chapter eight

Care

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King Lear's anxiety to unburden himself of the "cares" of kingship so that he can "crawl toward death," innocent, free, and detached from the oppressive concerns of this earthly plane, dominates the opening scene of Shakespeare's tragedy:

> Meantime we will express our darker purpose.
> Give me the map there. Know that we have divided
> In three our kingdom, and 'tis our fast intent
> To shake all cares and business from our age,
> Conferring them on younger strengths.[1]

As derived from the old English term for grief and suffering (*caru, cearu*), care is a force to eschew for the aging monarch.[2] As if the physical passing on of the crown could "shake" the "cares and business" of a long reign, Lear's emotional and psychological divestiture is naively conceived as a simple passing of the baton, a mock reading of a final testament that is rendered into the absurd. Cares, however, are obstinate and heavy, clinging tenaciously to Lear's aging soul. In Richard II's description, the crown and cares are immortal partners, inseparable by time and syntax:

> Your cares set up do not pluck my cares down.
> My care is loss of care, by old care done;
> Your care is gain of care, by new care won.
> The cares I give I have, though given away;
> They tend the crown, yet still with me they stay.[3]

The early modern personification of Care as worry in the realm of worldly ambitions and desires draws upon the classical tradition, as in

Horace's Ode 3.1: "But fear and threats climb up to the same spot as the master; and she withdraws not from the bronze galley, and she even sits behind the horseman – black, gloomy Care."[4] Personified frequently as a masculine figure, Care appears in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* as the toiling blacksmith:

> Rude was his garment, and to rags all rent,
> Ne better had he, ne for better cared:
> With blistred hands emongst the cinders brent,
> And fingers filthie, with long nayles vnpared,
> Right fit to rend the food, on which he fared.
> His name was *Care*; a blacksmith by his trade,
> That neither day nor night from working spared,
> But to small purpose yron wedges made;
> Those be vnquiet thoughts, that carefull minds inuade.[5]

Care is an intruder in Friar Lawrence's counsel to a perturbed Romeo – "Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye, / And where care lodges, sleep will never lie"[6] – and a fraying force, unravelling man's physical adornments as a reflection of his internal state in *Macbeth*: "Sleep that knits up the raveled sleeve of care."[7] It is the detachment from these "unquiet thoughts" that tantalizes Lear as he approaches retirement and aspires for a rather different form of care – the "kind nursery" he expects from Cordelia as his caregiver in old age.[8]

While detachment from oppressive cares is an envious state of being, the movement from noun to verb, from cares to caring, transforms the burdens of one's ego to concern for others. The dynamics of this semantic movement coexists in *King Lear* and in early modern usage as an active potentiality that transforms individual concern into collaborative possibility, releasing an ego crippled by concern and self-obsession into the emancipatory space of the abode of service to others. The latter state develops individual capacity in empowering others while the former robs the self from attaining a state of self-knowledge that is possible only through an outward-looking orientation. The Latin use of the term *cura* as concept and creation myth, found in the writings of first-century Roman grammarian Hyginus, captures the nature of the keyword *care* as that of both mental oppression *and* the conscientious attention to others that increases one's capacity to empathize with and serve a friend, a family member, a stranger.[9] This chapter draws upon classical conceptions of the multifaceted concept of care and contemporary philosophy

engaging with the ethics of care to examine how care as a state of *being* and *doing* develops in Shakespeare's plays.

"Care Is No Cure"[10]

In his *Fabulae* no. 220, Hyginus relates an origin story with a feminine core:

> When Cura was crossing a certain river, she saw some clayey mud. She took it up thoughtfully and began to fashion a man. While she was pondering on what she had done, Jove came up; Cura asked him to give the image life, and Jove readily grant this. When Cura wanted to give it her name, Jove forbade, and said that his name should be given it. But while they were disputing about the name, Tellus arose and said that it should have her name, since she had given her own body. They took Saturn for judge; he seems to have decided for them: Jove, since you gave him life [take his soul after death; since Tellus offered her body] let her receive his body; since Cura first fashioned him, let her possess him as long as he lives, but since there is controversy about his name, let him be called *homo*, since he seems to be made from *humus*.[11]

The origins of man's inevitable life of "care" in both the sense of individual worry and collective concern appears in Robert's Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* as a significant contributor to the development of one's melancholic disposition. As Stephanie Shirilan explains, in the *Anatomy,* Burton is "profoundly concerned with the relationship between care as fear or worry and care as *caritas* or charity. His promotion of melancholy rests precisely on the idea that the excess cares and supposedly groundless fears suffered by the melancholic attest to a generosity of spirit evidenced in his or her sensitivity to the suffering of others."[12] Burton "valorizes care (as in worry or fear) as the root of compassionate feeling";[13] Burton, in other words, reads Hyginus's feminine fable in terms of its Old English associations with one's state of being, as in Shakespeare and Spenser's references to the masculine personification of insomnia inducing Care. This dual conceptualization of care is captured, for instance, in Thomas Elyot's Latin-English dictionary, where *Cura* is defined as "care, thought, study, diligence, warke or labour, also loue."[14] Although the Old English etymology of care as worry and grief is distinct from the Latin *cura*, care as verb – to care for – rather than care as a state of being is in use by the thirteenth century. The English derivative of *cura,* cure, circulates in the fourteenth century, leaving a

rich linguistic heritage of association with spiritual and medicinal healing called upon in the work of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.[15]

The frequent early modern use of a personified Care departs from its Roman hermeneutic in Hyginus's myth as that speaking to the ethics of caring for others, a concept found in the Stoic writing of Seneca where human perfection is attained through care. As Warren Thomas Reich, drawing upon Konrad Burdach's early twentieth-century work, explains in his seminal essay on the historical evolution of the idea of care, "In this Stoic view, care was the key to the process of becoming truly human. For Seneca, the word care meant *solicitude*; it also had connotations of attentiveness, conscientiousness, and devotion."[16] Martin Heidegger elaborates on this duality or the "ambiguity of the terms 'cura'" in *Being and Time* in terms of Seneca's perfection, claiming that "the *perfectio* of human being – becoming what one can be in being free for one's own-most possibilities (project) – is an 'accomplishment' of 'care.'"[17] For Heidegger, "being-in-the-word is essentially care."[18]

Warren T. Reich's affirmative reading of the Cura myth has profound implications for the well-known clash of civilizations thesis, a reading of human relationships that maintains an inevitable battle of differences rather than collaborative unity in diversity: "The Myth of Care offers a subversively different image of human society, with very different implications for ethics in general and bioethics in particular."[19] As Reich explains, care is the "glue," the binding source, the aspirational material for human society, the means to perfection of universal virtues from within diverse cultures and religions. Writing from a personalist philosophy, Milton Mayeroff's 1971 *On Caring* explicates the nature of this dynamic state of being in the world that emphasizes the "primacy of process," which often forms through the struggle of "overcoming obstacles and difficulties."[20] Caring is intricately linked with familial relationships and by extension with others in one's community; it is a means of being in the world with oneself and with others that is focused on capacity building: "To help another person to grow is at least to help him to care for something or someone apart from himself."[21] As in the Cura Myth, caring in Mayeroff's estimation concerns the foundation of being in the world: "We are 'in place' in the world through having our lives ordered by inclusive caring."[22]

While caring is not limited to familial responsibilities or simply for vulnerable populations, it is noteworthy to read Shakespeare's engagement with an ethics of care found in *King Lear* alongside *The Tempest*. Both plays depict the needs of two particularly vulnerable populations: the elderly and the poor in *Lear* and an orphaned and disfigured Caliban

in *The Tempest*.[23] Through these prominent depictions of poverty and oppression, Shakespeare adumbrates the hard and thorny path to developing virtues in not only Lear and Prospero, but also in Edgar, the future king, and in Caliban, an independent sovereign reigning his reclaimed island by the conclusion of the play. Mayeroff's contribution to the discourse on care includes an inventory of virtues or "major ingredients" that comprise caring: knowing, alternating rhythms, patience, honesty, trust, humility, hope, and courage. In *King Lear*, the limitation of "ethical possibilities," in James Kearney's terms, leaves us with a state of knowledge that is hindered from more than minor acts of caring, the "small ethical moments" that brighten the darkness of the play.[24] In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare takes us to the fringes of care in the guardian–ward relationship between Prospero and Caliban, exploring the challenges and potentials of patience and trust.

Caring on the Heath

Lear's aspirational desire to detach from the cares of kingship depends on his attachment to Cordelia, the daughter who will succour him through her "kind nursery" (1.1.122), an anticipated time of ongoing care that never comes to fruition in the fullness of his expectations at the beginning of the play.[25] Ethical possibility, often hinging on a form of care through hospitality and solidarity with others, is muted, lost, or forgotten in Shakespeare's tragedies, dramaturgically relegated to narration rather than dramatization, and temporally distant from the chaotic tragic actions on stage. In Othello, caring as a form of hospitality is part of Othello's defence of his prior relationships with Brabantio and his daughter as he proclaims in front of the duke, "Her father loved me, oft invited me."[26] He gestures toward a past temporality of hospitality and reciprocity between Othello and Desdemona's family that seems hopelessly lost in the face of Brabantio's accusations toward his new son-in-law.

While the continual care of Cordelia's kind nursery is a desirable state unattainable in Lear's lifetime, Lear's understanding of the work needed to achieve such kindness evolves in his interactions with Edgar as Poor Tom on the heath, an "ethical catalyst in the play"[27] who brings Lear to account through his extreme representation of poverty. Edgar as Poor Tom manifests the characteristics of both the inhabitants of Bedlam Hospital and an assumed con artist, a well-known "social stereotype" as William Carroll describes.[28] In the sixteenth century, various acts, such as the Poor Relief Act of 1601, were considered and passed attempting to

distinguish the social situation of the "true" poor or "approved beggars" that could be assisted and those to be physically punished in some form, bringing greater attention to the needs of those marginalized while firmly upholding certain biases, prejudices, and fears of those outside the social constraints of the greater society.[29] Poor Tom, like Caliban, stands as a figure on the fringes of society by mirroring in his entertainment of insanity the breakdown of the kingdom and the family nucleus in the play. In this sense, as scholars have noted, poverty is not only a physical state reflecting the plight of unfortunate citizens of the day, but also a spiritual state, the "nothingness" at the heart of Lear's unexamined life. When Lear spontaneously reflects on his duties towards the destitute in his kingdom, he expresses regret for his neglect:

> Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these? *O, I have ta'en*
> *Too little care of this!* Take physic, pomp,
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
> And show the heavens more just. (3.4.28–36; emphasis added)[30]

At this moment before Edgar's entrance, Lear's reflective prayer on the state of the poor is the gateway to the knowledge of those whom he has neglected. As if in answer to his desire to "feel what wretches feel," Edgar's suffering being appears as a test assaying the fledgling virtue of care sprouting in Lear's heart. As Mayeroff writes, to care for others is to saturate oneself in a deep understanding of another person:

> To care for another person, I must be able to understand him and his world as if I were inside it. I must be able to see, as it were, with his eyes what his world is like to him and how he sees himself. Instead of merely looking at him in a detached way from outside, as if he were a specimen, I must be able to be with him in his world, "going" into his world in order to sense from "inside" what life is like for him, what he is striving to be, and what he requires to grow.[31]

As with the progressive development of a newly acquired virtue, such as care, compassion, and even justice, the framework of understanding

hinges on the self in its infantile state and as such, Lear responds to Edgar's physical manifestation of poverty as a reflection of his own psychological and spiritual state: "Has his daughters brought him to this pass?" (3.4.60). In his reading of this revealing scene, with patterns reflecting recognition scenes from romances, Kearney suggests that Lear has not cultivated the capacity to fully recognize the alterity of Edgar as distinct from his own being and as such is unable to empathize with him.[32] In this vein, Edgar's appearance as Poor Tom tests the practice of the virtue of caring that Lear summons in his prayer for the poor. The general "wretches" appearing in the particular figure of Poor Tom invoke a range of responses that revolve around Lear's needs rather than a shivering Tom. Thus, while harm may seem to be the opposite of care, the more accurate antonym is the paralyzing force of apathy, a crucible of selfishness and estrangement from others that deteriorates social bonds, leaving individuals alienated, despairing, and insecure.

Although Poor Tom necessitates care, he is also the indirect caregiver serving primarily as one of Lear's interlocutors. More than just a listening ear, the protean Edgar is the obliging child humouring an aged father figure, taking on the mask Lear wants him to assume as the "good Athenian" (3.4.168), the "learned Theban" (3.4.145), the "noble philosopher" (3.4.160). Here Shakespeare's turn to philosophy is performative, a parading of philosophers from antiquity uniting in their emphasis on virtue as a product of philosophical engagement and care for the self.[33] When Edgar assists Lear by turning away three imagined barking dogs and thereby accommodating his distressed state, Lear acknowledges Edgar's service in this instance of solidarity between two abject souls, proclaiming, "You, sir, I entertain you for one of my hundred, only I do not like the fashion of your garments. You will say they are Persian; but let them be changed" (3.6.77–9). Considering Edgar's rags are far from any sartorial symbols of Eastern elegance, riches, and pomp, the image Lear claims to see is ironic and puzzling. At the same time, Lear's lament on Edgar's clothing informs us of the presence of another persona for Edgar, an invisible Persian figure or Englishman dressed as a Persian, possibly a soldier or an ambassador, graciously aiding Lear in his confrontation with the rancorous dogs populating his suffering mind. Thus, Lear does not accept *Edgar as Poor Tom* into his dissolving retinue in his attempt to salvage his dignity and control over his lost fortunes, but rather as an unknown figure with Persian adornments who succours him much like his Greek philosophers and the wise judge – all figures of aid the forsaken king beseeches in his time of need.

Lear's prayerful reflection reveals the fundamental incoherence of his life, that it was impossible to be a devoted father of his daughters if he was not a devoted servant to his realm. Lear's prayer narrates the movement of the cares of the head to caring in the heart, which becomes, in Seneca's terms, a solicitous attitude toward others. In this sense, his epiphany speaks to Mayeroff's description of the potential conflicts of caring: "My carings must be compatible, in some kind of harmony with one another, if they are to be inclusive enough to enable me to be in-place. My life cannot be harmoniously ordered if, for example, there is a basic incompatibility between caring in my work and caring for my family."[34] Lear achieves Mayeroff's state of knowledge on the journey to develop the virtue of caring: "To care for someone, I must know many things. I must know, for example, who the other is, what his powers and limitations are, what his needs are, and what is conducive to his growth."[35] Lear's tardy arrival to the state of knowledge necessary for caring in the world prevents him from moving beyond theory into practice, but he does arrive at the threshold of appreciating the order of values with caring at its core.[36]

While Lear may not have the time or even the capacity to go beyond a theoretical and limited state of empathy for the poor, Edgar's performance leaves open the possibility for greater understanding of social diversity to permeate his capacity as future king. While theatricality separates Edgar from the true oppression of the state he assumes and later dismantles, nevertheless the physicality of his suffering and the initial familial displacement he undergoes offer him opportunities to develop virtues of sympathy and compassion. Through his dramatic experiment as Poor Tom, Edgar can access a glimmering of suffering otherwise distanced from him and those around him. Perhaps this part does in fact affect his capacities, leading him to claim a portion of lost sympathy in the play, to "*speak* what we feel" (5.3.326; emphasis added), if not the desire for sustained empathy with the poor, "to *feel* what wretches feel," as Lear advocates. There is hope, perhaps, that the future reign of Edgar will be informed by his performance of poverty, in some measure.

Tempering Human Care

Despite his staged ramblings and reflections, Poor Tom speaks an indisputable truth: "Tom's a-cold" (3.4.161). Tom's need, however, is overlooked because of Lear's desire to "feel what wretches feel," to experience the "creaturely existence of the human animal stripped of all prosthetic and pretension."[37] Like Tom's physical suffering, Caliban's

enchanted pain inflicted by a wrathful Prospero is the only truth both parties acknowledge:

PROSPERO: If though neglect'st or dost unwillingly

What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,
Fill all they bones with aches, make thee roar,
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

CALIBAN: No, pray thee.

[*Aside*] I must obey. His art is of such power,
It would control my dam's god, Setebos,
And make a vassal of him.[38]

Caliban's pain and Tom's cold are parallel physical ailments manifesting the powerful interior suffering of a displaced orphan and an undermined, soon-to-be-orphaned son. Both require care from the father figures in the plays, yet both are consistently denied such care or, worse, are the victims of abuse. While Lear's encounter with Poor Tom reveals how the "realm of ethical possibility" is "beneath" or "behind the world of Lear," how the ethics of care is manifest in small gestures rather than systematic action, Prospero's care, estrangement, and acknowledgement of Caliban speak to the action of caring that Lear never fully achieves.

While acknowledging the significance of seemingly conflicting power structures defining Caliban's being and doing, namely readings that see Caliban as a victim of colonization and those that see Miranda as the victim of attempted rape, with Caliban as the perpetrator of an even greater abuse of brute power, the question of the efficacy of early modern education and servitude as enacted in Prospero's cell, aptly analysed by Tom Lindsay, aligns with the discourse on care I am elaborating.[39] As Lindsay explains, the play is a "drama about the workings of Prospero's household and schoolroom, his 'cell'" that unsuccessfully hosts a training that emphasizes a "set of capacities for political action – submissiveness and assertiveness in particular."[40] While Miranda successfully absorbs this education from the patriarch, well known in the period's educational manuals and procedures, her ultimate outlet for political action is inherent in her nobility, whereas Caliban is unable to channel his learning in action, either through household tasks that are bereft of "edifying" skills or through a greater social reality, that is the goal of such education.[41] Thus, this failure in educational advancement and empowerment is in part because of the limited focus on behaviour and powers of expression.

According to Lindsay, Caliban's frustrations and "disillusionment" lead him to enact his own forms of political agency that attempt to harm the personhood of Miranda, and ultimately Prospero.[42] Perhaps, in both the case of Caliban's oppression and his attempt at sexual and political domination, it is the fundamental loss of the capacity to care or the inability to care appropriately by knowing the needs of the new resident within the cell or household that leads to such abuses of power.

Caliban's counter-narrative to Prospero's claim of kindly guardianship affirms rather than dismisses the care Prospero alleges to have bestowed on an orphaned Caliban on the enchanted island in The Tempest:

CALIBAN: When thou cam'st first,

Thou strok'st me and made much of me; wouldst give me
Water with berries in't; and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee
And showed thee all the qualities o' th' isle,
The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and fertile.
Cursed be I that did so!

PROSPERO: Thou most lying slave,

Whom stripes may move, not kindness. I have used thee
(Filth as thou art) with humane care, and lodged thee
In mine own cell till thou didst seek to violate
The honor of my child. (1.2.332–48)

The verbs of care incorporate associations of physical touch ("strok'st"), generosity ("give"), and dedication to capacity building ("teach me"), which lead Caliban to "love" in this seemingly joyful family affair which is never staged and only left to the audience to imagine. This prior time, like Othello's former hospitable welcome and Lear's future dream of kind nursery, remains bracketed, accessible only through narration and shared memory. This off-stage, hidden moment of hospitable care involved taking Caliban into a smaller, more intimate, and familial dwelling within the island, similar to an au pair in Julia Reinhard Lupton's reading of Caliban's minority status. Lupton's powerful characterization of Caliban identifies his various states first as an orphaned child on the island after the loss of his mother, Sycorax, and then as an adopted child in the care of Prospero and Miranda, an erring youth and quasi-peer who is then outcast, shunned, imprisoned, and convicted as an adult for his

assault on Miranda.[43] The tragedy of the failure of an ethics of care in the backstory of their relationship is manifest in Prospero's claim to have treated Caliban with "humane care" despite the doubt of the capacities of his "vile race" (1.2.357) that Miranda voices in the opening act. Thus, in his claim of an initial attempt toward some sort of equality, it is evident that "'humane' characterizes both Prospero's moral bearing toward Caliban (he acted humanely) and his expectations for Caliban's moral aptitude (he treated Caliban as a human, capable of personhood)."[44] While Prospero's intentions with the young Caliban may never be fully revealed, his early acts of care for Caliban take him to the fringes of care in his ability to go beyond the state of knowledge into the realm of doing that Lear never arrives at. In Mayeroff's estimation, Prospero's initial welcome of Caliban calls upon a degree of courage to go into the "unknown" in his caring for Caliban and his willingness to "trust in the other to grow."[45]

However, and unfortunately, the tragic denial of "human care," the loss of trust brought about when Caliban tests the limits of care in his household, reveals the inadequacy of his education to his growing needs as an adolescent, physically and existentially. Following his punishment for his assault on Miranda, rather than apathy, the relationship between Prospero and Caliban turns into one of puerile revenge, of attachment to the anger of being wronged that plagues Prospero in his dealings with all except Miranda and Ariel, although, in both the former and the latter he is not above reminding Miranda of her educational and life-preserving debts to him and to chastising Ariel for his forgetfulness of his time of arboreal imprisonment. As Melissa Sanchez explains, while Caliban refers to himself as a "subject," Prospero's designation of him (and Ariel) as "slave" speaks to the play's linguistic conflation of the terms in the realm of servitude, a "philosophical indeterminacy" highlighting "the difficulty of finding a precise account of the origins and extent of authority, whether political, domestic, or erotic. Instead, the play registers the possibility that authority can be defined only insofar as it is resisted."[46]

Prospero's counter-assault on Caliban expresses an ongoing grudge, a psychological state that transforms the verbs of care turn into verbs of torture in the tempus or time of the play:

CALIBAN: All the infections that the sun sucks up

From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall and make him
By inch-meal a disease! …
His spirits hear me,
And yet I needs must curse. But they'll nor pinch,

> Fright me with urchin-shows, pitch me i' the mire,
> Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark
> Out of my way, unless he bid 'em. But
> For every trifle are they set upon me;
> Sometime like apes that mow and chatter at me,
> And after bite me; then like hedgehogs which
> Lie tumbling in my barefoot way and mount
> Their pricks at my footfall; sometime am I
> All wound with adders, who with cloven tongues
> Do hiss me into madness. (2.2.1–14)

While Caliban is in his tortuous exile, feeling the "pinch," "mow and chatter" of Prospero's will upon his body and soul, his attempt at sovereignty through his partnership with Trinculo and Stephano leads to experimenting with his own political will. When all is revealed at the conclusion of the play, Prospero's acknowledgment of Caliban, "This thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine," is followed with a reintegration, albeit temporary, of the household: "Go, sirrah, to my cell; / Take with you your companions. As you look / To have my pardon, trim it handsomely" (5.1.275–6, 294–7). As both Prospero and Caliban have grown in their understanding of social reality, Prospero's understanding and development of the virtue of forgiveness enables him to attempt a return to the caring stance he failed to maintain at the onset of his relationship with Caliban. His acknowledgment here is, in part, an affirmation of the pain released through his earlier banishment of Caliban, even as it is "painfully partial" in its insistence on the "darkness" Prospero's claims of Caliban.[47] As Sarah Beckwith writes in this volume, the relationship between acknowledgment and care is contingent on "where we stand in relation to others" and calls for an acceptance that aims to transcend the pain brought about through the tragic denial and avoidance of others.[48] Similarly, Prospero's acknowledgment of Caliban speaks to Mayeroff's claim that care calls upon the virtues of hope and courage, a hope that is not only future-oriented but also "an expression of the plenitude of the present, a present alive with a sense of the possible."[49]

Caliban's experience and subsequent reintegration before Prospero's departure not only chastens him but also inspires him to be "wise" in his return to solitary sovereignty on the island. As in the case of Edgar's learning in action, his dramatic trial as Poor Tom, Caliban's impending sovereignty is similarly informed and chastened by experience and perhaps also tempered with more wisdom than was accessible to him

before his state of extreme servitude and poverty. Caliban's desire to rule with wisdom exhibits hope and courage by caring for himself as he embarks on the next phase of his development. Mayeroff's description of the interplay between courage, trust, and hope speaks to both Caliban's enlightened state at the conclusion of the play and Shakespeare's portrayal of the primacy of enabling individual virtue in The Tempest: "This is the courage of the artist who leaves the fashions of the day to go his own way, and in so doing comes to find himself and be himself. Such courage is not blind: it is informed by insight from past experiences, and it is open and sensitive to the present."[50]

From Dame Cura to Carers

> If you plant a seed in the ground, a tree will become manifest from that seed. The seed sacrifices itself to the tree that will come from it. The seed is outwardly lost, destroyed; but the same seed which is sacrificed will be absorbed and embodied in the tree, its blossoms, fruit and branches.
>
> 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 1912

While Cordelia manifests the feminine care Lear hopes will cradle him in his old age, the crisis of care he both experiences and creates results from an individual and collective lack of virtue buttressing the structures of his kingdom. Such a dual moral concern speaks to our modern conceptualization of the work of care.[51] Dame Cura's contemporary avatars include nannies, nurses, and caregivers for the elderly, a host of affective labour that is monetized, marginalized, and minimized in social and economic value. Perhaps one of the most intriguing fictional figures of care is Kathy H., the "carer" in Kazuo Ishiguro's dystopian novel *Never Let Me Go*, which opens with biographical lines that mimic an ad for employment: "My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years."[52] Destined to be a caretaker of her fellow clones who must go through a series of organ donations until the euphemistic "completion" of their lives, Kathy's humanity is ironically evident in her superior skills as a caregiver despite her status as a clone: "I've developed a kind of instinct around donors. I know when to hang around and comfort them, when to leave them to themselves; when to listen to everything they have to say, and when just to shrug and tell them to snap out of it."[53] If care is what shapes and moulds humans, then it is the capacity to care and empathize that distinguishes Kathy H.

and furthers the tragic lack of acknowledgment of the humanity of the genetically modified youth in Ishiguro's novel. Care is intricately bound up with sacrifice and obligation for Kathy H. as well as the other carers and donors and becomes the binding force that enables the system to continue. As in the myth of Cura, as John Hamilton explains, "Cura's primary task is to unify. With muddied hands she brings together the dual aspects, spirituality and materiality, that define the human condition." As Hamilton observes, in Hyginus' fable, the "donors" are the gods who endow humans with "a form, a body, a spirit, and a name," only to return the donations after death when man is secure from a life of care.[54]

The question of sacrificial obligations haunts our understanding of care. In one sense, Ishiguro's clones are the epitome of sacrificial care, donating parts of themselves until death for the well-being of others. Yet it is the joy of sacrifice, indirectly associated with Kathy H.'s "boasting" of her ability to care for donors, that is perhaps the most admirable and mysterious part of the human condition. From the streaming tears of a birthing mother to the chance heroic encounter of an altruistic Good Samaritan, the joy of sacrifice provides us with glimmerings of our highest nature, noble, virtuous, and caring. What is clear is that mortality and care are bound together in profoundly significant ways, revealing how, in its essence, caring tests one's virtues through the arena of sacrificial service that can be completed or exercised only in one's lifetime. It is the sacrifice of the self that enables the growth of another; it marks the end of foreignness and the beginning of human solidarity. It is the catalyst for a powerful transformation of the self and others. Lear's contemplation on care as he faces his own mortality, a mortality that saturates *Never Let Me Go*, reminds us that the cultivation of humankind's sublime virtues is contingent on the work he completes or ignores in this world.

NOTES

1 William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. Grace Ioppolo (New York; W.W. Norton, 2008), 1.1.34–8. Subsequent references will be to this edition and cited in text.

2 *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "care, n.1."

3 William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second*, in *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, ed. Frances Dolan, general editors Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller (New York: Penguin, 2002), 4.1.195–9.

4 John T. Hamilton, *Security: Politics, Humanity, and the Philology of Care* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 130.

5 Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene,* ed. Thomas P. Roche (New York: Penguin, 1987), 5.4.35.
6 William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, in *The Pelican Shakespeare*, ed. Peter Holland, general editors Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller (New York: Penguin, 2002), 2.3.35–6.
7 William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, in *The Pelican Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Orgel, general editors Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller (New York: Penguin, 2002), 2.2.40–1.
8 Janet Adelman writes of Lear placing himself in a "position of infantile need" as he hoped to make Cordelia's "nursery his final resting place" in *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, from Hamlet to the Tempest* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 116.
9 For a discussion on the distinctly Roman aspects of the Cura myth, see K.F.B. Fletcher, "Towards a Roman Mythography: Hyginus' *Fabulae*," in *Writing Myth: Mythography in the Ancient World*, ed. R.S. Smith and S. Trzaskoma, 133–64 (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2013).
10 William Shakespeare, *The First Part of Henry VI*, in *The Pelican Shakespeare*, ed. William Montgomery, general editors Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller (New York: Penguin, 2002), 3.7.3.
11 Hyginus, *Fabulae* 220, cited in *The Literary Genres in the Flavian Age Canons, Transformations, Reception,* ed. Federica Bessone and Marco Fucecchi (Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 76.
12 Stephanie Shirilan, *Robert Burton and the Transformative Powers of Melancholy* (London: Routledge, 2016), 29.
13 Shirilan, *Robert Burton*, 32.
14 Thomas Elyot, *The Dictionary of Syr Thomas Eliot Knyght* (London, 1538).
15 *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "cure, n.1."
16 Warren Thomas Reich, "History of the Notion of Care," *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, rev. ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1995), 319–31. Reich notes the tension of the "positive side of care" alongside the tension between earthly concerns and divine aspiration but emphasizes that "the primordial role of Care is to hold the human together in wholeness while cherishing it." See also Konrad Burdach, "Faust und die Sorge," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 1, no. 160 (1923): 1–60.
17 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: SUNY Press, 1996), 185.
18 Heidegger, *Being and Time* 180.
19 Reich, "History of the Notion of Care"; for a discussion of adversarial paradigms of human relationships and subsequent responses to the thesis, see Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World*

Order (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996); David Cannadine, *The Undivided Past: Humanity beyond Our Differences* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013); and Michael R. Karlberg, *Beyond the Culture of Contest: From Adversarialism to Mutualism in an Age of Interdependence* (Oxford: George Ronald, 2004).

20 Milton Mayeroff, *On Caring*, World Perspectives Series, general editor Ruth Nanda Anshen (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 43:22, 5.

21 Mayeroff, *On Caring*, 7.

22 Mayeroff, *On Caring*, 39.

23 As Debra K. Shuger notes, many of Shakespeare's lower-class characters are comic rather than suffering, with Poor Tom as an anomaly. In reading Poor Tom and Caliban alongside each other, I would add that Caliban is an additional exception in the canon. See Shuger, "Subversive Fathers and Suffering Subjects: Shakespeare and Christianity," in *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540–1688*, ed. Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 46.

24 James Kearney, "'This Is Above All Strangeness': *King Lear*, Ethics, and the Phenomenology of Recognition," *Criticism* 54, no. 3, Shakespeare and Phenomenology (Summer 2012): 466. Kearney identifies "small ethical acts" in the "everyday exchanges and bodily interactions" of characters such as hand-holding between Edgar and Gloucester on their way to Dover, 466.

25 The reunion scene offers Cordelia a brief but poignant opportunity to care for a "child-changed" Lear following her invocation to the gods to "cure this great breach in his abused nature" (4.7.15).

26 William Shakespeare, *Othello, The Moor of Venice*, ed. Michael Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1.3.1.

27 Kearney, "'This Is Above All Strangeness,'" 455.

28 William C. Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 191.

29 Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar*, 42.

30 Shuger identifies Lear's invocation as a prayer for the poor: "Superflux is a Shakespearean coinage, a translation of a technical term from medieval canon law referring to the percentage of a person's income or goods that is owed to the poor…. In this painful epiphany, the pagan king for a moment grasps the nature of Christian *caritas*." "Subversive Fathers and Suffering Subjects," 53.

31 Mayeroff, *On Caring,* 30.

32 Kearney, "'This Is Above All Strangeness,'" 457–8.

33 On ancient philosophy as care for the self, see Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University

Press, 2002); and Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self*, vol. 3 of *The History of Sexuality,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1988).

34 Mayeroff, *On Caring*, 42.

35 Mayeroff, *On Caring*, 9.

36 Mayeroff writes that caring provides a "center" that promotes harmony and coherence in life. *On Caring*, 37.

37 Kearney, "'This Is Above All Strangeness,'" 458.

38 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 1.2.367–73. All subsequent references will be to this edition and cited in text.

39 Tom Lindsay, "'Which First Was Mine Own King': Caliban and the Politics of Service and Education in *The Tempest*," *Studies in Philology* 113, no. 2 (March 2016): 400.

40 Lindsay, "'Which First Was Mine Own King,'" 400.

41 Lindsay, "'Which First Was Mine Own King,'" 411.

42 Lindsay, "'Which First Was Mine Own King,'" 410.

43 Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 218.

44 Lupton, *Thinking with Shakespeare*, 204. Lupton further distinguishes Prospero's role as upholding his duties as a "curator" (from the Latin Cura and in reference to Roman law) from Miranda's role as "tutor" who teaches Caliban to speak, 204.

45 Mayeroff, *On Caring*, 20.

46 Melissa E. Sanchez, "Seduction and Service in *The Tempest*," *Studies in Philology* 105, no. 1 (2008): 63. Sanchez notes that "the early English translations for the Latin word for slave (*servus*) suggests, the terms 'servant' and 'slave' were often used interchangeably in Renaissance England," 62.

47 Lupton, *Thinking with Shakespeare*, 210.

48 Sarah Beckwith, "'Acknowledgment'" (in this volume).

49 Mayeroff, *On Caring*, 19.

50 Mayeroff, *On Caring*, 20.

51 On affective and emotional labour, see, for example, Arlie Russel Hochshild's classic study, *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). On affective labour in Shakespeare, see Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Shakespeare Dwelling: Designs for the Theater of Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 51–68.

52 Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (New York: Vintage, 2005), 3.

53 Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 3.

54 Hamilton, *Security*, 4.