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**lace** There are two kinds of lace. The first is the string or twine that is used to tie pieces of clothing together (now mostly shoelaces). The second is the intricate work used to ornament clothing, for example the ruffs for which the earlier part of this period is famous. This second meaning lends itself to figurative language because of its expense and ornate construction. The meaning of laces used to tie clothing appears when a female character bemoans a state of affairs:

*Stan.* Come, madam, you must straight to Westminster,  
There to be crowned Richard's royal queen.  
*Q, Eliz.* Ah, cut my lace asunder,  
that my pent heart may have some scope to beat, Or  
else I swoon with this dead-killing news.

(Rlll4.1.31-5)

The first person to react to Stanley's news to Anne is Edward IV's widow. Her clothing reference is to the lacing used to make women's clothing tightly conform to the shape of the body. Paulina comes out with a similar statement at WT 3.2.173 when she bursts in to the court with the news that Hermione has died offstage.

Another familiar meaning is the ruff made of lace, to which Cleopatra (anachronistically) refers at AC 1.3.71. This is a good example of the use of contemporary Renaissance costume to represent any other period.

More figurative usages are based on the availability of this kind of lacework to those who can best afford it. In other words, it can be a metaphor for soft luxury:

Ah, wherefore with infection should he live,  
And with his presence grace impiety,  
That sin by him advantage should achieve,  
And lace itself with his society?

(SON 67.1-4)

Picard (2004) gives an example of just how complex lacework could be in a section on ruffs at 138-41.

**lackey** A servant. The term is not necessarily abusive, although as so often with words describing lower-class **occupations**, it can be turned into an insult. The word's basic meaning of 'servant' appears several times in the plays; see HV 4.1.272 and TS 3.2.65. A slightly insulting usage occurs when Parolles thinks he has been captured. During his 'interrogation' he insults one of the Dumaines: 'In a retreat he outruns any lackey' (AW 4.3.289-90). This could be a reference to a **knight's** servant who stays at the back of the army out of the fighting while looking after his master's equipment. However, OED also gives an obsolete use of the word to mean 'camp follower', which would make it even more pejorative here. King Richard uses the word particularly as a term of abuse in his oration to his forces before the Battle of Bosworth, at Rlll 5.3.317, in the middle of a list of insults about the enemy army.

Becoming some sort of domestic servant was one way to make a living; see Amussen (1988) at

**lady** (a) In general use, a polite term for any **woman**. It has a myriad of very specialized uses in relation to **rank**, since the original sense was as the female equivalent to a **lord**.

(b) The wrangling over Henry VI's **marriage** produces heated argument, mostly over the relative **rank** and title of the two ladies put forward by Gloucester and Suffolk. As Gloucester points out, the king is already pre-contracted when Margaret of Anjou's **name** arises:

You know, my lord, your Highness is betroth'd  
Unto another lady of esteem.  
How shall we then dispense with that contract,  
And not deface your honour with reproach?

(1 HVI 5.5.26-9)

These issues are not to be taken lightly when a king's marriage is at stake. Such a use of the term assumes that the ladies in question are of high **degree**; similar examples occur when noble women appear in the plays, such as Lady Percy in 1 Henry IV. Other ladies appear at various points in the plays, populating them with a range of light or non-speaking parts, filling out the expected background of life at **court**; for just one such grouping, see CYM 1.5. In direct conversation, the use of the word is not dependent on the relative ranks of the people involved. When the King of France addresses the Countess of Rossillion in *Alts U'i!!! That Ends T+ell*, he does so as 'My honour'd lady' (AW 5.3.8). A slightly more elevated phrase is: 'sovereign lady' (2 HVI 3.1.161), which Gloucester uses to Margaret of Anjou when he has fallen from **favour**; there is perhaps a touch of the sardonic in his choice of the word sovereign, since King Henry is supposed to be so-the implication may be that he is already ruled by his wife relatively early on in their marriage.

When Lear is dividing his **kingdom** between his daughters, he couches his decision in similar terms. He says to Goneril:

Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,  
With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,  
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,  
We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's issue  
Be this perpetual.

(KL 1.1.63-7)

The word here implies ownership, as Goneril becomes a kind of over-lady of a vast expanse of territory. Her behaviour will be anything but that conventionally associated with a lady. For comparison, see Botspur's comments on a **courtier** sent to him as a **messenger** from court, who speaks in effeminate 'lady terms' (1.3.46). Hermione defines the behaviour appropriate to a high-ranking **lady** during her trial:

For Polixenes  
(With whom I am accused) I do confess  
I lov'd him as in honour he requir'd;  
With such a kind of love as might become  
A lady like me; with a love even such,  
So, and no other, as yourself commanded

(WT 3.2.61-6)

Hermione's speech depends upon an ideal conjunction between **rank** and behaviour, a common enough assumption in the language of this period. In fact, it is something of a defining feature for her: a pre-existing code of behaviour based on socially appropriate conduct is basic to her identity.

Although Hermione invokes this category 'that might become a lady', this is not what happens all of the time in all of the plays. Indeed, there is a great deal of variation in practice, as events pressure the assumed unity of **rank** and behaviour. As is to be expected, the under-lying element is the woman's sexual behaviour, which is exactly the grounds for Leontes' distrust. It appears elsewhere, for example when Hamlet cuts through court ceremonial to sexuality in his conversation with Ophelia at the performance of the Mousetrap: 'Lady, shall I lie in your lap?' (HAM 3.2.112). The same happens in *Henry VIII*:

<i>Suj</i> How is the King employ'd?	
<i>Cham.</i>	I left him private,
Full of sad thoughts and troubles.	
<i>Nor.</i>	What's the cause?
<i>Cham.</i> It seems the marriage with his brother's wife	
Has crept too near his conscience.	
<i>Suj</i>	[ <i>Aside</i> ] No, his conscience
Has crept too near another lady.	

(HVIII.2.14-18)

This exchange between the three noblemen is crucial, but its significance is difficult for a modern audience to unravel. Suffolk, who makes the ironic aside to the audience, is Henry's greatest friend, and is married to the king's sister. By noting Henry's sexual attraction to Anne Boleyn, he undercuts the standard discourse that the matter of his marriage is really about its morality. Anne herself is very careful to make sure that she does not give in to Henry's advances until he has married her which he does in secret before her **coronation**. Another Lady Anne who is wooed by a powerful man of high **rank** appears at RIII 1.2. These ladies demonstrate that ultimately their own feelings are irrelevant in this society; what matters is what the man wants, and in the abstract that is exactly what happens when Anne is wooed by Richard of Gloucester.

Such doings undo the usual assumptions of courtly love, showing them to be an empty convention. See, for example, the standard conceit of the lady's eyes employed by Orlando at AYLI 5.2.24, or Mercutio's mockery of Romeo: 'Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flow'd in' (RJ 2.4.38-9). It would be difficult to find a more complete objectification of the woman than Cressida's passage through the invaders: 'Is this the Lady Cressid?' (4.5.17). The woman's function as an object of exchange in a patriarchal system is seldom realized with such dramatic clarity, just as the so-called 'Dark Lady' sonnets recognize the possibility of a sexual attraction to someone who is not a conventional **lady** at all. Incidentally, 'lady' is a word that Shakespeare never uses in these poems.

(c) For the lives of aristocratic ladies, see Stone (1967), 269-81. Tellingly, this is a chapter on marriage and the family, implying that it was in relation to these that aristocratic women were defined. Ridley (2002, 2) comments on the position of women in England generally at 296-300. Weir (1996) has a substantial index entry at 379 on The Lady Elizabeth, which of course was Elizabeth's title after her mother's fall. See also Lovell (2005) for the career of the formidable Bess of Hardwick, one of the greatest ladies in the **kingdom**.

**lawyer** (a) A man in the legal profession (in this period they are always men). The term is used somewhat imprecisely by Shakespeare. The main law schools were the **Inns** of Court in **London**, attended by young men notorious for their riotous lifestyles as well as by those anxious to qualify and gain a solid reputation with which to practise the profession. An education at law had become an alternative to the stuffy establishments at Oxford and Cambridge; apart from the humanities, these universities were still basically theological colleges. There is more than a residual distrust of lawyers in the plays, because they can be represented as having access to an esoteric knowledge that gives them a major advantage over ordinary people - it also allows them to make quite a lot of money.

(b) A lawyer appears in the Temple Garden scene of 1 HVI (2.4), the emblematic moment at which

the Wars of the Roses are supposed to begin. He intervenes on behalf of the Yorkist claim:

Unless my study and my books be false,  
The argument you held was wrong in you;  
In sign whereof! pluck a white rose too.

(1 HVI 2.4.56-8)

This is not to say that he is absolutely correct, since what he utters is an interpretation. It is also possible that his advocacy of the rights of the Duke of York should not be taken at face value, since a lawyer's opinion can always be challenged. However, the terms in which his judgement is couched cite precedence, a critical element of English jurisprudence. In other words, his declaration on behalf of the white rose of York will remind the audience of the interruption of the principle of primogeniture represented by the Lancastrian usurpation of the current king's grandfather, Henry IV over Richard II. The most famous civil legal trial in Shakespeare at MV 4.1 also relies on this principle. Most of the time, however, the appearance of lawyers is negative.

They are immediate targets for Cade's rebellion. As Dick says, 'The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers' (2 HVI 4.2. 76-7), a sentiment that would be sure to get a cheer in most performances. This is part of a general distrust of the educated and well off:

All scholars, lawyers, courtiers, gentlemen,  
They call false caterpillars, and intend their death.

(2 HVI 4.4.36-7)

There is an element of the anarchistic Land of Cockayne about all of this, even though the independent spontaneity of the rebellion is undermined by the play's insistence that Cade was set up by the Duke of York. Part of the gravedigger scene in Hamlet includes a discourse by the prince on lawyers:

There's another. Why may not that be the  
skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his  
quillities, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks?  
Why does he suffer this mad knave now to knock him  
about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell  
him of his action of battery?

(HAM 5.1.98-103)

Hamlet's riddling language is well suited to the linguistic tricks of a lawyer. Modern criticism has tended to concentrate on Hamlet's comments on what he assumes to be the skull of Yorick, as a meditation on death. But here the language is much more earthy and physically violent, as well as a good example of black humour.

However, the plays do not all make use of such trenchant attacks on legal language or education; sometimes, figures such as Justice Shallow speak for themselves.

(c) See Picard (2004) at 231--4 for the Inns of Court. Heal and Holmes (1994) give examples of the relationship of the gentry to the legal profession at 133--4. One of the most famous lawyers in the English Renaissance was Sir Thomas More. For his legal career, see Wilson (2002), at 56-61 and again from 138--42.

**lease** (a) A **contract** of use with a specified end date. Such a contract could theoretically be of any duration. There is a figurative use of, roughly, 'lease of life', meaning one's lifespan. The usual duration of a land lease for a specified rent to a tenant was of three lifetimes, or 99 years, whichever was shorter. The problem with this from the landlord's viewpoint was that inflation could effectively reduce the relative value of the income over the period of the duration of such an arrangement.

(b) A famous confrontation between Richard II and his uncle, John of Gaunt, takes place when the latter is on his deathbed. Despite his own prestige and power, Gaunt has remained faithful to Richard as **king**, even when the younger man's actions have proven to be improvident, to say the least. But when he is dying Gaunt lets Richard know exactly what he thinks of him and his policies:

O had thy grandsire with a prophet's eye  
Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,  
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame, Deposing thee before  
thou wert possess'd,  
Which art possess'd now to depose thyself Why, cousin, wert thou  
regent of the world, It were a shame to let this land by lease;  
But for thy world e oying but this land,  
Is it not more than shame to shame it so? Landlord of England art  
thou now, not king.

(RII 2.1.104-13)

This is a series of massive insults, picking up as it does on the pre- eminence of Edward III, Richard's grandfather. It also acts as a kind of reactive prophecy, the playwright's advantage of hindsight allowing Gaunt to be given a speech predicting Richard's deposition. In the event it will be Gaunt's son who does the deposing. What is more, Gaunt lashes his nephew (cousin here means any close blood relation) with a taunt of being merely a landlord. The insult works quite well even in modern performance because of the way the rhetoric builds up to it, but there is added resonance for a contemporary audience. The reason for this is the ingrained disdain of the true **nobility** for someone who has to work to earn a living, whether as a Dlerchant or as a ·landlord. In effect, Gaunt is accusing Richard of being a 'bean-counter', to use a modern equivalent, a petty bureaucrat who counts out ways to eke out the cash available. He also testifies that this will destroy Richard, and he is correct; the use of the word 'lease' signifies that Richard's time will be short. The word appears in the Sonnets as well. Shakespeare uses it here again to represent a short period of time:

So should that beauty which you hold in lease  
Find no determination

(SON 13.5-6)

This is a common enough conceit in the poems to the young man: if he does reproduce, his beauty, which he holds only for the time of his own life, will perish with him. He needs to pass it on. The word appears again in the famous Sonnet 18:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.

(SON 18.3-4)

Again the implication is that the summertime of the young man's youth will not last very long. This is reminiscent of Cade's comments when he is forced to come out of hiding because of his hunger at 2 HVI 4.10.2-6; basically he would rather eat now than live for a thousand years.

( c ) Stone (1967) describes the relative fall in income over the period for manorial holdings, including rents derived from leaseholdings, at 71-3. Palliser (1992) goes into detail concerning the various kinds of land ownership and rental in the manorial system at 201-6.

**legate** A term derived from the Roman army. A legate was a general with full plenipotentiary power as deputed by a commander-in-chief or a provincial governor. The Catholic Church took the term over as with so much Roman usage, and applied it to those high-ranking churchmen specified by the pope to carry the full weight of his authority while on specified missions. Protestantism would see this as an abuse of power, an encroachment on the rights of a **sovereign**.

A papal legate makes an appearance at 1 HVI 5.1, having made **Bishop** Beaufort of Westminster a **cardinal**. In King John, one of the major figures is Cardinal Pandulph, the papal legate who excommunicates the English **king**. Perhaps the most well known to the English in Shakespeare's audiences is Cardinal Campeius in Henry VIII, who was sent to England to sound out the king's wish for a divorce; he was supposed to act in concert with Cardinal Wolsey. The latter falls from grace when he is accused of the arcane crime of *praemunire*, loyalty to an outside power over that of the King of England. Senior members of the **nobility** have a field day at Wolsey's expense, Surrey accusing him as follows: 'that without the King's assent or knowledge, You wrought to be a legate' (HVIII 3.2.310-11). All of this would feed into the reformed faith's suspicion of the Catholic Church, especially given the pope's death sentence on Elizabeth I.

For Cardinal Campeggio's (Campeius in the play) legateship to Henry's court, see Wilson (2002), 247-54.

**leno** A pander or bawd, an unpleasant lower-class character who prostitutes others. The term occurs only twice in Shakespeare, who tends to use its synonyms more often: once, in the *dramatis personae* to Pericles, and the other in Henry V. This latter example is particularly vicious, when Bourbon refers to a coward acting as a leno who will hold open the bedroom door while his most beautiful daughter is defiled by a slave (4.5.11-15). All of these associations are common in the play, with its emphasis on true worth and illegitimacy.

For the context of illegitimacy and commingling of blood in Henry V, see Dollimore and Sinfield (1992).

**lieutenant** Military rank was not fixed in this period, so it is misleading simply to assume the modern usage of a **rank** just below that of **captain** in the **army**, or commander in the **navy**. The word may well be derived from the practices of 'bastard' feudalism, when the place of a tenant required to attend for military service is taken by someone else, usually a professional soldier who is paid to do so. In Shakespeare, the word has several possible uses, all of them variations on a theme. Most often, it signifies a commanding general's deputy, a much higher rank than in the modern military. As such it is a position, not a rank. It is also applied to specific offices, such as Lieutenant of the Tower of **London**. Unsurprisingly, this figure makes several appearances in the plays: see 1 HVI 1.3; 3 HVI 4.6 and 5.6 and Richard III.

The usage of the term as a deputy general occurs in *Coriolanus*, where Aufidius has a lieutenant; see also Ventidius' carefully politic advice to Silius about lieutenants not outshining their masters at AC 3.1.12-27. The most well known such lieutenant is probably Cassia in *Othello*. Iago describes him as:

Forsooth, a great arithmetician,  
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine  
(A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife) That never  
set a squadron in the field, Nor the division of a  
battle knows  
More than a spinster -unless the bookish theoretic,  
Wherein the togged consuls can propose  
As masterly as he. Mere prattle, without practice,  
Is all his soldiership.

(OTH 1.1.19-27)

Iago's venomous volubility marks him off immediately to the audience as a manipulative

machiavel who is not to be trusted. Iago tells Roderigo that Cassia was given the position of lieutenant to Othello instead of himself, and that is why he hates him. Othello, however, says several times that he has known Cassia for a very long time, implying that they have served together. This would give the lie to Iago's assertion that Cassia has never practised the art of war.

See Edelman (2000), 202-5, for several entries about this term. Duffy (1998) describes the lasting medieval influence on ranks in the armed forces from 35-57. See especially his comments on the lieutenant at 45-6. Sir Robert Brackenbury was Lieutenant of the Tower of **London** before and during the reign of Richard III; he died at Bosworth fighting for Richard (see Pollard (1995, 2), 171.

**lion** Proverbially the king of the beasts; an **emblem** for might, power and **majesty**. Part of the royal arms of England is three lions; the lion rampant is the Scottish equivalent.

A standard simile appears when Mortimer describes Glendower as 'valiant as a lion' (1 HIV 3.1.165). Falstaff playfully uses similar language slightly later in the same play:

*Fal.* As thou art Prince, I fear thee as I fear the roaring of the lion's whelp.

*Prince.* And why not as the lion?

*Fal!* The King himself is to be fear'd as the lion. Dost thou think I'll fear thee as I fear thy father?

(1 HIV 3.3.146-50)

The use of the lion as emblem for royal power is well enough known for the banter to flow smoothly between Falstaff and Hal. Another standard reference occurs when Warwick loses to the sons of York:

Thus yields the cedar to the axe's edge,  
Whose arms gave shelter to the princely eagle,  
Under whose shade the ramping lion slept,  
Whose top-branch over-peer'd Jove's spreading tree,  
And kept low shrubs from winter's pow'rful wind.

(3 HVI 5.2.11-15)

Warwick sees himself as more than princely in a series of emblematic representations of his power over royalty.

A more comic use is probably the most famous lion in Shakespeare. The playlet in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* plays with the lion's might:

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear  
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,  
May now, perchance, both quake and tremble here,  
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.  
Then know that I as Snug the joiner am

(AMND 5.1.219-23)

Snug is very careful to let the onstage audience know that he is not really a lion, because he and his fellow players mix up reality and representation. Thus the play as a whole draws attention to its status as artifice, a common enough self-referentiality in Renaissance drama.

For the full royal arms of England, see MacKinnon (1975), Plate 1. The second plate shows the arms of Scotland. Henry VIII kept lions in a menagerie at the Tower of **London**: see Wilson (2002), 1. He picks up on the obvious symbolic implications.

**livery** (a) A uniform worn by members of the **household** of a **lord** or by members of one of the great **London** livery companies. A lord's livery would be in colours associated with his coat of arms. The uniform is a sign of service and this makes the word available for more figurative uses as well.

The Duke of York warns Richard II of the consequences of his seizure of the lands of the exiled Henry of Lancaster:

*York.* If you do wrongfully seize Herford's rights,  
Call in the letters-patents that he hath  
By his attorneys-general to sue  
His livery, and deny his off'red homage,  
You pluck a thousand dangers on your head,  
You lose a thousand well-disposed hearts,  
And prick my tender patience to those thoughts  
Which honour and allegiance cannot think.  
*KRich.* Think what you will, we seize into our hands  
His plate, his goods, his money, and his lands.

(RII 2.1.201-10)

Richard is determined to enact complete vengeance on his banished cousin. He takes advantage of the death of Henry's father, John of Gaunt completely to dispossess the Dukedom of Lancaster. York points out that this action will have dire consequences, but Richard ignores him. The unspoken point is that if Richard is prepared to do this to one of the great royal dukedoms created by his grandfather, Edward III, then large swathes of the **nobility** will be ready to oppose him; after all any of them could be next. The reference to Henry's letters patent and livery is based upon his right to succeed his father; since he himself is currently in exile, he needs to use attorneys general to sue on his behalf. But by ignoring all of this Richard places himself in the position of a tyrant who rules by whim and circumstance rather than by custom and law. It leads eventually to his cousin's return to England, as he takes advantage of Richard's absence in Ireland:

I am denied to sue my livery here,  
And yet my letters-patents give me leave.  
My father's goods are all distrain'd and sold, And these,  
and all, are all amiss employed. What would you have  
me do? I am a subject, And I challenge law. Attorneys  
are denied me, And therefore personally I lay my claim  
To my inheritance of free descent.

(RII 2.3.129-36)

This argument is extremely important, because it allows Henry to gather support from among the **nobility** who are also present. There is still a great deal of debate as to whether he intended this early on to usurp the kingdom, or whether he simply took ruthless political advantage of a favourable developing situation. In any case, the usage of the term 'livery' is emblematic of his struggle to claim his basic right to inherit his father's dukedom. Hotspur will later pick up on exactly these issues at 1 HIV 4.3.60-105 during his dangerous rebellion against the man who is now King Henry IV. Cade uses the word in his topsy-turvy promises to his rebels during the reign of Henry of Lancaster's grandson, Henry VI:



I thank you good people -there shall be no  
money; all shall eat and drink on my score, and I will  
apparel them all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers, and worship me  
their lord.

(2 HVI 4.2.72-5)

He inverts the usual use of the term to promise that there will be no distinctions between the people (except himself as king, of course).

Richard of Gloucester makes a particularly nasty comment about the power of the queen's relations:

I'll tell you what, I think it is our way  
If we will keep in favour with the King,  
To be her men and wear her livery.

(RIII 1.1.78--80)

The meaning is obvious: Edward IV is ruled by his lower-class queen. Mercutio uses the word in a similar way when he encounters Tybalt:

*Tyb.* Well, peace be with you, sir, here comes my man.  
*Mer.* But I'll be hang'd, sir, if he wear your livery.

(RJ 3.1.56-7)

To be someone's man means to serve and wear their livery. Tybalt has seen Romeo coming and simply says so; Mercurio puns on Tybalt's meaning, thereby drawing attention to the rivalry between the two Houses.

More figurative uses also occur, such as when Theseus lays down the law of Athens to Hermia: she can either be put to death for disobeying her father, or 'endure the livery of a nun' (AMND 1.1.70). Angelo also uses the word when he tells Isabella that he loves her (MM 2.4.138); Isabella repeats it when she recounts Angelo's hypocrisy to her brother: 'tis the cunning livery of hell' (MM 3.1.94). The wearing of liveries had to be common enough in Shakespeare's **London** for these metaphorical uses to make sense to his audiences.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the livery companies of **London** to civic life. Picard (2004) gives a huge index entry at 382-3 that contains a couple of dozen elements of their contribution. Heal and Holmes (1994) deals with the wearing of liveries as part of the life of a household of the gentry at 283--4. Thomson (1995) describes several attempts on the part of monarchs to curb the power of the great houses by banning or at least restricting the use of liveries; see 120-3

**London** (a) Capital of England, and easily the largest city in the **London** grew massively in size during the Tudor period, a magnet for anyone who came from the provinces and to make a living people such as Shakespeare, for example, entertainment districts of **London** were famous, as well as being by the more sober-minded puritans for their supposed licentiousness. The main area lay just outside the City proper, in Southwark the south bank of the Thames. It was reached by **London** Bridge, here were located all of the possible recreations one could want: brothels, cockpits, bear-baiting arenas, gambling dens. In fact, of the best entertainment money could buy aside from life at court, somewhere else that good religious citizens distrusted. There were also designated entertainment areas inside the City boundaries known as the 'liberties', such as the Blackfriars, where Shakespeare's company owned a stone indoor theatre. The only times that the City authorities had jurisdiction over these areas was in times of **plague** or civil unrest.

**London** was run by a corporation of businessmen, organized by liveried companies that had royal charters - these were the descendants of the medieval guilds. They were headed up by the Lord Mayor. **London** was also the location of important buildings of state, such as the great fortress of the Tower, and the law schools. In religious matters, the people of the city tended to the more radical end

of the reforming spectrum.

( b ) **London** is the location in which Prince Hal carouses with his low- life companions. This is noted by his father not long after he has acquired the **crown**, at RII 5.3.1-12; see Eastcheap. The prince sees the metropolis as a good place in which to have fun, especially when robbing the merchants and others drawn to the commercial hub: 'traders riding to **London** with fat purses' (1 HIV 1.2.127), as Poin calls them. Because it is the capital **city**, **London** has great strategic significance for any monarch who to rule effectively. The great processions of state are staged here, such as the **coronation** of Anne Boleyn at H VIII 4.1 and the christening of the baby Princess Elizabeth at HVIII 5.4. **London** was well known as a centre of support for the House of Lancaster during the Wars of the Roses, probably as a direct consequence of the hatred of the city's wealthier citizens for the forced loans and autocratic rule of Richard II; see Margaret of Anjou's comments at 2 HVI 5.3.81-3.

But life in **London** could be a noisy affair. It is the scene of faction fighting between the Duke of Gloucester and his rival, the Bishop of Winchester, at 1 HVI 1.3 and was famous for the rioting of its prentices. Captain Gower has a very jaundiced view of people like Pistol who could make a living begging in the streets of **London**:

Why, 'tis a gull, a fool, a rogue, that now and  
Then goes to the wars, to grace himself at his return Into London under the  
form of a soldier.

(HV 3.6.67-9)

This kind of behaviour is familiar enough to Shakespeare's audiences, especially given the various misadventures undertaken by Elizabeth's forces in Ireland, not to mention her **nobility** getting themselves involved in wars on the continent.

(c) Picard (2004) is a very full and lively description of life in **London** during this period. See Duffy (1992) at 453-8 for **London**'s reactions to the more radical religious reforms of the government of Edward VI.

**lord** (a) An appellation for a man of rank higher than that of the gentry; the equivalent of **lady**, although the masculine term is more restricted in its use. This includes high-ranking churchmen. The House of Lords is the upper chamber of parliament, and in this period only those with either a hereditary right or of high enough ecclesiastical standing can sit there. The word can also be used between spouses to denote the man of the couple, although usually only when he is of high degree. It is specifically added to the titles of the highest offices in the land, such as the Lord Chancellor. This is done to mark a difference from any other, lower, office that carries the same basic title. In more general usage, usually as a mild form of profanity, 'the Lord' refers to Jesus.

A good example of the word's use as a general term of high rank occurs throughout 1 Henry VI with Lord Talbot, hero of the wars in France.

Following this logic, it can be used of generic faceless courtiers- such as those who appear in CJymbeline at 1.2 and 2.1 with Cloten. King Henry uses it in its sense of ecclesiastical standing when he asks: 'Where is my gracious Lord of Canterbury?' at 1 HIV 1.2.1. The word's utility in marriage occurs many times; see, for example, the interaction between Hotspur and his wife at 1 HIV 2.3, and the queen's comments on Pisanio as reminding Imogen of 'her lord' the banished at CYM 1.5.77-8. One of the most famous single uses in sense is Oberon's question to Titania: 'Tarry, rash wanton! Am not lord?' (AMND 2.1.63). Desdemona very precisely delineates the requirements of patriarchy in the council chamber of Venice:

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 show'd  
 you, preferring you before her father,  
 So much I challenge that I may profess  
 Due to the Moor, my lord.

(OTH 1.3.180-9)

Desdemona's lord is her father up to the point at which she transfers to a husband, who becomes her new lord.

The patron of Shakespeare's company until the accession of James I was the Lord Chamberlain. This is one of a number of offices that have 'Lord' as part of the title. Many others appear in the plays, such as the Lord Protector in 1 Henry VI. The man who holds this office is Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, brother to Henry V and uncle to the young king Henry VI. He is in conflict with Henry Beaufort, Bishop (later Cardinal) of Winchester over the war with France; as a member of the clergy, the Bishop thinks that the war should be ended. Also, he is effectively the faction leader of the Beauforts, the powerful noble family who are cousins to the direct line of the Lancastrian dynasty. Their enmity erupts into open fighting between their retainers and, almost, themselves as well at 1 HVI 1.3 as they meet outside the Tower of **London**. This is a good example of the use of 'Lord' with official titles, since the Lord Lieutenant of the Tower (Woodville) is heard from inside the complex, and the Lord Mayor of **London** turns up to quell the disturbance with his officers. Later on in the same play, Cardinal Beaufort greets the Duke of York as 'Lord Regent' (1 HVI 5.4.94), a title York carried while the weak king was mentally incapacitated. The Lord Chief justice is something of a thorn in the flesh for Falstaff in 2 Henry IV, especially when he is confirmed in his office by the newly crowned Henry V. The Lord Chamberlain, an important post because it is effectively head of the household of the monarch, appears at various points in Henry VIII. The Lord Marshal, the highest military position in the land, is present at RII 1.3 when Norfolk and Herford are due to fight in single combat, which is the preserve of the Lord Marshal. By overruling this combat, King Richard demonstrates his tendency to autocracy.

The term is available for more figurative language as well, as when Berowne rails against Cupid as, among other things, 'lord of folded arms' (LLL 3.1.181). The ultimate figurative use is probably religious, since the Lord with a capital is Jesus: 'Lord, what fools these mortals be!' exclaims Puck famously at (AMND 3.2.115).

Stone (1967) is the pre-eminent book on the aristocracy of Shakespeare's England and up to the Civil War. He has an important chapter on the system of offices from 183-232. Palliser (1992) has some comments on the membership of the House of Lords at 13.

**Lords, House of:** see **parliament**

**love** (a) A word used in all sorts of circumstances. It can denote liking, sympathy, loyalty, respect, political affiliation, trust, patriotism, and even passionate personal love (in its modern sense). The range of differentiations is important; love in this period is particularly charged with a host of social resonances that go well beyond the purely personal. The rise of individualism after the Renaissance has constructed something of a barrier for later periods when looking back at Shakespeare's uses of the word. Some cultural and literary historians warn against a too simple assumption that love usually means what it seems to mean to us, even when it would appear that what is meant is personal. This can make many of the plays (and the Sonnets) difficult for us to unpack, because of their overt concern with 'love'. It is possible to see the word socially contested, a kind of site of criss-crossing

concerns that overlap and contrast with one another.

There are occasions in the plays where the word's use seems almost perfunctory. It is certainly often a conventional expression of loyalty or

Respect, shot through with the politeness of **rank**:

This bald unjointed chat of his, my lord,  
Made me to answer indirectly, as I said,  
And I beseech you, let not his report  
Come current for an accusation  
Betwixt my love and your high Majesty.

(1 HIV 1.3.65-9)

Hotspur is here excusing his behaviour when confronted with some lord or other after a battle, demanding a report for the king of what has transpired. Typically, in the heat of the moment Hotspur answered rather hotly and this has seemed to King Henry at least to be a possible cooling of Hotspur's loyalty. Hotspur himself encounters a similar use of the word when he receives a letter from a lord who is somewhat unwilling to commit to rebellion:

'But, for mine own part, my lord, I could be  
well contented to be there, in respect of the love I bear  
your house.'

(1 HIV 2.3.1-3)

'Love' here functions as a synonym for 'respect'; it also smoothes over the surface of the various political dealings that are taking place. Someone who makes an assertion of love with this connotation is not necessarily to be trusted. Hotspur himself, who states his love to the king, leads a dangerous rebellion that costs him his life. Richard of Gloucester uses the word in a similar way when dissembling before the queen's family at Rill 2.1.62; this occurs when his dying brother Edward IV is trying to make peace between all of the factions at his court. Henry VI is very precise in exactly this collocation of meanings when the Southampton conspiracy is uncovered:

Alas, your too much love and care of me  
Are heavy orisons 'gainst this poor wretch!  
If little faults, proceeding on distemper,  
Shall not be wink'd at, how shall we stretch our eye  
When capital crimes, chew'd, swallow'd, and digested, Appear before  
us? We'll yet enlarge that man,  
Though Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey, in their dear care  
And tender preservation of our person,  
Would have him punish'd.

(HV 2.2.52-9)

To contextualize: a drunken soldier has been condemned by the three lords who are conspiring against the King. The audience has already been informed that treachery is afoot, so the scene is designed to take advantage of dramatic irony as Henry invokes love.

There are occasions when this usage shades over into genuine respect between those of roughly equal social degree. Hotspur again provides an example, when he tells the Scot, Douglas, 'a braver place. In my heart's love hath no man but yourself.' (1 HIV 4.1.7-8). It is clear from his use of 'braver' that he is talking about mutual admiration based on military prowess. Commonly, this kind of admiration lends 'love' a sense of political association or affiliation:

Brutus, I do observe you now of late;  
I have not from your eyes that gentleness  
And show of love as I was wont to have.  
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand  
Over your friend that loves you.

(JC 1.2.32-6)

The 'love' between Cassius and Brutus may be some form of personal mutual respect (although they can be critical of each other), but ensuing events demonstrate that this 'love' is the basis for political action. In this sense, 'love' is the opposite of emulation. When the conspiracy is being organized, Cassius notes the danger posed by Mark Antony: 'Yet I fear him, for in the engrafted love he bears to Caesar' GC 2.1.183--4); at this point Brutus interrupts him. This is an important moment, because this is the decision point for the whole conspiracy.

When there is a wide disjunction in rank between those involved, 'love' is imbricated within another set of socially defined parameters:

*Fal.* Well, thou wilt be horribly chid to-morrow when thou  
comest to thy father. If thou love me, practice an answer.  
*Prince.* Do thou stand for my father and examine me upon  
the particulars of my life.

(1 HIV 2.4.373-7)

There follows one of the most famous comic scenes in the plays. But what is interesting is the sense in which 'love' functions in different ways for both Falstaff and Prince Hal. The fat knight is worried enough about the upcoming civil war, but he is perhaps even more so about the king's possible dislike of the prince's companions, including himself. So Falstaff's love for the prince is shot through with self-interest, as events towards the end of 2 Henry IV will show. Hal, on the other hand, is using his low companions as a way of getting intimately to appreciate the views of the majority of his people, as opposed to the **nobility**. He is quite open about this to the audience, and famously says so directly to Falstaff after their mutual play on the king in court (1 HN 2.4.481).

When 'love' is mentioned in a context that crosses class boundaries, it does not always conceal something potentially negative; see the Second Lord's aside to the audience when Cloten complains about Imogen's love for Posthumus (CYM 1.2.25-7). See also Ophelia's uncomprehending response to her father's probing: 'My lord, he hath importun'd me with love In honourable fashion' (HAM 1.3.110-11). In both cases 'love' seems to approach nearest its modern conception, but even so events demonstrate that a romantic love that cuts across classes is subject to wider social and political pressures. Hamlet's response to his own dangerous situation is to feign a form of madness that takes on something of a life of its own:

This is the very ecstasy of love,  
Whose violent property fordoes itself,  
And leads the will to desperate undertakings  
As oft as any passion under heaven  
That does afflict our natures.

(HAM 2.1.99-103)

Polonius certainly takes love to be the root cause of Hamlet's melancholy, but even so he sees personal love as a dangerous emotion.

All of the meanings so far explored impinge in one way or another upon the action of King Lear. Lear makes the mistake himself of assuming that a protestation of love really means some form of personal affection. The word appears initially in the short initial scene between Gloucester, Edmund and Kent, when the last named says 'I must love you, and sue to know you better' (KL 1.1.30) after being

introduced to Edmund. The rest of the court enters and Lear first uses the word in relation to the suits of France and Burgundy for marriage to Cordelia at KL 1.1.46. Most famously, Lear then asks each of his daughters in turn to tell him just how much they love him. Their inheritance then depends on their verbiage:

*Con.* Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter,  
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty,  
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare,  
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;  
As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found;  
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable:  
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.  
*Cor. [Aside.]* What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent.

(KL 1.1.55-62)

Goneril gets her reward, of course, but what is interesting about her rhetoric is that it means nothing. She defines her love negatively, that is, by comparison with that which it is not. Her words are very carefully chosen to give an impression of great weight and ultimately this is what counts with her father. Cordelia's response is equally revealing: she says directly to the audience that she will simply love, and say nothing. This is important in performance terms. An aside in this theatre is not some kind of momentary glimpse into the inner psyche of a character. It is a direct statement to the audience, and by implication it is a judgement by one character on what is being said or done by others.

When it is her turn, Regan adopts the same strategy as her sister. She also operates by comparison, but the terms in which she does so are based on her sister's previous speech:

*Reg.* I am made of that self mettle as my sister,  
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart  
I find she names my very deed of love;  
Only she comes too short, that I profess  
Myself an enemy to all other joys  
Which the most precious square of sense possesses,  
And find I am alone felicitate  
In your dear Highness' love.  
*Cor. [Aside,]:* Then poor Cordelia!  
And yet not so, since I am sure my love's  
More ponderous than my tongue.

(KL 1.1.69-78)

Regan's vocabulary plays on terms of value, such as 'mettle' with its aural pun on 'metal', 'prize', 'worth' and 'possesses'. These can be taken to apply to love; they can also be purely materialistic terms. Cordelia's second aside very precisely pinpoints the issues at stake: for her, love is not dependent on a ponderous tongue. The exact repetition of a speech on love followed by an aside, then followed by Lear's decision, patterns the scene in such a way as to focus expectation on a third statement. But of course Cordelia follows on from her spoken decision to the audience not to follow her sisters' lead. This results in the explosion of Lear's temper as he disinherits his youngest daughter. Yet another meaning of the word then appears when Kent speaks out against what is happening:

Royal Lear, Whom I have  
ever honour'd as my king, Lov'd as my father, as my  
master follow'd,  
As my great patron thought on in my prayers –

(KL 1.1.139-42)

Kent's love is that of the loyal retainer; a bit too loyal, in fact, for Lear's taste. Rather than hear something he knows he will not like, the old king interrupts Kent's speech. The earl's response is uncompromising:

be Kent unmannerly  
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man? Think'st  
thou that duty shall have dread to speak  
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound, When  
majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state,  
And in thy best consideration check  
This hideous rashness. Answer my life my judgement, Thy  
youngest daughter does not love thee least,  
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds  
Reverb no hollowness.

(KL 1.1.145-54)

Kent's vocabulary is hardly respectful. His response focuses the audience's attention once again on the concept of love, or rather the competing values placed upon it by the various characters.

Shakespeare's audiences are well aware of the nuances of the spoken word; what matters here is the way that the play explicitly draws their attention inexorably towards the status of the various rhetorical techniques used to define 'love'. And when rhetoric is involved, language inevitably becomes bound up with the positions that lie behind it, as is very much the case with the two older sisters. In other words, language is not transparent or neutral. Rhetorical manipulation is always managed by and on behalf of some agenda. By failing to recognize that this is the case, even when one of his trusted retainers tries to intervene, Lear fails as a sovereign. He reacts to others, he does not impose his will upon them. He has become an irascible old man looking for some kind of love when his first duty must be to his kingdom. In this situation, 'love' criss-crosses between personal and social meanings in ways that would make perfect sense to a contemporary audience.

What constitutes love, and ultimately who has the final say on its definition, becomes something of a test case for the play as it develops. It is one of those terms that reappear constantly in the play, another one being 'nature'. The usual critical terminology that these are 'recurring motifs' or similar, is not precise enough to deal with the meanings generated by this kind of linguistic logic. The word 'love' reverberates through the play, bouncing from one set of meanings to another. Edmund notes that 'Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund As to th' legitimate.' (KL 1.2.17). The disguised Earl of Kent and Goneril's steward Oswald end up fighting each other:

*Osw.* Good dawning to thee, friend. Art of this house?

*Kent.* Ay.

*Osw.* Where may we set our horses?

*Kent.* I'th' mire.

*Osw.* Prithee, if thou lov'st me, tell me.

*Kent.* I love thee not.

(KL 2.2.1-7)

Kent goes on to describe the kind of courtier which he perceives Oswald to be, and it is quite a list. In this meeting, Kent's definite 'I love thee not' inverts the usual polite usage of 'love' to denote respect. In the new world of Goneril and Regan inhabited by men such as Oswald, 'love' comes to mean something else: 'I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love.' (KL 3.5.24-5) says Cornwall to Edmund, when the latter has betrayed his father.

Residual meanings similar to Kent's at the beginning of the play do still exist. Goneril's husband, Albany, is the only one of the four highest ranking people in the kingdom who is not utterly self-seeking in some kind of quest for supreme power. He praises Gloucester for the service to Lear that cost him his eyes: 'Gloucester, I live To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the King' (KL 4.2.94-5).

Here love means something like duty; but continued duty to meanings associated with the old regime now carries a price. Lear himself finally realizes this when he meets up with Cordelia:

If you have poison for me, I will drink it.  
I know you do not love me, for your sisters Have (as I do  
remember) done me wrong: You have some cause; they  
have not.

(KL 4.7.71-4)

The actions of Goneril and Regan are not based upon anything done to them by their father; therefore, so much more extreme should be Cordelia's revenge after what he does to her at the start of the play. In effect, what all of this does is open up a massive contradiction at the heart of patriarchal ideology. Lear the old king, the ultimate patriarch, presents Cordelia with an impossible dilemma. He orders her to speak as he does her sisters. Their speech gains them great independent power. But for Cordelia, to speak means to compete with her sisters. If she speaks, she is like them, an unruly woman; if she does not, she disobeys her father. Either way, she is damned. Love is therefore a site of contestation for massive social pressures. The forces unleashed by Lear drive him through madness into the arms of the one daughter he really does wrong. And, of course, being true to her stock role of the good daughter, she does nothing about it. After all, she is played by a man.

Even King Lear does not exhaust the possibilities of this word. Brutus invokes it in his funeral oration for Caesar: 'Not that I lov'd Caesar less, but that I lov'd Rome more' (JC 3.2.21-2). Patriotism is the reason Brutus gives for assassinating the dictator. In *The Tempest*, Prospera says that the reason for his usurping brother allowing her and the baby Miranda to live was 'So dear the love my people bore me' (TEM 1.2.141). But then this assertion comes from a man who has admitted that he completely ignored state business in favour of his studies. Prospera is also the only one who gives a version of these events, so whether or not one should trust him is a moot point. A similar set of meanings emerges in *Henry VIII*:

All the commons  
Hate him perniciously, and, o' my conscience,  
Wish him ten fathom deep. This duke as much  
They love and dote on; call him bounteous Buckingham,  
The mirror of all courtesy

(HVIII.1.49-53)

The Second Gentleman's comparison of Wolsey with Buckingham is interrupted by the latter's procession towards the Tower of **London** for his execution. The play has been very careful to arraign Buckingham against Wolsey and the distinction the Second Gentleman makes between the two of them reinforces their opposition. However, the terms in which his comparison is couched are very interesting because they imply that public support for Buckingham has been the key factor in his downfall. This was in fact one reason for his death, but the comparison was to the detriment of the king, not the cardinal. Buckingham was a very serious potential candidate for the throne, much more so when one remembers the very precarious claim of the House of Tudor. At the time Buckingham was judicially murdered by Henry, the only person standing between him and the crown was Henry's young daughter, Mary. The people's interest in Buckingham that is denoted by the word 'love' here is an important factor in all of this; as the initial glamour of Henry's succession to his parsimonious father began to wear off, Henry simply decided to get rid of him.

Many of the plays do of course register a sense of love that is similar to our conception of romantic passion between two individuals. But such a love affair can have socially embarrassing consequences, and this is what occasions the plot line of *Measure For Measure*; see Claudio's conversation with Lucio at MM 1.2.145-56. The confusions produced here would have made perfect sense to a contemporary audience. There were various possible stages towards a full marriage; much medieval and Renaissance diplomacy was concerned with the minutiae of such pre-contracts and betrothals.



Certainly in England the status of Juliet's relationship with Claudio would be considered a marriage; it just had not been made fully public yet. Juliet's pregnancy reveals the truth of their situation a little earlier than they would have liked; unfortunately for them, it also coincides with Angelo's decision to implement the full laws of Vienna on immoral behaviour. But passion stirs Angelo himself when he meets Claudio's sister Isabella, surprising him with its vehemence (MM 2.2.176-86). This is exactly the kind of passionate love Othello has, and loses, for Desdemona:

Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul But I do  
love thee! and when I love thee not, Chaos is come  
again.

(OTH 3.3.90-2)

The power of his love is turned by Iago's insinuations into a force for jealousy. The means Iago uses to do so are important: he plays upon the social conventions that have been violated by Desdemona's marriage. Romantic love in this period is always potentially imbricated in a wide network of social relations; the higher up the social scale one goes, the wider the ripples.

For the upper classes, there is a whole discourse of love. Courtly love, as it is usually called, carries with it a whole baggage of associations. They are a very well known part of literary culture, so much so that they impinge directly on pretty much any upper-class liaisons. They are also easily available for parody such as the play within a play in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or Romeo's posturing to Benvolio: 'Out of her favour where I am in love' (RJ 1.1.168). There then follows a long exchange between the two in which Benvolio gently mocks Romeo's conventional love posture by using the terms of the convention himself. None of this makes any sense unless to an audience for whom the discourse is already wearisomely familiar. This part of the play is obviously meant to contrast with what happens to Romeo when he infiltrates the ball thrown by Lord Capulet at RJ 1.5 and sees Juliet for the first time. Courtly love discourse is not always positive; as so often with a rhetorical construction, the pose can mask serious problems:

'But woe is me, too early I attended  
A youthful suit- it was to gain my grace;  
O, one by nature's outwards so commended That  
maidens' eyes stuck over all his face.  
Love lack'd a dwelling and made him her place; And when  
in his fair parts she did abide,  
She was new lodg'd and newly deified.

(LC 78--84)

This is spoken by a woman who said yes to a 'suit ...to gain my grace', a vocabulary that is straight out of the courtly love tradition. It is very clear that in this instance at least the convention masks a ruthless pursuit of sex, and a woman in this society who consents to sex without marriage could effectively become outcast. This is because of the value placed on women's sexual status by patriarchy, a social construction that lies beneath even extreme instances of wooing such as Rill 1.2. In courtly love poetry, the woman beloved of the writer is placed on a pedestal and worshipped. The language used is adapted from medieval romance, as the woman becomes a lady to be served by her suitor. This is especially the case if there is a disparity in rank between them. Even so, patriarchy requires the woman to be a passive recipient of the verses; at the very most, she can deny the poet's suit, or ignore him. But she is not supposed to take action herself, at least by patriarchal logic, since the very definition of femininity in this system is pure passivity.

By the time Shakespeare was becoming established as a playwright in **London**, a vogue for courtly love sonnets reached the height of poetic fashion. But this is quite late in terms of the convention's history. At the same time as plenty of sonnets are being written that stay within the parameters set by the tradition, others are produced that lay bare the assumptions behind it. This is not exactly a new twist, since poets are supposed to play with the conventions they inhabit, which is about as close to a

definition of originality one will find for the period. But in the case of sonnet collections, it does produce some surprisingly powerful, even unsettling, poetry. Shakespeare's own sonnets are usually dated to the period, roughly, of the closure of the theatres due to a particularly bad outbreak of the plague (1593, or thereabouts), although this does not necessarily mean that all of them were written at that point. They are mostly addressed to a young man who is represented as being of much higher social status than the poet. Some of them (the later ones in the collection) are written to a disturbing woman. The language of love associated with the sonnet convention is therefore adapted by Shakespeare to suit his subjects; the problem for us at the other end of the rise of individualism is that it is extremely difficult to pinpoint where romantic, personal love comes in all of this, if it does at all.

This issue is not trivial, since if Shakespeare is sincerely writing in love to a young man, he is homosexual or bisexual. But there is a further problem: sexuality as an index of identity can only be dated from a much later period; what matters in the Renaissance is one's rank. Therefore the sonnets to the young friend are shot through with a language of love taken from the traditional methodology of sonnets addressed to a woman, in which the poet serves the beloved. If the young man is of such superior degree to the poet, then a whole logic of patronage necessarily impinges on the language we would normally assume to be romantic. All of this is extremely difficult for us to unpick at this distance in time, although a start can be made with numbers 1-17. These form a sub-group organized around an interwoven theme; they are poems designed to try to persuade the upper-class young man to do his duty and beget an heir in order to continue the lineage of his house. The problem is that he doesn't want to:

For shame deny that thou bear'st love to any,  
Who for thyself art so unprovident.  
Grant, if thou wilt, thou art belov'd of many,  
But that thou none lov'st is most evident;  
For thou art so possess'd with murd'rous hate,  
That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire, Seeking that  
beauteous roof to ruinate  
Which to repair should be thy chief desire.

(SON 10.1-8)

This poem identifies the young friend's self-interest in terms of repair to a 'beauteous roof'; by refusing to marry and have children to continue the line, he is accused of hating himself 'Love' in these circumstances is a relationship between the young man and his own lineage. Shakespeare's sonnets move very quickly from one set of ideas to another, which has led many commentators to wonder about their status as a collection of poems in sequential order. One of the best known is Sonnet 20, which has excited a great deal of commentary around the issue of the poet's sexuality:

But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,  
Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

(SON 20.13-14)

The 'she' referred to in the poem's final couplet is nature. She has endowed him with an instrument to pleasure women, but the poet nevertheless wants love to be between the young man and himself, even as the 'use' of his love goes to women. Another important collocation in these poems is that of patronage:

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage  
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,  
To thee I send this written ambassage  
To witness duty, not to show my wit;

(SON 26.1-4)

The vocabulary here is one of deference to superior rank, following on from the conventional postures in the sonnet tradition. In this context, 'merit' is socially constructed, rather than a personal quality. The poet's love is clearly overdetermined by an unequal relationship; it is not, in this poem at least, some form of personal bond. The poems to the young man, numbered from 1-126, oscillate across all of the associations of the term 'love' that are bound up with its social construction in this period. Sonnet 108.4 replicates the language of number 26. Even another of the best known, number 116, can be seen to operate within this overall context:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments; love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove.

(SON 116.1-4)

A modern reader would see this in straightforward terms of personal love; the poet in this reading would be saying that his love's truth forbids him from changing, even if his lover has done so. A Renaissance reader might instead see it as a patronage relationship, one in which the patron is changing, while the lower-class poet cannot afford to do so. It could of course be both, but the point is that to assume that all of the occurrences of 'love' in these poems are automatically personal may be to misunderstand them by reducing the range of meanings in an ahistorical fashion.

The so-called 'Dark Lady' sonnets (127-54) present another set of problems in deciphering what the lexical item 'love' might denote. These poems are written with a very precise knowledge of the traditional conventions (see 130). However, the drive to register some sort of originality produces this beloved as a set of dark eyes:

Thine eyes I love, and they as pitying me,  
Knowing thy heart torment me with disdain,  
Have put on black, and loving mourners be, Looking with pretty  
ruth upon my pain.

(SON 132.1-4)

This is an exceptionally knowing development of a standard courtly love conceit, the power of the lady's eyes. But such blackness inevitably carries emblematic associations of deep untrustworthiness in this period. A situation is produced in which the poet is supposed to be attracted to the woman by the logic of the form, while at the same time he notes her falseness:

When my love swears that she is made of truth,  
I do believe her, though I know she lies,

(SON 138.1-2)

The sense of disquiet that lies behind such a complex relationship gives rise to the disgust of Sonnet 129 as well as other instances of confusion:

In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes,  
For they in thee a thousand errors note;  
But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,  
Who in despite of view is pleas'd to dote;

(SON 141.1-4)

This is an important observation by the poet, because it notes a massive disjunction between his gaze and his heart. The privileged position reserved for the male gaze in patriarchy has failed here. This is a woman who cannot easily be defined by a man in concert with the power of a full literary tradition behind him; it is no wonder that he finds her so unsettling. This context produces the impossible love

of Sonnet 147:

My love is as a fever, longing still  
For that which longer nurseth the disease,

(SON 147.1-2)

Love here is not a fixed, easily definable emotion. It is not even a stable piece of vocabulary, because it acts as a site across which so many conflicting meanings are played out. One should be very wary of such extreme linguistic complexity when dealing with a term that at first sight seems so straightforward as 'love'; to reduce it to the purely personal is radically to misread its potentiality in this period.

(c) Stone (1990) lays out a framework for investigating the relationship between family and love at 76-88. He uses phraseology such as 'affective relationships' in order to try to avoid the inevitable misunderstandings that arise because of the semantic changes around 'love'. Stone (1967) also delves into some of these areas, this time in relation to the aristocracy, at 269-302. For the relatively relaxed attitude to sex before marriage, but after a marital agreement had been reached, see Amussen (1988), 108-11. Heal and Holmes (1994) locate the existence of personal affection in marriages among the **gentry** at 62, but they do so in a context in which economics and status have a prior importance. Henry VIII found out the hard way that falling in passionate love is not something that is advisable for a king to do; for his marriage to Catherine Howard, see Starkey (2004), 649-84. Elizabeth I's supposed love affairs were inevitably dominated by matters of state. She does seem to have fallen genuinely in love quite late on with one of her suitors, the Duke of Anjou. She was finally unable to marry him because of English xenophobia; see Somerset (1997), 392-421.

Charney (2000) is a relatively accessible literary critical reading of love in Shakespeare. Howard (2000) looks at love and marriage in Shakespeare in terms of generic conventions at 303-8. For the role of personal affective love leading up to marriage in the plays, see Neely (1993), 1-23. Henderson (2003) is a useful introduction to the concepts and conventions of love poetry. Spiller (1992) is a book-length treatment of the relationship between courtly love and the development of the sonnet form. For an important overview of categories of sexuality in the period, see Bray (1995). Sedgwick (1985) follows on from the first edition of Bray's work and relates it specifically to Shakespeare's sonnets at 28--48. See also Bruce Smith (1994), 228-70. Barrell (1991) provides a provocative analysis of Sonnet 29 as embodying a language of patron- age via the term 'love', at 18--43. For a full discussion of the relationship between courtly love and the Renaissance sonnet and how this affects Shakespeare's poems, see Innes (1997).