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Shakespeare - Sylver

[My true love gave to me, a 12-step program concerning dunce-caps & diadems]

by Nathan Samuel Ellingsen

(English 2228)

Linguistic encryption is an age old trick. There are various ways to communicate secretly with a correspondent by letter and book. One of the better known ways is to carry a number pattern within a written letter- an answer-key is agreed on between the two. The answer-key is a book, for example, *The Bible*. Letters used to be carried by hand, and so there was no guarantee that a letter would not be read at every change of hands. As a person today might use steam to heat the glue on an envelope, so people long ago would melt and reseal the wax on a letter. In the play *Twelfth Night; or What you Will*, a false letter (that seems to be encrypted without a key) is dropped in Malvolio's path. Although the entire letter does not seem to be encrypted, only the title of the recipient is in code (and blatantly). I submit that this letter without a key is actually a key for understanding the nature of morality presented in this comedy. Every antagonist in Shakespeare's plays is vying for some kind of power that they may or may not have. This is Malvolio's downfall. But this information is also presented 'in code' along with the action of the story. William Shakespeare often used his comedies as a means to uphold the status-quo, often with subtle pneumatic suggestions (e.g. a character's name) to a theme- This can be seen in *The Taming of the Shrew*, in Katherine's submissions to Petruchio's 'patriarchal' dominance and Bianca, whose name means 'white woman' in Italian and whose character is presented as the portrait of an obedient wife (until the end of the play). Considering the Bard's penchant for naming characters with a direct intention, there must be a reason for the title of *Twelfth Night; or What you Will* and some of its characters. I propose also that William Shakespeare had a very interesting neurological trait, which colored his writing in ways that we could only imagine (it has only recently been recognized as a specific process in the brain), that by means of this peculiarity of thought he was capable of furnishing his text with an integral linguistic key that could only be explained by numerical transcription. Following patterns within the play we will discover what the MOAI, and *Twelfth Night; or What You Will* mean. Understanding these ideas of Shakespeare has greatly affected my outlook on life, and my neurological traits.

How would a person translate and understand this key? We will begin with a little magic:

A B R A C A D A B R A
 A B R A C A D A B R
 A B R A C A D A B
 A B R A C A D A
 A B R A C A D
 A B R A C A
 A B R A C
 A B R A
 A B R
 A B
 A

This diminishing word pattern is a form of sympathetic magic. The afflicted person would speak

each line- as the word truncates, so should the illness. If the individual couldn't speak, then someone would do it on their behalf. This permutation of *Abracadabra* was used to treat fever. "The earliest known mention of this was in 208 CE by Quintus Serenus Sammonicus, physician to the Roman Emperor Severus. Sir E. A. Budge, however, believes the formula is based on something much older." (The Witch Book, Buckland, pg. 1) Changes that take place over a period of time for science (from alchemy to chemistry) can easily be related to language. As if a new breed of linguistic animal has just arrived through the meeting of minds that occurs every day. This, is the evolution of language- or, as I prefer to call it, the morphology of lexemes, graphemes and morphemes. If you noticed the two complete spellings of *Abracadabra* in the triangle above (Across the top and diagonally up from the bottom) then you are either very perceptive, or you have Synesthesia (certainly if you see the letters in color).

Synesthesia is a trait that involves cross chatter between different areas of the brain related to different functions. There are more than 63 types of known synesthesia. For example, a person with Synesthesia may see each letter of the alphabet in a different color, or they may even see parts of language in color. A person with linguistic synesthesia can see any number or variance of patterns in language either with colors externally or internally projected, or without any color source at all- only viewing parts of language as entities in more of an ordinal-lingual synesthesia. Shakespeare took advantage of these linguistic anomalies, both in deep philosophy and jest. They are essential to truly understanding the title and morals of the comedy *Twelfth Night*. The title refers to the advent of Christ, or the twelve days of Christmas, if you will. But how does this connect to the action of the play, where do we see it? We see it in M.O.A.I.

Upon examining the letter dropped by Maria, Malvolio understands that this letter is addressing him by realizing that the letters M.O.A.I. are in his name. It should be noticed that no other character in the play has all of these letters in their name. (II.V.136-139) But there is a deeper meaning here, taking this into account:

Malvolio [*He Reads*] [...]
remember. Go to, thou art made, if thou desir'st to be
so. If not, let me see the a steward still, the fellow of
servants, and not worthy to touch Fortune's fingers.
Farewell. She that would alter services with the,
The Fortunate-Unhappy. (II.V.152-156)

There is little need to address him in code AND by title. This would seem to be overkill; Maria tempts him and then insults his possible decision to remain in his station (he is 'made, if thou desir'st to be so [a play on 'mad', as the pronunciations are similar in Elizabethan dialect], the opposite of being 'made' is being destroyed, that is truly what she's offering him (destruction as a form of creation [Ouroboros]). If he denies his aspirations (whether pure or not) he'll end up feeling a little bit like Orsino at the introduction of the play (At the end of the play, Malvolio has quite the opposite feelings of those expressed here by Orsino because his intentions were not pure of heart): Orsino-

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken and so die. (1.1.1-3)

Further down this monologue, we see Shakespeare's preparation in foreshadowing, Orsino calls out the name of his lover without even knowing it:

That strain again! It had a sying fall;
Oh, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,

Stealing and giving odor. Enough, no more. (1.1.4-7)

A Violet is of the genus Viola. So we see that he was longing for her spirit before she was even known to him, or him to her. Thus we are first introduced to the idea of transmutation early (a coming of full-circle, foreshadowing or Ouroboros [predestination or destruction as creation]), and subliminally, causing the audience on some level to question “what’s in a name?”

But why is that specific alphabetical pattern (M.O.A.I.) used to address Malvolio as his Master’s desire? This can be easily understood as contingent upon graphemes (the individual characters of a language, the English language having twenty-six individual graphemes). This type of puzzle is explained by the movie and Graphic Novel *Pi*, by Darren Arronofsky.

INT. COFFEE SHOP-DAY

Max sits at the counter frantically looking at the Wall Street Journal. He plops three pills into his coffee.

He draws circles and other shapes across the page.

Max is interrupted by a puff of smoke. At the same time, someone touches his shoulder and says:

LENNY MEYER

Hey, Max, how you doing?

MAX

Oh, okay.

LENNY MEYER

Lenny Meyer.

(Motioning to the cigarette)

I'll put it out.

(Which he does)

So, what do you do?

MAX

Um, I work with computers

...math.

LENNY MEYER

Really? What type of math?

MAX

Number theory. Mostly research.

LENNY MEYER

Number theory? No

way, I work in theory, too.

(Points to his yarmulke)

I work with the Torah.

(Awed by the coincidence)

Amazing.

MAX

(Passing it off as a coincidence)

Yeah...

LENNY MEYER

Yeah. You know Hebrew is all numbers. It's all math.

MAX

Hm.

Lenny pulls out a worn' dog-eared Bible from his pocket. There are paper slips marking what seems like every other page. When he opens it up,

Max sees that the pages are marked up by highlighter pens, notes and diagrams.

Lenny points to the text. EXTREME CLOSE-UP of Hebrew letters.

LENNY MEYER

Here, look...the ancient Jews used Hebrew as their numerical system. Each letter is a number.

Lenny pulls out a pen and grabs Max's Journal. He writes on it as he talks.

LENNY MEYER

You see...The Hebrew "A," the number 1. The Hebrew "B," Bet, is two. You can take any Hebrew text and turn them into a long string of numbers. The waitress refills Max's coffee.

LENNY MEYER

The Torah is just a long string of numbers. Some say that it's a long code sent to us from God. Satisfied, Lenny lights up a cigarette and takes a drag.

MAX

(Mildly impressed)

Kind of interesting.

LENNY MEYER

(Proud of himself)

Yeah, like take the Hebrew word for, say, the Garden of Eden, Kadem. Kuf, Dalei Mem...Kuf is a hundred. Daled, four Mem, forty. They equal one hundred and forty-four. Then take the tree of knowledge...in the garden, Aat Ha Haim, it equals two hundred and thirty-three. Now you can take that number and...

MAX

They're Fibonacci numbers.

LENNY MEYER

Huh?

MAX

The Fibonacci sequence.

Italian mathematician, thirteenth century. If you divide a hundred and forty-four into two hundred and thirty-three, it approaches theta.

LENNY MEYER

Theta?

MAX

The Greek symbol for the golden ratio. The golden spiral.

Lenny exhales the smoke. Max quickly graphs the number on his Wall Street Journal.

LENNY MEYER

You're right, I never saw that before. That's the series you find in nature. Like the face of a sunflower.

MAX

Wherever there's spirals.

LENNY MEYER

You see, there's math everywhere.

Lenny's smoke drifts by Max's eyes.

SLOW MOTION: MAX'S POV of smoke spirals spinning in front of him.

MAX

Math everywhere...

SLOW MOTION: Max looks down at his coffee cup. He pours cream into his coffee. It shoots up and mixes with the black coffee forming spirals in the mug.

MAX

(Serious)

Everywhere...

SLOW MOTION: Max looks at the spiral he just drew on the Wall Street Journal.

NORMAL SPEED Suddenly, Max stands up.

MAX

Oh my God... (<http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Pi.html>) [Web]

Traditionally, we use the Arabic number-system: 1,2,3,4,5, etc. By using the first and last letters of Malvolio's name, order seems to be have turned on its head. "The last will be first and the first will be last", if you will. Without resorting to numerology and calculating each number according to its position in the alphabet there's one numerical system that becomes obvious and gels with our language- Roman Numerals. (Matthew 20:16)

But, there is no Roman numeral zero, and there is no Roman numeral A. This is where we must rely on Morphology, both in the medical and linguistic sense of language as an organism. Simply put, we are looking for derivation. The Biblical nature of the play and this "fustian riddle" suggest that there is a continuing and subversive pattern we are meant to follow.

If graphemes are considered the smallest part of language, then they would be mutable in

occasion to lexemes and morphemes. The entirety of the riddled permutation would be a Lexeme, or Idiom that is dependent on personal interpretation. It is up to the audience to translate the graphemes M.O.A.I. into Lexemes or concepts (the first and the last); from there the audience must see the morphemes or root words, so to speak. This action brings us full circle to graphemes once again, because the most obvious linguistic morphemes of this puzzle are actually graphemes:

O = either Omega in Greek, Zero in Arabic, or an Ouroboros (a lizard eating its tail, the sign for infinity). Perhaps the raunchy definition of a cipher.

A = either Alpha in Greek, or the Male bisect of the Star of David (the alchemical symbol of androgyny).

(Revelations 1:8, 22:13)

The O very likely means a LITERAL cipher:

noun-

1. Zero
2. Any of the Arabic numerals of figures
3. Arabic numerical notation collectively
4. Something of no value or importance
5. A person of no influence, a nonentity.
6. A secret method of writing, as by transposition or substitution of letters, specially formed symbols, or the like. Compare cryptography.
7. Writing done by such a method; a coded message.
8. The key to a secret method of writing.
9. A combination of letters, as the initials of a name, in one design; a monogram.
verb (without subject)
10. To use figures or numerals arithmetically.
11. To write in or as in a cipher.
verb (used with object)
12. To calculate numerically; figure
13. To convert into a cipher

(<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Cipher>) [web]

It is not uncommon for simple graphemes to be mutable within a single document, or for them to change between languages. For example (pertaining to the abbreviation I.N.R.I.)- “Latin uses “I” instead of the English “J”, and “V” instead of “U” (i.e., Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum). The English translation is “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.””
(<http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t024.html>) [web].

This 4-letter abbreviation was known and used in the Elizabethan era. Comparing M.O.A.I. to I.N.R.I. –even without a determining moral argument presented by cryptography- illuminates the issue of the play’s title: *Twelfth Night; or As you Will*. It is spectacular that in the core of Malvolio’s initials, we have the Omega grapheme followed by the Alpha grapheme.

The amount of interpretations that can be made for this train of logic are endless, that’s what’s so interesting about it. Unraveling this riddle is very much like interpreting *The Bible* without a copy, only the preacher is there to help you out. The rest is up to you. This style is what the Elizabethan audience was used to in Church- they did not have individual copies of the Bible to pass around, they were left to the interpretation of their clergy.

Malvolio’s chief flaws are piety and a lack of humility. In this play he is Shakespeare’s tragic character, putting an interesting spin on the idea of reversing Aristotle’s laws of tragedy to invoke comedy.

It is only when Malvolio is placed beside other characters that a true picture of his character comes into play. The abbreviations provided by Malvolio's name may also be practiced with other characters in this play. This may be the reason for the similar lettering of certain names within the text.

The following characters may be analyzed with Morpheme allusions: Valentine [a token sent, or an artistic work], Curio [a prized curiosity], Viola [an instrument or ostentatious flower], Sebastian [a first-century Saint, shot with arrows and beaten to death], Antonio [deserving of praise], Malvolio [Latin Mal, meaning bad, wrong or ill], Feste [Festive], Olivia [the Olive branch] and Maria [thought to be from the Egyptian word 'Beloved'].

Certain character names may also be analyzed numerically.

There are the obvious Roman numerals- I = 1, V = 5, X = 10, L = 50, C = 100, D = 500, M = 1,000. Each Roman numeral corresponds to a symbolic meaning. 1 is a single person. 5 is a single person, but it is also a body or the pentagram with a man laid on top of it- it is Venus, it is man. These two meanings may be attributed to higher numbers that carry ciphers after them (such as 50 or 100). Because Roman numerals are read backwards and forwards, the Ouroboros is important in determining whether numbers are considered to be separated by an A or O.

The important thing is personal coloring and interpretation, as it is impossible to know what

The letter T, at first has no meaning, although with a bend of the eye this letter may be construed an X... It has another meaning which will be seen in the character Feste.

Orsino = there is a one in the middle, bookended by two ciphers, but it is offset, not exactly in the middle. This is either a one in infinity, or a one in a vacuum.

Viola = Along with her foil, Olivia, Viola is unique in that her name may be manipulated into a 'first and last' number sequence, after the fashion of Malvolio. Her name resembles a flower and an instrument, both in words and letters. The O is centered, and hidden, resembling her attempt to disguise herself as a male servant- which is indicated by the V and A surround the L and I. The first and last letters of her name also allude to a balance of masculinity and femininity as seen in the Star of David (seen in the overlapping of 'V' & 'A').

The cipher in the middle of her name reminds us of femininity. Her sequence is 5, 1, 0, 50, Alpha. or 5, Alpha, 1, 50.

Feste = Though a 'first and last' arrangement of Feste's name would quantify no value, it is interesting to see that the letter T would come last. 10 is often considered to be a perfect number. Feste is the 'Noble Fool'. Despite his position, his wisdom allows him to speak the truth, no matter how painful. He also recognizes his place- as a servant, last in importance. The letter 't' is very simple, it is a cross (incarnating the noble-fool as a holy-fool). Within the center of his name, to the left of 't' is 's', which may be thought of as an unwound oroborous or snake.

Topas = The letter 'T' also exists in Feste's alter-ego Topas, who essentially tries to make cure Malvolio by repeating same idea in his ear (that he's insane), very much like the repetition of the phrase 'Abracadabra'. It would seem that Topas, by analyzing his name, has life figured out. We begin with a 't' or cross, then an Ouroboros, a humble 'p' (it slopes below the line of a page and doesn't come back up, like our fish-hook 'q'), an 'a' and an 's' or 'unwound Ouroboros'. These symbols would read an almost alchemical process of the spirit, backwards or forwards. The 't' and 's' are opposite one another, showing that to unwind the mystery of the universe is to become like Christ. Interestingly, the contrasting 'O' and 'A' are internalized in his name, centered and balanced. This is quite luminous, considering the irony he subjects Malvolio to, having him 'made', or mad, and the two times he changes the place of fool with a Character:

Feste:

Sir, but that's all one. "By the Lord, fool, I am not Mad." But do you remember? "Madam, why laugh

You at such a barren rascal? An you smile not, he's
gagged." And thus the whirligig of time brings in his
Revenues. (5.1.370-376)
Feste: motley in my brain. Good Madonna, give me leave to
Prove you a fool.
Olivia: Can you do it?
Feste: Dexteriously, good Madonna.
Olivia: Make your proof.
Feste: I must catechize you for it, Madonna. Good my
Mouse of virtue, answer me.
Olivia: Well, sir, for want of other idleness, I'll bide
Your proof.
Feste: Good Madonna, why mourn'st thou?
Olivia: Good fool, for my brother's death.
Feste: I think his soul is in hell, Madonna.
Olivia: I know his soul is in heaven, fool.
Feste: The more fool, Madonna, to mourn for your
Brother's soul, being in heaven.- Take away the fool,
Gentlemen.
(1.5.55-69)

Sebastian = The most interesting thing about Sebastian's name is the three middle letters. We have an 'A', 'S' and 't'; the 'S' or unwound ouroboros is surrounded by the masculine, phallic 'A' and the 't', resembling a cross. This seems to point to an unraveling of the relationship between man and the divine sacrifice of Jesus.

Olivia = At the beginning and end of her name we have O and A, a masculine and feminine sign. Or, it may be construed as 'the brimming void' and 'the beginning'.

In the center of her name we have I and V. A masculine and female sign which can be read backwards as 4 or forwards as 6; these orders depend on whether she puts herself or her lover first.

Around IV, we have L and I or 50 and I. A body with a void and a single unit- One thing that can fill the emptiness inside someone, yet they are separated by the concept of whether or not the other person comes first. Seeing it both ways provides a give-and-take outlook.

Olivia is a woman in a man's position of power, which makes it important for the audience to consider where she carries herself.

Cesario = As Viola's male alter-ego, it is particularly interesting that the middle of this name is the letter A (a masculine symbol). Also, it begins with C, or 1,000- a male symbol followed by three ciphers or female/eternity symbols. This is an allusion to the holy trinity and the androgyny of God, who is referred to in English by the masculine nominative-pronoun 'he'.

Maria = Her name is very similar to Malvolio's, excepting that there are no feminine symbols there besides M [1,000]. Using the mathematical abbreviation FOIL, we move from this trinity of Ciphers and a 1 to the offset of a masculine A, then to another masculine A, then a solitary I. The masculine letters in her name are balanced by her own feminine being. She is Malvolio's foil, a servant who Sir Toby tries to get romantically involved with Sir Andrew Aguecheek:

SIR TOBY: Accost, Sir Andrew, accost.

SIR ANDREW: What's that?

SIR TOBY: My niece's chambermaid.

(1.3.47-49)

SIR TOBY: You mistake, knight. "Accost" is front her,
board her, woo her, assail her.

(1.3.55-56)

Though being involved with a Knight may better her position in life, she is content to mock them and keep her position in life; to keep these gentlemen as friends. More interesting than any numerical translation of her name is the fact that almost every character in this play is a foil of Malvolio.

But as you will soon see, Malvolio has *many* foils in this play.

Malvolio = this name makes just as much sense without the ‘first and last’ letter arrangement. We have M (1,000) next to A (Alpha) which signifies that Malvolio views himself to the right of God (or at his right hand if you will)- this is followed by LV (55) or two bodies of equal value, then O, LI (51) and O: within two representations of infinity or never-ending time (O) we have 51, a whole body and a representation of a single unit or person [his name is unbalanced]

Despite these wonderful ideas concerning forgiveness, Malvolio throws away his position as steward. Though one wonders if he might easily get it back in this wonderful country of illusion, where even a Pirate is forgiven (or at least no reprimanded on stage). Antonio’s name, like many others, bares the balance of ‘A’ and ‘O’; there is a cross inside as well, a ‘t’. By comparing his name with Malvolio it becomes interesting how the ‘M’ begins to jump out at us, like devil’s horns.

As I have already mentioned, the code MOAI bears a striking resemblance to INRI, based on the fact that it is the ‘first and last’ (Alpha and Omega) letters of Malvolio’s name.

When INRI was written at the top of Christ’s cross by Pontius Pilate, the priests asked him to change it to “This man said he was the King of the Jews”. Pontius replied that he had written what he had written. (John 19:19)(Matthew 27:37)(Mark 15:26)(Luke 23:38) (John 19:20-22)

It was the priests who asked for that statement to become, “*What You Will.*”

Though Christ left offering salvation, Malvolio offers damnation.

Upon leaving, in Malvolio’s threats we see the leniency of the land of Illyria.

Malvolio: I’ll be revenged on the whole pack of you!

(5.3.377)

This era of history is not far removed from the time of kowtowing; the reluctance of a person to bow in front of a Lord would result in their being shot, this was to ensure the safety of Royalty from assassins. By allowing Malvolio to leave, despite his threat, the court of Illyria demonstrates a true benevolence in the manner of Christ.

“For God so loved that world that he gave his only begotten son, and who soever beliveth in him, shall not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

Malvolio, on the other hand, needs time to get over what has happened to him; he exemplifies Levitical law (instated before the time of Christ):

“thou shall number seven Sabbaths of years-This most extraordinary of all civil institutions, which received the name of “Jubilee” from a Hebrew word signifying a musical instrument, a horn or trumpet, began on the tenth day of the seventh month, or the great day of atonement, when, by order of the public authorities, the sound of trumpets proclaimed the beginning of the universal redemption. All prisoners and captives obtained their liberties, slaves were declared free, and debtors were absolved. The land, as on the Sabbatic year, was neither sowed nor reaped, but allowed to enjoy with its inhabitants a Sabbath of repose; and its natural produce was the common property of all. Moreover, every inheritance throughout the land of Judea was restored to its original owner.” (Leviticus 25:8)

It’s as simple as this piece of scripture:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her – Ephesians 5:22

The difference between IV and VI, is whether or not you are willing to take a loss for the one you love, or whether it is all about gain. This moral *should* stick with the audience without a blatant examination of the symbols used.

These concepts stick in my head and coagulate for an odd reason. The odds of being a Synesthete are 1 in 23. The majority of Synesthetes have multiple forms of Synesthesia. I know these things so readily because I'm a Pan-Synesthete (or Pan-Syn). The train of thought that I used to formulate this hypothesis was developed by means of my grapheme Synesthesia. Reading Shakespeare was one of the few times that I felt my idiosyncrasies with language were applicable to an analysis. This analysis suggests that *Twelfth Night; or What You Will* not only draws on Christian symbolism as to the position of a servant in the Church and Society but utilizes something clever. By combining Roman Numerals with the Greek and English language, Shakespeare was incorporating the use of Graphemes within Graphemes (a truly 'fustian riddle'. Just as there is trouble quantifying certain nominal algorithms of the characters in this play (the I's on both sides of a V), so does the title have a dual meaning. The 'What You Will', pertains not only to the Advent but the Execution of Jesus Christ, and how people behave in his comparison (it is a choice). MOAI is a distortion of INRI. "The twelfth night" refers to the birth of Christ, his Advent, but it also signifies humanity's desire to ascend to His level of being and worth, his love and validation; man's quest for power.

A B R A C A D A B R A
 R
 B
 A
 D
 A
 C
 A
 R
 B
 A
 A A R A
 A A C A R
 A A A B
 A R A A
 A B A D
 A A
 A C
 A A
 A R
 A B
 A

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