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David Scott Kastan

Editor in Chief



Volume



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TONY HARRISON ~ A MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES

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TONY HARRISON

Sandie Byrne

Tony Harrison (born 1937) was born in a working-class district of Leeds, in the North of England, to the baker Harry Harrison and his wife Florence (Florrie). He was educated at a local primary school where he won one of the very few state scholarships to the prestigious Leeds Grammar School. After studying classics at Leeds University, he embarked on postgraduate research into translations of the *Aeneid*, but abandoned academic life in order to devote himself to poetry. He has lived and worked in Africa, Prague, Cuba, the United States, and Greece, but has made Newcastle upon Tyne in the North of England his base for many years. He has been married twice and has two children.

Harrison's early poems appeared in student magazines such as *Poetry and Audience*, and were later taken by periodicals such as *London Magazine* and *Stand*. His first collection was a pamphlet-length publication, *Earthworks*, printed in 1964, and his first book proper was *The Loiners* (a dialect word for residents of Leeds), which was published in 1970. Since then he has published numerous volumes of poetry, verse plays, and verse film scripts, including two editions of his *Selected Poems*, and he is still publishing poetry in periodicals such as *The Guardian*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, and the *London Review of Books*. Harrison has been awarded a number of prizes, including the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize, the Whitbread Poetry Prize, the Prix Italia, the Royal Society's Best Original Programme Award, the William Heinemann Prize, and the Northern Rock Award, but he remains a determinedly antiestablishment figure, and made it known that he would not accept the poet laureateship if it were to be offered to him after the death of Ted Hughes. (It was given to Andrew Motion.)

A number of Harrison's verse plays and adaptations have been performed at the London National Theatre as well as in northern locations such as Salt's Mill, in Saltaire, Yorkshire, and in other European locations such as the ancient stadium at Delphi, in Greece. Although he has written some entirely original dramatic work, he is better known for his verse adaptations of classical and other

plays such as *The Oresteia*, *The Mysteries*, *The Common Chorus*, *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus*, *Medea: A Sex-War Opera*, *The Kaisers of Carnuntum*, and *The Labourers of Herakles*. His television and cinema work has led to collaborations with a number of leading producers and directors, including George Cukor, Peter Hall (whom Harrison later pilloried for accepting a knighthood), Richard Eyre, and Peter Symes, on projects such as *The Gaze of the Gorgon*, *v.*, and *Black Daisies for the Bride*; but on more recent work, such as the film *Prometheus*, Harrison himself has taken on the director's role.

Harrison lists among his poetic influences his "household gods," John Milton and John Keats, but also the music-hall artists Max Miller and "Professor" Leon Cortez. Embracing both "high" and "low" culture, and insisting that neither should be the exclusive province of any sector of society, Harrison combines in his work elements from classical literature and myth, canonical poetry of many cultures, popular song, and jokes. The language he employs to convey this eclectic mix is highly flexible, incorporating dialectal and Standard English, non-English languages, profanity, and specialized registers. A master of form, he uses strict metrical and rhyme schemes, but often when depicting subjects and using language not usually associated with the conventions of canonical poetry.

THEMES

The main theme of Tony Harrison's work is introduced in his linked sonnets "Them & [uz]" I and II, which articulate the anger of a bright working-class schoolboy despised and disparaged for his dialect and accent ("[uz]" is a phonetic representation of the word "us" pronounced in a northern English accent, while "[ʌs]" represents the same word spoken by a someone whose accent is R.P., the more prestigious Received Pronunciation).

4 words only of *mi 'art aches* and . . . "Mine's broken, you barbarian, T.W.!" He was nicely spoken
"Can't have our glorious heritage done to death!"

Harrison's Leeds Grammar School scholarship amounted to cultural kidnap. It gave him a classical education and introduced him to the arts, but also divorced him from working-class culture and the family background he portrays as, at least for his earliest years, warm and loving. Another sonnet, "Illuminations," depicts this background as a circuit through which flowed a kind of current, uniting the family. Education broke the circuit, and experience, travel, and his profession widened the break. The scholarship boy cannot have his wish to be the poet that his father reads. In "A Good Read" he writes:

I've come round to your position on the Arts
but put it down in poems, that's the bind

Nonetheless, Harrison cites his family as the source of his poetic power. "Hereditry" answers a question about where he got "his talent" from:

I say: I had two uncles, Joe and Harry—
one was a stammerer, the other dumb.

The uncles' painful strained articulacy remains Harrison's gold standard, and in "Self-Justification," writing of both his ancestors and his contemporaries, he states:

Their aggro towards me, my need of them 's
what keeps my would-be mobile tongue still tied—
aggression, struggle, loss, blank printer's ems
by which all eloquence gets justified.

The last line is "justified"—that is, made to fit across the whole line width by the insertion of spaces. (An "em," or two "ens," was a width measurement of a piece of type, and a blank em would insert that much space in a line typeset in the old way, by hand, using actual metal pieces for each symbol.)

These are all Meredithian sonnets, named for the Victorian poet George Meredith, who employed a sixteen-rather than a fourteen-line form in his sonnet sequence *Modern Love* (1862). The extra two lines enable Harrison to develop his argument and—a favorite device—to spring a surprise at the end, fit in a punch line, or turn his argument around, pulling the rug out from under our feet. Many of his Meredithian sonnets are part of the "School of Eloquence" sequence that has been growing since the late 1960s. Among these are some of Harrison's most moving lines, in elegies for his parents, and some of his most powerful political statements, in his attempts to give a voice to the voiceless and dispossessed.

Harrison often breaks up his forms on the page and includes typographical devices (italic and bold type,

Gothic script, small caps) to represent political, social, and personal division and fragmentation. Harrison's remedy for this fragmentation and dispossession is not the restoration of the continuum; not a return to a family, class, and peer-centered life, but instead the embracing of *self-centeredness*. Poems such as "The Heartless Art," representing the poet seizing on a personal tragedy as good poetic copy, show an achieved ruthlessness and self-interest presented as essential for the pursuit of poetry. Other poems depict characters finding refuge in sex, which in Harrison's work is an affirmation of life set against the void of personal and possible global extinction.

Sexual union is important to the poems and verse plays because the dramatis personae of Harrison's work are divided from one another and within. Their sense of self, however divided, is strong, but they are dispossessed from the very things that, for most people, constitute the sense of self: family, language, culture, rights. The place of origin and original belonging establishes identity, and accent (pronunciation) is its marker, particularly for Harrison's "Loiners," or natives of Leeds, but Harrison does not romanticize the poorer areas of Leeds. The streets of uniform, cramped, back-to-back houses are shown as having nothing going for them other than this status as common origin, but his Loiners feel their disconnection from these places and from one another, moving from connection to disconnection and from separation to contact.

Classics may have interrupted the continuum of Harrison's family life, but it also gave him a model of a society with a dynamic culture in which religion, entertainment, philosophy, art, and community were integrated. The prefaces to his verse plays suggest that classical Greek drama incorporated high and low culture into an indivisible whole by staging tragedy, comedy, and satyr play together, and it acknowledged the necessity for both poet and hooligan in the human makeup. Silenus, the loutish, drunken leader of the satyrs in Harrison's *Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* (1990), sets out the case:

Satyrs in theatre are on hand to reassess
doom and destiny and dire distress.
Six hours of tragedy and half an hour of fun.
But they were an entity conceived as one.

Silenus argues that later teachers and critics have "elbowed the satyrs with embarrassing erections" out of high art. But can classical high art—art from a highly hierarchical society and the catalyst for the division in Harri-

son's life—really be the cement that rebinds society? Later in the same play, Silenus's satyrs employ the same kind of aggressive language as the narrator of "Them & [uz]," but literalize the narrator's attack on the canon, tearing up and burning the papyrus fragment of *The Ichneutae*, the play they came from; they then metamorphose into football hooligans. The message seems to be that you can take a half-man-half-goat to culture but you cannot make him respect it. The acts of destruction are offered as tragic yet acceptable. One remembers that Harrison, claiming his kinship with the "skinhead" football hooligan in his earlier long poem *v.*, lays claim to his own act of hooliganism, triggered by anger at the idealist rhetoric of politics and "high" art. Harrison's satyrs, soldiers, and vandals are associated with Dionysus, the god of outdoors, celebration, loss of inhibition, libido, community; while the scholar who discovered the fragments of Sophocles' play becomes Apollo: god of music and other aspects of high culture, control, balance, the autonomous self. The play makes an association, characteristic of Harrison's work, between working-class culture and male bonding, between "masculinity" and energy, and between ruling-class culture and cold ruthlessness. In *Trackers*, Harrison uses Marsyas, who was flayed by Apollo for daring to aspire to the high art form of music, to represent the culmination of a number of acts of exclusion from high culture visited by the ruling classes on upstart working-class artists. In another play, *The Big H*, a chain of hyperbolic logic is made to lead from the same mockery and silencing of language seen in "Them & [uz]" to gagging, censorship, imprisonment, murder, and war.

Classical literature is not Harrison's only source of reference material, quotation, and adaptation. Many of his longer poems engage with other texts, borrowing their method or form, or addressing their themes and assumptions. One of his justly most famous poems, "A Kumquat for John Keats," takes as intertext Keats's Odes, and wonders what the Romantic poet would have made of the ambivalently bitter and sweet kumquat, had it been available to him instead of the grape. "The Fire-Gap" and "The Lords of Life" build on Lawrentian ideas about the wild and the Christian demonization of our animal and primitive instincts. "Newcastle is Peru" is an energetic and witty innovative rediscovery of a metaphysical mode. "The Blasphemers' Banquet" was an intervention in the Salman Rushdie controversy.

Although in "Them & [uz]" Harrison affirms "[uz] [uz] [uz]" and expresses a longing to restore the "continuous" of "our Tony" and the family, geographical, or so-

cial group, it is "my name" and my "own voice" that are loudest in his work; not "we," but "I." The starting point of many of the "School of Eloquence" poems is, crucially, the loss of membership in a group (for example, "Me Tarzan," "Confessional Poetry") or the loss of a "sense of place," or is a pairing (for example, "Isolation," "Cremation"). Harrison has refused to join "us," but dropping "T.W.," the initials by which he was known at school, did not restore "our Tony" to assimilation with "uz." Harrison represents his textual persona, the narrative "I," as an artist, observer, outsider; a man alone and between, divided and dualistic, sometimes dueling.

Although the narrators of the poems are often exiled and alienated, their alienation is mitigated. They resist the tags of "sellout" and "softy" by performing physical exertion: digging, sawing, fire making, sex (for example, in "Cypress and Cedar" and "The Lords of Life"). They seek and find solace in interpersonal and erotic, rather than social and familial, relations. Libidinous release sometimes brings oblivion and sometimes brings a sense of connection; to the woman, to the life force, in a way that Harrison associates with the pulse of life and the beat of meter. Arguing that sex obliterates class, nation, and other differences, Harrison comes close to arguing "make love not war" (for example, in "Chopin Express"). "Durham," however, comes around to the view that neither sex nor love nor any other human transaction is exempt from politics.

While relationships with working-class men are strained in Harrison's work, in "The Lords of Life" the "Cracker" neighbors in Florida are said to assume that the narrator is a "fairy" or "cissy," and he competes in pointless displays of machismo; sexual relationships with women seem to represent a literally plugging in to a stream that is a composite of life-energy, poetic rhythm, and language, perhaps because, for him, his mother was the conduit of literacy, as he shows in "Blocks." "Uz" in Harrison's work remains eternally lost, and "As" (or "them") a club he is desperate not to join; but women, at least women available for heterosexual relations, represent a way of reinserting himself into a continuum.

Any short introduction to Harrison's work could lead the reader to expect stereotypical working-class "chip on the shoulder" aggression or the guilt of the social climber, but there is more to Harrison's work than that. He is a wonderful formalist; a master of meter and a master manipulator of the ambivalent image, of the contradiction, of the qualification. The worldview of his poetry is an equilibrium permanently compromised and permanently in tension.

CRITICAL EVALUATION AND
SELF-EVALUATION

Harrison is a former editor of literary magazines, former president of the Classical Association, and a polyglot. The cover of his *Selected Poems* acclaims him as "one of the most prodigiously gifted and accessible poets alive today . . . our best English poet," and quotes Stephen Spender referring to "poems written in a style which I feel I have all my life been waiting for." Conversely, Harrison has been accused of being a "Bolshy," of writing "a torrent of four-letter filth" (*Daily Mail*, 12 October 1987), of contributing to the decline of broadcasting standards (Early Day Motion, House of Commons, 27 October 1987), and it has often been implied that he brings poetry into disrepute by inappropriately using the "high" cultural forms of poetry to represent the "low" life of popular culture. If one aspect of Harrison does acknowledge that the critics' praise is justified, another seems instantly compelled to turn his work against the "poetry lovers," and thus himself, by giving a voice to those who have no value for poetry or the poet. In the last scene of his *Labourers of Herakles*, the published text has the portentous direction, "Enter **Tony Harrison** to speak as **The Spirit of Phrynichos**." At the first (and thus far unique) performance of the play, at Delphi, the respectful silence following the playwright's highly referential as well as moving speech on war, genocide, and Greek drama was broken by the querulous and irritated voice of one of the laborers: "Who the fuck was that?"

Although he is both a highly literate and a technically accomplished poet, Harrison is never in danger of becoming complacent or pretentious while aspects of himself detach themselves to shout, "A book, yer stupid cunt, 's not worth a fuck!" (the offensive sexism there is the character's, not Harrison's, of course), as happens in his long poem *v.*, which contemplates, with some sympathy, the unemployed youths who turn to vandalism and defile the graves in the Leeds cemetery where Harrison's parents are buried. Nor is he in danger of overrating his intellect at the expense of his roots or his feelings. His writing can be a roller-coaster ride through one of the most exciting minds we are ever likely to encounter, but it is as visceral as it is cerebral, and as emotional as it is sensual. It is also, sadly, as removed from its contemporary audience as it is linked to its poetic ancestors, or so Harrison suggests. He could be accused of peddling stereotypes in his insistence that working-class men do not read poetry, but it also has to be admitted that his representations of oppressed workers are mostly politely applauded by middle-

class "poetry supporters." A poem to a long-dead child mine laborer, Patience Kershaw, tells her, "You're lost in this sonnet for the bourgeoisie."

The poetry evinces a pained awareness of the price paid for the products of high culture. First in his first "proper book," and later in *Selected Poems*, Harrison included "Thomas Campey and the Copernican System," a poem for a secondhand book dealer whose diseased spine is bowed by the weight of the old, crack-spined volumes he pushes in his handcart through the Leeds streets. The frontispiece in Harrison's own books is a woodcut of Thomas Campey, bent almost double in flat cap and mackintosh, with a quotation from the poem:

And every pound of this dead weight is pain
to Thomas Campey (Books)

Just as Thomas Campey is before Harrison when he opens his books, and Patience Kershaw is before him when he looks into a coal fire, so, perhaps, the trace of the burden of volumes bound in heavy boards, the metaphorical weight of the capital-intensive publishing industry on its workers, and the moral responsibility of the writer for his or her words, are present in each "sonnet for the bourgeoisie."

[See also Ted Hughes.]

SELECTED WORKS

- Earthworks* (1964)
- Aikin Mata*, with James Simmons (1966)
- Newcastle Is Peru* (1969)
- The Loiners* (1970)
- Palladas: Poems* (1975)
- Phaedra Britannica* (1975)
- Bow Down* (1977)
- From "The School of Eloquence" and Other Poems* (1978)
- Looking Up*, with Philip Sharpe (1979)
- Continuous: Fifty Sonnets from "The School of Eloquence"* (1981)
- A Kumquat for John Keats* (1981)
- The Oresteia* (1981)
- U.S. Martial* (1981)
- Selected Poems* (1984; 2nd ed. with additional poems, 1987)
- Dramatic Verse 1973–1985* (1985)
- The Fire-Gap* (1985)
- The Mysteries* (1985)
- v.* (1985)
- Theatre Works 1973–1985* (1986)

Anno 42 (1987)
Ten Sonnets from "The School of Eloquence" (1987)
The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus (1990)
A Cold Coming (1991)
The Common Chorus: A Version of Aristophanes' "Lysistrata" (1992)
The Gaze of the Gorgon (1992)
Square Rounds (1992)
Black Daisies for the Bride (1993)
Poetry or Bust (1993)
The Shadow of Hiroshima and Other Film/Poems (1995)
Plays 3: Poetry or Bust, The Kaisers of Carnuntum, The Labourers of Herakles (1996)
The Prince's Play, Le Roi S'Amuse (1996)
Prometheus (1998)
Laureate's Block and Other Occasional Poems (2000)
Plays 4 (2002)
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Under the Clock and Other Poems (2005)

FURTHER READING

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able collection of articles from newspapers and periodicals as well as some of the poet's own prose introductions.

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STEPHEN HAWES

Antony J. Hasler

Once a victim of the condescension and neglect usually afforded early sixteenth-century literature, the Tudor courtman and poet Stephen Hawes (1485?–1529?) is now a partaker in its reevaluation. His fascination lies partly in his work's strange protomodernity and the prospect it opens on his place in cultural history. Hawes is heir to a fifteenth-century tradition of public and advisory poetry, and to the more intimate love narratives, allegories, and lyrics of late-medieval England and Europe. He regularly lauds the authority of Chaucer, John Gower, and in particular John Lydgate, the poet-monk whose gargantuan endeavors had ushered in the Lancastrian dynasty a century before Hawes was writing. Yet such well-buttressed vernacular lineages had in Hawes's lifetime to contend both with an enduring sense of English's endemic backwardness and with the Latin lives, odes, and panegyrics, written by such career humanists as Bernard André, which after Henry VII's accession in 1485 became the literary prestige models of the new Tudor regime. Hawes's poetry is also responsive, in vivid yet unsettlingly indefinable ways, to the more direct pressures of courtly power. Against this background Hawes practices a curious eclecticism, almost as if to suggest that the competing modes and genres available to him offer no single and secure vantage point. The enticements and frustrations his poems offer the modern reader both measure a struggle to narrate self-formation in a desperately heterogeneous cultural and political world—hence both their allurements and their frustrations.

Next to nothing is known about Hawes's life. He may have been from East Anglia, where the name is common enough to have foiled a number of would-be identifications; he may have been the Stephen Hawes who attended Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1493. In 1503, he received four yards of black cloth for the funeral of Henry VII's queen Elizabeth of York. Royal accounts from 10 January 1506 show a payment to Hawes of ten shillings "for a ballett [balladeo] that he gave to the king's grace." All his poems were printed by William Caxton's disciple and follower Wynkyn de Worde. The first to appear, *The Example*

of Virtue, refers to him as "one of the gromes [grooms] of the most honorable chambre of our souerayne lorde King Henry VII"; its followers take up this designation, but a change occurs, as we shall see, after Henry VIII's accession in 1509.

PROMOTING POETRY

The Example of Virtue (composed 1503/04, published 1509), on all the evidence Hawes's earliest published poem, is typical of his longer works. After professing, in good fifteenth-century style, its author's modesty and indebtedness to his precursors, the poem settles into a personification allegory in which the narrator-protagonist Youth undertakes a quest to seek the lady Cleanness (purity or chastity). In a dream the narrator finds himself in a "medowe amerous," the familiar landscape of love literature, but is quickly taken under the tutelage of Sapience and Discretion, spiritual virtues both, who bombard him with strings of maxims from advisory texts. These figures guide him onward to a strangely anomalous island, an earthly paradise strewn with exotic coral and pebbles but also an English nation where yet more personifications debate the relative importance of wisdom, nature, hardihood, and fortune, and consider the perils of a boldness that improperly harnessed is as likely to foster treasonous rebellion as it is defense of the commonweal. What is at issue on this wondrous terrain, it soon turns out, is the proper condition not just of the religious self but also of political subjecthood under monarchy. Later Youth passes the portals of a peculiarly syncretic King of Love, an indecipherable blend of classical and Christian iconography, and meets Cleanness herself, whose cloistered virtue relates her to lay devotional writings about the "mixed life," an idealized union of action and contemplation.

The long expository speeches that gloss the allegory are offset by much more abrupt and bewildering interminglings of sacred and secular, one of which carries an autobiographical signature. Youth becomes groom to the

chamber of Dame Sapience, who tells him that perseverance in her commandments will ultimately bring him to “a much better room.” The royal chamber of Henry VII’s reign was, as David Starkey’s researches have shown, the center of far-reaching changes in governmental style, as a monarch wary of household conspiracy selected his closest attendants from outside the ranks of traditional privilege. There is no evidence that Hawes belonged to the intimate circle of the king’s privy-chamber grooms, as some have claimed. The passage nevertheless negotiates hopes of court preferment most skillfully, asserting the courtier’s emulous wishes even as they vanish into a command to win heaven through the pursuit of wisdom, self-advancement authorizing itself through self-annihilation. This mixture of political ambition, doctrine, and otherworldly, hypnotic scenery was to reach a long way; not for nothing has Hawes been seen as a forerunner to Edmund Spenser.

FATAL FICTIONS

The conclusion of *The Example* has a decidedly clerical bent; Youth and Cleanness marry in a feast sponsored by every figure of doctrine Hawes can lay hands on (moral personifications, Church fathers), then go on a tour of heaven and hell. The much longer *Pastime of Pleasure* (composed 1505/06, published 1509), Hawes’s most famous poem, is structurally more subtle. Once more it is an allegorical quest, but here the love fiction dominates; the narrator is called Graunde Amour, his love La Belle Pucelle (the fair maiden). Pucelle, however, is also the object of desire in a more general way. Long before she appears as a character, her desirability is announced by Dame Fame—not the skeptical Chaucer’s fickle goddess but, rather, stable and everlasting renown decked out in the “brennyrge tongues” of an admiring future, a figure borrowed from the poetry and court festivities of contemporary Burgundy. What follows, once again, is an exercise in generic instability, as the poem wanders between love narrative, the poet’s quest for fame, and a marked—if more subdued—religious strand. There is low-style comedy, too, in the shape of Godfrey Gobelive, a ribald dwarf who scorns Amour’s refined love. Also of note is the particular path that Amour must follow; in accordance with the period’s increasing insistence that the gentleman be educated in letters as well as arms, Amour spends much of the poem in the Tower of Doctrine with the Seven Liberal Arts, before fighting giants and monsters who take on the roles of traditional obstacles—slander, “disdain”—to the medieval literary lover’s success.

A. S. G. Edwards has shown close correspondences between Hawes’s first two poems and the woodcuts that accompany them, implying that Hawes and his printer de Worde are especially aware of the potential of print. This perhaps accounts for the poem’s fluid treatment of narrative voice. The poems move sectionally among genres, sometimes marked by affiliations with other texts printed by de Worde (the woodcuts in *The Pastime’s* Tower of Doctrine scenes, for instance, also appear in instructional works). In *The Pastime*, accordingly, the fiction of a speaking lover, Graunde Amour, takes second place to Hawes’s sense of what genre the poem is in at any given point. Such apparent discontinuity, however, goes with statements about the general nature of poetry that are consistent, serious, and self-conscious. The Tower of Doctrine episodes assign overwhelming importance to rhetoric, which gives Hawes the chance to praise past poets who, Lydgate-like, used their talents in the service of the realm. Hawes’s vocabulary, too, derives from Lydgate; true poets “enlumyne” and “encense,” their words, as though viewed through some strange sensorium, pouring out light and fragrance. The narrator’s voice is highly Latinate, and Gobelive, its opponent within the poem, speaks in the unreconstructed “rude” English (here a Kentish dialect) that Hawes openly rejects. Coupled with this, however, is a persistent stress on secrecy. Poets write “fatal fictions,” which conceal truth beneath “cloudy figures”; rhetoric in the Tudor state, as Rita Copeland notes, is seen as the preserve of an initiate elite wielding a veiled power. *The Pastime’s* own fatal secret, however, is a structural one. After its long expanses, the poem suddenly collapses, concertina-style. Amour marries his Pucelle, but the poem hurries him, in a very few lines, into avaricious old age, a death that he himself narrates (“Out of my body my soule than it went”), and purgatory. As C. S. Lewis observed, the blurred narratorial articulation of the entire poem turns out in retrospect to have been death-haunted. A final sequence of triumphal entries—of time, fame, and eternity—gradually move away from Amour himself, to suggest that time and narrative are fictions, subplots built on an eternity into which the poem must at last disappear. Hawes, much concerned with poetic “authority,” once again enacts an authority attested by its own dissolution.

THE DISCOMFORTS OF HISTORY

The records that note Hawes’s presence at the 1503 obsequies for Henry VII’s queen do not include him among the mourners for her royal husband in 1509. After this,

he is identified in his poems as “somtyme grome” of the “late” king’s chamber, suggesting that after the accession of Henry VIII he may have lost or left office. Most of his work in the new reign tells us little of what, if anything, changed in the poet’s circumstances. *The Conversion of Swearers* (1509) remarkably anticipates the pattern poems of later poets such as George Herbert. His surviving panegyric of the new ruler, *A Joyful Meditation* (1509), is more revealing, though of what we cannot know. The poem’s praise of the young Henry VIII is partly swamped by a timid defense of the late king’s “avarice” (shown in the bonds and recognizances imposed on the nobility in Henry VII’s latter years) and edgily equivocal claims that it was geared to the preparation for a new crusade. As Hawes’s editors suggest, building also on fragments of political fable that hang sinisterly in the air in *The Example of Virtue*, Hawes may have been overclosely associated with Sir Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley, the unpopular lawyer-councillors who implemented Henry VII’s fiscal policies and were executed once the new reign began.

Whatever the truth, Hawes’s remarkable *Comfort of Lovers* (composed 1510/11, published c. 1515) reads like nothing so much as a powerful record of the experience of exclusion. Again we meet a lover in a garden, here remembering a “lady excellent” of higher station whom he has loved and longs to recover. This time, however, Hawes’s customary eclecticism has become a traumatic fragmentation. This lover is compassed about by terrifying necromantic plotters; a venerable lady interrogates him as in earlier works, but here the usual sententious utterances are combined with questions of riddling obliquity, to which he responds in kind. Love complaint mingles here with late-medieval political prophecy, in which hopes and fears of political change found expression in cryptic figurative speech. The poem offers other keys. It features a total absorption in books—the lover even claims that the poems of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, the forefathers of English poetry, prophesy his own sufferings. Such matter is intercut with episodes of romance recognition; the lover sees magical mirrors and gems; a sword that, Excalibur-style, marks its discoverer as a hero-elect; and an image of the Holy Ghost suggesting divine inspiration. The poem seems to be reaching toward some dramatic gesture of closure that will heal the split identities of this narrator-protagonist, who is at once lover, ambitious courtier, romance hero, poet and prophet—and who, like *The Pastime of Pleasure’s* central figure, is named Amour. Yet such fantasies of completion are un-

dermined by the appearance of the lady herself—La Belle Pucelle *rediviva*, who calmly rejects the promises held out by the genres previously evoked and preserves a chilly distance, even claiming that the sword he took was not ordained for him. This most secretive of Hawes’s poems—does it refer to some concealed history? is it an allegory of his poetic career?—is also the most reflexive, as Amour, again resting his desires on the slender thread of a literary signature, tries to write *The Pastime* into the story of his love. This achieves nothing, however; the lover-poet, locked in his own obscure words (“I speke vnknown”) is left wishing that his lady would recognize the “preuyte” [privity] of his heart and “remembre” him.

AFTERLIFE

We hear no more of Hawes until a later reference by the poet Thomas Feylde to “Yonge Steuen Hawse whose soule god pardon,” in a poem published in 1529, provides a *terminus ante quem* for his death and poignantly hints that he may have died young. Feylde was also published by De Worde, who evidently strove to keep Hawes’s reputation alive, and in the 1530s some of the more self-contained lyrics from his poems appear in manuscript. Hawes received little attention in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although the exceptions to this rule include such notable names as Thomas Wharton and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The twentieth century, if we discount Lewis’s superb and sympathetic account, also gave him short shrift. Even its final decades, with their fresh exploration of fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century poetry (which did much to rehabilitate Hawes’s adored Lydgate), tended to repeat the standard accusations of clunking prosody, weak rhyme, and narrative longueurs, without heeding Hawes’s real if sometimes uncertainly handled experimentalism of form and genre. Lately, however, a sharper scholarly attentiveness to the ways in which late medieval poets read one another, and their own historical involvement, has brought Hawes’s work, once interesting merely as a symptom of a supposed “transition from medieval to Renaissance,” into fresh focus. The critical results suggest that despite his unpromising reputation, reading Hawes can still be a pastime of pleasure.

[See also John Lydgate.]

SELECTED WORKS

- The Example of Virtue* (1503/04)
The Pastime of Pleasure (1505/06)

The Conversion of Swearers (1509)

A Joyful Meditation (1509)

The Comfort of Lovers (1510/11)

FURTHER READING

Copeland, Rita. "Lydgate, Hawes, and the Science of Rhetoric in the Late Middle Ages." *Modern Language Quarterly* 53 (1992): 57–82. Highly suggestive on the politics of Hawes's rhetorical practice.

Edwards, A. S. G. *Stephen Hawes*. Boston, 1983. Useful overview, full bibliography.

Lewis, C. S. *The Allegory of Love*. Oxford, 1936. Classic, often wrongheaded, still perceptive on Hawes.

Starkey, David. "Intimacy and Innovation: The Rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485–1547." In *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, edited by David Starkey et al., 71–118. London, 1987. Invaluable for the historical context of the early Tudor court.

ELIZA HAYWOOD

Ellen Pollak

Eliza Fowler Haywood (c. 1693–1756) was one of the most popular and prolific writers of the first half of the eighteenth century, celebrated in her own day as one of the three most influential women writers of the age by the poet-critic James Sterling, who included her, along with Aphra Behn (c. 1640–1689) and Delarivier Manley, in the “fair Triumvirate of Wit” (“To Mrs. Eliza Haywood, on Her Writing,” dedicatory verse to Haywood’s *Secret Histories, Novels, and Poems*, 1725). An extraordinarily versatile writer, Haywood experimented with a remarkable range of genres (including drama, poetry, the political essay, the scandal chronicle, periodical writing, theater history, and translation, in addition to the prose fiction for which she is best known), publishing more than seventy works over almost forty years.

Her first novel, *Love in Excess; or, The Fatal Enquiry*, a story of amorous intrigue published in three parts between 1719 and 1720, was a best seller, going through two editions and multiple reissues before 1724 and appearing in two collected editions of Haywood’s works in 1724 and 1725, respectively. It has been argued that only two other works appearing prior to the 1740 publication of Samuel Richardson’s acclaimed novel *Pamela*—Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726), now both classics—enjoyed comparable popularity.

Haywood’s best-known works are *The Female Spectator*, the first English periodical for women written by a woman, which appeared monthly between April 1744 and May 1746; and *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), a narrative of female development that has earned her distinction as a pioneer in the early history of the English novel. Although the dominant character of her writing changed conspicuously over the course of her career, from the explicitly erotic fiction of the 1720s to the more morally decorous didactic prose and domestic fiction of the 1740s and 1750s, Haywood demonstrated a sustained commitment throughout her life to analyzing and critiquing eighteenth-century gender politics and their influence on the dynamics and representation of heterosexual love.

Despite her importance and visibility in eighteenth-century literary and theatrical circles, until very recently Haywood has cut a rather poor figure in the annals of literary history. Certainly she has not enjoyed the kind of critical reception that kept controversial male writers like Defoe and Swift in print and at the forefront of public consciousness throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For over two hundred years after her death she was known primarily as a licentious hack writer, best remembered for Alexander Pope’s disparaging portrait of her in his mock-epic poem *The Dunciad* (1728), where she appears as the prize in a urinating contest between two rival booksellers whom Pope considered among the most unprincipled of his contemporaries. Figuring his “Eliza” as an offering to the farthest pisser, Pope insinuates that as a professional writer Haywood habitually sold herself (her body as well as her work) to the highest bidder. As has often been the case in treatments of women writers of the past, Haywood’s sexuality has been a focus of attention while her work itself has been neglected and undervalued.

Since the early 1990s, however, Haywood’s critical fortunes have begun to change. An increasing number of her works are now available in modern editions and are receiving the serious critical and scholarly attention they deserve; works not formerly attributed to her are still in the process of being identified. No longer regarded merely as a minor precursor to the great canonical novelists of the mid to late eighteenth century, she is now emerging in her own right as a leading figure in the early development of the British novel—one whose innovations in the genre had a shaping influence on many better-known writers, including Richardson, Henry Fielding, Frances Burney, and Jane Austen.

LIFE AND EARLY CAREER

Little information about Haywood’s life survives. Born Eliza Fowler, probably in London in 1693, her first known appearance as Eliza Haywood occurred in 1715, when she

made her acting debut at Dublin's prestigious Smock Alley Theater. Until recently, the theory of the early-twentieth-century biographer George Frisbie Whicher that Haywood was the runaway wife of the cleric Valentine Haywood dominated the scholarly field (Whicher's is still the only full-length biography of Haywood); but the work of Christine Blouch has since demonstrated that this conjecture is based on tenuous evidence. Although we know from Haywood's own later testimony that "an unfortunate marriage . . . reduc'd [her] to the melancholly necessity of depending on [her] Pen for the support of [her]self and two children" (letter from Haywood to an unidentified potential patron, quoted in Blouch, p. 537), nothing is known about the identity of her husband or the circumstances under which their relationship ended. Be that as it may, Haywood was almost certainly on her own by the time she returned to London in 1717, where she performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields, one of the city's two royal theaters, and became a member of the vibrant literary circle of the playwright and essayist Aaron Hill. During this period (1717–1724) she developed a personal and professional relationship with the writer Richard Savage, who may have been the father of one of her two children. The father of her other child was probably the playwright and actor William Hatchett, with whom she lived for twenty years and collaborated on a number of theatrical projects.

After the triumphant success of *Love in Excess* (1719), Haywood continued to act and write plays, and she collaborated with Daniel Defoe on a series of pamphlets about the deaf-mute prophet Duncan Campbell; but her energies during the decade of the 1720s were primarily focused on the production of prose fiction. Her own words suggest that this shift in emphasis was market-driven: "The Stage not answering my Expectations, . . . made me turn my Genius another Way" (quoted in Ingrassia, Introduction, p. 30). Her literary output between 1719 and 1729 was prodigious; in all, she wrote more than fifty texts, averaging a new novel every three months. Her preferred genre was the amatory novel, in the tradition of Behn and Manley, a form distinguished by the frank sexuality and rhetorical extravagance of passages like this one from *Love in Excess*, in which Amena, despite misgivings, is overcome by the seductions of Count D'Elmont:

she had only a thin Silk Night-Gown on, which flying open as he caught her in his Arms, he found her panting Heart beat Measures of Consent, her heaving Breast swell to be

press'd by his, and every Pulse confess a Wish to yield; . . . in fine, there was but a Moment betwixt her and Ruin. (*Secret Histories* [1725], vol. 1, p. 26)

Haywood followed the example of Behn and Manley in exploring the relationships between power and seduction, at once exploiting the erotic potential of the seduction plot and deriding her society's sexual double standard, but she also initiated an important transformation in the amatory genre. Where Behn's and Manley's stories of power and sexual intrigue had been inextricably embedded in party political rivalries and ideologies (the two rival political parties of the time were the Whigs and the Tories), Haywood's work, though it does not altogether abandon Tory political concerns, harks back to earlier traditions of romantic fiction in addressing a more general and less directly party-political reader, thus expanding its appeal and ultimately paving the way for the later development of the domestic novel. Although there is some debate over whether Haywood's fictions were directed primarily at a female readership, scholars tend to agree that the formidable productivity and popularity that inspired Henry Fielding to portray her as "Mrs. Novel" in his 1730 play *The Author's Farce* and James Sterling to praise her as the "Great Arbitress of Passion" derived in large part from her sustained focus on the universal force of desire and on sexual seduction as an instrument of power.

Although Haywood produced at least eight new works between 1729 and 1739, her voluminous output and public visibility during this period underwent a relative decline. Consequently, some scholars have speculated that Pope's 1728 attack on her as a "Juno of majestic size, / With cow-like udders, and with ox-like eyes" (*Dunciad*, book 2, lines 155–156) had effectively shamed her into silence and eventual moral reform, supporting their conjecture by pointing to the uncharacteristically didactic character of most of the work she produced in the 1740s and 1750s. In fact, far from being silenced during the decade of the 1730s, Haywood had merely shifted direction professionally in an attempt to capitalize on growing markets for theatrical and political writing, particularly writing critical of the Whig government of Robert Walpole, England's controversial first prime minister (1721–1742). During these years she resumed her acting career; she collaborated with Hatchett on *The Opera of Operas; or, Tom Thumb the Great* (1733), a musical adaptation of Fielding's anti-Walpole play *The Tragedy of Tragedies*; she produced a critical history of the British theater (*The Dra-*

matic Historiographer; or, The British Theatre Delineated, 1735; later retitled *The Companion to the Theatre*) that went into seven editions by 1756; and she anonymously published *The Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo* (1736, 1741), a sophisticated satiric fantasy mocking Walpole and his government. In 1737 she joined Fielding's Great Mogul's Company at the Little Theatre in Haymarket, which she later referred to as "F—g's scandal-shop," alluding to the radical political nature of the plays performed there (*The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, 1751). A benefit performance of Fielding's wildly popular *Historical Register*, in which Haywood appeared as Mrs. Screen, was held for her on the night before Parliament passed the Stage Licensing Act—a statute designed to prevent the performance of plays (especially those by Fielding) satirizing Walpole's administration. This legislation brought about the closing of Fielding's theater and ended both of his and Haywood's theatrical careers.

HAYWOOD AND THE NOVEL AT MIDCENTURY

In 1741, in an extraordinary move for a woman, Haywood set up shop as a bookseller in Covent Garden, calling her business The Sign of Fame. In the same year, she wrote and anonymously issued (from her own shop) *Anti-Pamela; or, Feign'd Innocence Detected*. With this work she joined the groundswell of public response to Samuel Richardson's supreme best seller, his first novel, *Pamela*—a wave of reaction that generated not only numerous imitations, rewritings, continuations, and commentaries but also a new market for such fashionable commodities and entertainments as Pamela fans and Pamela waxworks. Like Fielding, who also participated in this "Pamela-craze" with his two parodies, *Shamela* (1741) and *Joseph Andrews* (1742), Haywood—ever attuned to new commercial opportunities—capitalized on her competitor's popularity while entering into a larger cultural conversation about the nature of the novel genre and its readers. Through the adventures of its heroine, Syrena Tricky, a servant girl who uses her wit and seductive wiles to turn her position of sexual and economic dependence to profit, Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* at once exposes the vulnerable position of female servants in the eighteenth century and impugns the jealously guarded purity of Richardson's heroine, whose virtuous resistance to the sexual advances of her young, aristocratic master ultimately pays off in the form of a marriage proposal and a dramatic class ascent.

Richardson captured the market for fiction in the 1740s by producing titillating novels of seduction with an expressly moral aim, thus capitalizing on popular taste for amatory intrigue while at the same time distancing his work from the "scandalous" romances of Haywood and her predecessors Behn and Manley, whose narrative techniques he nevertheless freely incorporated. With her finely attuned commercial and cultural sensibilities, Haywood understood the gendered stakes of Richardson's commercial success and the shift in literary tastes it represented. Recognizing the new cultural authority of the figure of the virtuous domestic woman, and being "something of a discursive contortionist who could manipulate her skills to fit the appropriate niche markets" (Ingrassia, Introduction, p. 35), Haywood responded cannily by reinventing her public persona. In the first issue of *The Female Spectator* of April 1744, she pays direct lip service to the doctrine that readers should be edified as well as entertained:

It is very much, by the Choice we make of Subjects for our Entertainment, that the refine'd Taste distinguishes itself from the vulgar and more gross: Reading is universally allowed to be one of the most improving, as well as agreeable Amusements; but then to render it so, one should, among the Number of Books which are perpetually issuing from the Press, endeavour to single out such as promise to be most conducive to those Ends.

At once confronting and forestalling readerly concern about authorial reputation, Haywood issued her periodical anonymously while introducing herself to her readers as a reformed coquette:

I . . . acknowledge, that I have run through as many Scenes of Vanity and Folly as the greatest Coquet of them all My Life, for some Years, was a continued Round of what I then called Pleasure, and my whole Time engross'd by a Hurry of promiscuous Diversions.—But whatever Inconveniences such a manner of Conduct has brought upon myself, I have this Consolation, to think that the Publick may reap some Benefit from it.

Her experience, she archly hopes, will prove "in some measure both useful and entertaining to the Publick."

Haywood cultivated this new, more respectable and high-minded persona throughout the remainder of her career, publishing three "moral" novels—*The Fortunate Foundlings* (1744), *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), and *The History of Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy* (1753), as well several works on conduct: *Epistles for the*

Ladies (1748–1750), *The Wife* (1756), and *The Husband: In Answer to the Wife* (1756). She did not, however, abandon political controversy altogether, bringing out several issues of a Tory periodical, *The Parrot*, in 1746, and writing, anonymously publishing, and possibly distributing an allegedly seditious pamphlet for which she was arrested and jailed for some weeks (but not prosecuted) in 1750. In 1756 she became ill while working on a new weekly publication, *The Young Lady*. She died on 25 February and was buried on 3 March at St. Margaret's Church, in an unmarked grave in sight of Westminster Abbey, where many British literary figures are memorialized by burial in the Poet's Corner, and where Aphra Behn lies in the cloister.

WOMEN WRITERS IN THE LITERARY MARKETPLACE

Women occupied a prominent but vexed position in the new literary marketplace within which the novel flourished. Because the new profession of writing was open to authors of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and did not require a formal education, women were able to compete within it on the same footing as men. On the other hand, as Paula McDowell observes, “Augustan political and cultural élites recognized . . . women's . . . access to their culture's most important mode of mass communication as a significant new threat to the established order, and expended considerable energy working to shut down their voices in print” (p. 6). Such viciously sexualized attacks on Haywood as Pope's make it clear that women writers in the early modern print market faced unique and difficult challenges. Since authorship was traditionally considered a male activity, the very act of entering the public sphere as a writer—not to mention publishing racy and sometimes libelous narratives—called a woman's sexual character into question. Jonathan Swift was content to refer to Haywood as “a stupid, infamous, scribbling woman,” even as he confessed never having “seen any of her productions” (*Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Harold Williams, vol. 3 [Oxford 1963], 501). Pope's “Eliza,”—with her “cow-like udders” and “Two babes of love close clinging to her waste” (*Dunciad Variorum*, 2.150)—represents the “profligate licentiousness of . . . shameless [s]cribblers” generally, but mainly those of “That sex, which ought least to be capable of such malice or impudence” (149 n.). In the context of *The Dunciad's* sustained attack on literary hacks, her grotesquely breeding reproductive body (whose “babes of

love” just as readily suggest her amorous literary progeny as her illegitimate children) comes to stand for the monstrous fecundity of print culture itself, with its proliferating glut of inferior authors and bad writing. In much the same satiric vein, Haywood's one-time lover Savage referred to her as a former “Strolling Actress” who should have turned washerwoman rather than scandal writer, so that she might have usefully cleaned others' “sullied linen” instead of simply displaying it in public (Richard Savage, *An Author To Be Lett*, [London, 1729], Publisher's Preface).

Haywood lamented the impossible cultural condition of the woman writer on more than one occasion, alluding to “that Tide of Raillery, which all of my Sex . . . must expect once they exchange the Needle for the Quill” (dedication to *The Fair Captive*) and inveighing against “the numerous Difficulties a Woman has to struggle through in her Approach to Fame” (preface to *The Memoirs of the Baron de Brosse*). Her first biographer, David E. Baker, nonetheless praised her posthumously for her unsurpassed “virtue” and “purity”:

whatever Liberty she might at first give to her Pen, to the Offence either of Morality or Delicacy, she seem'd to be soon convinced of her Error, and determined not only to reform, but even atone for it; since, in the numerous Volumes which she gave to the World towards the latter Part of her Life, no Author has appear'd more the Votary of Virtue, nor are there any Novels in which a stricter Purity, or greater Delicacy of Sentiment, has been preserved. (*Companion to the Play House* [London, 1764])

Clara Reeve followed suit in her famous essay *The Progress of Romance* (1785), but without the hint of doubt implicit in Baker's use of the terms “seem'd” and “appear'd.” Here, in a dialogue concerning the romance genre, the voice of Euphrasia is resolute in her defense of Haywood's ultimate respectability: “I would be the last to vindicate her faults, but the first to celebrate her return to virtue, and her atonement for them.”

Whether or not Haywood's midcareer “conversion” has been accepted at face value, the wonder is that it has taken so much longer in her case than in, say, Swift's, for critics to begin to explore her manipulation of literary masks. Haywood's heroines are often victims of male power and duplicity, but they are just as often plotters themselves who use masquerade to outwit men. The heroine of *Fantomina; or, Love in a Maze* (1725) brilliantly secures the interest and desire of her straying lover by impersonating an array of different women with whom