

**CHARCOALS OR DIAMONDS?
ON DESTRUCTION OF MORAL AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
(OR SOUL MURDER) IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS**

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Abstract. *This paper was presented at the First British Shakespeare Association Conference, held at De Montfort University in Leicester in August of 2003. It was part of the seminar on "Shakespearean Childhoods: Representing and Addressing Children in Shakespeare's Work and Afterlife". It highlights the process of instruction children are subjected to by various figures of authority, in order to point out that the effect such instruction has on them is equivalent to the destruction of their moral and emotional intelligence, or murder of their soul. Shakespeare exposes the deadliness of this traditional 'for-your-own-good' pedagogy by showing in his plays how children, belonging to different historical epochs and geographical locations, have to 'give themselves up to be commanded', and how the triumph of the will of the adults over them comes to be complete. Forced, or seduced into self-betrayal, children are raised not to become who they potentially are, but what they are expected to be, to fulfill prescribed social roles and expectations. Shakespeare does not merely illustrate the fact that 'dumb waiters' such as Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Polonius, Laertes, Osric, Oswald, etc. exist; he shows how they are created out of the same humanity that is Horatio's, Hamlet's, Edgar's, Kent's, Cordelia's.*

*This approach to Shakespeare has been taken up and explored by John Herbert's *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, Heiner Müller's *Hamletmaschine*, Edward Bond's *Lear*, Howard Barker's *Seven Lears*, the Women's Collective's *Lear's Daughters*. The plays *Faust (Faust is Dead)* by Mark Ravenhill and *Far Away* by Caryl Churchill are also seen as 'Shakespearean' because their central preoccupation is the treatment of the child. In the first part of this paper the playwrights' Shakespearean concerns are compared to the findings of Victor Frankl, Bruno Bettelheim, and Alice Miller, psychoanalysts who have worked with children most of their lives. The second part examines Shakespeare's *King Lear* and Howard Barker's *Seven Lears: The Pursuit Of The Good* (the reconstruction of the process through which Lear, the child, is turned into the King we meet in Shakespeare's play). The subtitle, *The Pursuit Of The Good*, places Barker's approach in the tradition of Socrates and Nietzsche (from whose *Twilight of the Idols* the title of the paper is taken). In different ways Socrates, Shakespeare, Nietzsche and Barker built their work on a 'heretical' conception of personal development, founded on the belief in the child's innate sense of justice, the godlike authority of the private soul, and questioning as the method that leads to the*

unfolding recognition (and love) of the Good. Their works show how care-givers guided by such assumptions have been replaced in our culture by promoters of the 'put-money-in-your-purse' poisonous pedagogy, which cripples and dehumanizes the child.

1. SHAKESPEAREAN CHILDHOODS

1.

Nurse: Mary, bachelor,
Her mother is the lady of the house,
And a good lady, and a wise and virtuous.
I nursed her daughter that you talked withal.
I tell you, he that can lay hold on her
Shall have the chinks. (Romeo and Juliet, 1,5)

...

Juliet: 'Comfort me, counsel me.
Alack, alack, that heaven should practice stratagems
Upon so soft a subject as myself!
What sayest thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?
Some comfort, Nurse.

Nurse:I think it best you married with the County.
O, he's a lovely gentleman. (Romeo and Juliet, 3,5)

2.

Odysseus: Ensnare the soul of Philoctetes with your words.
...I know, young man, it is not your natural bent
to say such things nor to contrive such mischief.
But the prize of victory is pleasant to win.
Bear up: another time we shall prove honest.
For one brief shameless portion of a day
give me yourself, and then for the rest
you may be called most scrupulous of men. (Sophocles, Philoctetes, lines 55, 79-85)

3.

Volumnia: If it be honour in your wars to seem
The same you are not, which for your best ends
You adopt your policy, how is it less or worse
That it shall hold companionship in peace
With honour, as in war, since that to both
It stands in like request?
...speak to th' people
Not by your own instruction, not by th' matter
Which your heart prompts you, but with such words
That are but rooted in your tongue, though but
Bastards and syllable of no allowance
To your bosom's truth.
Coriolanus: ...You have put me now to such a part which never
I shall discharge to th' life.
Cominius: Come come, we'll prompt you. (Coriolanus, 3,2)

4.

Lady Macbeth: Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eyes,
Your hand, your tongue: look like th' innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't. (Macbeth, 1,5)

Macbeth: Away and mock the time with fairest show.
False face must hide what the false heart doth know. (Macbeth, 1,7)
5.

Lear: So young, and so untender?

Cordelia: So young, my lord, and true.

Lear: Let it be so, thy truth then be thy dower.

...Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this for ever. (King Lear, 1,1)

6.

Shylock: If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge! If a Christian
wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge! The
villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.
(The Merchant of Venice, 3,1)

7.

Emilia: But I do think it is their husbands' fault
If wives do fall. ...have not we affections,
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?
Then let them use us well, else let them know
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so. (Othello, 4,2)

8.

Second murderer: I hope this passionate humour of mine will change. It was wont to
hold me but while one tells twenty. (He counts to twenty)

First murderer: How dost thou feel thyself now?

Second murderer: Some certain drags of conscience are yet within me.

First murderer: Remember our reward, when the deed's done.

Second murderer: 'Swounds, he dies. I had forgot the reward.

First murderer: Where's thy conscience now?

Second murderer: O, in the Duke of Gloucester's purse. (Richard III, 1,4)

9.

Sebastian: I remember, You did supplant your brother Prospero.

Antonio: True: And look how well my garments sit upon me;

Much faster than before: my brother's servants

Were then my fellows; now they are my men.

Sebastian: But, for your conscience.

Antonio: Ay, sir, where lies that? (The Tempest, 2,1)

10.

Prudentia: This acting. This intervening. This putting stops to things. Who obliges
you, Clarissa?

Clarissa: My conscience.

Prudentia: Put it to sleep, then. Strike it with a shovel. Like a senile dog, one swift and clean blow kills it. I was spun by conscience like a top. And when it died I came to life. The top ceased spinning. Look how you shiver. Look how manifestly you are inferior to me. Do I shiver? (Howard Barker, *Seven Lears*)

2. THE AFTERLIFE

When the psychiatrist Victor Frankl died in 1997, the obituary published in the *Economist* mentioned: his deportation, in 1942, from Vienna to a succession of four concentration camps (including Auschwitz); the three years spent there; the book *Man's Search for Meaning* published when he was freed at the end of the war (9m copies sold), the 31 other books he added to his name during the 25 years subsequently spent practicing and teaching psychiatry in Vienna, and additional 20 spent as visiting professor at Harvard and other American universities; the 29 honorary doctorates awarded to him from institutions around the world; the flying he took up when he was 67; the suggestion he made on US television that America should erect on its other coast a Statue of Responsibility; the fact that as a psychiatrist "he was concerned with healing the soul, the higher part of man, rather than the body."

The obituary published in a Belgrade paper concentrated on Frankl's experiences in Dachau and Auschwitz and the way he evolved, out of them, his specific healing methods. He helped his patients not by prescribing medicaments, but by enabling them to restore their belief in the meaning and value of life. In 1996, one year before his death, Frankl was invited to Vienna to open the proceedings of the first World Council of Psychotherapy. He used the occasion (his last public appearance) to reiterate his belief that God exists in the unconscious of each one of us as the power that motivates us and empowers our conscience to function as an instrument of meaning.

For a discussion of Shakespeare and childhood two things related to Frankl are important: his concern with the health of the soul, and his insistence on the role conscience plays in the discovery of values which endow life with purpose and meaning. Modern man's search for a soul has not been successful, and the failure to find any satisfaction in being alive has caused, in England alone, in the past two decades, a 170% increase in the suicide rate among boys aged between 15-24. The period to which Shakespeare belonged is now called 'early modern': many of our 'late modern' afflictions can be traced to processes Shakespeare accurately perceived and condemned in his works.

Numerous characters in Shakespeare are driven to madness, and/or commit suicide. Discontents leading to such states and acts are caused by harm done to the soul, by denial, suppression and corruption of conscience, by subversion of innate moral and emotional intelligence (of which the epigraphs at the beginning of this paper are a brief reminder). These tragic processes we are taught to regard as progress and civilization. In his survey of the history of western civilization Shakespeare perceived its participants (both the sinned against, and the sinning) as victims, and for that reason did not, as the saying goes, take sides. Rather than that, he employed his many talents to study the strategies through which unjust manipulative 'traditions' are forced upon human beings, victimizing them through the roles they are assigned to play. In opposition to these, the purposed end of the role-plays he himself invented for the theatre was freedom.

The meaning of freedom spans two questions: free from what, and free for what. Juliet and Desdemona discover their soul's joy in love, and wish to be free to pursue it: on the other hand, a whole range of other characters in Shakespeare wish to get rid of their conscience to be free to kill. Perhaps it is due to the importance and complexity of these questions that Ariel, who refused to serve Sycorax, needs Prospero and the experiences he shares with him to discover the free-for-what of freedom.¹ Without such knowledge and awareness life comes to be at the mercy of brute force, freed from moral insight and utterly divorced from wisdom and justice. Without them, as Conrad recognized, the human soul goes mad.

Shakespeare was appalled by the amount of madness in history. He saw (as Bond would say) law protecting the order and not justice, lovers turned into killers, fair becoming foul and foul fair in Troy, Athens, Rome, Venice, Vienna, Denmark, England. The pity of it, the tragedy of human life irreverently lost and wasted throughout millennia, could not leave him indifferent. In his plays old tales and diverse historical and geographical contexts turn (as Iris Murdoch notes) into "new and fruitful places for reflection" where strategies of moral disorientation - methods used to get rid of the troublesome milk of human kindness - are carefully scrutinized. The aim of his anatomy of human destructiveness (church, state, and family instrumentalizing and corrupting the young and destroying all other dissenting or unsubmitive individuals) was to register and evaluate attempted modes of resistance (including madness and suicide) and clarify and recommend ways in which recovery of moral balance, remembering of forgotten values, and completion of being could take place. Given the state of moral disorientation in the world today, his study of human beings as moral agents, and his reflection upon the nature of moral progress and moral failure is such that "it is and always will be" as Iris Murdoch claims in *The Sovereignty of Good*, "more important to know about Shakespeare than to know about any scientist".²

In order to elaborate Murdoch's claim, and articulate more fully my own views on Shakespeare's relevance for the world we inhabit, I will refer briefly to the work of psychiatrists Bruno Bettelheim and Alice Miller, who share Viktor Frankl's concern for the young, and the plays of Mark Ravenhill, Caryl Churchill and Shelagh Stephenson - *Faust*, *Faust is Dead* (1997), *Far Away* (1999), and *Five Kinds of Silence* (2000) - because they deal with childhood ordeals that many of the young face today. Better than anyone else, in my view, these authors document the afterlife of a culture that has managed to learn nothing from Shakespeare and his insights.

The plays of the German playwright Heiner Müller (*Medea*, 1974; *Hamlet-machine*, 1977) and of the British history-student-turned-playwright Howard Barker (especially his *Seven Lears: The Pursuit of the Good*, 1990) also deserve special mention. In their efforts to assess the present these two authors look back to both Shakespeare and the Greek classics because they wish to point out to what great extent the Greek tragedies and Shakespeare's plays subvert and problematize our attitudes to history, and challenge conventional definitions and defenses of its greatness. Like their own plays, Greek trage-

¹ For a discussion of the questions "Free from what/Free for what?" see Steve Tesich's play *On The Open Road* (New York, Applause Theatre Book Publishers, A Goodman Theatre Edition, 1992), and Quentin Skinner's Isiah Berlin Memorial Lecture delivered at The British Academy in December of 2001, published under the title "A Third Concept of Liberty" in the *London Review of Books* on April 4, 2002.

² Iris Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection", *The Sovereignty of Good*, Ark Paperbacks, London, 1970, p. 34. Throughout the book Murdoch acknowledges the inspiring influence of Simone Weil.

dies and Shakespeare's plays often accomplish this by providing and foregrounding evidence of things done to children, 'for their own good', to make them civilized. One example of what our culture promotes today will hopefully convey the gravity of the matter:

Psychology Today, March/April 1996, p. 26.

Parenting

Transmitting Values

How to Make a Money-maker

What does it take to breed a child who is financially aggressive and values monetary success? For starters, it helps if you value financial success yourself. After all, kids identify with their parents. Childrearing styles also play into it, finds psychologist Tim Kasser, Ph.D. The less warm, involved and democratic parents are, the more they attune a child to financial success.... When mothers are cold and controlling, their children focus on attaining security and a sense of self-worth through external sources, such as financial success...³

3. SOUL MURDER OR WHY THE MEN WHO BUILT AUSCHWITZ DID NOT CRY

-He has the great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve-...

-What would you?

-Serve you, sir.

-That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

The Merchant of Venice, Act 2,2

Child rearing practices, both those explicitly enforced through education and those implicitly conveyed to the child by the life style and cultural habits of its environment occasionally do get the critical attention they deserve. For instance, in a recent review of new books on Hitler's architect Speer one of the authors, Joachim Fest, is quoted observing that Hitler 'came from nowhere' while, unlike him, Speer "was by origin and upbringing, the product of a long process of civilization". Fest sees Speer as representative of German bourgeois society as a whole, and its capitulation to totalitarian temptations. He insists that the representativeness of Speer, far from exonerating German society, actually inculcates the educated bourgeoisie in the Nazi project yet further.

Observations made in 1944 by Sebastian Haffner of *The Observer*, are similar but even more troubling, because Haffner sees Speer as representative of all of Europe, and not just Germany. "Speer is not one of the flamboyant and picturesque Nazis", writes Haffner: "He is very much the successful average man, well dressed, civil, non-corrupt, very middle class in his style... Much less than any of the other German leaders does he stand for anything particularly German or particularly Nazi. He rather symbolizes a type which is becoming increasingly important in all belligerent countries: the pure technician, the classless bright young man without background with no other aim than to make his way in the world and no other means than his technical and managerial ability... the Hitlers and Himmlers we may get rid of, but the Speers, whatever happens to this particular special man, will long be with us."

³ On the same page, further on, we find reports on Support Groups and the kind of assistance they offer. For instance, we find that in the *Self-Help Source Book* reviewed on the same page "...there is even a chapter about on-line support network for folks in need of cyberhugs."

The list of 'representative' men (and women) of this kind would be long. When Hannah Arendt fled from Germany all her highly intelligent and academically successful university friends had become Nazi supporters. The points made about Speer, Hitler's architect, apply in an even more disheartening degree to Goebels, who held a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Heidelberg. In his case, as in the case of numerous other 'great' European political leaders, the aim of higher education (even in humanities and medicine) seems to have been to prepare them not to resist, but to embrace active participation in the moral orders out of which empires are built.

The Speers who in Germany used their technical skills to build the required work-and-death camps, and who employed their managerial abilities to operate them as profitable business ventures from 1932 to 1945, did not feel that they had "murdered sleep", did not see troublesome ghosts, did not hear voices crying 'Hold!', did not shed tears over the millions they tortured and exterminated. Neither did their Spanish Catholic counterparts, whose enslavement and destruction of the Incas and Aztecs energized and 'enlightened' the European spirit in the Renaissance; nor their eighteenth century North American Protestant doubles, whose African slaves were not discussed when the Declaration of Independence was penned, and when the existing state of injustice and exploitation was called democracy. They heard no 'hold', because they were, as Fest puts it, "by origin and upbringing products of a long process of civilization."⁴ Through the coordinated effort of family, church and school they were brought up to obey authority (whatever system of values it rested upon and enforced), to suppress their emotional and moral intelligence, and to give themselves up in the full bent to be commanded.

Even more effectively than in the book on Speer the impact of this process is presented in the play *Die Commandeuse*, written and staged in 1996 by the German theatre artist Gilla Cremer. The play is a documentary account of the life of Ilse Koch, the Commandeuse of Buchenwald. The ironies it exposes are numerous and terrible. Buchenwald was built on the site of the forest which Goethe frequently visited. Only one oak remains to commemorate the great artist, and the past and the tradition he stands for. The rest of the forest was cut and replaced by the concentration camp, the kind of plant western civilization more readily invests in and cultivates.

The association of Buchenwald with Goethe is used to generate a metaphor which greatly enhances and extends the meaning of the play. A conversation between Eckermann and Goethe, concerning molting birds, is reported. Eckermann explains to Goethe that molting is not a sickness but a rite of passage, a very sensitive phase in the normal development of a bird. The loss of youthful feathers and their replacement by new plumes, strong enough to sustain the bird throughout its adult life, must not be disturbed. If the helpless bird is deprived of some of the new growth it may become incapable of maintaining balanced flight. It is this account that throws light on the transformation of Ilse Koch into the Bitch of Buchenwald. Her case is used as a study of how loss of moral balance in human beings occurs, and how unnatural practices usurp the place of the natural and the normal. As in the case of Speer and Goebels, what is monstrous, the play invites us to see, is not so much Ilse, the final product, but the process set up to ensure her successful manufacture.

⁴ About the participation of the health professions in the FARBEN corporation at Auschwitz and in other similar institutions see Richard Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History: The Holocaust and the American Future*. (1975).

In her book *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence*⁵, the Swiss psychiatrist Alice Miller calls this process poisonous pedagogy. The term is used as the general heading for the first part of her book entitled "How Child-Rearing Crushes Spontaneous Feelings: Glimpses of a Revered Tradition". The book opens with six epigraphs (the first from 1621) which trace the historical development of poisonous pedagogy. The last two are by Rudolf Hoss, Commandant of Auschwitz (who gives an account of how the principles of obedience by which he was brought up became second nature to him) and Adolf Hitler (who exclaims what good fortune it is for those in power that people do not think). Miller's historical survey ends with a reference to Dr. Daniel Gottlob Moritz Schreber, renowned pedagogue of the mid-nineteenth century, whose books guided into adulthood generations of German and other European children.

In her *Afterward* Miller states bluntly that pedagogy is a question of power, of hidden power struggles. She writes: "Conditioning and manipulation of others are always weapons and instruments in the hands of those in power even if these weapons are disguised with the terms *education* and *therapeutic treatment*. ...In the same way that technology was used to help carry out mass murder in the Third Reich... so too the more precise kind of knowledge of human behavior based on computer data and cybernetics can contribute to the more rapid, comprehensive, and effective soul murder of human beings than could the earlier intuitive psychology. There are no measures available to halt these developments. Psychoanalysis cannot do it; indeed, it is itself in danger of being used as an instrument of power in the training institutes. *All that we can do, as I see it, is to affirm and lend our support to the human objects of manipulation in their attempts to become aware and help them become conscious of their malleability and articulate their feelings so that they will be able to use their own resources to defend themselves against the soul murder that threatens them*". (p. 278, my italics) In fulfilling this goal, she finds "It is not the psychologists but the literary writers who are ahead of their time". One such writer is Shakespeare, although with this compliment she meant to give support and encouragement to several young German and American authors.

In the Appendix, Miller reduces her professional observations and insights to twelve points. The last (in my view very Shakespearean because, when reading it, one cannot help but think of Richard III and Edmund) deserves to be quoted in full:

"People whose integrity has not been damaged in childhood, who were protected, respected, and treated with honesty by their parents, will be - both in their youth and adulthood - intelligent, responsive, empathic, and highly sensitive. They will take pleasure in life and will not feel any need to kill or even hurt others or themselves. They will use their power to defend themselves but not to attack others. They will not be able to do otherwise than to respect and protect those weaker than themselves, including their children, because this is what they have learned from their own experience and because it is **this** knowledge (and not the experience of cruelty) that has been stored up inside them from the beginning. Such people will be incapable of understanding why earlier generations had to build up a gigantic war industry in order to feel at ease and safe in this world. Since it will not have to be their unconscious life-task to ward off intimidation experienced at a very early age, they will be able to deal with attempts at intimidation in their adult life more rationally and more creatively."

⁵ Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good, Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence*, Translated by Hildegard and Hunter Hunnum, London, Virago Press, 1987.

Miller came to these convictions after careful scrutiny of the lives of Adolph Hitler, Jurgen Bartsch, Christiane F. and Sylvia Plath. It is interesting to note that Sylvia Plath's suicide, more precisely the insights which, in its aftermath, her husband Ted Hughes gained into the causes of her tragedy, his own failings, and the destructive nature of the civilization to which they both belonged, informs his important study *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*.⁶ The preservation of integrity and completeness of being surface as imperatives on which both the 'doctors of the soul' and practitioners of art insist.

Soul-murder, the term around which Miller's diagnosis in *For Your Own Good* (1987) pivots, is borrowed from Morton Schatzman's book *Soul-Murder: Persecution in the Family*, in which the child-rearing methods advocated by Daniel Gottlob Moritz Schreber are analyzed (p. 90). Insights into Dr. Schreber and his poisonous pedagogy came to play the key role in Miller's work. She came to see the Holocaust as the consequence of "the destructive child-rearing style practiced widely on infants around the turn of the century". She addressed the topic even more fully in an article published in *The Journal of Psychohistory* in June 1998 ("The Political Consequences of Child Abuse"). There also she has no hesitation in claiming that she is talking about universal abuse of infants in Germany.

"Of course," she writes, "children in other countries have been and still are mistreated in the name of upbringing or caregiving, but hardly already as babies and hardly with the systematic thoroughness characteristic of the Prussian pedagogy. In the two generations before Hitler's rise to power, the implementation of this method was brought to a high degree of perfection in Germany. With this foundation to build on Hitler finally achieved what he wanted: 'My ideal of education is hard. Whatever is weak must be hammered away. In the fortresses of my militant order a generation of young people will grow to strike fear into the heart of the world. Violent, masterful, unafraid, cruel youth is what I want. Young people must be all that. They must withstand pain. There must be nothing weak or tender about them. The free magnificent predator must flash from their eyes again. I want them strong and beautiful... That way I can fashion things anew.' This education program revolving on the extermination of everything life-giving was the forerunner of Hitler's plans for the extermination of an entire nation. Indeed it was the prerequisite for the ultimate success of his designs."

It is in this spirit that Dr. Schreber's tracts and textbooks, some of which ran to as many as 40 editions, instructed parents in systematic upbringing of infants from the very first day of life. Miller reminds us: "Many people motivated by what they thought to be the best of intentions complied with the advice given them by Schreber and other authors about how best to raise their children if they wanted to make them into model subjects of the German Reich."

One outcome of these best intentions,⁷ worthy of Shakespeare's Polonius, was the tragic fate of Dr. Schreber's own youngest son, Daniel Paul Schreber, pillar of society, a

⁶ Ted Hughes, *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*, Faber, London, 1992.

⁷ Although we are given no indication of what Hamlet's education at Wittenberg was like, in *Hamlet* we are shown, in several scenes, how Polonius instructs his own two children. Ophelia not only has to 'give him up the truth' (I,3), she has to surrender to him her private letters (which he reads publicly in II,2) and is expected to obey when ordered to dismiss her private feelings for Hamlet. If she is asked to deny her privately made choice and become ready to play, regardless of her true feelings, any assigned public role, then by seeing what is done to her we can surmise how Gertrude grew up to be the queen who disappoints Hamlet so greatly (I,2: "...a beast that wants discourse of reason would have mourned longer"). In the same manner we see in the play how courtiers are schooled in obedience and servility. In II,2 Rosencrantz and Guildenstern give up themselves in

Leipzig judge. The judge, who died in an Asylum in 1911, wrote in 1903 a book about his fits of madness (*Memorabilia of a Nerve Patient*) and insisted on having it published. The book offers a glimpse into what the pedagogy his father subjected him to was really like. The book was subsequently analyzed by Freud himself, and Schreber's tragedy became one of Freud's more famous case studies.⁸ Schreber saw his first doctor, whom according to Freud he identified with his father, as soul-murderer. Parts of the text which record his account of what constitutes the essence of soul-murder and its techniques were unfortunately withheld from print as unsuitable for publication. Schreber, however, claimed that in addition to being threatened with soul-murder, it also became imperative for him to become a woman.

4. THE MEANING OF CRYING⁹

"What, does thou weep? come nearer; then I love thee
Because thou art a woman and disclaim'st
Flinty mankind, whose eyes do never give
But through lust and laughter. Pity's sleeping:
Strange times, that weep with laughing, not with weeping!"

Timon to his steward Flavius, *Timon of Athens*, Act 4,3

We are told that Jung enjoyed Freud's analysis of Schreber's case tremendously, but also that "few clinical studies by Freud have been subject to so much modern rebuttal as this one".¹⁰ To add one more observation not entertained by Freud will not then be out of context. It is possible that in his Shakespearean madness Schreber **did** see the true nature of the pressure under which he was forced to grow up, and **did** give an accurate account of it when he called it soul murder. His experience was corroborated by John Stuart Mill, who went through a similar crisis, and who saved himself from 'soul-murder' by reading Wordsworth and Coleridge¹¹ and other romantic authors.

Like Schreber, Mill also studied law, and considered and rejected a career at the bar. In Chapter V of his *Autobiography*, entitled "A Crises in My Mental History: One Stage Onward" he writes that in 1826-7 he often asked himself if he could, or if he was bound to go on living the life that his "mind irretrievable analytic" had made vapid and uninteresting. He was saved from despair when a passage he read moved him to tears. "The oppression of the thought that all feeling was dead within me, was gone" he writes: "I was no longer hopeless: I was not a stock or a stone."

The cultivation of the feelings became one of the cardinal points in his ethical and philosophical creed. He came to believe, very much like Frankl, that "those only are

the full bent, to lay their services freely at the royal feet to be commanded. The triumph of the royal will over Ozric and Polonius is the same: Shakespeare provides two virtually identical scenes to show that Polonius and Ozric see only what their prince does, and have no will and no mind of their own.

⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Case Histories II: 'Rat Man, Schreber, 'Wolf Man', A Case of Female Homosexuality*, The Pelican Freud Library Volume 9, 1979, pp. 129-223. Schreber's case is listed as "Psychoanalytic notes on an autobiographical account of a case of paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)" - (1910-1911).

⁹ On June 1, 2003, The Freud Museum organized a multi-disciplinary one-day conference on The Meaning of Crying. See the announcement for the conference in London Review of Books, May 8, 2003, p. 26.

¹⁰ See John Kerr, *A Most Dangerous Method: The Story of Jung, Freud, and Sabina Spielrein*, Vintage Books, New York, 1994.

¹¹ See the section on Mill in *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature, Volume II*, 1973, pp. 858-894.

happy who have their minds fixed on some objects other than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way." These views were contrary to the Utilitarian tenets he was brought up to revere, which did not openly exclude the pursuit of art and philanthropy from daily life but "found feelings standing very much in the way" of successful practical performance and, consequently, strove to have them "deadened rather than quickened".

"In truth", writes Mill, "the English character, and the English social circumstances, make it so seldom possible to derive happiness from the exercise of the sympathies, that it is not wonderful if they count for little in an Englishman's scheme of life." As a converted man he strove hard to prove, to those who dismissed the feelings and the imagination as distracting illusions, that they provide us with the "most accurate knowledge and most perfect practical recognition of all the physical and intellectual laws and relations" Iris Murdoch could not agree more.

Schreber called the depravation Mill describes "soul-murder". In his 'mad' way he also quite correctly perceived that in order to preserve what in his book he referred to as "the soul, the softness, the bliss, the voluptuousness of life, the true Order of Things", he had to free himself from the soul-killing definition of manhood his culture had asked him to accept. To save these, in a sense, he had to choose to become a woman.

In Shakespeare, this chord resonates profoundly. Hitler's proposed education for the young men of the future (which Alice Miller quotes, and for which Dr. Schreber paved the way) is very much like Volumnia's boastful review of measures she took to bring Coriolanus' up. Lady Macbeth likewise subjected herself voluntarily to the unsexing and moral and emotional maiming she considered necessary for a successful bid for power. However, in spite of the frequency and variety of such scenes in Shakespeare, there are in his plays numerous occasions when, during moments of great inner crises, the woman in his men manages to re-emerge and take over. Timon sees her in his good steward Flavius, Titus cries for his sons the way Tamora did, and all the other warriors and kings who cry in Shakespeare recognize her, and greet her (if they are redeemable) as the most valuable part of their self and being.¹² Shakespeare himself practiced what he preached. In opposition to the soul-killing masculine ideals of his time (the generals, the merchants, and the politicians) he states in his sonnets that he could love only someone who had "A woman's face with nature's own hand painted and a woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted with shifting change as is false women's fashion." (Sonnet 19) Only such a well commingled person could be the master-mistress of his passion.

Schreber describes, in one episode in his book, the soul-killer as being incapable of learning anything by experience, and unable to understand living men "because He only knows how to deal with corpses". (Freud p. 186) It is not necessary to point out how accurately this describes most politicians and holders of power today. Shakespeare built

¹² Mill ultimately healed himself (or achieved completeness of being) through his relationship with Harriet Taylor. In Shakespeare, perhaps the ultimate revolution in the order of values (by choice between political success and private fulfillment through love) is the moment when Anthony dishonors himself at Actium. He leaves the battle and follows Cleopatra's ship because, he tells her: "Egypt, thou knew'st too well /My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings, /And thou shouldst tow me after. O'er my spirit /Thy full supremacy thou know'st, and that /Thy back might from the bidding of the gods /Command me." Only a moment later, when she cries over their political defeat, he adds: "Fall not a tear, I say. One of them rates /All that is won and lost. Give me a kiss"(Act 3,11)

many of his plays around parental figures that fit this description. His plots often offer these arrogant and ignorant usurpers of authority a chance to free themselves from their addiction to power, and gain insight. To indicate how difficult it is to break down bad habits, and break through to a new vision of life, in most of his plays Shakespeare deliberately makes the anagnorises, the moment of self knowledge, come too late. In the mirror he holds up to the nature of culture, parents usually come to see better, and understand more, only when they hold in their arms the corpse of their own unhappy child.

5. CURE THROUGH LOVE

Regrettably, in the increasingly utilitarian and pragmatic world we inhabit, fewer and fewer people have the opportunity to be exposed to Shakespeare's pedagogy, or to the stimulants for growth available in art. The children produced by the latest breed of "men unable to understand living men because they know only how to deal with corpses" (released from Schreber's nightmares and restored to executive positions in all the areas of our daily lives)¹³ are autistic children whose number is rapidly growing, and whose cure and care was the lifework of psychiatrist Bruno Bettelheim. "These children treat living people as inanimate objects", explained Bettelheim on one occasion: "On a beach they walk right over sand, rock and people as if all three were the same".¹⁴

As a survivor of Dachau and Buchenwald Bettelheim had ineradicable memories of what treating people as inanimate objects is like. He thought hard about the pressures under which rationalizations of inhuman behavior are internalized. In the book *The Art of the Obvious* he observes with dismay the growing 'laziness of the heart' evident not only in the spheres of business and politics but, he laments, in the specialized profession to which he had dedicated his life.

In an epigraph to his book *Freud and Man's Soul*¹⁵ Bettelheim quotes (as a kind of reminder) Freud's definition of psychoanalysis as "in essence a cure through love". He also quotes with understanding Freud's observation that "America is gigantic, but it is a gigantic mistake." (p. 79) Freud's views were influenced by what he regarded as the American commitment to materialism and technological accomplishments, which excluded those cultural and spiritual values that were most important to him. "A condition may arise", wrote Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, "which might be termed 'the psychological misery of the masses'. The present cultural state of America would give a good opportunity for studying this feared damage to culture." (p.80)

Bettelheim understood Freud's verdict (that American culture causes psychological misery) because of his own unexpected confrontation with the truth of this claim. To his utter astonishment the emotionally disturbed and autistic children he dealt with in America (often from very privileged families) displayed the same symptoms as the tortured and abused victims of the concentration camps he had passed through in Germany.¹⁶ What troubled him was not only the discovery that in war or peace, visibly or invisibly,

¹³ See the film *Dark City* (1998, directed by Alex Proyas) a modern, science-fiction version of Schreber's case.

¹⁴ Bruno Bettelheim & Alvin Rosenfeld, *The Art of the Obvious*, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1993, p. 113.

¹⁵ Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul*, Penguin, 1989.

¹⁶ His book *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (1975) grew out of his efforts to help the victims of this invisible psychological abuse. Like Frankl he also thought that the best way to assist the child's struggle for meaning is to encourage the child to use the imagination and explore feelings. Consequently, the title of the Introduction is "The Struggle for meaning".

legalized institutional violence binds together the traditions of Europe and America, but more than this the fact that psychiatry, the humanistic discipline dedicated to the task of curing the psychologically miserable, was being invaded and subverted by the prevailing ideology of the times.

"Times have changed in psychiatry, and how we view our patients and our role", observed Bettelheim's friend and collaborator Alvin Rosenfeld, in a conversation they shared in 1993. "The field we entered made a person's existence central to our study. In large part the approach has disappeared, or has been colonized by a new, more distant breed of psychiatrists who seem less sophisticated in their understanding of people and the problems disturbed people in particular encounter in trying to live their lives with some dignity and emotional satisfaction. Yet this new breed promises that, through correcting supposed chemical imbalances we will have a golden future: better living through biochemistry. ...If we could only find a simple case, like a defective gene, we wouldn't have to bother ourselves with the more prevalent causes of psychopathology, which are far messier, and which would require far more profound changes in our approaches and commitment to children."¹⁷

In 1994, a year after these misgivings were voiced, Harvard student Elizabeth Wurtzel published her memoir *Prozac Nation: Young and Depressed in America*, a testimony of what biochemical happiness procurable in the US is like, and the British, in 1997, in a book called *Britain on the Couch*, asked themselves the same question: what to do about low levels of serotonin, and why they were unhappier than in the fifties, despite being materially better off.¹⁸ In England, the home of Shakespeare, Mill, Murdoch and so much other marvelous art, the level of serotonin did not have to fall, and such questions did not have to arise. They did, among other reasons because schools are being reformed to get Shakespeare and art out of the way so that the poisonous pedagogy, unrecognized and unchallenged, can do its work.

6. I WONDER WHAT MADE ME THAT WAY

Three recent plays¹⁹ ('Shakespearean' because they make treatment of children as central as Shakespeare does) monitor the state we are currently in with precision characteristic of great art. Mark Ravenhill's play, set in America but actually concerned with the system of values rapidly spreading throughout the global village, is called *Faust, Faust is Dead* (1997).²⁰ As the title indicates it is about a civilization which has sold its soul to the Devil for the wrong kind of knowledge and wrong conception of power. The play contains several case studies of children growing up in a world currently provided for them by their elders. It is framed by the voice of an unidentified child who has the role of the chorus. The child at the beginning of the play cries every night "because the world is such

¹⁷ *The Art of the Obvious*, pp. 139-140.

¹⁸ See Oliver James, *Britain on the Couch, Why we're unhappier compared with 1950 despite being richer: A treatment for the low serotonin*, Century, London, 1997. A review of this book appeared in TLS on January 23, 1998.

¹⁹ Mark Ravenhill's *Faust (Faust is Dead)*, Caryl Churchill's *Far Away*, and Shelagh Stephenson's *Five Kinds of Silence* (radio play published, like Ravenhill's, in 1997 but staged, like Churchill's, in 2000). Stephenson's play deals with incest, and contains brilliant analysis of material and emotional deprivations which make careers in the army desirable. The army utilizes the suppressed violence (bread by poverty, neglect and constant abuse) and provides for it legal outlets and rewards.

²⁰ Mark Ravenhill, *Faust (Faust is Dead)*, London, Methuen Drama, 1997.

a bad place". At the end, the adult it has turned into no longer feels anything. The only way to survive in the world that is not likely to come to an end, and not likely to change, we find out, is to kill the emotions that identify it as the Hell that it actually is.²¹ To the rhetorical question the chorus asks: "I wonder what made me that way" - every scene in the play is the answer. In every one of the twenty short episodes we see how biological, intellectual, and spiritual "fathers", as well poor, marginalized and exploited mothers, betray the child by undermining and frustrating its soul, its innate moral and emotional intelligence. Not surprisingly, the setting chosen for the play's central seduction/initiation scene is California's Death Valley (Scene Ten, pp. 16-21).

In Ravenhill's play children, both rich and poor, feel so dead that they only know they are alive when they cut themselves - feel the pain and see the blood. Money, in spite of the power it is claimed to have, cannot buy salvation for these emotionless hearts. A Japanese businessman kills and eats a female colleague, still capable of writing love poetry, because he can think of no other way to internalize, literally put back inside, emotions he believed he had to get rid of for the sake of unimpeded career development. Poetry spoke to the inmost part of his being, as it did to Mill: his panic at no longer finding anything there drove him to his cannibalistic love-feast.²²

The same process is the through-line of Caryl Churchill's *Far Away* (2000): in the course of the play a child grows up. The points Churchill makes are also the same as Ravenhill's: children start out equipped with moral and emotional intelligence and end up deprived of it, disoriented, diminished, dehumanized. The girl-child who **can**, at the beginning of Churchill's play identify the cry in the night as an expression of agony and a call for help, and who **does** get out of bed and out into the night to answer the call and see how she can help, is intercepted, taken over, instructed and re-formed by her aunt. In front of our eyes, through the very precisely graded stages of their dialogue, under the guise of proper explanations, we see how rationalizations characteristic of colluding adults are instilled into the manipulated child. The process is completed when the aunt feels she can say to the girl who has just witnessed a bloody beating of another child and many other ugly and mysterious things performed by her uncle: "Of course. I'm not surprised you can't sleep, what an upsetting thing to see. But now you understand, it's not so bad. You're part of a big movement now to make things better. You can be proud of that. You can look at the stars and think here we are in our little bit of space, and I'm on the side of the people who are putting things right, and your soul will expand right into the sky."²³ If, as the saying goes, the child is the father of the adult he/she will grow up to be,

²¹ Italo Calvino ends his book *Invisible Cities* with a similar observation: "The Inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is what is already here, the inferno where we live every day, that we form by being together. There are two ways to escape suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it" (That is what Ravenhill's children, who kill their emotions in order to survive, do.) "The second, is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space." See *Invisible Cities*, London, Picador, 1974, 1979, pp. 126-7.

²² This anecdote is repeated twice in the play: in Scene Two (pp. 2-3) and Scene Eight (pp. 11-12).

²³ Caryl Churchill, *Far Away*, Royal Court, London, 2000, pp. 14-15. The horrible thing about this episode is that it fits into so many scenarios of both recent and distant history. The purchase of better worlds with dead bodies may have begun with the Trojan war and the rationalized murder of Iphigenia, but instructions like those used by the aunt have helped build the English empire, Hitler's Reich, American democracy, and have caused terrible episodes in many other national histories. Alice Miller's study *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child* (German edition 1981, New American Library Meridian Book translation, 1986) could be used as a relevant supplement to Churchill's play. In the second scene of the play the manipulated child has

then what we see in Churchill's play makes the evolution of civil servants who ran Auschwitz, and Nazi students who burned books, identifiable, and thus avoidable. They were not born, but made.

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become a manipulated, colluding artist. The spectacular artifacts such 'artists' make (hats, in Churchill's play) serve to hide the true nature of the horrors that are being perpetrated.

**GRAFITI ILI DIJAMANTI?
O UNIŠTAVANJU MORALNE I EMOCIONALNE INTELIGENCIJE
(ILI UBISTVU DUŠE) U ŠEKSPIROVIM KOMADIMA**

Ljiljana Bogoeva Sedlar

Tekst predstavlja deo izlaganja sa osnivačke konferencije Britanskog Šekspirovog društva, održane na Deonfor univerzitetu u Lesteru, avgusta 2003. godine. Rad povezuje drame u kojima Šekspir prikazuje 'pedagoške' situacije (kontakte u kojima ljudi od iskustva i autoriteta uče mlade vrednostima na kojima društveni poredak počiva) sa pedagogijom koja je proizvela nemački nacizam, i sa nepromenjenom pedagoškom praksom koja danas školuje kadar za najnovije epizode tragične i sramne istorije prosvetljenog i tehnološki nadmoćnog Zapada. Nasuprot onima koji takvu tradiciju svojim autoritetom i silom nameću, rad ističe tradiciju drugačijih učitalja, kojoj pripadaju Sokrat, Sofokle, Šekspir, Niče, i brojni novi, savremeni nastavljači istinske brige o mladima. U tom svetlu rad pominje dramska dela Kerol Črčil, Marka Rejvenhila, Šile Stivenson, Hajnera Mjulina i Hauarda Barkera, i knjige koje su o svom radu sa mladima napisali psihijatri Viktor Frankl, Bruno Betelhajm i Alis Miler. Da li će mladi postati grafiti koji se pod svakim pritiskom lome, ili nesaalomivi dragulji, (dijamanti, kako Niče u Sumraku Bogova priželjkuje) zavisi u mnogome od razvojne paradigme, odnosno pedagogije, kojoj su podvrgnuti.