

# "To Skip or Not to Skip": Shakespearean Romanticism and Curricular *Genderpellation* in Canadian Popular Culture

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## Abstract

This essay investigates the Romantic effects of Shakespearean "touchstones" in popular cultural representations of Canadian curriculum to interpellate girls in the contested institutional space of public education. The essay's genealogy of Shakespeare and gender-curricular politics opens with Lucy Maude Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, a popular literary text published shortly after the Victorian-imperial institution of public education. The argument juxtaposes Montgomery's pedagogical and prescriptive adaptation of Shakespeare with Skye Sweetnam's "Billy S.," a 2004 popular song that articulates a rebellious appeal to the imagination, not unlike Anne's own. The paper concludes with questions about how these uses of Shakespeare in popular representations of school and Romantic ideology produce a gender-coded literary curriculum, and students, in English Canadian public education.

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This essay compares how Shakespearean quotations work in two popular cultural representations of Canadian curriculum that interpellate girls as a student audience. For the purposes of this argument, I use the portmanteau term *genderpellation* to describe this particularly gender-coded and gender-productive hailing and forming of readers and audiences. The integration or segregation of students according to gender has become controversial in the new century; since 2002, the so-called Canadian national newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*, has run stories almost annually about the pros and cons of gender-segregated classrooms (see Peritz 2003, Went 2005, and Alphonso 2006). I wish to contextualize how popular cultural images of school culture represent the Romanticism of literary pedagogy through Shakespearean intertexts, thus problematizing the gender-coding of Shakespeare's canonical authority and, moreover, the gender-based division of cultural and intellectual labour in public education. Juxtaposing Lucy Maud

Montgomery's novel *Anne of Green Gables*, published near the start of the last century, with the pop song "Billy S.," by Skye Sweetnam, released near the start of the twenty-first century, we can track continuities and transformations in Shakespeare's function as a touchstone of Romantic ideology in Canadian school culture. The distinctively curricular framing of each of these popular texts' references to Shakespeare leads me to suggest that his authorial function sustains that particular patriarchal gender division in public education that gender-codes language subjects and literary study (such as the Arts and Humanities they represent) as "girls' stuff."

While this division has been embodied by a conspicuous, often dramatically high ratio of women to men students in virtually every Arts or Humanities class I have attended or taught (in Ontario, and more recently in Germany), it begins at much earlier levels of the educational system, and (it should go without saying) and is anything but a natural division of the curricular field (in Pierre Bourdieu's sense of the field as a site where capital and habitus converge and conflict to produce agents and positions [see Bourdieu 1993]). This division is well documented. Examining the practice of reading among British adolescents, Elaine Millard argues that reading as such "is constructed within both domestic and school settings as an interest more appropriate for girls than it is for boys" (1997, 31). Ann Clark and John Trafford also historicize modern language studies in general as a "traditionally 'female' subject" in their investigation of the teaching practices and assumptions that lead girl students consistently and dramatically to outperform boys in the subject (1995, 315). More recently, Nola Alloway et al. have reviewed the extensive literature on how "participation in the communicative and expressive aspects of English has often been identified by boys as a feminine activity" (2003, 352-53), in order to suggest that "the interplay between masculinity and oral performativity in English classrooms . . . is a source of anxiety and tension" (363).

Adopting a longer historical perspective, Carrie Paechter situates the learning of gender in school according to the epistemological *grand récit* of Cartesian dualism (2006, 121); and a survey of research published in *Gender and Education* over the last decade or so shows a similarly broad international scope for the genderpellation of girl students in English and literary studies, from points across the postcolonial Anglophone diaspora (e.g., Britain, Australia, Canada, and the USA) to places where English is taught as a second language, such as Japan (see Kobayashi 2002); perhaps less than coincidentally with Kobayashi's claim that English in Japan is "feminized," Japanese culture has also drawn commentary for its own forms of canonizing *Anne of Green Gables* [see Devereux 2001]). These researches navigate between the schoolyard culture of students and the classroom practices of teachers to map the shifting and often-reified terrain of gender construction in educational systems. What concerns me in the present essay is the way in which

popular cultural texts can represent and respond to curricular genderpellation, specifically to its operations in the English curriculum, and more specifically still to its leverage of Shakespeare, who then is often figured, dialectically, as representing the school curriculum in general.

In making this argument, I would not imply that the genderpellation of girls as the target student body for English and literary studies should simply be reversed — that Shakespeare and literary pedagogy should be re-masculinized. (The old-school network of old boys is always ready to protest too much to that effect.) Instead, I hope to show that the particular adaptations of Shakespeare in these popular texts for girls point to possibilities for critiquing the gender-divided priorities of public education, and maybe even for radicalizing the relation of girls and women to the discourse and institution of literary (and more broadly) Arts education. To properly treat *Anne of Green Gables* and "Billy S." in detail, I will first elaborate the historical context of Romantic Shakespeare and curricular Romanticism, as triangulated by the discourse of curricular Shakespeare. A survey of these contexts, themselves well-covered areas of scholarly study, is important in order to demonstrate their conjunction in conditioning the discourse of curricular Shakespeare: as an "author function" (Foucault 1977, 124), a canonical oeuvre, a marker of cultural capital, and a synecdoche for school culture in general.

"The lunatic, the lover, and the poet" (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1.7)

In the historical formation of the English literary canon and the discipline of literary study that has followed and superintended it, Shakespeare suffered a well-documented change, a rich and strange makeover from Voltaire's *sauvage ivre* (see "Voltaire" 2007) to Britain's "national poet" (Dobson 1992). Michael Dobson writes:

[M]any of the conceptions of Shakespeare we inherit date not from the Renaissance, but from the Enlightenment . . . which initiated many of the practices which modern spectators and readers of Shakespeare would regard as normal or even natural: the performance of his female roles by women instead of men; . . . [and] the reproduction of his works in scholarly editions . . . Yet something of Shakespeare's "drunken savagery" persisted to supplement the shift in this author's cultural status. His "drunkenness" mediates a sensibility of intoxication; his "savagery," a primitivist sense of untutored talent; together, the terms of Voltaire's pejorative caricature would become revalued as a sublime authenticity according to the Enlightenment ideals and Romantic aesthetics that displaced the Neoclassical over the course of the eighteenth century, in the process installing Shakespeare as "the paradigmatic figure of literary authority." (Dobson 1992, 1)

Although Shakespeare's rehabilitation and canonization began earlier — between the restoration of the monarchy and the 1769 Stratford Jubilee (3) — the cultural matrix now historicized as Romanticism did much in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to consolidate the dominant terms of "Bardolatry" for high and late modernity. As shown by Jonathan Bate's research into the Romantic terms upon which Shakespeare's canonicity remains largely contingent today, Romanticism and Bardolatry developed as simultaneous, mutually constitutive cultural phenomena (1986, 6). On this account, Shakespeare's drunkenness was alchemized into sublimity, passion, and creative imagination (10); his savagery, into a peculiarly English valorization of anti-intellectualism, celebrating lack of learning as a triumph of practice over theory (6-7; see also Simpson 1993). In projects of Shakespeare's reclamation by major Romantic figures such as Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Schlegel (among others), Shakespeare (alongside Spenser and Milton) became a "model" of "sublime and pathetic" poetry, in Warton's words, that played a significant part in directing the late eighteenth-century eschewal of the "wit," "sense," and satire prioritized in Neoclassical literature (Day 1996, 49-51).

In light of the Romantic period's broader changes in modes of literary production — the increase in and diversification of reading audiences, the professionalization of authorship — the retroactive reevaluation of Shakespeare by writers and thinkers now situated as Romantics simultaneously made Shakespeare a proto-Romantic author (in Foucault's sense of authorship as an authoritative signature, a discursive effect) and gave Romanticism a specifically Shakespearean authority.

"I will never be a truant, love, / Till I have  
learn'd thy language" (*1 Henry 4*, 3.1.204-205)

The resulting Shakespearean forms of Romanticism — especially Hazlitt's dramatic character criticism and Schlegel's theory of the Bard's "organic" sensibility of "infinite desire" (René Wellek, quoted in Day 1996, 81) — in turn informed the emergence, formation, and pedagogical priorities of literary education, the discipline historicized by Ian Hunter as "English." As Hunter (1988) argues in his Foucauldian theory of culture in education and government, character and desire became integral terms in producing the discipline of English in public education as an apparatus of moral supervision and emulation, in which students approach texts as sites for imagining and discovering their own character (64-65). Hunter identifies a specifically Romantic aesthetic as an "educational imperative" (210), an "ethical technology" (68) in which the English teacher becomes a moral example for students to emulate (65) in an ongoing project of exploring — and, crucially, imagining — the self (211), and so, microcosmically, reconciling culture and society. Here, the

very figure of the subject, like the subject of character, becomes legible as a function of Romantic aesthetics in literary pedagogy (282):

The contours of literary education — the forms in which it confronts us in the present — are . . . the results of a specific set of historical circumstances . . . in which literary pedagogy, having emerged as a privileged embodiment of the technology of moral supervision, permitted the exemplary discipline of the Romantic aesthetic and the clarificatory practice of the human sciences to meet, in a being characterized by a certain ethical and intellectual incompleteness. (283)

In elaborating his theory, Hunter refers to Margaret McMillan's 1904 *Education through Imagination* as a seminal statement advancing the use of drama in pedagogy, focusing on dramatic and literary "character development" as a model for students' own learning (65, 116). The analysis and performance of character in the classroom comprise a "social technology" to monitor and correct the imagination and self-formation of student subjects. Hazlitt's foundational attention to Shakespeare's characters and the actors who played them thus appears in the historical background of this ethico-social technology, as does Schlegel's celebration of Shakespeare's "infinite desire," translated here into the ongoing process of clarifying the subject's unconscious through literary study.

To put it in somewhat chiasmic terms, the focus in English education on the study of literary character development becomes a means to develop the student's character. And because this discipline of character *Bildung* thus exploits the processes of identification (not to mention those of seduction, sympathy, and transference) so basic to the act and pleasure of reading literature, its particular mediation of the imperative to inculcate a love of learning entails a supplementary inculcation of learning to love. The implicit Romanticism in the pedagogical principle to inculcate a "love of learning," which permeates all levels of the educational system (not unlike Shakespeare's own texts), in English language and literary studies often means learning to "love" Shakespeare — and to love, *tout court*. Pedagogical romanticism thus constructs character development as a simultaneously intersubjective and intertextual romance. And, it should go without saying, this teaching approach genderpellates girls specifically, according to patriarchal traditions that have consistently oriented women's education to "the domestic carceral" (Morrison 1991, 1), from the artistic and domestic subjects feminized as proper to the Victorians' "angel in the house," to the still-circulating assumption that tertiary education for women is mainly a means to marry.

Dobson's history of Shakespeare's promotion to "the center of English literary culture" (3) also accounts for the versatile gender-coding of "the Bard" integral to these traditions:

If there was a tradition dating back at least as far as Dryden's prologue to *The Enchanted Island* of associating Shakespeare with father-kings, there was equally a tradition, dating back to Margaret Cavendish's letters or Aphra Behn's preface to *The Dutch Lover*, of associating him with women . . . This association was institutionalized in the late 1730s by the establishment of the Shakespeare Ladies' Club. (147)

Dobson notes that several contemporary observers, such as Eliza Haywood, gave this club "sole credit" for, in Haywood's words, "preserving the fame of the dead Bard" (quoted in Dobson 147). By the time of the 1769 Jubilee, then, Shakespeare could be celebrated as "the only poet . . . who has delineated to perfection the character of a *female friend*" (224):

But where, O Muse! Can strains be found,  
T' express each virtue, charm, and grace,  
With which benignant Shakespeare crown'd  
The female mind, the female face? (quoted. in Dobson 225)

"School yourself [b]ut for your husband" (*Macbeth*, 4.2.15, adapted)

Shakespearean Romanticism thus converges with the Romantic aesthetics and ethics of literary education (not to mention, of course, Shakespeare's "big-time" popularity [see Bristol 1996]) to produce the particular and particularly gender-coded privilege of Shakespearean texts in English curriculum. Shakespeare, as author-function and oeuvre, has become a curricular staple not merely because of his centuries-long canonicity, but also because of his perceived use-value as pedagogical armature on which to hang the literary-educational priorities of subject formation and social reproduction, of imagination and desire.

To observe that Shakespeare informs all but the very earliest levels of modern Canadian school curriculum is to state the obvious. From the popular primary school adaptations by Stratford-area educator Lois Burdett, through junior-high and secondary curricula, to graduate seminars at universities across the country, Shakespeare remains central (despite or possibly because of his epitomic privilege as an imperial dead white male amidst canon critiques and culture wars) to most areas and levels of English studies in Canada. Interestingly, the discipline's focus on character seems concentrated today at the secondary school level, as a mode of study too complex for primary school and too archaic or uncritical for university. Consider the following "specific expectations" (i.e., learning objectives) for high school English, as laid out by the Ontario Ministry of Education. For Grade 9 English:

*Understanding the Meaning of Texts:* By the end of this course, students will: . . . select and read texts for different purposes, with an emphasis on recognizing the elements of literary genres and the organization of informational materials, collecting and assessing information, responding imaginatively, and exploring human experiences and values (e.g., *read a play by Shakespeare to interpret a character for performance*). (Ontario Curriculum 1999, 9, my emphases)

A subsequent expectation stipulated for Grade 10 English is as follows:

By the end of this course, students will: . . . select and read a range of texts for different purposes, with an emphasis on recognizing the elements of literary genres and the organization of informational materials, evaluating print and electronic materials as sources of information, and comparing personal ideas and values with those in texts (e.g., . . . *develop a "profile" of a character in a play by Shakespeare or a novel and then role-play an interview with the character*). (27, my emphases)

And one stipulated Grade 11 English expectation for "understanding effective presentations" suggests an assignment to "explain how Marc Antony's 'Friends, Romans, countrymen' speech in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* uses emotional appeals to sway the audience" (Ontario Curriculum 2000, 85). (This same "touchstone" speech will be discussed later for its salutary appearance in *Anne of Green Gables*.)

Alternately, consider these reflections by a Halifax high school teacher, on teaching *Romeo and Juliet* to a grade 11 class:

The way we've been studying the story in class, to be honest, is we read the story together . . . *different people take on different roles — I take on all roles, and trust me when I say my nurse is BY FAR THE BEST*. . . . As we go through the book we discuss the story . . . I always relate it to things they've dealt with and how silly young love can be . . . Today's journal topic was "*What the heck can a 16 year old know about love?*" — *95% of my class is exactly 16* . . . They find the story interesting . . . Juliet (13, are you kidding me?) . . . When we finish the story, we'll do a comparative paper analyzing the old 1960s version of the film and the current DiCaprio version . . . After we do this, we'll begin working towards our "Favorite Scene Presentation," wherein the class will get into groups and re-script their favourite scene from the movie in any genre they would like. . . . We will do a comprehension test once we know the story inside out and backwards (throughout

the unit we take very abbreviated notes of each scene once we finish reading it in class). (McCutcheon 2006, my emphases)

These samples of high school English curriculum from Ontario and Nova Scotia are not meant to be nationally representative, but to show the postcolonial and transnational institution of discourses of character, ethical identification, and instructional exemplarity as focusing and structuring the "social technology" of English curriculum since its formation in the period historicized by Hunter. The Ontario ministry quotations show the centrality of character to the secondary-level study of literature (and one wonders if this centrality contributes to the difference in methods and priorities so frustrating to instructors on both sides of the secondary-tertiary transition in literary study). The high school teacher quoted above demonstrates (albeit in a latent or unconscious manner) the moral exemplarity of the English teacher, in his not entirely sarcastic bragging about his pedagogical performance of Juliet's Nurse as "THE BEST." I have sketched this network of literary and curricular contexts in broad strokes in order to contextualize the production of Montgomery's and Sweetnam's references to Shakespeare and curriculum, and to focus my reading of these references and the texts in which they appear. What I am particularly interested in here are popular cultural representations of Shakespeare in school culture — and especially Shakespeare as a synecdoche for the English curriculum or school in general — and how these representations engage discourses of gender and curriculum.

The texts by Lucy Maud Montgomery and Skye Sweetnam treated here both articulate Shakespearean references in relation to school culture. Montgomery's novel has the additional value of its established foothold in Canadian English curriculum (although certainly nowhere near as widespread or uncontested a hold as *old Bill*). *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) has, over the course of its century in print, undergone dramatic changes in its cultural and scholarly capital, according to what Carol Gerson has identified as an unusual "decline and rise" pattern (2002, 17). Now often taught in university courses on children's literature, women's literature, and (in the case of my own course) popular culture, *Anne* also shows up in primary and secondary English curriculum. Perhaps as a way to train local students for work in Prince Edward Island's *Anne*-fuelled, tourist-industry simulacrum of itself, the province's Department of Education lists *Anne* (in an abridged edition) among its English curriculum's required texts for grade 4 ("Elementary Program" 2003-2004, 68). Small wonder, then, if disaffected locals, sickened by the surplus of *Anne* in their cultural water supply, go on to produce parodies like *Annekenstein*.

Sweetnam's "Billy S." occupies a very different position in the field of contemporary Canadian popular culture. The first single by the Bolton, Ontario, singing-songwriting teenager



put her on the pop charts in the wake of similar successes by another smalltown Ontario teen star, Avril Lavigne. Fans and the music industry media drew inevitable comparisons between Sweetnam and her predecessor (it is always regrettable that such comparisons, when unfavorable, focus their ire on the players themselves rather than the companies' formula-oriented effort to hedge its bets by replicating proven hits). The "Billy S." single was adopted for the soundtrack of a Hollywood high school romantic comedy, *How to Deal*, and was followed in 2003 and 2004 by several other charting singles.

Both texts solicit approximately the same demographic audience of pre-teenage girls, albeit for quite different reasons. Montgomery was quite explicit about her pedagogical intentions for the stories from which her novel developed as stories of moral instruction for girls at Sunday school (Devereux 2004, 15). Sweetnam's pop song achieved heavy rotation in media channels and programs directed at the "target market" of pre-teen girls with disposable income, a group now termed "tweens" in marketing jargon. Needless to say, "Billy S." is not taught in Canadian English curriculum (please correct me, anyone, if I am wrong). But it is a popular text citing Shakespeare in a curricular context, and as such it registers some interesting similarities and differences with *Anne* in how such citations value Shakespeare's cultural capital, and in how they genderpellate their audiences as girls and students.

"I read in a book once that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet"

Mary Rubio notes that the extent of Shakespearean quotation in Montgomery's oeuvre corresponds to the author's penchant for quoting and misquoting from Shakespeare in everyday conversation, often doing so from memory. Based on dialogue with Montgomery's son, Rubio suggests that Montgomery was deeply familiar with Shakespeare's work, and not merely with the more famous plays, either (Rubio 2006). Scholarly editions of *Anne* document the extent and diversity of Shakespearean quotation in the novel, which (along with similar quotation practices in Montgomery's oeuvre in general) has been extensively analyzed by Trinna Frever (2004). Frever theorizes in Montgomery's "adaptive technique" a dialectic between the "gender transforming" of Shakespeare's texts in Montgomery's fictions, on the one hand, and, on the other, "vesting the domestic with tragic import" in order to reconsider critically "the Shakespearean past from her time period and ours" (3). In terms of the particular form taken by Montgomery's adaptation of Shakespeare, Frever notes that

Montgomery's utilization of Shakespeare is almost wholly verbal. Montgomery does not, for the most part, utilize Shakespearean characters in her works . . . [but] seems particularly

drawn to Shakespearean phrasings, the concepts they encompass, and the dramatic contexts they draw upon in creating her fiction. (3)

Focusing her own analysis on "the early 'Anne' books," Frever argues that these texts "show the greatest Shakespearean influence across Montgomery's prolific career" (3).

In the first and most popular *Anne* book, most of the Shakespearean quotations are put into the protagonist's own mouth and are often keyed to scholastic contexts. Anne's early and perennial requests to be called Cordelia (Montgomery 1996, 24, 135) and her recollection of reading about the name of the rose "in a book once" (38) introduce the character as something of an autodidact, one who tends initially to understand the domestic and scholastic challenges and crises she encounters in "tragical" terms (24, 82, 85, 101). However, a striking and non-verbal adaptation that exemplifies how curricular Shakespeare circulates in this novel occurs at the Debating Club concert Anne attends, during the Shakespearean recital given by the schoolteacher, Mr. Phillips: "When Mr. Phillips gave Mark Antony's oration over the dead body of Caesar in the most heart-stirring tones — looking at Prissy Andrews at the end of every sentence — Anne felt that she could rise and mutiny on the spot if but one Roman citizen led the way" (153). The public school teacher (whose role as moral exemplar Hunter shows will be transferred to the specialized English teacher) recites the speech with a theatricality sufficient to fire Anne's romantic self-identification as a loyal Roman; however, the narrator (while still occupying Anne's point of view) also notes the desiring gaze at his student paramour, Prissy Andrews, with which Mr. Phillips punctuates his performance. The triangulation of speech act, identification, and desire in this brief scene, in which Anne both imagines herself a subject interpellated by this performance of character and observes a lover's discourse encoded within it, neatly encapsulates Shakespeare's pedagogical utility to instill love of learning and learning to love.

Frever notes a similarly non-"verbal," but significantly "gender shift[ing]," quotation that describes Anne's return to school and her evident desire for learning:

The narrator describes the scene: "There was a tang in the very air that inspired the hearts of small maidens tripping, unlike snails, swiftly and willingly to school" (AGG, xxiv, 190). This phrasing provides a sharp contrast with Jaques' well known "All the world's a stage" speech from *As You Like It*, when he describes a time of life wherein "the whining schoolboy" is "creeping like a snail; Unwillingly to school" (II.vii.145-47). . . . In addition to shifting the gender of the subject of Jaques' speech, Montgomery transforms the tone and content of the speech as well. . . . Montgomery wrote at a time when women's access to formal education was still a hotly debated issue. Anne Shirley, one of the "small maidens"

referred to here, is a girl who earns not only a teachers' degree, but also a B.A., in the course of the *Anne* series. . . . In this context, Montgomery's . . . modification suggests that girls and women, given the opportunity to be educated, will pursue this education with an unprecedented enthusiasm. . . . By transforming both the gender and the tone of the original quotation, Montgomery's text makes a timely argument about the importance of female education, as well as centralizing the female experience in her texts. (Frever 2004, 3-4)

Frever's insights here are instructive; however, I would add that "Montgomery's modification" does not simply "suggest" that women will enthusiastically pursue education; rather, in a didactically designed text, it *prescribes* that enthusiasm, soliciting the reader to identify with Anne's willing trip to school as part of its genderpellative, pedagogical project. Anne enlists Shakespearean quotations and references in a narrative that strongly advocates a belief, in Marilla's words, "in a girl being fitted to earn her own living whether she ever has to or not" (Montgomery 1996, 242). Surveying gender and feminist criticism of the novel, Cecily Devereux notes that Marilla's vocalization of Montgomery's advocacy of women's education is more ambivalent than progressive (2004, 31); and as Anne's own story shows, women's education is not only oriented towards the bifurcated romance of love of learning and learning to love, but also subordinated to traditionally patriarchal and imperial priorities of self-sacrificing wife- and motherhood. As Devereux argues,

The first novel [in Montgomery's *Anne* series] ends with Anne's having matured to the point of recognizing that her duty as a girl is more important and will ultimately be more rewarding than either her education or her ambition. . . . *Anne of Green Gables* is pervasively and didactically maternalist. That is, the novel is concerned primarily with the development of a young girl from prepubescent child to young adult, charting her development in terms of her academic as well as moral and domestic education in maternal womanliness. (2004, 21, 28)

Anne's character development as both "model student" (Weber 2002, 56) and mother-in-training demonstrates how the Shakespearean intertexts used to tell her story activate a curricular Romanticism that genderpellates "young maidens" as students of desire, daughters of empire, and would-be mothers.

### "I don't need to read Billy Shakespeare"

Fast-forward a hundred years, and we observe both similarities and differences in the genderpellative uses to which curricular Shakespeare may be put. Like Anne, the persona of Skye Sweetnam's text is a post-Romantic individualist; whereas Anne's "drunken savagery"

of youth provides the pretext for her education in and reproduction of the social order (in that case, the "culture of imperial motherhood," according to which Devereux classifies Anne as a "*Mutterroman*" [2000, 6]), the song's voice, studiously true to the school of rock, is explicitly bent on rebellion against the social order, represented in this case by "school," which is figured abstractly as an oppressive institution.

On a first listen, Sweetnam's song sounds clichéd and vapidly anti-intellectual. An uptempo, pop-reggae arrangement of backbeat, bass, and rhythm guitar opens the song, and, together with muted major guitar chords, accompanies the first verse:

Wake up tired  
 Monday mornings suck  
 It's way too early to catch a bus  
 Why conform without a fuss  
 Daddy daddy no  
 I don't want to go to school  
 Whoo. (Sweetnam and Robertson 2004)

At "who," the muted guitar chords crunch into the foreground to power the chorus (a variation on the "quiet-loud" song structure popularized by post-punk, and similarly student-themed, anthems like The Pixies' "U-Mass" and Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit"). The chorus pits Shakespeare, as a synecdoche for school, against an abstract Romantic revolt:

I don't need to read Billy Shakespeare  
 Meet Juliet and Malvolio  
 Feel for once what it's like to rebel now  
 I want to break out  
 Let's go. (2004)

The reference here to Shakespeare as a sample of standard curricular content seems symptomatic of the sexual politics of modern schooling that have divided the subjects of "useless" and effeminate fancy from those of masculine fact and utility.

The second verse will likely sound naïvely ironic (if not downright humorous) to teachers in the notoriously underfunded public school boards across the nation:

Teachers treat us all like clones  
 Sit up straight, take off your headphones  
 I don't blame them, they get paid

Money money, whoo!

Lots of money money, whoo! (Sweetnam and Robertson 2004)

Setting aside the comical image these lines yield, of public school teachers rolling around on beds strewn with cash (after a hard day's work distracting their students from music appreciation), there is in this line not only that absurdity, but also a curiously bottom-line reading of teachers' professional motivation (are teachers in it for the money? Does Sweetnam have private schools in mind here?). The proximity of "lots of money" to the ensuing chorus' resistance to Shakespeare suggests a recognition of the exchanges and equivalencies between cultural and financial forms of capital. Furthermore, Sweetnam phrases this economic reading of teacher motive in sympathetic terms: "I don't blame them." They're just doing their jobs, treating students like clones and inflicting Shakespeare on them. The criticism of being treated "like clones" sustains the song's Romantic individualism, but in the context of teachers' pay, is there a comment here on classroom crowding and the compromise of individuated attention it usually entails?

The bridge consists of the adapted line, "To skip or not to skip: that is the question," delivered under heavily distorting vocal effects, over a loop of shouted exhortations to "Get out get out get out get out, whoo!" The alternating "quiet-loud" arrangements in this song thus contrast a feel-good "pop" mood for the musing and pouting of the verses, a mood first pressured by each verse's final line (delivered as shouting rather than singing, and distorted, like the bridge, with a static effect), and then exploded by the rebellious declamations and power chords of the chorus. The song represents school as a site of clones and conformity and articulates rock's traditional expression of teenage revolt to three Shakespearean references, making it a more specific expression of student unrest. Here, "school" is a socially homogenizing institution governed by the Law of the Father ("Daddy daddy no"), an ideological and repressive apparatus where teachers do the repressing ("Sit up straight"), in which "Billy Shakespeare" is assigned the ideological detail.

Both apparati enforce heterosexist norms: the directive to "sit up straight" can be read ironically (as can, more disturbingly, saying "no" to "daddy"), and in counterpoint to the liberatory gesture of breaking "out"; similarly, the two Shakespearean "character references" may be read as negative examples of heterosexual relationships. Given the demonstrated function of curricular Shakespeare for teaching a love of learning and learning to love, Juliet and Malvolio quickly become recognizable as case studies in dubious romantic choices: Everybody knows how Juliet's teenage marriage ends; and, as Frever notes regarding a similar reference to *Twelfth Night* in *Anne of Avonlea* (1978), Malvolio is a scheming gold-digger: "Malvolio's desired match, Olivia, represents political power, while the male figure Malvolio represents ambition to marry. . . . The

play undermines the idea that marriage aspirations are exclusively a woman's sphere, while political success is exclusively male. *Twelfth Night* also addresses the precariousness of gender roles by depicting a woman who assumes the identity of a man through cross-dressing" (Frever 2004, 9). Otherwise, beyond their names, pairing, and use in rhythm and rhyme structures, the song gives no more detail about these characters, thus leaving them to signify, simultaneously, bad relationship choices and abstract signs of commonly assigned English class texts. Infantilizing and ridiculing Shakespeare by calling him "Billy," the persona ambiguously declares that she does not need to read him. "I don't need to read" suggests that such reading is not just excessive, but also perhaps that it has already been done.

Something of method thus emerges amidst the pop madness. If "Billy Shakespeare" is someone the persona does not need to read, the subsequent and similarly ambiguous refrain from "meeting" Juliet and Malvolio does more than just develop the rhyme pattern (need, read, meet) — it also comments subtly on the Romantic methodology of Shakespeare in school curriculum. A refusal to "meet" Juliet and Malvolio implies in the most concise terms a critique of the Romantic tradition of character criticism that Hunter shows to have been foundational to the disciplinary formation of English pedagogy. The persona's refusal to "meet" these characters expresses skepticism about the popular approach to teaching of Shakespeare (and by extension English) based on the Romantic and essentialist premises that have attributed to Shakespeare's characters a hyperreal life of their own, a transcendent signified *dramatis personae*.

The resistance to heteronormativity, the disavowal of textual knowledge, and the critique of Romantic pedagogy are then all brought together in the persona's gender-bending identification with (and parodic misquotation of) Hamlet, her contemplation of whether "to skip or not to skip." This identification complicates the opposition to "need[ing] to read Billy Shakespeare" by signalling some textual (or at least intertextual knowledge) of the plays, thereby suggesting the opposition to reading Shakespeare derives more from prior familiarity than from anti-intellectual rejection.

"Shakespeare one gets acquainted with without knowing  
how . . . one is intimate with him by instinct" (*Mansfield Park*)

This identification, in which the song's persona performs the role of Hamlet (in however cursory a sound bite), establishes a common point of reference with *Anne of Green Gables*. Anne also identifies with Hamlet, in a similarly cursory way, after the pleasures of concert-going and Christmas: "To Anne in particular things seemed fearfully *flat, stale, and unprofitable* after the goblet of excitement she had been sipping for weeks" (Montgomery 1996, 205, my emphasis).

Sweetnam's parodic misquotation of Hamlet's soliloquy repositions school attendance as a question of life and death, in which Shakespeare winds up on the side of death, if refusing to read him frees one's time to "feel for once what it's like to rebel" (Sweetnam and Robertson 2004). *For once*: The indexical value of Shakespeare, here, as a synecdochal figure of Romantic curriculum (and one Romantically resisted, through the aesthetics of rock), is to personify routine or predictable pedagogy; to epitomize the "dead white male" of the canon and, by extension, of the patriarchal social order; and to represent the curricular subjects of literature and language that are so widely and trenchantly reified as female or effeminate — "girl stuff." The critique of a predictably Romanticized English curriculum emerges also in the song's disavowal and demonstration of textual knowledge; the exhortation to rebel "for once" becomes a plea to read, "for once," an author other than Shakespeare, whom everyone already knows, or at least knows, in Jane Austen's words, "in bits and scraps" — a "common enough" form of knowing (1995, 245). (Note how Henry Crawford's combined terms, "common knowledge," suggest the canonical and the carnal.) The song's persona rejects the genderpellation of girl students not only in specific approaches to English teaching, like the bourgeois humanist discourse of character, but also in the general assumptions of literature and language instruction. Is the identification of these voices with the epitome of the tragic hero a rejection of gender typecasting? In identifying with Hamlet, Sweetnam's persona echoes Anne, similarly gender-bending the characterization, arrogating its authority as Shakespeare's own alter ego, and imbuing the scholastic scene, as Frever argues that Anne does for her domestic one, with tragic import.

Another similarity between the pop song and Montgomery's novel occurs in the very ambiguity of their citation practices, instantiating Austen's "instinctive intimacy." The identification of Sweetnam's persona with Hamlet seems to contradict her disavowal of Shakespearean knowledge, ambivalently suggesting foreknowledge of the plays as well as their outright rejection. For Montgomery's part, Anne's identification with Hamlet contrasts — in terms of its arrogation of Shakespeare's own dramatized identity — with her recurring identification with a tragic character with whom Shakespeare was not personally identified, Cordelia. Like Anne's unnamed reference to Juliet's "rose by any other name" (Montgomery 1996, 38), her adoptions of "Cordelia" performs a disavowal of Shakespearean textual knowledge not unlike that performed by the persona of "Billy S." Anne frames what becomes her recurring fondness for adopting Cordelia as pseudonym (135) and fictional alter ego (208) as the choice of "a perfectly elegant name" (24), and never explicitly cites *King Lear*. But the reference assumes irony for Anne's situation, which is given tragic undertones as a variation on Cordelia's familial estrangement and dispossession. The name also signals other facets of Anne's character: her learned imagination, and hence her leverage of

cultural capital towards upward mobility; her embodiment of an object lesson in "being fitted to earn her own living" (242); her melodramatic and tragic sensibilities; and her facility for plain speaking, as demonstrated in her introductions to Rachel Lynde (64-65) and Josephine Barry (157). By alluding only elliptically to the intertextual frames of reference both for Anne's unattributed adoption of Cordelia and for her theory of "any other name," Montgomery suggests that Anne has read widely beyond the public school readers that furnish so many other touchstone quotations in the novel; however, that she reads outside school, and that she reads Shakespeare, produce her gender-specific character as a model student, one who has internalized the moral disciplinary measures of the English classroom and organized them around its leading authority figure.

Thus, the ironies and varied repetitions of Cordelia as "any other name" contribute to the same kind of intuitive Shakespearean intimacy protested (too much?) in Sweetnam's song. The ironic disavowals of Shakespearean intertextual knowledge in these texts convey an ambivalence about Shakespeare — but more importantly, according to his synecdochal gender-coded figuration of curriculum, they convey a deeper ambivalence about the methods and materials of curriculum per se. So despite other striking differences in these popular texts' curricular uses of Shakespeare, both *Anne of Green Gables* and "Billy S." figure the Bard as a synecdoche for the curriculum, synonymous with girls' learning, an integral source of the references that reproduce gender by conflating imagination and romance (in less problematized practices of identification, tragedy, and everyday life, and also in more critical reflections). In these popular images of school girls' culture, the author function of Shakespeare becomes legible as the invisible hand animating Juliet, Cordelia, and Hamlet as sets of available attitudes and positions in an educational field where curriculum and courtship are too readily, and for too long now, brought to much confusion. The burden of responsibility remains on us, as instructors, to rise from our cash-strewn beds, brushing the bills off our shoulders, in an effort to make our readings of resistance and critique in popular texts available and accessible to the "target" audiences for which the dominant commercial systems of distribution and dissemination exert their even more formidable financial resources — in tandem with what Adorno identified as "adapted romanticism" (1975, 15) — to promote only the most impoverished, the most easily domesticated interpretations.



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