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> "It is the chief misfortune of one who is considering the relation of Chaucer to Shakespeare that there is no way to avoid that most distressing of plays, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*."
>
> E. Talbot Donaldson[1]

I've often felt that the "chief misfortune" we face as teachers of medieval literature is that of alienation: twenty-first century people are all historical outsiders to the Middle Ages, and our students suffer more acutely than we do the sense that an unbreachable wall of centuries stands between them and the medieval text.[2] The art of reading is in many respects an art of empathy, so we need our students to overcome their status as outsiders to the medieval, to become insiders who understand and empathize with the texts they read. In this paper, I argue for one way of bridging the gap and encouraging empathy in undergraduate readers of the medieval. I suggest leading students into the Middle Ages through a Renaissance text that is self-conscious about its own alienation from its medieval source: William Shakespeare and John Fletcher's *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a play based on Geoffrey Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*.[3] In advocating for this play as a way of approaching the Middle Ages, I contest E. Talbot Donaldson's accusation that *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is the "most distressing of plays."[4] Indeed, I believe that the play is able to offer an alienated modern audience entry into the culture of chivalry precisely *because of* the very real discomfort which it demands from us.

I taught *The Two Noble Kinsmen* in a recent introductory-level literature course at a small liberal arts college. Under the broad departmental rubric, "Themes and Traditions in Literature," my course took on the topic "Long Ago and Far Away." Together, students and I read texts ranging from *Beowulf* to David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*: all semester we investigated how and why authors employ "long ago" or "far away" settings to make arguments about their own societies. Shakespeare and Fletcher's play became one important case study in our investigation. The play, like Chaucer's text, uses the past to critique the authors' present; moreover, both texts use the figure of the outsider to challenge chivalric ideologies and the social structures supported by them. Yet Shakespeare and Fletcher seem not to grasp the critique of chivalry that Chaucer raises from within medieval society; their desire to build an artistic reputation upon Chaucer's makes it difficult to recognize his iconoclastic tendencies. This blindness is part of what makes *The Two Noble Kinsmen* a valuable teaching text. Despite themselves, Shakespeare and Fletcher build upon Chaucer's critique to show how outsiders can lend us a broader and more relatable perspective on the past.

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[1] E. Talbot Donaldson, *The Swan at the Well: Shakespeare Reading Chaucer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 50.

[2] An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Medieval Association of the Midwest conference in 2012 at Xavier University. I am grateful to the conference organizers, especially program organizer Stephen Yandell, and to members of the audience for their valuable suggestions on my work.

[3] *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is Shakespeare's last play and dates to 1613-1614. See Eugene M. Waith, "Introduction," in William Shakespeare and John Flecther, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. Eugene M. Waith, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1. References to the text cite Waith's Oxford edition. References to Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* cite Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed (Boston, Mass: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1987), 37-66.

[4] E. Talbot Donaldson, *The Swan at the Well: Shakespeare Reading Chaucer*, 50.

Indeed, the playwrights position themselves self-consciously as outsiders to the medieval, beginning with a Prologue that meditates upon the difficulties of adapting the *Knight's Tale*. Imagining the play as a child of Chaucer, who is "a noble breeder," the Prologue frets that if the performance should fail to meet the audience's approval, it will "shake the bones of that good man" and make him cry out against those who have debased his work (Prologue 10, 17). The playwrights imagine a spectral Chaucer speaking from the grave, a fantasy that momentarily bridges their Renaissance present and the medieval past—but the communion across centuries is hardly reassuring. Rather than having their alienation eased by the touch of the poet's voice, the playwrights have their work condemned as "witless chaff" (Prologue 19); in fantasizing about Chaucer's rejection of their work they suggest that the touch of the past can only make their alienation more intense. This reaction strikes me as not unlike what undergraduates sometimes express when confronting medieval texts for the first time: interwoven with complaints like, "I don't understand Chaucer" and "why does he just go on and on like that?" is the subtext, "Chaucer doesn't understand me" and "Chaucer leaves no room for me in this conversation."

To begin opening a space for students to converse with the medieval—and with Chaucer—through *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, I first introduced them to the core ideologies of chivalry. We had already established the principle that literature can be didactic, teaching readers who to be, or offering models for readers to aspire toward. I situated chivalric literature in this framework, suggesting that it represents the best of what real knights might like to believe about themselves (despite their consciousness of a disjoint between image and reality). We set aside two of our discussion days to tackle two major elements of the chivalric imagination that *The Two Noble Kinsmen* critiques: the idea that love ennobles knights and their ladies alike, and the idea that knights must balance lethal force with "noble" manners. In other words, we began with the premise that chivalry is about love and war, and I challenged students to discover how Shakespeare and Fletcher endorse or critique these ideals from their perspective as outsiders to the culture of chivalry itself. Importantly, we discussed how early modern class and gender structures continued to be justified by chivalric models, despite the decline in the real importance of knighthood in Shakespeare and Fletcher's day. I pointed students to the work of scholars like Alex Davis, who reminds us that "even as the forces of the emergent state system were gradually marginalizing the militarized aristocracies of the Middle Ages, ideals of honor and chivalry retained a symbolic prominence in the early modern imagination."[5] Thus, we approached medieval ideologies through a Renaissance text constructed in a culture with a vested interest in those ideologies—a culture with a fuller sense of "touching the past" than our own, and yet positioned to critique the medieval past at the same time.

In our discussions, I immediately found that students gravitated toward the character of Emilia; as a figure who herself struggles to find a voice and a "space" to participate in her own culture, Emilia sparked productive responses in students who tend to think of the modern individual as fundamentally alienated from society. Despite Emilia's lack of agency (or perhaps because of it) she struck my class as more "real" and "relatable" than the idealized Palamon and Arcite. Moreover, Emilia offers a unique perspective because she is both central to the action and made redundant by it: although she is fought over by the kinsmen, her desires are never acknowledged by them, and she

[5] Alex Davis, "Living in the Past: Thebes, Periodization, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 40, no. 1 (2010): 182.

can validate the ideals they represent only if she remains apart.[6] Through her, Shakespeare and Fletcher suggest that any culture can win self-knowledge only by soliciting the perspective of such disenfranchised figures, who observe the failings of dominant institutions from a position neither fully outside nor inside, but peripheral. This message empowers students who are also insider/outsiders. As readers they "participate" in the text, yet as inhabitants of the twenty-first century they feel excluded by the historical setting. Their empathy with Emilia allows them a route of entry into the text; furthermore, as the playwrights valorize Emilia's status as an insider-outsider cultural critic, they offer students a place of privilege similar to Emilia's.

My students clearly felt connected with Emilia's perspective, admiring the way in which she critiques the chivalric order from the outside. Her perspective attracted them from the very outset of the play, when the audience "meets" Emilia and Hippolyta not as conquered parties led passively into Athens, but as active proponents of justice in their encounter with the Theban widows. My students reacted immediately to the play's characterization of both Amazons as successful fighters in the defense of women. They noticed that Emilia performs the knightly role of champion when she reassures one of the queens, "what woman I may stead that is distressed / does bind me to her" (1.1.36-7). This passage provoked one of our richest exchanges in class discussion, as one of my students pointed out how "chivalrous" Emilia sounds in her defense of women, and another countered that there is a difference in this chivalry: that Emilia speaks out of genuine empathy and a sense of fellow-feeling, not from pity or a condescending desire to protect the Other. Some students also read this moment in terms of Hippolyta's declaration that the sisters:

> [h]ave been soldiers, and we cannot weep
> When our friends don their helms, or put to sea,
> Or tell of babes broached on the lance, or women
> That have sod their infants in—and after eat them—
> That brine they wept at killing 'em. (1.3.18-22)

In my class, students took this passage as license to read Emilia's resistance to the knightly contests of Palamon and Arcite against her own history as a "woman knight." As Hippolyta tells it, the Amazons are battle-hardened against women's supposedly emotional nature; it follows that they see male knights as "fellow fighters" rather than objects of romantic desire. Within this framework, it becomes easier to understand Emilia's later responses to her suitors as those of a "knight" who is both inside and outside the chivalric order—not well served by its demands, and thus able to see the harm to which it subjects even its most successful adherents.

This Emilia, an outspoken woman warrior, is an innovation of Shakespeare and Fletcher as they adapt Chaucer's Emelye. Indeed, the playwrights give Emilia a voice where Emelye struggles to speak: in the episode of the supplicant widows, the Knight lavishes detail upon the widows' pleas, but allows Emelye and Hippolyta both to fade into the background as Theseus fields the widows' complaints. He has already marginalized the Amazons as fighters when he narrates their entry into Athens: just before the widows appear, the Knight praises Theseus as the greatest conqueror in

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[6] Karma Lochrie argues that this insider-outsider status is fundamental to Amazon characters in medieval texts. Moreover, she notes that many medieval literary Amazons suffer a fate similar to Emelye's: "It is because of this queer resemblance of Amazonian ideals to medieval culture that they sometimes serve the ideological ends of medieval narratives and at the same time, pose a danger to those ends, requiring some narrative negotiation—either segregation, incorporation, or death—to defuse their threat." *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn't* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 123.

history, citing as evidence his victory over the Amazons. He then apologizes that "if it nere to long to here, I wolde have toold yow fully the manere / How wonnen was the regne of Femenye" (I.875-77). Here, the Knight strips both Emelye and Hippolyta of their history of challenging men's desires: this history must be buried to make Emelye believable as a passive object of competition between Palamon and Arcite.[7] I suggest that Chaucer uses the contrast between the Knight's dismissive "hiding" of the Amazons and his extravagant indulgence in the widows' mourning to hint that this narrator feels threatened by the possibility of women actually rising up to confront their own marginalization. To petition for help as the widows do is admirable and moving, but to fight actively on one's own behalf is too subversive to be narrated. To read Shakespeare and Fletcher's Emilia against Chaucer's Emelye is expose how Chaucer uses the Knight as a filter: the Knight's silent Emelye becomes less "factual," as the more outspoken and knightly Emilia raises alternative responses to the same situation.

Chaucer uses the Knight's attitude toward Emelye to stage his own, more subtle, critique of medieval chivalry: something which is indeed subtle enough as to pose challenges for the beginning undergraduate student of Chaucer's work. As Lee Patterson notes, the Knight positions himself as a defender of chivalric ideology and history, but Chaucer constructs the narrative to illustrate "the chivalric mind engaged in an act of self-legitimization that simultaneously and secretly undoes itself."[8] My reading of the tale differs from Patterson's in one important respect, related to the possibilities for students to converse with the ideals the Knight promotes. Patterson sees in the Knight a narrator "fully in control not only of [the tale's] narrative elements but of its meaning, secure in the possession of interpretive categories that can assimilate the events to a supervening ideology that is itself invulnerable to analysis."[9] If we focus more closely on Emelye, however, we can see that the Knight's control over his material slips at moments when he most clearly suppresses her agency. At these moments, the narrator worries over his ability to tell his tale well. That is, he struggles with the question of how to act ethically as a narrator of Emelye's experience. This pattern begins with the Knight's protests about the lack of time he has to tell the Amazons' history, and carries through to the tale's conclusion. At Arcite's funeral, for instance, the Knight struggles *not* to narrate: he can't tell how Emelye "swowned whan man made the fyr, / Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desire" (I.2943-44). He actually reveals a great deal about his own attitudes through his strategic protests about omitted details: here we see the Knight struggling to cover up the failings of a chivalric order that destroys good men and makes good women into mere objects.

In Chaucer's text, the Knight allows Emelye to speak for herself in a meaningful way only once, when she prays at the temple of Diana before Palamon and Arcite's tournament. Here, Emelye laments:

> Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I
> Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf,
> Ne nevere wol I be no love ne wyf.
> I am, thow woost, yet of thy compaignye,
> A mayde, and love huntynge and venerye,

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[7] Reading *The Knight's Tale* through a postcolonial lens, Tory Vandeventer Pearman suggests that in addition to reducing the threat of the Amazons as foreign women and ensuring that they remain subjugated in a way that sustains empire, the Knight also uses his silence at this moment to obscure the "feminization" of Theseus by the Amazons. "Laying Siege to Female Power: Theseus the 'Conqueror' and Hippolita the 'Asseged' in Chaucer's 'The Knight's Tale,'" *Essays in Medieval Studies* 23 (2006): 35.

[8] Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 169.

[9] Ibid., 210.

> And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
> And noght to ben a wyf and be with childe. (I.2304-2310)

Citing her "masculine" enjoyment of activities like hunting, Emelye expresses a desire to remove herself from the economy of love entirely—she wants to remain among Diana's maidens, rather than becoming a wife, a mother, or a lover. This is Emelye's most direct challenge to the chivalric order, and it remains an unsatisfying one for modern readers because Emelye must ultimately slip back into silence as her prayers remain unanswered. The suggestion is that one must either accept love on society's terms or reject all affection entirely.

Shakespeare and Fletcher's Emilia builds on early modern paradigms of friendship to stake out a space for love, while still endeavoring to preserve her freedom from the confining feminine roles of wife and mother. In so doing, their Emilia offers a more direct critique than Chaucer's Emelye of heteronormativity and especially of the courtly love model promoted by Chaucer's Knight as part of his defense of chivalry. I prepared students to discuss these competing models of affection by first giving them some context for early modern love and friendship. We had already discussed so-called courtly love before we read *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, so students were familiar with the idea that the love of a good (but unreachable) woman is supposed to ennoble the knight and contribute to his successful performance of chivalric identity. We had also discussed how this model both empowers medieval women and limits the degree of agency they can actually attain: students were interested in what they felt to be courtly love's "backhanded" way of granting women some status while also essentially maintaining patriarchal power structures. I proposed to them that early modern culture offers one response to this dilemma, in the form of same-sex friendship as a force that competes with (and coexists with) notions of heterosexual love that include the courtly love ideal. I introduced Laurie Shannon's influential theory that for early modern writers and readers, friendship is political, leveling hierarchies between individual bodies in a way that models resistance to tyranny in the body politic. Shannon writes:

> The radical likeness of sex and station that friendship doctrines require singly enables a vision of parity, a virtually civic parity not modeled anywhere else in contemporary social structures. Further, the insistent emphasis on sexual and social sameness is a systematic response to that most acute form of early modern difference: the hierarchical difference of degree, especially the categorical difference between rulers and the ruled.[10]

Armed with this set of frameworks, my students set out to determine which model of desire and affection—friendship or courtly love—is represented as being more productive within the context of the play. I asked them to consider which model Shakespeare and Fletcher seem to endorse more strongly, and what consequences the play suggests this model has for individual and collective happiness.

To accomplish this task, we had a "jigsaw discussion." I divided students into five groups, each of which chose a character from among those who are most voluble in the play's debate about love: Emilia, Hippolyta, the Jailer's Daughter, Palamon, and Arcite. Each group had to decipher their character's position on love and friendship, choose the model of love that they believed the character more strongly endorses, and come up with evidence the character uses to advocate for that

[10] Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 2.

position. The group working on Emilia's perspective gravitated toward moments where she endorses love between women and rejects the notion of loving a man. Importantly, this is an element of the character which is developed in Shakespeare and Fletcher's play and not really present in Chaucer's tale—as part of Emilia's more assertive "voice" in the play, her promotion of same-sex attachment provides an important critique of the chivalric model of courtly love. Much as they do in Chaucer's text, the kinsmen of Shakespeare and Fletcher's adaptation first see Emilia in a garden, fall in love with her, and debate whether she is human or divine—in both texts their friendship is destroyed at this moment. In the play, though, the kinsmen ignore much more of Emilia than Chaucer's knights do of the silent Emelye: in the play, Emilia speaks about her lack of desire for men, but the knights do not hear her. The cousins' discussion about Emilia is intercut with dialogue exchanged between Emilia and the maid who tours the garden with her: Emilia first cautions the maid that "men are mad things" (2.2.126) and then jokes with her about lying down together (2.2152-255). Thus, as the cousins debate who deserves Emilia more, the audience is reminded that she is not merely unaware of them, but actively rejects the affection of men like them. My students reacted strongly to this dynamic: they suggested that Emilia's rejection of courtly love exposes the cousins' discussion as shallow and foolish, and as a performance of identity calculated to win acclaim from "being in love" rather than to win love itself.

Just prior to this scene, in a passage which also captured my students' attention, Emilia reflects at length upon the superiority of bonds between women. Telling Hippolyta about her lost friend, Flavina, Emilia insists that "the true love 'tween maid and maid may be / more than in sex dividual" (1.3.81-82); Hippolyta rightly understands her to mean that she will never love a man as she loved Flavina (1.3.84-85). Both the group working with Emilia and the group working with Hippolyta were struck by this point. One student hesitantly offered, "it's almost as though Hippolyta is calling Emilia a lesbian." Indeed, Alan Sinfield responds to just this kind of puzzlement that Emilia tends to produce in present-day audiences. Sinfield argues that scenes like this are noteworthy for the openness with which Emilia critiques heteronormative demands on women's desire: "either same-gender passion is so remote from the minds of these people as to be off the map of potential human experience, or it is so commonplace as to be unremarkable."[11] What was ultimately most important to my students, though, is that Emilia's frank disinterestedness in men's affection establishes her as an outsider uniquely positioned to critique Palamon, Arcite, and the chivalric system they represent. Schooled in the arts of battle, she respects what they have achieved as knights. Yet she absolutely rejects the notion that their competition for her affection should define her.

Once the groups had conducted their initial discussions, they formed five new groups, each containing one representative from each of the original groups. In their new groups, students debated one another in character, promoting either courtly love or early modern friendship with evidence from the text. Marshaling evidence from the text to support their points, the groups each came to a consensus about which characters' views are designed to be most persuasive—and extrapolated some conclusions about which model of love Shakespeare and Fletcher endorse more fully. The verdict was unanimous: all of the groups felt that courtly love is critiqued in the play, and that same-sex friendship is promoted. They objected to the way that Palamon and Arcite—but most strikingly the Jailer's Daughter—are destroyed by their own desire to buy into courtly love ideologies. But they were most vocal about the fact that they felt drawn to follow Emilia as the voice of reason speaking against courtly love and in favor of same-sex friendship.

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[11] Alan Sinfield, *Shakespeare, Authority, Sexuality: Unfinished Business in Cultural Materialism*, Accents on Shakespeare (New York: Routledge, 2006), 76.

My students found Emilia most persuasive especially because of her sorrow on behalf of Palamon and Arcite's destruction in by courtly love. In discussion, they reacted to passages where Emilia, as an insider-outsider woman-knight, worries that by renouncing their own friendship in her name, Palamon and Arcite will make of her a villain, inverting the notion that courtly love ennobles all parties. When Theseus initially condemns both knights to death after discovering their duel in the woods, Emilia protests, saying their deaths would dishonor her:

> The goodly mothers that have groaned for these,
> And all the longing maids that ever loved,
> […] shall curse me and my beauty,
> And in their funeral songs for these two cousins
> Despise my cruelty and cry woe worth me,
> Till I am nothing but the scorn of women.
> For heaven's sake, save their lives and banish 'em. (3.6.245-250).

Here, my students reacted strongly to Emilia's positioning of herself as someone who understands the chivalric ideal but does not buy into it. I myself would suggest that, Emilia leverages her understanding of knighthood to show that she accepts the terms upon which these men are defined as ideal. She accepts that their triumphs are the source of family pride—and she accepts that other women should long for the love of men like these. But she critiques a system that encourages such destructive contests between men, and she hints in her call for banishment that the knights' pursuit of this self-defeating ideal threatens the body politic as much as it threatens their own bodies.

Ultimately, as one of my students noted, Emilia wants to choose a lover because she *wants to*, not because she *has to*, and courtly love as Shakespeare and Fletcher represent it leaves no room for this option. Another student aptly responded that Emilia's disempowerment reveals how Arcite and Palamon themselves are robbed of agency by the ideologies of chivalry. This student pointed to Emilia's question when Arcite's triumph in the tournament initially condemns Palamon to death: "Is this winning" (5.4.138)? Because the knights feel they must perform chivalric identity by loving a woman, they sacrifice the idealized love for one another that Emilia is so sad to see them lose. Indeed, my students surprised me by actually expressing a sense of betrayal when Emilia falls in love with Palamon and Arcite despite her resolutions to the contrary. I confess that I had expected them to feel more comfortable with this more predictable Emilia, one who plays into their notions of "happy" or at least orderly endings to love plots.[12] Yet they *did* feel betrayed: so much so that they began to view her as a hypocrite and were skeptical of her professed desire to avoid watching the tournament (5.3.1-32). When I pressed them to consider the source of this personal reaction, some students said they had hoped Emilia would be strong enough to stand up for her own desires against the force of ideology. More intriguingly, others decided that instead of betrayal, what they were actually feeling was sadness at the message that the ideology itself may be too powerful to subvert. These students wanted Emilia to erode the hegemony of chivalric ideals through her personal

[12] Helen Cooper notes that as Shakespeare's last play, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* finally makes a turn away from happy endings, with its bleak conclusion and lack of satisfactory resolution: "After the wonder of the romances, their reunions and near-miraculous resurrections and recoveries, their prophesied workings out of all things for good, he ends his career in the bleakness of a medieval romance that goes wrong." *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 375. What interests me here is that my students did not really see the ending of the play as "go[ing] wrong" in any way. Indeed, they seemed to enjoy the fact that Arcite, in their view, got what he deserved, even if Palamon escaped the same kind of "justice." They were, however, very disillusioned by Emilia's developing love for the kinsmen.

resistance. It seems to me that when confronted with the potential impossibility of individual resistance to an ideological system like this one, they felt their modern sensibilities suddenly challenged by the very character who had seemed such a relatable guide in their literary travel into the past: re-alienated from a history they had just begun to connect with, my students were unsure how to react.

Coda: Inviting the Past into the Present

Ultimately, I still felt that my students' connection with the past through Emilia was a productive one; the vehemence of their reaction to what they perceived as her "selling out" is a testimony to the power of this character as a pedagogical tool. As a teacher of early English literature, I count as my greatest triumphs those moments when students connect with characters enough to feel immersed in the world those characters represent, and to experience the injustices of that world as their own. For my "Long Ago and Far Away" students, Emilia's alienated perspective paradoxically invited them into Shakespeare and Fletcher's text and gave them a voice as they also worked to interrogate the chivalric ideologies presented there. To capitalize on this sense of connection and to help students synthesize this text with others we had read so far, we did one last activity to invite characters from the past into the present: a blog project, in which groups of students took on the personas of characters they particularly admired from each of our texts. Each group wrote several posts, some of which were to respond to pop culture or current events: this allowed students the chance to imagine how characters might engage with our fictions about ourselves, just as Shakespeare and Fletcher engage with early modern England's fictions about its medieval past.

The cluster of women blogging as Emilia crafted some of our most productive posts and comments on others' entries; in many ways, "Emilia" became a facilitator for conversations among the other characters. A favorite among the students was the lamentation that "Emilia" issued on Valentine's Day, in which she critiqued a holiday that she understood as promoting shallow love like the kind she attracts "at first sight" from Palamon and Arcite. Her post was answered by a cast of characters including two from *Beowulf*, which we had read earlier in the semester. Grendel predictably suggested that it is better to be loved in a shallow way than to live forever in exile. On the other hand, *Beowulf*'s Queen Modthryth applauded Emilia for her strength and seconded her rejection of men's presumptuous gazes.[13] What I found most rewarding about this exercise was the way students' posts testified to the success of using a character like Emilia as an entry point into the past. Not only had they left Shakespeare and Fletcher's play more prepared to understand the ideologies of both the early modern and medieval periods, but they had created a genuine sense of connection with the past—a sense that our own views of love and selfhood are still in conversation with those of the past, and that this conversation is still worth interrogating as we think about our own ideologies.

[13] "Grendel" in our blog fixated on the outrage of exclusion from the mead-hall (perhaps the worst kind of punishment imaginable by college students). Queen Modthryth captured the imagination of another blog group, who found in her a model of empowered femininity when she decrees the death of "any retainer [who] ever made bold / to look her in the face" (1933-34). Seamus Heaney, trans., *Beowulf* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2000).