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## Youth and Privacy in *Romeo and Juliet*

*Passionate, dramatic, secretive, and misunderstood, Romeo and Juliet represent adolescence in ways that strike a familiar chord for audiences today. My essay suggests, however, that these young characters likely appeared to Shakespeare's original audiences as troubling, unsettling figures, because Romeo and Juliet dismantles extant understandings of young people in Shakespeare's England. I argue that the play's staging evokes the guarded interiority of its young protagonists and establishes private spaces in which they constitute themselves as adolescent subjects. Private space, in turn, makes possible a private language: a kind of teen-speak recognizable today but among its earliest manifestations.*

Perhaps what strikes readers and audiences most forcefully about Shakespeare's famous young lovers is the way they talk. Beautiful and complex, dominated by wit and wordplay, their language is a thing to wonder at, yet feels at the same time oddly familiar. 'Did my heart love till now?' gushes Romeo on first glimpsing the fair Juliet: 'Forswear it, sight, / For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night' (1.5.49–50).<sup>1</sup> When they speak, audiences hear the language of the young; somehow they sound, in ways that Shakespeare's other adolescent characters do not, like teenagers. Indeed, much scholarship on *Romeo* has addressed the play's influence on current cultural perceptions of teenagers.<sup>2</sup> My main interest here, however, is not to determine whether, or how, *Romeo* produced youth culture as we understand it today, but rather to explore how the play dismantled youth culture as Shakespeare knew it. In *Romeo*, Shakespeare raises the unsettling possibility of a private adolescent self, a particular kind of subjectivity likely yet unexplored in early modern England; in so doing he exploits his culture's growing unease with the idea of inner, hidden selves and insinuates unstable ideas of youth into a culture already worried about secret subjectivities. Looking specifically at *Romeo and Juliet*, I argue that the play's staging both reflects and reveals

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the guarded interiority of these young characters, establishing pockets of private space in which they constitute themselves as subjects. This spatializing of privacy in turn makes possible the young lovers' distinctive, private language, marked by narrative, evasiveness, dissimulation, and word play; a kind of teen-speak recognizable to audiences today, but among its earliest manifestations.

Paul Griffiths's analysis of the early modern period's 'vocabulary of age' finds that 'youth' was the most usual descriptor for the stage of life between childhood and adolescence.<sup>3</sup> The word 'adolescent', despite its medieval origins, appears less frequently, and the first recorded use of 'teen' appears in 1673.<sup>4</sup> With my self-consciously anachronistic application of the word 'teenager' to Romeo and Juliet, I mean to suggest that Shakespeare contributed to a new conception of the youthful subject: his destabilized portrayals of young people are to a degree responsible for the version of 'the teenager' we recognize in the twenty-first century — that creature who is resistant to authority, emotional, prone to peer pressure, and above all impossible to understand. The term 'teenager' is today freighted with significance, and by invoking the word here I want to acknowledge this debt.

In Shakespeare's time, however, youth, while extant as an age category, was as yet only crudely defined. Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos identifies the rudimentary types applied to young people in the period.<sup>5</sup> Common images of young age occurring in religious manuals, educational writings, autobiographies, and literature depict the young as prone to sin and vice; they were lustful and ungodly.<sup>6</sup> Protestant preachers often wrote of youths' immoral activities, disobedience, and insubordination.<sup>7</sup> Thus the conduct literature advocated the strict subordination of youth to adult authority. Frequently viewed as naturally sinful and rebellious, requiring a firm hand, adolescents might also be held up as emblems of hope and joy:<sup>8</sup> conversion rhetoric, in particular, offered a positive view of youth as people capable of reasoned decision-making but still sufficiently malleable to receive religious instruction.<sup>9</sup> Both formulations assigned young people to categories; they were construed as types rather than as individuals, as evidenced in the period's morality plays: sixteenth-century dramatic interludes, starring such stock figures as Youth in the anonymous *Interlude of Youth*, or Lusty Juventus ('Flaming Youth') in R. Wever's *Lusty Juventus*, tend to follow a basic sin-and-redemption pattern. The young were expected, Griffiths explains, merely to choose their path: an onerous one to heaven, or a certain one to hell.<sup>10</sup>

But historians working on the lived experience of early modern youth have found that between the poles of piety and profanity stretched a wide gap, what Griffiths has called 'an extensive middle territory in which people blended orthodoxy with their own assumptions about authority, piety, work, time, youth, conviviality,

and play'.<sup>11</sup> This gap, a space in which the young carved out their own sense of themselves, was evidently of interest to Shakespeare, whose young characters are nuanced, distinctive, and individuated. I suggest that the playwright invents, in his rendering of Romeo and Juliet and other teenaged characters (notably Prince Hal of the second tetralogy, Anne Page of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*,<sup>12</sup> Miranda of *The Tempest*, Marina of *Pericles*, and Perdita of *The Winter's Tale*), new ways of thinking about the young. His plays often depict teens coming of age on their own terms, engaging in self-definition outside the usual narratives established in conduct literature and morality plays. In *Romeo*, a new version of an old tale, Shakespeare represents young people in the process of becoming something other than the received versions of youth familiar to his contemporaries: the complex subjectivity of youth on display in *Romeo* is quite at odds with the hegemonic production of youthful subjects elsewhere in early modern culture.

Paul A. Kottman observes that most criticism on the play, notwithstanding its variations in method, roots itself in a particular critical paradigm, a 'dialectical tension between the lovers' desires and the demands of society or nature'.<sup>13</sup> While my analysis of Romeo and Juliet as self-fashioning teenagers participates in this interpretive paradigm, I read the two young characters not only *against* the cultural forces impinging upon them, but also as people who find and express a selfhood *outside* the prevailing parameters of their culture; in other words, their resistance is more nuanced than what we think of today as uncomplicated teenaged rebellion against parents and social mores. Against the dominant public narratives of feud, patriarchy, and despotic parents, Shakespeare sets the teens' shared, private narrative, consisting in secrets, lies, and confessions; it is through these forms of private and elliptical narrative, rather than through straightforward rebellion, that Romeo and Juliet constitute themselves as subjects. In *Romeo*, privacy and resistance converge: the keeping of secrets reflects the incipient self-awareness of the play's teens. *Romeo's* early construction of interiorized youthful selves resonates powerfully both for the surviving characters at the end of the play and for audiences through the centuries.

### Privacy and subjectivity

A sense of a private, guarded interiority thus emerges in Shakespeare's treatment of the young lovers: they not only possess, but also work to conceal, inner selves. As Keith Thomas reminds us, the idea that people had 'true' selves discrete from the masked selves they presented in public first took hold during the early modern period.<sup>14</sup> Print and literacy allowed people to 'internalize privately' others' words;<sup>15</sup>

thus the spread of print and private reading, as Cecile M. Jagodzinski argues in *Privacy and Print*, led early moderns to develop a sense of a private self.<sup>16</sup> Private space emerged as the embodiment of this newly interiorized sense of subjectivity; those who could afford it sought out such spaces in houses with specialized rooms and locking doors, as well as in gardens, closets, and cupboards.<sup>17</sup> People began to control access to interior spaces, both literal and psychological. While scholars frequently qualify the critical commonplace that self-fashioning was a Renaissance innovation, looking much earlier for evidence of the interior self, much of the work on nascent signs of interiority continues to evidence the particular emergence of the self in early modern literature and culture.<sup>18</sup> In England, the shift to an interior spirituality characterized the Protestant Reformation: unmediated access to spiritual writings, a personal relationship with God, and a dependence on faith and grace became paramount to Christian belief.

Thus a complication arose alongside this growing sense of interiority, for a private self could be guarded or kept secret.<sup>19</sup> God alone could access a person's innermost thoughts, an idea that generated much anxiety: the new private subjectivity was at once something to celebrate and to fear.<sup>20</sup> Early modern privacy is interesting in the way that it helped both to fix the idea of an interior self and made that idea troubling and suspicious, for it unsettled the truism of a coherent, stable self, readily definable in terms of social and economic hierarchies. The new interior self emerged as a real and valued entity, but also a cause for concern, for the 'true' self could be masked. This conflict prompted efforts to stabilize the new subjectivity by penetrating its dark recesses. Theatre in the period, Katherine Maus argues, exploits these conflicted responses to the idea of inwardness, for its 'spectacles are understood to depend upon and indicate the shape of things unseen'.<sup>21</sup> Inwardness performed is, unavoidably, inwardness destroyed; thus early modern anxieties about the hidden, interior self resonate with particular force on the stage.

Shakespeare confronted his audiences with unstable, difficult representations of the young through a public staging of private interiority, instituting a shift in contemporary perceptions of this age group. Here I draw on Steven Mullaney's reading of the performative 'as a consequential and primary mode of signification',<sup>22</sup> and Paul Yachnin's argument that for Shakespeare's audiences, 'judgment came to require some understanding of the inward state of others'.<sup>23</sup> The early modern playhouse functioned as a public and therefore discursive and 'contestatory space',<sup>24</sup> its performance of plays 'itself a kind of social thinking'.<sup>25</sup> Romeo and Juliet perform their own sense of privacy; in doing so they not only publicize their guarded inner selves, but also put forward the idea that a private youthful

subjectivity could exist at all. Perhaps, for audiences, this idea was unsettling enough to provoke new questions about the young. Mary E. Trull's discussion of overhearing, a key trope in early modern works, is also useful here: 'each performance of privacy through overheard lament conjures up a public with a distinctive style that evokes specific affects and establishes an ethics for relations between audiences and performers'.<sup>26</sup> As Trull suggests, the public/private boundary in the early modern period was flexible; texts of the period commonly exploit this flexibility using the trope of overhearing to reveal a character's secret thoughts. Overhearing renders public that which is intended as private. While overhearing occurs within *Romeo* itself — in, for example, Romeo's overhearing of Juliet at her window — its audience also eavesdrops, becoming privy to the protagonists' innermost thoughts and desires, and thus witnessing a performance of the young self that conflicted with depictions of youth familiar at the time.

A particular version of youthful male behavior recognizable to an Elizabethan audience is quite evident in *Romeo*: such scenes as the play's opening exchange between Samson and Gregory, or Benvolio and Mercutio's discussion of their friend Romeo in the second act, inventory 'all the things likely to happen when young men get together in unspecified outdoor sites in Verona'.<sup>27</sup> The play's youth endeavour, in 'the public haunt of men' (3.1.45), to establish a specifically masculine identity: sexual puns ('Draw thy tool' [1.1.29]) and the drive to differentiate themselves from women ('therefore women, being the weaker vessel, are ever thrust to the wall' [1.1.14–15]) characterize their sense of masculinity. Mercutio construes his witty banter with Romeo and Benvolio as vastly superior to 'groaning for love': 'Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo' (2.3.77). Violence and public unruliness are also required: 'Draw, if you be men', instructs Samson (1.1.55). While Shakespeare does not offer a specific age for Romeo, he clearly belongs to an adolescent peer group, one that would be understood as such by its original audience. Bruce Young points out that Romeo is still a dependent member of the Montague household.<sup>28</sup> Since dependency lasted until marriage, Romeo could be twenty-something years old, but this seems not to be the case, given Friar Lawrence's emphasis on Romeo's youth and his implication that Romeo is not mature enough for marriage. Jill L. Levenson, writing of Romeo's age, claims convincingly that the play 'catches the lovers specifically in the early and middle phases of adolescence', citing Shakespeare's portrayal of Romeo's sexual energy and involvement in a peer group of other boys.<sup>29</sup>

The play reflects its culture's normative expectations for adolescent girls as well, particularly in terms of rigid subordination to parents and purposeful attention to marriage. Juliet is instructed by her mother to 'think of marriage now',

for, her mother claims, ladies ‘younger than you’ (1.3.71), are already wives, and indeed mothers. Juliet should waste no time fulfilling the single purpose of her life, established at her birth. In her lengthy recollection of Juliet’s infancy, the nurse delights in repeating, no fewer than three times, the tale of her husband’s jest upon seeing the toddler Juliet fall on her face: ‘Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit’ (44). The nurse is charmed by her memory of the little girl’s uncomprehending acquiescence to this vision of her sexual future: ‘It stinted and said “Ay”’ (59). Meanwhile, Juliet’s father, with his steadfast belief in his daughter’s obedience in the matter of her marriage, must have looked familiar to early modern audiences: ‘I think she will be ruled / In all respects by me. Nay, more, I doubt it not’ (3.4.13–14). Her refusal to marry Paris triggers not only consternation in her father — ‘How, will she none? Doth she not give us thanks?’ (3.5.142) — but rage, hatred, and threats:

Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!  
I tell thee what: get thee to church o’ Thursday,  
Or never after look me in the face. (160–2)

In effect, as Coppélia Kahn has argued, girls in Verona are denied the adolescence that boys are allowed, in that girls have ‘no sanctioned period of experiment with adult identities or activities’.<sup>30</sup> Juliet is to be married against her will at the age of thirteen.

Juliet’s age in Shakespeare’s play, however, marks a startling departure from his source material: in Bandello’s *Giulietta e Romeo* (1554) Juliet is eighteen, while in Brooke’s *Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), Shakespeare’s immediate source, she is sixteen. Shakespeare’s change is significant, particularly when we recall that average marriage ages in the period were much higher than thirteen, or even eighteen: E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield find an average first marriage age of twenty-eight years for men and twenty-six years for women in the period 1600–49;<sup>31</sup> Tine De Moor and Jan Luiten Van Zanden offer similar findings for the same period: twenty-five years for women and twenty-seven and a half for men.<sup>32</sup> Even among Italian women, who married somewhat younger, ‘the benchmark age was 19’.<sup>33</sup> Patricia Crawford’s discussion of marriage ages in the early modern period demonstrates that while wealthier girls married earlier than poorer ones, the average age for girls in higher levels of society was still around twenty; for the majority of the population it was approximately twenty-four. Men were usually significantly older than their brides.<sup>34</sup> *Romeo* thus begins to complicate, even as it dramatizes, its culture’s stereotypes of adolescence: Juliet’s extreme youth must have been as startling to the play’s first audiences as it is today. Her mother is

incorrect to claim that plenty of girls of thirteen and younger are already married and mothers, and Shakespeare's audiences would have known as much. Intentionally exaggerating his heroine's youth, the playwright unsettles the foundations of an old, familiar tale, rendering the Capulets absurd for forcing their daughter into such an early marriage and garnering sympathy for their adolescent daughter. The resulting heightened sense of conflict between daughter and parents enables the play's extended exploration of the teenaged subject.

### Uses of private space

Both Romeo and Juliet resist the expectations of family and friends by turning inward, setting their interiorized youthful selves against the weight of cultural obligation. Juliet cleverly evades her parents by feigning compliance to their wishes, while Romeo withdraws from the boys' social sphere; his friends complain that his interest in women distracts him from the masculine pursuits celebrated in Verona. 'Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead,' laments Mercutio, 'stabbed with a white wench's black eye, run through the ear with a love song' (2.3.12–14). At odds with parents and community, Romeo and Juliet seek to inhabit spaces — physical, psychological, and linguistic — outside the world they know: they try to articulate a private teenaged subjectivity. Early in the play, Montague recognizes his son's inclination to conceal both the source of his melancholic behavior (1.1.140–6) and his physical body:

Away from light steals home my heavy son,  
And private in his chamber pens himself,  
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out

(130–2)

As the play individuates its young protagonists, it situates them in private spaces, alone or with only one another (or the Friar) for company, and emphasizes their secretive behavior.

Thus Shakespeare insistently separates his young characters from the forces that oppose them, and the territoriality of the staging registers this breach.<sup>35</sup> Here again his method departs from Brooke's, for Brooke's poem sketches a simple opposition between parents and their children that merely recycles and emphasizes authoritative structures. When, for example, Brooke's Capulet rages at his daughter for her disobedience, the fearful Juliet retreats wordlessly into her chamber to weep:

Then she that oft had seen the fury of her sire,



their farewell in order to acknowledge the Nurse's call. Shakespeare's emphatic spatializing of the scene takes hold as the protracted parting drags on:

NURSE (*within*) Madam!

JULIET I come, anon. [*To Romeo*] But if thou mean'st not well,  
I do beseech thee —

NURSE (*within*) Madam!

JULIET By and by I come. —

To cease thy strife and leave me to my grief.

Tomorrow will I send.

(191–7)

The Nurse's repeated, insistent calls, like her knocking later at the Friar's cell, detach the balcony space from the interior of the house, designating the house as an adult space at odds with the youthful space of balcony and garden, the lovers' private territory. Later, this same space remains the private domain of the newly married couple, prior to Romeo's departure. In this scene (3.5), there is an unusual shift — what Mariko Ichikawa calls a 'remarkable transition'<sup>39</sup> — in locale: while the main stage represents Capulet's orchard until line 59, it transforms suddenly into the interior of his house at line 64. During the intervening lines in which Juliet weeps and rails against the fickleness of fortune, two things occur, as stage directions indicate: she pulls up the ladder of cords Romeo has used to flee, and her mother enters below. This entrance bisects line 64, which belongs first to Juliet ('But send him back'), and then gives way to her mother's question: 'Ho, daughter, are you up?' In the midst of this exchange, the stage space transforms: the lovers' separation, followed closely by the mother's appearance, effects the sudden transition from garden to house. With the wrenching departure of Romeo ('Art thou gone so, love, lord, my husband, friend?' [43]) and the puncturing of the space by the adult figure, the lovers' private world dissolves.

There is a sense of opposition in the staging, then, that reflects youthful resistance to scripted subjectivity. Moments of isolation for Romeo and Juliet, when they inhabit spaces discrete from the world of adults or peers, are revelatory: hidden from fellow characters, their inner selves are on display. Once again, directionality carefully embedded in dialogue marks Romeo's physical detachment from his friends as he pursues a private conference with Juliet: 'He ran this way, and leapt this orchard wall' (2.1.5), Benvolio informs Mercutio as they search for Romeo. Hidden by the 'humorous night' (31), Romeo hears his friends' teasing — 'Romeo! Humours! Madman! Passion! Love!' (8) — but evinces little concern once they have gone: 'He jests at scars that never felt a wound' (43). Together,

he and Juliet now control the stage space, and the balcony scene marks the beginning of their private love story. Ready to dispense with Verona's expectations, Romeo interrupts Juliet's private musings with an offer to shed his name and all that it means: 'Call me but love and I'll be new baptized. / Henceforth I never will be Romeo' (92–3). Juliet, too, is ready to defy family and custom, offering herself to Romeo frankly ('Take all myself' [91]), and with an ironic self-reflexivity that suggests an awareness of her own difference:

if thou think'st I am too quickly won,  
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,  
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world. (135–9)

Moving toward self-realization, the young characters define themselves as lovers. In their union, Romeo and Juliet surpass a simple rebellion against parents and social mores, undertaking a process of becoming in which they rely on one another.

Indeed the play is full of moments where just such a self-recognition is made possible, moments where the young characters, 'bescreened in night' (2.1.93), 'untalked of and unseen' (3.2.5–7), try to make sense of who they are becoming. Private spaces in *Romeo* are disruptive not due to their sometimes domestic, feminized quality (after all, Juliet's private scenes with her mother do nothing to challenge the masculinist imperative that drives Verona), but in the sense that they disorder the stable subjectivity the play otherwise attributes to its young characters. In *Romeo*, writes Naomi Liebler, 'we hear much about walls — and about walls within walls: Verona's many small enclosures and little fortresses ("two households") subdivide and thus weaken the city'.<sup>40</sup> Verona, Liebler contends, implodes: its walls signify separateness and divisiveness; violence and disorder underlie the very structure of the city, and Romeo and Juliet are fatally ensnared in that structure. It seems to me, though, that they make use of that very divisiveness, exploring a sense of interiority from within the segregated spaces the play carves out. Indeed it is precisely *because* 'the structures of order and authority fail'<sup>41</sup> that Romeo and Juliet find opportunities for self-fashioning. Juliet acknowledges that 'the orchard walls are high and hard to climb', yet Romeo can and does 'o'erperch' them, 'For stony limits cannot hold love out / And what love can do, that dares love attempt' (2.1.105, 108–10). Freedom from family, feud, and fixed ideas of 'who thou art' (106) lies in the private space beyond the orchard wall. As Kottman has recently argued, love in the play should be understood as a 'struggle for freedom and self-realization'.<sup>42</sup> This sense of freedom — the freedom to acknowledge one's

individuality as a private subject — lies at the heart of Shakespeare's representation of youth in this play.

The shared space of the mausoleum is the most disruptive of all, for parents and authorities must penetrate this space, and the revelation of what has happened causes chaos and confusion: the Prince must quickly silence the grieving parents, instructing them to 'Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while, / Till we can clear these ambiguities' (5.3.215–16). The moment resonates powerfully, because the teens' story, thanks to the Friar, is finally told, and their hidden selves laid bare: 'For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo' (308–9). The lovers' jarring tale is quickly contained, packaged carefully by the Friar ('I will be brief' [228]), and answered by the grieving parents with a hastily conceived solution: to turn their children into scapegoats ('sacrifices of our enmity' [303]) and erect elaborate statues in their memory. If life is to make sense again, they must superimpose a narrative of renewal on the dreadful scene before them. The suddenness of this resolution, though, while seemingly an effective act of containment and therefore an erasure of the sense of self the young people have pursued throughout the play, instead points up the extent to which the newly dead Romeo and Juliet, truly a 'pitiful sight' (172), have rewritten a script well known to their parents, forcing them into a knowledge they would rather not possess: a radical reimagining of the children they thought they knew. That their deaths have ended the feud is at any rate merely a Pyrrhic victory, for Romeo and Juliet are only children; the future for both families has died with them. The rest of the cast is now admitted to the private recesses that the audience has been privy to all along, and for them, as for us all, the final revelation proves far too much to bear.

### A private language

Disruptive private spaces in *Romeo* make room for what is probably the most significant manifestation of a reimagined youthful subjectivity in the play: the teens' distinctive language, characterized by evasiveness, dissimulation, word play, and a predilection for storytelling. In the private space of the Friar's cell, Romeo and Juliet speak freely and lay bare their interior selves; in a word, they confess.<sup>43</sup> But confession here is not a matter of divulging sins and receiving absolution; indeed, Juliet lies outright to the Nurse about visiting the Friar's cell for this purpose (3.5.231–4). Rather, in his role as confessor, the Friar urges the young people to express their innermost thoughts. In doing so he reflects the early modern shift from public to private confession: for Romeo and Juliet the cell is a place to

express thoughts they must conceal from their families and friends. Juliet, forsaken by the Nurse, renounces her once-closest confidante in favor of the Friar:

Go, counselor!  
 Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.  
 I'll to the friar, to know his remedy. (239–41)

The cell is one space in the play where Romeo and Juliet pursue the project of self-making: confession, writes Michel Foucault, is a 'ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement ... a ritual in which the expression alone, independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it'.<sup>44</sup> While the agency in this mode of discourse rests with the interlocutor rather than the speaker, this 'discourse of truth finally takes effect, not in the one who receives it, but in the one from whom it is wrested'.<sup>45</sup> Just so do Romeo and Juliet begin to constitute themselves as subjects within the privacy of the Friar's cell; private 'confession', uttered in the secret space of the cell, helps the teens perceive themselves as individuals.

Long forced to bear the weight of the feud, Romeo and Juliet try, as they come of age, to shed this narrative and replace it with one of their own; they resist what Friar Laurence calls a 'certain text' (4.1.21). The Chorus foregrounds that text, opening the play with a sonnet that summarizes the story to come; the Chorus gives the play's opening 'a static quality, a frozen sense of events', until, in line 14, one recognizes the contingency of the Chorus's judgments and the possibility that its story is not complete: 'What here shall miss'.<sup>46</sup> It falls to Romeo and Juliet, ultimately the play's 'most reliable authority', to invalidate the determinism of the Chorus.<sup>47</sup> Romeo and Juliet rewrite the story that has scripted their lives and constitute themselves as subjects through the development of a private language: in narrative, dissimulation, and word play.

They are eager to establish a way of speaking that reflects their private experience, and that distinguishes them from the adult community around them. As Romeo informs Friar Laurence,

Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel.  
 Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,  
 An hour but married, Tybalt murderèd,  
 Doting like me, and like me banishèd,  
 Then mightst thou speak (3.3.64–8)

Similarly, Juliet bemoans the Nurse's sluggish pace in returning from a visit with Romeo:

Had she affections and warm youthful blood  
 She would be as swift in motion as a ball,  
 My words would bandy her to my sweet love,  
 And his to me. (2.4.12–15)

Were the Nurse young, Juliet fancifully imagines, rather than ‘unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead’ (17), the lovers’ youthful language could move her, sending her bouncing between them like a ball in a tennis volley.

Paul Jorgensen has argued that Shakespeare never raises Romeo and Juliet’s poetry above the level of their age; *Romeo* ‘shows pure, youthful, tragic love in a poetry consummately suited to that love.’<sup>48</sup> Witness Romeo, in the throes of his passion for Rosaline: ‘Tut, I have lost myself. I am not here. / This is not Romeo; he’s some other where’ (1.1.190–1); or Juliet, as loath to part with Romeo on the balcony as a present day teen to hang up the telephone (or send the last text message): ‘Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow / That I shall say good night till it be morrow’ (2.1.229–30). In its youthful ebullience, their diction suits these very young characters, tragic heroes ‘less complex and less grand’ than those Shakespeare would later create,<sup>49</sup> and it strikes a familiar chord for contemporary audiences, in the same way that their rashness and impetuosity does. Yet we cannot attribute the same sense of familiarity to our early modern counterparts. Indeed Shakespeare seems at pains to imagine a particular voice for his teen protagonists in this play, one that sets them apart from the familiar discourse of their community. At the level of language they are exiles, early examples of young people who set themselves in opposition to their parents, background, and community.<sup>50</sup> Anthony Low argues that a ‘separation from the community of discourse’ is closely related to the condition of exile; since people draw a sense of self from their discourse community, ‘enforced silence’ is the result of exile from that community.<sup>51</sup> In the case of Romeo and Juliet, however, a detachment from the language of their parents and peers opens avenues for resistance.

In a play preoccupied with the telling of stories, the teenaged protagonists try to dispel the influence of the narratives that surround them. Levenson’s analysis of the play’s transformation of rhetoric demonstrates the extent to which the play makes possible the retelling of old stories. In its deliberately complex use of rhetoric (evident, for example, in the ‘elaborate array of rhetorical devices’ Mercutio offers in his Queen Mab speech), *Romeo* ‘reopens a book which writers of the previous generation had apparently closed.’<sup>52</sup> Destabilizing the familiar narrative from which it takes its story, the play introduces ambiguity, thus releasing ‘the old narrative to tell a new story.’<sup>53</sup> Much of this retelling falls, I think, to the

protagonists: Juliet, for example, is a wildly imaginative storyteller and an accomplished liar. In her private conference with Friar Laurence in act 4, she indulges in a series of immoderate images detailing circumstances preferable to marrying Paris:

Chain me with roaring bears,  
Or hide me nightly in a charnel house,  
O'ercovered quite with dead men's rattling bones,  
With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls;  
Or bid me go into a new-made grave  
And hide me with a dead man in his tomb. (4.1.80–5)

Juliet often uses language to reinvent herself, opening her character to a range of interpretations. And while today we might feel dismissive of such language (the contemporary colloquialism 'drama queen' comes to mind), it seems important that the Friar receives her words seriously; indeed, his plan to help her will literalize the products of her imagination. Friar Laurence meets Romeo's theatrics — 'In what vile part of this anatomy / Doth my name lodge?' (3.3.105–6) — with a similar seriousness and sense of urgency:

Wilt thou slay thyself,  
And slay thy lady that in thy life lives  
By doing damnèd hate upon thyself? (115–17)

That the Friar takes seriously what we would quickly dismiss gestures toward the novelty of the teens' language and behaviour in Shakespeare's time.

To counter the entrenched narrative that has thus far dictated their lives and identities, Romeo and Juliet fashion their own publicly performed narrative: the young lovers show an aptitude for dissimulation. The balcony scene bears witness to Juliet's acting ability, a skill that reappears in her scene of false repentance, performed for the benefit of her parents. Kneeling before her father, she makes a convincing show of obedience and lies to him with practiced ambiguity:

I met the youthful lord at Laurence's cell,  
And gave him what becoming love I might,  
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty. (4.2.25–7)

Gratified to hear what he believes to be a recitation of an appropriate script, Capulet approves of his daughter once again: 'Why, I am glad on't. This is well. Stand up. / This is as't should be' (28–9). Juliet can even perform a version of her own death, a 'dismal scene' that she must 'act alone' (4.3.19), despite the Friar's worry

that her 'womanish fear' may 'abate thy valour in the acting of it' (4.1.119, 120). Her feigned death succeeds in that it both cancels her parents' wedding plans for their daughter and reverses her father's earlier imposition of silence upon his daughter when she attempts to resist his plans for her marriage ('Speak not, reply not, do not answer me' [3.5.163]), robbing him of language: 'Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail, / Ties up my tongue, and will not let me speak' (4.4.58–9). Juliet's skill in performance, in dissembling, both invalidates the Friar's gender-based assumption and undermines her father's tyrannical authority.

Juliet herself calls attention to Romeo's skills in dissimulation, wondering, as she grieves Tybalt's death, if her new husband has deceived her:

O serpent heart hid with a flow'ring face!  
 Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?  
 Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!  
 Dove-feathered raven, wolvis-ravens lamb!  
 Despisèd substance of divinest show!  
 Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st —  
 A damnèd saint, an honourable villain. (3.2.73–81)

Carried away, as she so often is, by a frenzy of extravagant metaphors, Juliet yet strikes upon an important facet of Romeo's character, one that his family and friends note as well. While the Nurse is sure that 'there's no trust, no faith, no honesty in men; / All perjured, all forsworn, all naught, dissemblers all' (86–7), other characters point to such dissembling as particular to Romeo. Benvolio, for example, assumes he will have to work hard to extract from Romeo the true cause of his 'black and portentous' mood: 'I'll know his grievance or be much denied', he assures Montague, who imagines Benvolio will be disappointed in his efforts: 'I would thou wert so happy by thy stay / To hear true shrift' (1.1.134, 150–2). The Friar, in his first scene with Romeo, grows similarly irritated with Romeo's oblique responses to his questions: 'Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift. / Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift' (2.2.55–6). This penchant for the performative is a linguistic strategy, a form of narrative that divides Romeo and Juliet from the forces that oppose them, because it amounts to a public posturing, a means of concealing an emergent subjectivity.

The lovers develop, then, what we might term a language of evasion, which to a significant extent inheres in lies, performance, and dissembling. But they press that evasion further still, attempting to evade even the language of family and feud itself. Sara Deats has noted Juliet's desire to dispense with the 'shopworn clichés that were *au courant* at the time',<sup>54</sup> she urges Romeo during the balcony

scene to ‘swear not by the moon, th’inconstant moon’ (2.1.151). Later, before they exchange vows, she informs him, ‘Conceit, more rich in matter than in words, / Brags of his substance, not of ornament’ (2.5.30–1). From Juliet, Romeo will learn that ‘true love speaks simply’.<sup>55</sup> Together they look for a way of speaking that reflects their sense of themselves as individuals, and that might disentangle them from the web of signification that constitutes language in Verona. The lovers are interested in playing on, and thus stripping the power of, words — and especially names — freighted with the expectations and mores of their culture: as Juliet cries out on the balcony, ‘O, be some other name! / What’s in a name?’ (2.1.84–5). Convinced that her enemy is not a man but a mere word signifying an old and meaningless feud, Juliet divides Romeo from his name: ‘Thou are thyself, though not a Montague’ (81). Romeo, overhearing her, concurs: he declines to utter ‘Montague’, informing Juliet instead, ‘I know not how to tell thee who I am’ (96). The teens’ way of speaking reflects their efforts to actualize a sense of private subjectivity outside the norms imposed by parents and society, and to live a private life of their own making.

Romeo and Juliet try elsewhere to strip words of their significance: following Romeo’s slaying of Tybalt, both are tortured by the words ‘banishèd’ and ‘banishment’. There was, says Juliet, some word

worser than Tybalt’s death,  
That murdered me. I would forget it fain,  
But O, it presses to my memory ... (3.2.108–10)

Just as she severs Romeo’s self from the word Montague, here Juliet divides the word ‘banishèd’ from what it signifies — her own profound sense of grief and loss — arguing that the word itself cannot name what she feels: ‘No words can that woe sound’ (126). Romeo, meanwhile, in conversation with Friar Laurence, attempts a similar deconstruction. ‘Banishèd,’ he insists, is actually ‘death mistermed’:

Calling death ‘banishèd’  
Thou cut’st my head off with a golden axe,  
And smil’st upon the stroke that murders me. (3.3.21–3)

Thus he implores the Friar, ‘Do not say “banishment”’ (14), and demands to know how he has the heart,

being a divine, a ghostly confessor,

A sin-absolver and my friend professed,  
 To mangle me with that word 'banishèd'? (49–51)

Friar Laurence, interestingly, offers Romeo 'philosophy' as 'armour to keep off that word' (54–5). But Romeo, notwithstanding his own frequent philosophizing, rejects the offer forthwith: 'Yet "banished"? Hang up philosophy!' (57). The horror of banishment derives not so much from the loss of community, for, contrary to Romeo's belief, there is a world outside Verona's walls; but rather from the loss of the lovers' private community, the loss of their newly forged private life. The word 'banishment' does not signify to Romeo and Juliet the Prince's act of mercy, commuting what would otherwise be Romeo's death sentence; rather, like 'Montague' and 'Capulet', it bears the heavy imposition of cultural authority. As Romeo puts it, 'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here / Where Juliet lives' (29–30).

An attempt at a loosening of the referent from its signifier is part of Romeo and Juliet's development of a youthful subjectivity: their refusal to reify names and words that carry such weight in their community contributes to the play's destabilizing of youthful identity. When words cease to signify, the feud and its fallout lose their power. Thus, while Juliet, for example, favours a straightforward style of communication with Romeo, she prefers prevarication when dealing with her parents. Capulet, irritated and baffled by her wordplay, accuses his daughter of sophistry — 'chopped logic' (3.5.149) — when she plays on the word 'proud' in response to his demand that she be 'proud' (or gratified) to take Paris as her husband: 'Not proud you have, but thankful that you have. / Proud can I never be of what I hate' (146–7). Linda Woodbridge has argued for the presence of a 'magical grammar' in Shakespeare, and particularly in *Macbeth*, comprised of euphemisms, pronouns, passive verbs, and other 'substitutive devices', that causes 'unpleasant things to disappear'.<sup>56</sup> Sometimes the ambiguities created by such language are, she argues, 'very calculated indeed' and serve a particular function: to protect characters from their own self-scrutiny.<sup>57</sup> While Romeo and Juliet are interested in deploying just such a calculated ambiguity, they use it instead to protect themselves from the external assumptions and expectations that press upon them, and therefore to open a space *for* self-scrutiny.

The degree to which the lovers succeed in their efforts to speak their way into a private subjectivity is debatable. Pierre Iselin's account of language in *Romeo* suggests that, rather than stripping signifiers of their meaning, Romeo and Juliet — perhaps unwittingly — instead reify them, so that these signifiers appear to behave autonomously. 'Banish' can kill or mangle; 'the mere phoneme[ai] is

endowed with lethal efficacy: “Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but ‘Ay’, / And that bare vowel ‘I’ shall poison more / Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice” [3.2.45–7].<sup>58</sup> Their names in particular are impossible to shed; Romeo and Juliet, writes Jacques Derrida, ‘will not be able to get free from their name, they know this without knowing it [*sans le savoir*]’.<sup>59</sup> Juliet tries to call Romeo ‘beyond his name’, and yet she knows that ‘aphoristic though it may be, his name is his essence. Inseparable from his being’.<sup>60</sup> And yet, for the young lovers, the attempt itself, the effort to evade the meanings and significations that surround and restrict them, matters; for the sense these young people inaugurate of a private teenaged subjectivity far outlives them, its originators. Even if, in Derrida’s terms, the aphoristic nature of both Romeo and Juliet and *Romeo and Juliet* at once precedes (owing to the play’s numerous source tales) and supersedes the lovers’ attempts to reinvent themselves, it is also through aphorism that they ‘will have lived, and live on’.<sup>61</sup> Their manner of speaking echoes still, to the point where it has now become familiar to audiences as that particular, peculiar language of the teenager.

Yet it is not a sense of familiarity that makes *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare’s premier representation of youth. More particularly, Romeo and Juliet make possible the interiorized young self by exposing, quite candidly, that very inwardness. *Romeo* destabilizes youthful subjectivity by staging the unsettling idea that young people might have inner selves at all, and, more troubling still, the possibility that they might conceal those same selves. The play does not stop at the mere provoking of questions: reading a teenaged character like Prince Hal, for example, we can acknowledge his self-imposed anonymity and wonder (all the while accepting the futility of the question) about the validity of the interior self seemingly on display, a questioning that itself creates a productive instability. But in *Romeo*, audiences witness the intelligible exposure of that self, are admitted into its private recesses, and are asked both to believe in it and to grasp that it likely reaches beyond their expected range of possibilities for youth. *Romeo*’s version of youth, while audiences and critics today may consider it foundational to our own, belongs to Shakespeare; and for his own viewers and readers, his portrait of the young must have been a very unsettling one indeed.

## Notes

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- 1 All quotations from Shakespeare are taken from Stephen Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York, 2008).
- 2 For example, Marjorie Garber's study of modern adaptations of the play in *Shakespeare and Modern Culture* (New York, 2008) stresses in particular the musical *West Side Story* as *Romeo's* 'most important intervention' in modern culture (47); she argues that the mid-fifties in America were, in Leonard Bernstein's words, the 'right time' for a musical about rival gangs in New York: the conformist yet restless fifties foresaw the 'sea change in youth culture and sensibility' (49) that would characterize the early sixties (young love, obstructed passion, drugs, peer pressure, parents who don't understand) and remains with us today. See also Sara Deats's essay, 'The Conspiracy of Silence in Shakespeare's *Verona: Romeo and Juliet*', in Sara Munson Deats and Lagretta Tallent Lenker (eds), *Youth Suicide Prevention: Lessons from Literature* (New York and London, 1989), 73, 74. Deats argues that *Romeo* has a continuing relevance in terms of what it can teach us about teen suicide: Deats relates (using such phrases as 'like so many parents today' and 'as so often happens today') the broken state of communication in the play, and the accompanying sense of profound isolation, to the experience of contemporary teenagers. *Romeo*, she points out, 'presents an all-too-familiar portrait of a disturbed adolescent with suicidal tendencies'; Tybalt similarly represents a 'familiar adolescent type' (ibid, 75 and 81).
- 3 Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560–1640* (Oxford, 1996), 20.
- 4 Diane Purkiss, 'Fractious: Teenage Girls' Tales in and out of Shakespeare', Mary Ellen Lamb and Karen Bamford (eds), *Oral Traditions and Gender in Early Modern Texts* (Aldershot, 2005), 57.
- 5 Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven, 1994). See also Michael Mitterauer, *A History of Youth* (Oxford, 1992) and Konrad Eisenbichler (ed.), *The Premodern Teenager: Youth in Society 1150–1560* (Toronto, 2002). It is important to note the debt all these books on youth owe to earlier historians working on youth groups in early modern England. See, for example, Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France', *Past and Present* 50 (1971), 41–75; Bernard Capp, 'English Youth Groups and The Pinder of Wakefield', Paul Slack (ed.), *Rebellion, Popular Protest and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1984), 212–18; and S.R. Smith, 'The London Apprentices as Seventeenth-Century Adolescents', Slack (ed.), *Rebellion*, 219–31.

- 6 Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, 17.
- 7 In 1612, for example, Anthony Stafford wrote his *Meditations and Resolutions, Moral, Divine, Political, Written for the Instruction and Bettering of Youth*, in which he insists that a ‘yong man is like a horse; who, if hee want a curbe, will runne himselfe to death. Those parents, therefore, are wise, who joyne correction, with direction, and keepe those in, who else would lash-out’ (*Early English Books Online [EEBO]*, 89–90).
- 8 Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, 20.
- 9 Thomas Powell gave a sermon in 1676 called *The Beauty, Vigour and Strength of Youth Bespoke for God*: ‘Remember your creator oh young men, while the evil dayes come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. Is it not better to live than die, turn than burn? O Sirs, persist not till it be too late, but choose God your chiefest Good, onely Good, suitable Good, and everlasting Good’ (*EEBO*, 16).
- 10 Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 55–6.
- 11 *Ibid*, 233.
- 12 On Anne Page as a self-fashioning teenaged girl, see Rachel Prusko, “‘Who Hath Got the Right Anne?’: Gossip, Resistance, and Anne Page in Shakespeare’s *Merry Wives*”, Evelyn Gajowski and Phyllis Rackin (eds), *The Merry Wives of Windsor: New Critical Essays* (New York, 2014), 51–60.
- 13 Paul A. Kottman, ‘Defying the Stars: Tragic Love as the Struggle for Freedom in *Romeo and Juliet*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 63.1 (Spring 2012), 4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/shq.2012.0007>.
- 14 Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfillment in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2009), 40.
- 15 Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore and London, 2002), 13.
- 16 Cecile M. Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print: Reading and Writing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Charlottesville and London, 1999), 6.
- 17 Thomas, *Ends of Life*, 188.
- 18 See, for example, David Aers, ‘A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the “History of the Subject”’, David Aers (ed.), *Culture and History, 1350–1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities, and Writing* (Detroit, 1992), 182. Aers finds evidence of an inward subjectivity in Augustine’s *Confessions*. Douglas Gray traces the backgrounds of self-fashioning in medieval literature and spiritual autobiographies in ‘Finding Identity in the Middle Ages’, A.J. Piesse (ed.), *Sixteenth-Century Identities* (Manchester and New York, 2000), 9–26. Others, including Jagodzinski in *Privacy and Print*, Anthony Low in *Aspects*

of *Subjectivity: Society and Individuality from the Middle Ages to Shakespeare and Milton* (Pittsburgh, 2003), and Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, 1989), while acknowledging the early roots of interior subjectivity, maintain that a change in worldview, characterized by a striking sense of the autonomous self, was apparent among the early moderns.

- 19 See Ronald Huebert, 'Privacy: The Early Social History of a Word', *Sewanee Review* 105.1 (Winter 1997), 21–38. Huebert discusses the sixteenth-century semantic relationship between privacy and secrecy, where 'privacy' could refer both to concealed items and to places of concealment.
- 20 Faith itself, writes Katharine Maus in *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago, 1995), 'encourages a kind of mistrust: for what is most true about human beings in such a system is simultaneously least verifiable' (12). Linda Woodbridge, 'Impostors, Monsters, and Spies: What Rogue Literature Can Tell Us about Early Modern Subjectivity', *Early Modern Literary Studies: A Journal of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Literature* 9 (2002), links the new interiority to the period's concern with imposture: 'that the unmasking of imposture, the shining of a bright light onto occulted identities and hidden practices, is a crucial trope in the period says much about subjectivity' (para. 2). In a similar vein, Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley, 2009), xiv–xv, has written of the early modern culture of dissimulation, arguing that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the mind was held to be impenetrable, its inner workings available to others only if its owner chose to make them known; secrecy was constitutive of self-representation.
- 21 Maus, *Inwardness and Theater*, 32.
- 22 Steven Mullaney, 'What's Hamlet to Habermans? Spatial Literacy, Theatrical Publication and the Publics of the Early Modern Public Stage', Angela Vanhaelen and Joseph P. Ward (eds), *Making Space Public in Early Modern Europe: Performance, Geography, Privacy* (New York and London, 2013), 31.
- 23 Paul Yachnin, 'The Reformation of Space in Shakespeare's Playhouse', Angela Vanhaelen and Joseph P. Ward (eds), *Making Space Public in Early Modern Europe: Performance, Geography, Privacy* (New York and London, 2013), 270.
- 24 Ibid, 264.
- 25 Mullaney, 'What's Hamlet to Habermans?', 19.
- 26 Mary E. Trull, *Performing Privacy and Gender in Early Modern Literature* (New York, 2013), 5.
- 27 Thomas Moisan, "'Now Art Thou What Thou Art'; or, Being Sociable in Verona: Teaching Gender and Desire in *Romeo and Juliet*", Maurice Hunt (ed.), *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (New York, 2000), 49.

- 28 Bruce Young, 'Haste, Consent, and Age at Marriage: Some Implications of Social History for *Romeo and Juliet*', *Iowa State Journal of Research* 62.3 (1988), 465.
- 29 Jill Levenson, 'Introduction', Jill L. Levenson (ed.), *The Oxford Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet* (Oxford, 2000), 17.
- 30 Coppélia Kahn, 'Coming of Age in Verona', Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely (eds), *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* (Urbana, 1980), 180.
- 31 E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541–1871: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1989), 255.
- 32 Tine De Moor and Jan Luiten Van Zanden, 'Girl power: the European marriage pattern and labour markets in the North Sea region in the late medieval and early modern period', *Economic History Review* 63.1 (2010), 18.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families* (Harlow, 2004), 5, 89.
- 35 I owe my understanding of certain principles of Shakespearean staging, particularly directionality and territoriality, to the late theatre historian and Shakespearean John Orrell.
- 36 Arthur Brooke, *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*, J.J. Munro (ed.), *Brooke's 'Romeus and Juliet' Being the Original of Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet'* (New York, 1970), 74.
- 37 Ibid, 72.
- 38 Mariko Ichikawa, *The Shakespearean Stage Space* (Cambridge, 2013), 82.
- 39 Ibid, 119.
- 40 Naomi Liebler, "There is no world without Verona walls": The City in *Romeo and Juliet*, Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (eds), *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works*, 4 vols (Malden, 2005), 1.307–8.
- 41 Ibid, 309.
- 42 Kottman, 'Defying the Stars', 5.
- 43 The shifting nature of confession, and its eventual demise under Protestantism, is another important marker of the move toward inwardness. Confession in late medieval Europe and England was mainly social, a face-to-face encounter between the priest and his parishioners, as John Bossy, 'The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (Dec. 1975), 21–38, <https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3679084>, describes it; the private confessional booth did not appear until the sixteenth century. The fourteenth century saw the beginnings of private, inward confession, but theologians continued to stress the importance of the public canonical rite of penance, which forged reconciliation, 'not directly with God, but with the church; the effect of the sacrament is to restore a

- condition of peace [*pax*] between the sinner and the church' (Bossy, 'Social History', 22). Between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the concept of sin as occurring in the mind gradually took hold (27); in the early sixteenth century, Luther carefully demarcated secret, interior sins from public transgressions, and was adamantly opposed to the formal confession of private sins. The emphasis shifted during early Lutheranism from a sinner's inner feelings of guilt, to sins felt within his own soul that he ought to confess only to God (Low, *Aspects of Subjectivity*, 66–7).
- 44 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 3 vols (New York, 1978), 1.61–2.
- 45 Ibid, 62.
- 46 Arthur Kinney, 'Authority in *Romeo and Juliet*', Maurice Hunt (ed.), *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (New York, 2000), 30.
- 47 Ibid, 31. Levenson also suggests, in 'Echoes Inhabit a Garden: The Narratives of *Romeo and Juliet*', *Shakespeare Survey* 53 (2000), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521781140.004>, that the play's opening sonnet is not so fixed a narrative as it might seem, arguing that it destabilizes the well known sequence of the Romeo and Juliet story, circulating throughout England, Italy, and France during the sixteenth century, by rearranging the sequence of events and introducing ambiguities through its unstable diction. The Chorus 'emphasizes the passions which drive the narrative' and 'invites the spectators to participate in making the play' (42).
- 48 Paul A. Jorgensen, *William Shakespeare: The Tragedies* (Boston, 1985), 27.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Robert Bellah, in *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2008), traces our contemporary sense of autonomy to the Puritans, a group called by God but forced to rely on themselves as they 'left wealth and comfort to set out in small ships' (55). It was this value of self-reliance that eventually gave rise to the tradition of the young person leaving home and parental support to find his own way.
- 51 Low, *Aspects of Subjectivity*, 15.
- 52 Jill L. Levenson, 'Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: The Places of Invention', Catherine M.S. Alexander (ed.), *Shakespeare and Language* (Cambridge, 2004), 122.
- 53 Ibid, 136.
- 54 Deats, 'The Conspiracy of Silence', 79.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Linda Woodbridge, 'Shakespeare and Magical Grammar', Allen Michie and Eric Buckley (eds), *Style: Essays on Renaissance and Restoration Literature and Culture in Memory of Harriet Hawkins* (Newark, 2005), 86–7.
- 57 Ibid, 94–5.

- 58 Pierre Iselin, “‘What Shall I Swear By?’: Rhetoric and Attitudes to Language in *Romeo and Juliet*”, Michel Bitot (ed.), *Divers Toyes Mengled: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Culture* (Tours, 1996), 264.
- 59 Jacques Derrida, ‘Aphorism, Countertime’, in Paul A. Kottman (ed.), *Philosophers on Shakespeare* (Stanford, 2009), 177.
- 60 Ibid, 176, 178.
- 61 Ibid, 171.