualified hope, the precarious finality of Donne's poetry is also that of religious hope. How to 'cross-over'—or the dangers of passage—is the central theme:

> In what torn ship soever I embark
> That ship shall be my emblem of thy ark.

'Whatsoever' opens and swallows 'torn ship' as the poet severs the grammatical bond to interject his fear. But 'embark' also opens to let a saving rhyme, 'emb(lem) . . . ark,' emerge as the poet converts fear into hope by further prolepsis.[49]

Hartman is lastingly effective in his apprehension of Donne's effects here, and my only furthering would be, first, to evoke yet again Drummond's 'in the Conclusion', and second, to mention the increment that comes with old spelling as against Hartman's modernised text.

> In what torne ship soever I embarke,
> That ship shall be my embleme of thy Arke.
> What sea soever swallow mee, that flood
> Shall be to mee an embleme of thy blood;

In setting *I*, *my*, *mee*, *mee*, in subjection to *thy* and *thy*, these lines in their old spelling give salience to the *me* that is in *embarke* and that is reiterated in *embleme*, itself reiterated.

Helen Vendler has said of Shakespeare's Sonnet 107: '*Rime* even contains *me*, so that "*I*'ll live in this poor r*ime*" becomes a self-guaranteeing statement'. This may well be so, and yet to think of those four lines of Donne is to have a more insistent instance before us. And the same is true of Donne's play with *I* and *me*, as against *her* and *her*, in 'Elegy XVII: Variety':

> The last I saw in all extreames is faire,
> And holds me in the Sun-beames of her haire;
> Her nymph-like features such agreements have

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[49] 'The Voice of the Shuttle' (1969); *Beyond Formalism* (1970), p. 345. In our day, the great poet of the dilated rhyme is Geoffrey Hill, who sets before us (and here I draw upon my essay in *The Force of Poetry*) the grossly burgeoning unimaginability of Auschwitz, with the very sounds moving from delicacy ('a fable') into the fattened slabs of monumental evil:

> Many have died. Auschwitz,
> Its furnace chambers and lime pits
> Half-erased, is half-dead; a fable
> Unbelievable in fatted marble.
>   ('Of Commerce and Society' IV)

For '*fa*tted mar*ble*' is a distending of the word 'fable' into a sleek stoniness; and 'fatted' is the ancient sacrifice.

—lines which tempt a critic to underline what he sees as held before him
in agreements:

> The last I saw in all extrea*me*s is faire,
> And holds *me* in the Sun-bea*me*s of her haire;
> Her nymph-like features such agree*me*nts have

IV

> Creating euery bad a perfect best
> As fast as obiects to his beames assemble:
>   (Sonnet 114)

How conclusively *assemble* assembles those *beames*.[50] Shakespeare is like
Donne, not like Herbert: the anagram is not God's providence but is a
provision; not providential, but provisional. The editors of the Sonnets
have been right, I believe, unlike the editors of Donne and of Herbert, not
to draw attention to anagrams or to anagrammatic effects (clusters of let-
ters of which the repetition does not amount to a sheer anagram). This,
not because there are no such things in the Sonnets, but because an edi-
tor should not do a reader's work of this kind, any more than an editor,
qua editor, should draw attention to alliteration or internal rhyme. Except
in cases where there is information that we lack as readers (as happens
when it comes to the overt invoking of the anagram by Donne and by
Herbert), we should be left by editors to do our own noticing, even while
we all stand in need of help from critics (who are distinguishable from
editors, though not distinct from them).

So I judge it well-judged of recent editors to have been silent here-
abouts: John Kerrigan, *The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint* (1986);
Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1997); and Colin
Burrow, *Complete Sonnets and Poems* (2002). The position of Stephen
Booth is somewhat different, for in his unremittingly imaginative edition
of the Sonnets ('Edited with an analytic commentary', 1977), Booth
does find room for just about everything that might ever enter anyone's
head when it comes to a word's interactions with other words. So, given
this capaciousness of his, it is surprising that he has no interest in the
anagrammatic. Helen Vendler, on the other hand, who gives us not an
edition but a commentary (along with the Sonnets both modernised and

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[50] Kerrigan: 'as quickly as things seen take shape in its (the *eye*'s) gaze. Alluding, again, to the
idea that the *eye* creates the *beams* by which it sees'.

in their 1609 text), makes effects of this kind the central contention and solicitation of her book, *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*.[51]

Keats wrote to Reynolds, 22 November 1817:[52]

> One of the three Books I have with me is Shakespear's Poems: I neer found so many beauties in the sonnets—they seem to be full of fine things said unintentionally—in the intensity of working out conceits—Is this to be borne? Hark ye!
>
>> When lofty trees I see barren of leaves
>> Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
>> And Summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
>> Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard.

Keats's own language is itself full of fine things said unintentionally, if by this we mean without conscious intention perhaps—the move from 'unintentionally' to 'intensity', for instance, or the awe at Shakespeare's power, scarcely endurable for a fellow-poet, 'Is this to be borne?', when the Shakespearian power is to be adduced in 'Borne on the bier'. If we restore the 1609 spelling to the lines from Sonnet 12, even more may be glimpsed 'in the Conclusion':

> And Sommers greene all girded vp in sheaues
> Borne on the beare with white and bristly beard:[53]

Kerrigan remarks the double sense of 'bier' ('barrow for carrying harvested hay and grain', and 'stand upon which a corpse rests or is carried'), and speaks of 'a kind of fruitful corpse'.[54] The paradox—which is the one that James Joyce girded up in his anagrammatic spelling *cropse*, 'on the bunk of our breadwinning lies the cropse of our seedfather'—might then be compounded by the old spelling 'beare' (as against 'bier'), since this

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[51] For witty scepticism about some aspects of Vendler, see William Logan, *Parnassus* 24 (1999), 268–9: 'she's all too eager to find "hidden" anagrams, like a dotty Scrabble player: "The *mira* of *miracle* may have appealed to Shakespeare as an anagram of *rima* (rhyme)"'. (This is Vendler on Sonnet 65.) Logan: 'More than one line, like "Devouring time blunt thou the Lyons pawes" (19.1) or "And from the forlorne world his visage hide" (33.7), contains the scrambled letters h-e-l-e-n v-e-n-d-l-e-r; the latter even conceals the letters h-e-l-e-n v-e-n-d-l-e-r h-i-d t-h-i-s. Shakespeare played language games, but perhaps not these games.' For my part, though I dissent from a good many of Vendler's suggestions, I cannot—as will already be clear—agree with Logan that 'Such cryptograms, even if real, wouldn't tell us much', given moreover that for me the effects are not any such cryptograms.

[52] *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (1958), i. 188–9.

[53] 'beare' = bier, and 'beard' off-rhymes with 'herd', though no-one knows exactly with what sound.

[54] Introduction, p. 38.

has affiliations not only with 'Borne' ('Borne on the beare') but with its homophone 'Born'.[55] ('Thou met'st with things dying, I with things new borne'.) A fruitful corpse, then, because *not* barren even if the trees are now 'barren of leaues'. Vendler points out that 'the Quarto spelling, *beare*, so resembles the anthropomorphic *beard*', the one word resembling the other both to the eye and the ear.[56]

The complex interplay within 'Borne on the beare with white and bristly beard' might be contrasted with the simplicity of movement in Sonnet 15:

> Then the conceit of this inconstant stay,
> Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,

Vendler demonstrates the sheer candour of this: '*Sets YOU most rich in YOUTH before my sight*. As tru-th is true-ness and streng-th is strong-ness, so you-th is you-ness, in this adoring pun'. This is itself adorable, and it tacitly appreciates the entire identity of sound and sight ('before my sight') in the relation of *you* to *youth*. The full and equable accommodation of the one word within the other makes the effect less of a transpose and more of a transport. And this happy ease should be contrasted with the sense of mild strain that bears witness to the complication of feelings in Sonnet 22, where *youth / thou* is not, and should not be, felt to be quite the same as the earlier *you / youth*.

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[55] Burrow: 'The combination of senses [of 'bier'] turns harvest into a funeral, as the friend turns opportunities for reproduction into self-love'. With reproduction then into born, perhaps.

[56] Contrast elsewhere the disconcerting discrepancy of eye and ear, of sight and sound, 'in the Conclusion' of the line, in Sonnet 89: 'knowing thy wil, / I will acquaintance strangle and looke strange'. How it looks is different from how it sounds, the hard g against the soft. Shakespeare's intimations through discrepancy must modify, for me, one of Vendler's delighted observations, on Sonnet 29:

> Yet in these thoughts my selfe almost despising,
> Haplye I thinke on thee, and then my state,
> (Like to the Larke at breake of daye arising)
> From sullen earth sings himns at Heauens gate,

In the most joyous play of the poem, the disgruntled present participles—*wishing*, *desiring*, with their "wrong" arrangement of letters—suddenly give rise to new present participles where the letters are arranged "right": *despising*, *arising*, and then the verb *sing*—*sing, sing,*
  sing! The poem fairly carols.

This is lovely, and yet it ought to acknowledge the different s to be heard in *sing* as against in the participles where it is sounded as z. There is not a perfect fit of eye to ear, or of ear to ear, and this protects the lines against their being too gratifying, too sweet a carol.

> My glasse shall not perswade me I am ould,
> So long as youth and thou are of one date,
> But when in thee times forrwes I behould,
> Then look I death my daies should expiate.[57]

Both 'behould' and 'look I' do something to set the poem before not only
our ears but our eyes. And the same is true of 'truly write' in Sonnet 21:

> and all things rare,
> That heauens ayre in this huge rondure hems,
> O let me true in loue but truly write,
> And then beleeue me, my loue is as faire,
> As any mothers childe, though not so bright
> As those gould candells fixt in heauens ayer:
>   Let them say more that like of heare-say well,
>   I will not prayse that purpose not to sell.

The word 'heare-say' in the sonnet's penultimate line has perplexed edi-
tors. Booth: 'The word is curiously weak and flat here; its choice was
probably dictated by Shakespeare's desire to include the idea that other
poets write (say) only what they have heard, i.e. stock phrases.' I, as will
be expected, resist the equating in 'write (say)', since the Sonnets seem to
me alive to the difference. Hear + say, as against writing and reading.
(Burrow on *hearsay*: 'oral testimony rather than truth, making an implicit
opposition between the private "writing" of Shakespeare and the public
report of the imagined other poets'.) But I can lend a sympathetic ear to
Booth's subsequent cockings of his:

> Shakespeare may also have been attracted to the word *hearsay* by its potential for
> play on 'heresy,' 'here-say,' 'air-say' (see *heaven's air* in line 12), and possibly
> 'her-say' or 'hare-say'; the evidence of Elizabethan puns and rhymes is not defin-
> itive, but the words we spell 'her,' 'here,' 'hear,' 'hair,' 'hare,' 'heir,' and—since
> initial *h* was ordinarily silent in common words—'ear' and 'air,' all apparently
> sounded enough alike to be confusable.

Vendler, along her lines (which are for me among the right ones), looks
for the anagrammatic: 'It is impossible for me not to find *heare-say* (the
Quarto) a derivation from *reherse* [in line 4] (also Quarto spelling),
thereby accounting for the rather odd presence of *heare-say* in line 12
[*read* 13].' Vendler's is a point that would not be forfeited but fortified if
to 'reherse' there were added the phrase, 'heauens ayre', repeated as

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'heauens ayer' just before 'heare-say' and anagramatically to be found hemmed in its rondure.

Anagrammatising, then, may be germane to emendation. There is the inspired double (and related) error 'in the Conclusion' of Sonnet 23:

> O learne to read what silent loue hath writ,
> To heare wit eies belongs to loues fine wiht.

Booth: 'The Q spelling, "wit," probably reflects only the printer's inclination or carelessness, but, whatever the spelling, Shakespeare and his readers probably heard some kind of likeness between contemporary pronunciations of *with* and *wit*, the last word of the poem.' Vendler: 'The faulty Quarto spelling in line 14 (*wit* for *with*, and *wiht* for *wit*) suggests that even the compositor's eye was distracted by the play of *with* and *wit* in the one line.' When Burrow agrees that 'Q's compositor was thrown by the play on *with* and *wit*', his picking up Vendler's word *play* might call up the contrast upon which the whole sonnet turns, the contrast of play with poem, of stage with page, that nevertheless is well aware that we watch the stage (not the same as reading, and yet . . .) and that we hear in our heads the words on the page (not the same as the stage, and yet):

> As an vnperfect actor on the stage,
> Who with his feare is put besides his part,
> Or some fierce thing repleat with too much rage,
> Whose strengths abondance weakens his owne heart;
> So I for feare of trust, forget to say,
> The perfect ceremony of loues right,
> And in mine owne loues strength seeme to decay,
> Ore-charg'd with burthen of mine owne loues might:
> O let my books be then the eloquence,
> And domb presagers of my speaking brest,
> Who pleade for loue, and look for recompence,
> More then that tonge that more hath more exprest.
> > O learne to read what silent loue hath writ,
> > To heare wit eies belongs to loues fine wiht.

The contrast of page and stage strikes me differently from how it strikes Vendler, particularly in its relation to the anagrammatic. Apropos of this sonnet, she says

> Silent reading carried in Shakespeare's day a powerful reminiscence of oral reading (to oneself or an audience), and the number of auditory puns in the *Sonnets* testifies to Shakespeare's own ever-active ear, trained, of course, by his constant writing for oral delivery on the stage. Given Shakespeare's stage labors, it is even surprising that the *Sonnets* retain so many visual effects (e.g. the anagrams in 7 or the plays on *w* in 9).

For me, the argument runs the other way, and the Sonnets depend upon ceaseless realisations of the way in which the eye's reading is other than oral reception. So I should put differently her final point there, and should rather say: Given Shakespeare's stage labours, and his awareness of how the stage is not the page, it is not surprising that the Sonnets retain so many visual effects (e.g. the anagrams). Again, Vendler maintains that 'Precisely because he was a dramatist by temperament and by training, Shakespeare could, in the 1609 Quarto, turn the external dramatic enactment we see here into the interior meditative drama of lyric.'[58] It is true that the Sonnets are, among other things, interior dramas that owe much to Shakespeare's sense of dramatic enactments, but the Sonnets should not be assimilated to the plays with complete equanimity, not least because the Sonnets avail themselves of resources not amenable to the stage. Vendler is right to insist that 'Shakespeare's insistence on the eye as the chief sexual organ is everywhere present in the *Sonnets*, as in the plays',[59] but this is in danger of ignoring the way in which—on her own anagrammatic showing—the Sonnets are open to the eye's especial aptitudes. She is on surer ground, that of the page (though I think that 'no interest' overstates), when she says of Sonnet 11:

> Whether the foregrounding of *seale* is remembered when one encounters *that beauty which you hold in lease* in 13 perhaps depends on whether the reader shares with Shakespeare the Renaissance fascination with the way words look when printed. A purely oral poetry can have no interest in anagrams; but Shakespeare belongs to the world of print, a world in which anagrams were recognized and enjoyed.

Relatedly, I believe that although Burrow is right to say that Shakespeare's poems and Sonnets 'should not be consigned to the ghetto of "the non-dramatic verse"', I should want to qualify any implication that the Sonnets, as against the narrative poems perhaps, possess 'a manner which is distinctively that of a dramatist'.[60] Distinguishing a sonnet's manner from a drama's is what distinguishes the Sonnets, and one aspect of this distinction is the verbal device which can be so promptly and exactly seized by the eye in reading: the anagram or cognate effect. Sonnet 26:

> To thee I send this written ambassage
> To witnesse duty, not to shew my wit.

[58] *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 7.
[59] *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 15.
[60] *Complete Sonnets and Poems*, p. 5.

Sonnet 32:

> But since he died and Poets better proue,
> Theirs for their stile ile read, his for his loue.

The interplay of the written and the spoken, of different powers, is clear in the 'powrefull rime' that is Sonnet 55, which Kerrigan sees as contrasting 'The liuing record of your memory' with 'the written bias of this *record*'. The intimacy of the written is contrasted with at least the possibility of the anagrammatic:

> When wastefull warre shall *Statues* ouer-turne,
> And broiles roote out the worke of masonry,
> Nor *Mars* his sword, nor warres quick fire shall burne:
> The liuing record of your memory.

Am I imagining things, or was—more valuably—Shakespeare doing so, with a turn upon 'ouer-turne', when he had 'the worke of masonry' (there 'in the Conclusion') succeeded at once by two words that are the rubble of masonry: 'Nor *Mars*'? There comes to my mind the pleasure that Donne might have felt if, in 'An hymne to the Saints', he glimpsed that the rubble of *Monasteries* might be reduced—again 'in the Conclusion'—to heaps of stone:

> So fell our *Monasteries*, in one instant growne
> Not to lesse houses, but, to heapes of stone;

There is something to be seen at these moments, as in Sonnet 64 when it reiterates 'When I haue seene by times fell hand defaced . . . / When some-times loftie towers I see downe rased . . . / When I haue seene the hungry Ocean gaine / Aduantage on the Kingdome of the shoare'—and then arrives at this:

> When I haue seene such interchange of state,
> Or state it selfe confounded, to decay,
> Ruine hath taught me thus to ruminate
> That Time will come and take my loue away.

Booth urges: 'Note the phonetic play of *Ruin* and *ruminate*', yet we should note too what is not phonetic but graphic, in the expansion of the old-spelling *Ruine* in its undamaged entirety into *ruminate*, an effect which is smutched if we modernise as Booth does with 'Ruin'.[61] The contrast might be with an effect that is phonetic alone, and none the worse

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[61] Similarly with Burrow: 'the fact that the letters which make up *ruin* are hidden within *ruminate*'.

for that but differently effective, in Sonnet 10: 'Seeking that beautious roofe to ruinate'.[62]

The same increment from what is graphic may augment the loveliness of Sonnet 116 and its asseveration about love:

> Lou's not Times foole, though rosie lips and cheeks
> Within his bending sickles compasse come,

Kerrigan comments: 'The *sickle* seems to encompass the sonnet's *rosy lips and cheeks*, with cruel conviction, as we read'; yes indeed, and with the curve of the syntax—not 'Come within his bending sickles compasse' but 'Within his bending sickles compasse come'—confirmed at once by the immediacy with which *compasse* is heard to pass at once to *come*, in the Conclusion. But the concurrence of sound and syntax, with sound and sight at one, is then further confirmed by the old spelling as it is not by the modernising to 'compass', for it is only if we grant *compasse* its final e that the words can perfectly encompass expansion and contraction, an extraordinary *Within*. So that Kerrigan's phrase, 'as we read', will accrue a fuller rightness if we appreciate this detail that can be seen but not heard. The stoical resilience of this moment in Sonnet 116 may be the clearer if it is set against the deliberately ungainly conglomeration as the sonnet's opening line turns into its second line:

> Let me not to the marriage of true mindes
> Admit impediments, loue is not loue
> Which alters when it alteration findes,

The word *impediments* accretes so much of what has just constituted *mindes Admit*. The clutter of letters, of dissonant consonants that nevertheless have so much in common, is one form that alteration may take. Impediments indeed.

Time, always not only the subject but the element of the Sonnets, commands many gaits. The sun-dial takes its time, and its incremental indeflectibility is there for us to see in the anagrammatic sequence 'thy dyals shady stealth' (Sonnet 77), following as it does upon so much that asks that we be aware that we are reading, not hearing:

> The vacant leaues thy mindes imprint will beare,
> And of this booke, this learning maist thou taste.
>
> . . .

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[62] Vendler says of Sonnet 64: 'by our almost instinctive deletion of *m*, *ruminate* comes to contain *ruinate*'. I am suspicious of 'almost instinctive', but not of her point.

> Thou by thy dyals shady stealth maist know,
> Times theeuish progresse to eternitie.
> Looke what thy memorie cannot containe,
> Commit to these waste blanks,[63] and thou shalt finde
> Those children nurst, deliuerd from thy braine,
> To take a new acquaintance of thy minde.
>   These offices, so oft as thou wilt looke,
>   Shall profit thee, and much inrich thy booke.[64]

For all his acumen, Booth—because of his indifference to the anagrammatic—does something less than justice to the central moment when he reduces a phrase of four words to three words, dropping *thy* from the progress and modernising *dyals* into 'dial's':

> Thou by thy dyals shady stealth maist know,
> Times theeuish progresse to eternitie.

The ultimate effect of the careful imprecision of *dial's shady stealth* is to give the phrase, the three words, the capability the sentence attributes to what the three words describe: *dial's shady stealth* in line 7 anticipates, lets a reader know, *Time's thievish progress* in line 8.

Though an editor should not, in my judgement, point out felicities to us, there are occasions when an anagrammatic possibility might affect a textual decision. I am thinking of the most famous, the least ignorable, crux in the Sonnets, the opening of Sonnet 146:

> Poor soule the center of my sinfull earth,
> My sinfull earth these rebbell powres that thee array,

Kerrigan represents the second line simply by

> [   ] these rebel powers that thee array,

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[63] The editors follow Theobald's conjecture, which became Malone's emendation, reading 'blanks' for 1609's 'blacks'.

[64] Pertinent to the anagram is Colin Burrow's commentary on Sonnet 77:

> On the face of it this poem offers much to materialistic critics: memory must be written down, and needs a material record. As critics are coming to recognise, the ways in which writers from this period recorded their thoughts in the physical form of a commonplace book have a profound effect on how they shaped their learning as they wrote, and on the ways in which they conceptualised the workings of their minds. But we should also notice here that when memory *is* written down in a material form it becomes something more than mere matter; it becomes alive, something, or even someone, that one has to meet anew, like a new friend. In the imagery of the Sonnets memory more often accompanies the language of life than that of dead material; and as a result the poems imply that there is something more vital to memory than script, print, or matter. ('Life and Work in Shakespeare's Poems'; Chatterton Lecture (1997), *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 97 (1998), 25–6.)

He notes that 'Scores of emendations have been proposed for the phrase repeated from line 1', and he lists many though not all of them:

> Foiled by; Spoiled by; Soiled by; Swayed by; Starved by; Thrall to; Yoked to; Prey to; Fooled by; Bound by; Grieved by; Galled by; Vexed by; Pressed with; Served by; Ruled by; Feeding; Hemmed with; Leagued with.[65]

It might be noted, as giving perhaps some support to Kinnear's conjecture (1883), 'Thrall to', that *Thrall* would take up *ll earth* 'in the Conclusion' of the previous line. Or, still attending to anagrammatic possibility, that a construction parallel to 'center of', *Heart of*, would immediately re-present *earth* and would anticipate *dearth* in the next line.[66]

Vendler persuasively sees the Sonnets as alive to *live* / *evil* / *vile*, so I was reminded of the shifts to which I was once reduced when, forbidden to quote the Trinity manuscripts of Tennyson, I wished to make clear that in 1913 Hallam Tennyson had mistranscribed the opening of 'Semele':

> I wish'd to see Him. Who may feel
> His light and love? He comes.

'Love' is an error; the manuscript clearly reads: 'Who may feel / His light and . . .'—but the correct reading may not be quoted. Since apparently no other manuscript of 'Semele' survives, an editor has either to perpetuate the error 'love', or to amend it without being able to cite his authority. In the circumstances, one is tempted to go in for crossword-clues: this is an evil setback.[67]

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[65] *Complete Sonnets and Poems*, pp. 378, 439.

[66] Quentin Skinner wrote to me after the lecture, and has generously allowed me to make public his support of the intriguing conjecture, 'Trick'd by'. (It was proposed by Latham Davis in 1905; see the Variorum edition of the Sonnets.) Professor Skinner started by seeing, as I had not, that 'thee array' is an almost exact anagram of 'treachery' (a word that Shakespeare uses 26 times in the plays). 'Trick'd by' (which is along the lines of the conjectures 'Gull'd by' and 'Fool'd by') would have dealings not only with the overt 'rebbell powres' but also with the covert treachery that may lurk within 'thee array'. Moreover, the soul, two lines later, is addressed as 'Painting outward walls so costlie gay'. To trick is also *OED* 5, 'to dress, array' ('these rebbell powres that thee array'), and the verb did not in the sixteenth and seventeenth century need to be strengthened, as it now might, with *out*; there is the violent pastiche of the speech for the players, *Hamlet*, II. ii: 'horridly Trick'd / With blood of Fathers'. 'Trick'd by': arrayed as well as tricked in the other standard sixteenth-century sense, with treachery being the main or worst way in which we can be tricked. Booth quotes Clifford Leech's conjectural paraphrase, 'feigning to deceive by brave shows'. What better word, then, than 'Trick'd'? C. J. Sisson called this 'the prize crux of the Sonnets', in which case Quentin Skinner, seconding Latham Davis, has a strong claim to the prize.

[67] Chatterton Lecture (1966), 'Tennyson's Methods of Composition'; *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 52 (1968), 210.

But I should end, not with Tennyson but with Camden:

> But heere it is time to stay, for some of the sowre sort beginne to laugh at these, whenas yet they have no better insight in Anagrammes than wise Sieur *Gaulard*, who when he heard a Gentleman report that he was at a supper, where they had not onely good company and good cheare, but also savory Epigrammes, and fine Anagrammes; he returning home, rated and belowted his Cooke as an ignorant scullion that never dressed or served up to him, either Epigrammes or Anagrams.[68]

'And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining'.

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[68] *Remains Concerning Britain*, ed. Dunn, p. 151.