

LOCRINE

A member of the First Folio family

Locrine appeared for the first time in Quarto in 1995, as a member of the family of Shakespeare plays, as the argument to come will show. Yet it was not included by Bacon in the First Folio; and the almost uniform dreariness of its writing gives the clue as to why. It could have been written, in the main, by neither Bacon nor Shakespeare nor Marlowe, with the exception of the clown scenes, which suggest, on the basis of style and general wittiness, the hand of Shakespeare (see post on *A Yorkshire Tragedy* above, and of course *UDGCB*): so that a plausible scenario may be that Shakespeare took an artistic failure by a member of the Bacon *atelier*, and injected it with dose of his own brand of magic, to justify its publication. The frontispiece, with its ‘*Newly set forth, overseen and corrected, by W.S.*’ is consistent with this.

The crisis and redemption of the Puritan ego – the principal theme of FF as allegory – is portrayed in *Locrine* with the broadest possible brush strokes, much medium being wasted on unnecessary Classical allusions, in a way entirely atypical of the canonical plays. Here we recognise again the Gnostic ideal, a Solomon/Alexander/Christ figure (Brutus), being supplanted by the Puritan ascendancy (his son Locrine). This was historically due to the ruthless suppression of the Gnostic revival as Renaissance Neoplatonism/Christian Cabalism, first by the Roman Catholic Church, then by Protestant Puritanism: none of this background being touched on here, as it is in several plays of FF. The Gnostic ideal is always associated with the Queen of Hell-Grail Queen: here Brutus’ daughter Gwendoline, who will be rejected, consistently, by Locrine. The sham Goddess of Puritanism, who is no Goddess at all, is Estrild, a Tamora or Juliet analogue, whom Locrine weds, but only after the death of Corineus, brother of Brutus, who also represents the Brutus principle. The Scythians bear, like the cobbler-clowns, the value of the libido, or broader unseen world, which the Puritan thinks to have conquered (defeat of Humber by Locrine). It is a fundamental philosophical theme of the FF family, however, that this is a delusion, the suppressed underworld lying ready to re-irrupt the psyche to trigger the breakdown, in a classically Freudian (really Baconian, as we now know) way. This crisis is represented here by the defeat of Locrine by the resurgent Gwendoline. This may be interpreted in terms of the microcosm (psychological crisis), or, more generally, as the vulnerability of the Puritan world-view to the underworld principle which it has shirked from engaging. This former is the frame of reference of *Locrine*, but mostly only in a fuzzy way, the clown scenes serving to sharpen the focus, suggesting the intervention of Shakespeare. However, it is only the Gnostic world-view which can bring the unseen world under control (cf. subjugation of Kate Minola by Petruchio): this axiom being portrayed here in the defeat by Corineus of Hubba, son of the Scythian King Humber, who represents the underworld, dead but still malignantly alive (cf. infant sons of the Husband in *AYT*, and of Aaron and Lucius in *Titus Andronicus*), and is thus cognate with the Gwendoline of the final scenes.

We remember that the trigger to the Puritan Shaksper’s breakdown of 1587 was his encountering of an erotic passage in a book, almost certainly the graphically described seduction of Lucius (source of all the Luciuses and Lucios in FF) by Fotis in an early chapter of Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*. The libido portrayed in the written word is represented here by Strumbo, as his *billet-doux* to Dorothy (Fotis)

makes clear. Later Margery, who will beat him into submission with a stick, will appear as a typical Queen of Hell-Grail Queen, a Kate Minola analogue, her name suggesting her identity with Queen Margaret of the histories, who bears always this same value.

How can we be so sure of all these allocations? The familiar “I” for “Ay” technique is a great help (see post on *AYT* above). The clowns’ value as the libido is confirmed, for example, by Trompart’s two “I, sir”’s in I, ii; Humber’s similar value by the Ghost’s “I, traitorous Humber” in III, ii, and Lochrine’s “I, they are beasts that seek to usurp our land” in IV, i. Drunkenness represents always in the FF family the state of dissolution in blind libido: ‘*Strumbo* Near the tavern, II’ (II, iv). There are many other instances of this technique in *Lochrine*.

In the geographico-symbolic language of the plays, the direction north stands always in relation to south as mind to body, idea to will, or Apollo to Dionysius. Thus, the blade-suicide of Albanact, who has been placed by Lochrine in charge of the north, after his defeat by Humber, portrays the irruption of libido into the conscious ego, to precipitate a psychological crisis, against which the espousal of Puritanism, with its (delusory) victory over the libido (Lochrine’s defeat of Humber), is a defensive reaction. The ultimate reference here is, as always, to the mid-adolescent Will Shaksper, whose Puritan period lasted for eight years from aet. 15, as the histories and the inductions to *The Taming of the Shrew* make clear. The sword or dagger bears always in FF, like “I” for “Ay”, the value of the ithyphallos-libido, or broader unseen world: the example *par excellence* being the sword fight of Hamlet and Laertes, which powerfully portrays the conflict going on in the mind of the untreatable schizophrenic, centring around the will-to-eros: a scenario with which Freud, Jung, R.D Laing and the other great modern depth psychologists have made us entirely familiar.

This irruption of libido into the conscious ego is put another way in the actions of Strumbo, whose reawakening after playing dead on the battlefield (II, v) portrays the surgence of his principle, and is thus cognate with the victory of Humber. Money bears always in FF the value of the power of a principle: and Strumbo has previously vigorously opposed the “press money” being offered to him by the Captain, to get him to enlist. Yet enlist he does: the point being that although he has been fighting for Albanact, yet, on the plane of allegory, his principle has had no power, before his miraculous “resurrection”. “I may” is also symbolic of the ithyphallos-libido throughout FF (e.g. *HV* II, i, 21), as a reference to the maypole festivities of the First of May. In light of this, the meaning of the Captain’s “I may not” in response to Strumbo’s “Put me out of your book, then” (II, ii) is clear, as is Strumbo’s “but I will solve it as I may” in III, iii.

The sword fight of the two soldiers immediately before Lochrine’s wooing of Estrild is germane to that of Hamlet and Laertes: their incarceration by Lochrine representing the suppression of the erotic conflict by the Puritan, which is the purpose of his construction of the sham Goddess (Nature sundered from Her underworld aspect). Strumbo’s refusal to give food to the starving Humber represents the new suppression of the capacity of the libido as described in the written word to stimulate the libido of the reader.

There remains little further detail to be elucidated: the author of most of *Lochrine* possessing anything but the ability to convey the maximum of information in the minimum of space. It must now be admitted to the First Folio family as yet another of its long-lost members, one of a number of his kind who will perhaps derive more glory from his family name than he will confer upon it.

[return to top](#)

[home](#)

[index](#)

[contact me](#)

[order](#)

[links](#)