"Other" is a tricky concept, and while one may simply point out that *other* is a construct borne of a privileged person's need to de-privilege and marginalize another for one's own self-interest or benefit, and even that "the margin constitutes the center"—that the privileged person defines him or herself over against those he or she has marginalized—I think it's important to recognize that one may be in the center *and* marginalized simultaneously, as in the case of Iago, a man who is excluded via the refusal of promotion and via his own fears that his wife has had sex with his boss, but also a man who is privileged because he has that boss's ear and moves quite readily at all levels of the represented society. Othello, too, is both privileged and marginalized: privileged because he is *necessary* to Venice's stability, because his innate nobility combined with his experienced assertiveness (and his eloquence, despite his own denials of these abilities) show in all his actions and command the respect of those about him; marginalized because he is a Moor in a society where racism is thinly veiled and usable by his enemies to his own detriment), because he has married the wealthiest senator's daughter without consulting him, and because some of those around him are envious of his position, angered at their own lack of promotion, jealous of his marriage, or deceive themselves into thinking he's sexually promiscuous.

Thus I tender the enclosed list of "Other" in Shakespeare with caveats:

(1) usually the person defined as "Other" has a good reason for thinking the way he or she does—there are no "Dudley Do-right" heroes and no "Snidely-Whiplash" villains here, but rather men and women whose own rationales are explored via the social and psychological limitations placed on them, and even if a character is seemingly villainous, he may also be heroic, sympathetic, understandable: to reduce Shylock, for example, to the miserly stereotype of the Jew, is to miss the bargain Antonio would have had if his ships had come in, Shylock's justifiable rage at Antonio's anti-semitism, his absolutely justifiable defense of his own people against the cruelty and barbarity of the Christians, his sorrow at the loss of the ring—his only remaining remembrance of his lost love, Leah. Therefore, one must tread lightly when assigning the category "other" to a character—for the play does not give us a simple "either-or" in its characters.

(2) An "Other" may have a variety of significations. Consider the characters who are designated as *bastards* in Shakespeare's plays. In *King John*, Philip the bastard (Faulconbridge) is exposed as the progeny of Richard Coeur-de-lion by Philip's "legitimate" brother, Robert; as a result, Robert gets the title and lands of his father, Faulconbridge, but Philip is knighted and re-christened as Richard Plantagenet—a member of the royal line. Because of Robert's exposing of Philip's heritage, their mother is embarassed and there's a lovely and tender confessional scene between mother and bastard son (1.1.233-76) before we learn that the newly-christened Sir Richard is supremely aware of the fictions by which men live (see his soliloquy on commodity, 2.1561-598), a chance-taker who yet keeps his honor, a loyal man who advises his king to defy the pope's dishonest legate, and who ultimately becomes the champion in this play:
he is, in Harold Bloom's words, a character like Hamlet or Falstaff, "too large for the play he inhabits" (51).

The second bastard, Don John of *Much Ado*, reifies the stereotypical qualities society has imposed on bastardy: he is underhanded, cruel, and relentlessly greedy. Nevertheless, he (like other bastards and younger brothers in Shakespeare) is caught in a struggle: like the Bastard/Sir Richard, like Edmund Gloucester of *King Lear*, and like the younger brother Orlando of *As You Like It*, he has an inner struggle for spiritual/psychological legitimacy but more importantly for land and title denied him by his "legitimate" older brother. Don John chooses the path of the enraged pathetic: since he can't have it, he'll try to ruin the plans of his brother and his brother's friends. Edmund Gloucester, unlike Don John, is a man who has had his nose rubbed in his illegitimacy: as the play opens, his father—a good man with some minor faults—introduces him to Kent as his bastard son: "His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge. I have so often blush'd to acknowledge him, that now I am braz'd to it" (1.1.9-11). Gloucester expands on the fact of "the fault" that led to Edmund's birth and jokes about the "good sport at his making" right in front of him—humiliating the young man in his first trip to the court—and then the father suggests that Edmund "hath been out nine years [away from his father's presence], and away he shall again" (32-33). Edmund's brother Edgar is going to get the lands and title, and Edmund will be banished from any participation in power or presence at court.

Such a preliminary glimpse at Edmund's relationship with his father prepares us for his bitterness, which follows shortly thereafter:

Why bastard? Wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition, and fierce quality,
Than doth within a dull, stale, tired bed
Go to th' creating of a whole tribe of fops,
Got 'tween sleep and wake? Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.

(1.2.6-16)

Edmund's pursuit of power, of course, leads him further & further into his ambitions, until finally he betrays his father (whose eyes are put out) and eventually becomes the champion defending England against Cordelia's French army. He becomes the villain, but the path that led him to it—exclusion and a lifelong sense of being "other" is pretty clearly marked.
(3) An "Other" in Shakespeare may be an insider in the represented society. Shakespeare is famous for creating gulls, dolts, fools, and idiots, as well as "lords of misrule" who technically are privileged members of society, but who are present in the play to be exposed for what they are. The most famous of these is the Falstaff of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, who is a slimeball Sir out to have sex with the wives of honest citizens & get them to open their husbands' accounts to him. The wives, of course, completely untruss him, pretending to agree to the assignations so that they may (a) get him to hide in a buckbasket full of smelly laundry, which is later thrown into the Thames, (b) disguise himself as an old woman, Mother Prat, so that one wife's suspicious husband can beat the "old woman" because he can't stand her, and (3) get him to meet them for an assignation in the woods, where both the newly-informed husbands, other citizens, and children all dress up as fairies and pinch him nearly to death. Once he's repentant, they're willing to forgive him, but he is clearly "other" in a society which has no room for cheats and philanderers. Other "lords of misrule" or idiotic "carpet knights"—gallants who dress the part of the dandy and affect the manners of knighthood because they were born to it, but who ultimately are pretentious bores—must also be exposed, or depart or be cast out, as there is no place for them in the social order: these include characters like *Twelfth Night*'s Sir Toby and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, *All's Well's* Parolles, *Hamlet's* Osric, *Othello's* Roderigo, and such connivers as *The Tempest's* Sebastian and Antonio (who like *AYLI's* Orlando are also landless younger brothers who must shift by plotting against their own brothers—all of them perhaps implying a Shakespearean comment about the stupidity of the rule of primogeniture).

(4) An "Other" may be the hero or heroine of the play. Hamlet is the most obvious example: he is suspected, prodded, questioned, and watched from the moment we first meet him, and his struggle becomes not merely one to save himself and reinstate order to Denmark, but finally to keep a promise to his dead father. More importantly, Shakespeare's female characters—most of whom are "other" simply because of their social position (pawns in the marriage game where the privileged members are father and husband-to-be, denied access to power other than through whatever shrewdness or persuasion they can use to control their male counterparts, at the mercy in many ways to the power of the male—note that this is not Shakespeare's construction of gender, but the way things were back then: when Shakespeare places one of his women heroes in an impossible situation predicated on this male influence, he is through her agency exploring how an "other" circumvents or triumphs over the forces that would make her "other." Examples range from *MND's* Hermia, *Merchant's* Portia, *Twelfth Night's* Viola (my personal favorite), *AYLI's* Rosalind (perhaps the most discussed and justly famous of the comic heroines), *All's Well's* Helena (who must battle both gender and social class restrictions), *Measure for Measure's* Isabella, and such tragic heroine/villains as Margaret (from the three *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III*—a woman who goes from being an ingenue forced by her father to marry, to the general of her husband's armies when he proves unable to command, to a vicious torturer of her enemies, to an old crone who accurately prophesies the ends of Richard III's accomplices, a nemesis whose rage is tempered in the end when she sees that she has much in common with the York women
whom she had supposed her enemies, comforting them in their despair) and Cleopatra, a woman whose ability to retain her power as queen and as lover despite the crushing weight of Roman oppression, and whose dexterity in these fields compromises her true self over & over until finally she chooses death with her Antony over any further compromise, remains a character whose "age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety" (2.2.234-35).

Some "Others" in Shakespeare

Women

Note: Critically speaking, the Shakespearean "other" has been most thoroughly studied in his representation of women, who by the patriarchal nature of gender construction in the renaissance era were defined as "other." Shakespeare's representations of women (and their relationship to men) varies from the early misogynist view of the assertive woman in Taming of the Shrew to those representations of women (generally in the comedies) who via a variety of strategies—the most common being a male disguise—empower themselves. The great tragedies tend to be more male-centered, though the character of Cleopatra presents a study in how a powerful woman maintains her power—and her nation's relative independence—against the greater power of Roman (male) domination.

1. Shrew: Katherina (the non-compliant daughter, abused & driven to submission by father & husband)

2. MND: Hippolyta (conquered by Theseus & forced to marry); Titania (tricked and drugged by Oberon until she submits); Hermia (defies her father & gets her man despite strangeness in the green wood); Helena (abused by her betrothed, but ultimately gets him)

3. Merchant: Portia (constrained to marry by her dead father's lottery of chests; once she has the man she wants in mind, cross-dresses to empower herself and win his freedom—victimizes Shylock in the process, her "quality of mercy" speech a terrible piece of irony); Jessica (daughter of Shylock, turns against her father, stealing his goods and becoming a Christian, running off with her Christian lover Lorenzo—their final scene perhaps intimating future strife in their marriage)

4. AYLI: Rosalind (cast out of the court by the usurping duke, she cross-dresses and makes her way into the forest, where she meets and "instructs" her chosen lover in the way to woo and love); Celia, daughter of the usurping duke, she chooses friendship over family ties, and runs off with Rosalind.

5. TwN: Viola: orphaned & shipwrecked, presuming her brother drowned, she strikes out on her own, cross-dressing for empowerment and disguise.

6. T & C: Cressida is the daughter of a traitor in besieged Troy, falls in love with the king's son and has a night of love, is traded away to the Greeks, who prostitute her and destroy both her and her lover, Troilus.
7. Measure for Measure: **Isabella** leaves the nunnery to plead for her adulterous brother's life, is threatened with sexual harassment by Angelo, with the help of the disguised Duke gets **Mariana** (Angelo's betrothed, living in disgrace because her dowry was lost) to change places with her in Angelo's bed, and the two women later expose Angelo for what he is.

8. *I Henry VI*: **Joan de Pucelle** (Joan of Arc)—the peasant girl persuades the French to let her lead their forces against the English; she is taken, exposed as one possessed by devils, and killed—her otherness residing in her sex, social class, and in her place as a Catholic martyr).

9. *II and III Henry VI, Richard III*: **Margaret of Anjou**—goes from an ingenue forced by her father to marry, to the general of her husband's armies when he proves unable to command, to a vicious torturer of her enemies, to an old crone who accurately prophesies the ends of Richard III's accomplices, a nemesis whose rage is tempered in the end when she sees that she has much in common with the York women whom she had supposed her enemies, comforting them in their despair.

10. *Richard III*: **Lady Anne** (Warwick), widow of Prince Edward Lancaster, wife of Richard III. (a woman whose husband and father-in-law have been killed by Richard, who persuades her to marry him despite her hatred of him. Once married, Anne is neglected and ultimately disposed of by her villainous husband); **The Duchess of York**, Richard's mother, and **Queen Elizabeth**, Richard's brother's wife, both revel in their family's triumph and are arrogant when we first meet them, but are humiliated and emotionally destroyed by Richard: the Duchess must helplessly watch as Richard kills his brothers and the two princes, & she ends as a bitter and enraged woman; Elizabeth must helplessly watch the Tower as Richard's henchmen kill her sons and hide her rage as Richard demands that her daughter, **young Elizabeth**, become his next wife, later fleeing with her daughter..

11. *I and II Henry IV*: **Mistress Quickly** and **Doll Tearsheet**, "hostesses" and shared lovers to the Eastcheap gang, both their companions and accomplices, their "otherness" a matter of reputation and social class but not otherwise affecting them.

12. *Henry V*: **Katherine**, daughter to the French king—a pawn in the negotiations between the triumphant Henry and her defeated father, aware quite early that she will be traded to England—as in the scene where she learns English—and ultimately Queen of England after a perfunctory courting scene.

13. *Titus*: **Tamora**, Queen of the Goths, beaten in war, schemes to control the power of Rome and set her sons up as future power brokers, and after engaging in plots of terrible cruelty, becomes a victim herself when her victims serve her a meat pie baked from her own sons' flesh; and **Lavinia**, daughter to Titus, is raped and has her tongue cut out and hands cut off by Tamora's sons—she finds a way to indict them, which sets the revenge plot of Titus in motion.

14. *R & J*: **Juliet**, pawn in the marriage to Paris, falls in love and secretly marries Romeo and, when he kills Tybalt, chooses to honor her love rather than lose him; schemes to get him back when he's banished, confronts the possibility of death in the potion, and awakens, too late, to find her love seemingly dead—killing herself. **Lady Capulet**, a woman too accustomed to being privileged but without any real power, and who seems quite divorced from any real feelings for
Cope 6

her child, bitter. The Nurse, a woman who has had to shift according to her employers' desires and who, as a servant, does not have a real moral center, though she is truly affectionate to Juliet and has suffered in the loss of both husband and daughter.

15. Julius Caesar: both Calphurnia and Portia, wives of Caesar and Brutus, see all too clearly that their men are engaged in dangerous pursuits, but are unable to persuade them to abandon their designs and honor their loves.

16. Hamlet: Ophelia, a young woman in love with a man of far higher social class, who is caught between the new King's suspicions, her father's ambitions, and her lover's inability to trust her, driven mad when her lover kills her father, and finds the voice to speak her feelings only in madness, after which she apparently commits suicide. Gertrude, wife of old Hamlet and later of Claudius, a woman who has no real power of her own but apparently carries influence through her title of Queen (thus attracting Claudius, who later marries her and thus helps legitimize his own claim to the throne); Gertrude may or may not know what Claudius has done to get power—sees herself as a sinner with dark blots on her soul, but is excused from the dictum of revenge by the ghost; ultimately, a pathetic figure who wakes in time to warn Hamlet of the poisoned drink before she dies.

17. Othello: Desdemona, ingenue daughter of the wealthiest senator in Venice, who falls in love and marries the Moorish general without her father's permission, runs off with Othello to the wars, is betrayed and destroyed by her husband who in his jealousy is persuaded that she's been to bed with Cassio—though she never loses her purity; Emilia, the villain's servant-wife, who is rumored to have had sex with Othello, abused by her husband and, though emotionally loyal to Desdemona, steals her handkerchief in the hope of getting her husband's love; she later instructs the traumatized Desdemona in women's rights and the right of revenge, defies Othello when he has murdered his wife, and defies and is killed by her own husband.

18. King Lear: Lear's three daughters, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia, all display compensatory behaviors as a result of living with a domineering and arbitrary warrior-father. The first two choose a villainous path of power-seeking, dragging their husbands along with them as they consolidate their powers, strip Lear of whatever power he retained, but both show the effects of lack-love in their pursuit of Edmund Gloucester, the ultimate villainous alpha-male in this piece. Cordelia, whose "fault" seems to be her uncompromising honesty, is exiled by her flattery-demanding father, and returns to save him from her sisters before being killed herself.

19. Macbeth: like Goneril and Regan, Lady Macbeth has grown up in a warrior culture where might seems to determine right: she is loyal to her husband but cannot exercise power without him, and manipulates him to get what she wants. She thinks herself strong, pushing him to kill Duncan and helping him finish the job, but as the murders begin to pile up, she is driven mad by an activated conscience, and eventually commits suicide. The Weird Sisters seem to be the ultimate "other" in Shakespeare: they are bound by no rules accepted by patriarchal society, are in league with and servants of the devil, and manipulate male power brokers through equivocation that activates the ambition of such men as Macbeth and, perhaps, Banquo.

20. Antony & Cleopatra: Cleopatra, a woman whose strength depends on her ability to retain her power as queen and as lover despite the crushing weight of Roman oppression, but whose dexterity in these fields compromises her true self over & over until finally she chooses death
with her Antony over any further compromise; she remains a character whose "age cannot wither
nor custom stale her infinite variety" (2.2.234-35)—powerful, enchanting, devious, imperious, servile, wise, assertive, and politic as the situation demands, and finally choosing a love more powerful even than death. **Octavia**, Octavius' sister, who is used as a pawn to wean Antony away from Cleopatra and simultaneously neutralize him in Octavius' drive to power; and **Fulvia**, Antony's wife (not appearing in the play except as referred to), who leads the rebellion in his name and is killed for it.

21. **Coriolanus**: **Volumnia**, Martius/Coriolanus' domineering mother, who bullies her warrior son into pursuing the consulate, but because of his disdain for the people, he is banished, later returning to threaten Rome. She appeals to him to spare the city, but when he relents, the Machiavellian Aufidius and his faction stir the people against him, and he is torn to pieces. Volumnia is a powerful woman whose molding of her son ends in his tragedy.

22. **Pericles**: the **daughter to Antiochus** is his sexual partner and victim, dies in disgrace; **Thaisa**, Pericles' wife, apparently dies in childbirth during a storm at sea, is cast overboard and after serving as high priestess to Diana, is reunited with Pericles; her daughter **Marina** is given by Pericles to Cleon and **Dionysa** for safekeeping, but she earns Dionysa's hatred because she outshines her own daughter; Dionysa sets her up to be killed, but she is rescued by pirates, when sold to a brothel preserves her virginity through the promise of profit from her musicianship, and when her long-lost and forgotten father turns up in despair, sings him out of his sorrow—ultimately being reunited with both Pericles and Thaisa.

23. **Cymbeline**: **Imogen**, daughter to King Cymbeline through his first marriage, is pursued by the second queen's wretched son, Cloten, despite the fact that she has married Posthumus, who is banished. In Italy, Posthumus is conned into making a bet that her virtue is unassailable, and the villain Jachimo visits England and learns enough to convince Posthumus that he has had her in bed. Meanwhile, Imogen takes on a male disguise and flees into the wilderness, where she is saved and nurtured in a cave by the banished lord Belarius and his two sons—who kill the pursuing Cloten and later turn out to be her long-lost brothers, abducted by Belarius when they were small. She eventually is reunited with both Cymbeline and Posthumus, and all is forgiven—but she remains the type of the assertive and clever woman who must thrive by her wits in a world hostile to women.

24. **The Winter's Tale**: **Hermione**, pregnant wife of Leontes, is unjustly accused of adultery with his best friend, Polixenes; she is jailed and put on trial, gives birth to **Perdita** who, despite **Paulina's** pleading with Leontes is declared a bastard and ordered to be exposed and die; Hermione's son dies of a mysterious illness, and she seems to die of grief. Paulina stands up to Leontes, accusing him of murder, but she eventually relents when she sees that Leontes is finally aware that he has wronged his virtuous wife. Meanwhile, Perdita is rescued by a shepherd and his son, raised to be a queen of the May, and falls in love with Florizel, son of the same Polixenes—who pursues the lovers and tries to divide them without knowing her true identity. They run off and throw themselves on the mercy of Leontes, are exposed, and eventually Leontes is reunited with both Perdita and Hermione who, though thought to be dead, has actually been in hiding, concealed by Paulina.

25. **The Tempest**: **Miranda**, Prospero's daughter, is raised apart from society and yet is learned for a woman of her time; she tries to school Caliban, but he tries to rape her and is banished from her presence, and when Alonso's crew is stranded on the island, she falls in love with Ferdinand,
asking for his hand. When Prospero accomplishes his goal of making Alonso see the error of his ways, Miranda welcomes the Machiavellian gallants as though they are angels—and must be cautioned by her father that all is not as she sees.

Courtlings, Carpet Knights, Gallants, Lords of Misrule, Puritans, etc.

Note: In Shakespeare's plays, those most obviously targeted as unfit to be a part of society—given a place only to be exposed, curbed, marginalized or cast out—are, curiously enough, males who are either servants—stewards, butlers, jesters, etc.—or a part of the power elite, but whose characters are disordered, pompous, self-serving, puffed-up, rebellious, or vain despite "noble" birth. The catalogue includes some of Shakespeare's most memorable characters as well as some who merely advance a scene, present long enough to give an audience a quick smirk. Some samples:

1. I and II Henry IV, The Merry Wives of Windsor: Falstaff is at once attractive, jovial, a lord of misrule famous for his "vitalizing discourse, his beautiful laughing speech" and his "absolute faith both in language and himself" (Bloom 275)—yet because he represents casual criminality and social disorder, he must in both Henry plays be repudiated by Prince Hal; in Henry V we learn that Falstaff has, despite his disorders, a deep and abiding affection and loyalty: in being banished, "The King has kill'd his heart" (2.1.79) and he soon dies. Shakespeare brings him back, supposedly at the Queen's command, in The Merry Wives of Windsor, where his disorders are sexual—and though he must be repudiated, tricked, and nearly pinched to death, he is nominally accepted by the middle class people of that play once he shows that he is penitent.

2. Richard II: Mowbray is banished from England as a traitor; he is a stubborn lord who has engaged in traitorous and irresponsible acts in the past, is incensed at Bullingbrook's accusations and is willing to die in order to defend his honor, yet when banished he laments the loss of his native tongue as "an unstringed viol or a harp" (1.3.162). Though he is banished from the play, Mowbray does not end in disgrace, however: when the newly established Henry would call him back to England, he is informed that Mowbray distinguished himself in the crusades and then retired to Venice, and there "gave his body to that pleasant country's earth" (4.1.96-97).

3. As You Like It: Jaques is a misanthrope distinguished by his melancholy view of human nature—as in his famous "seven ages of man" speech 2.7.139-66). He is present as a mildly caustic commentator among Duke Senior's banished court in the Forest of Arden, and though he is invited to join in the celebratory finale, he decides to depart and join up with the newly converted and formerly villainous usurper, Duke Frederick, to learn something from him—seemingly most comfortable with those who "neglect the pompous court" (5.4.182). His melancholy attitude seems to be the signifier that renders him "other."

3. Much Ado: Don John, bastard brother to Don Pedro, has incited a rebellion against his brother, been defeated, and Pedro welcomes him back into favor. John, however, plots against Pedro (and the social order) through a trick, inciting the jealousy of Claudio against his newly betrothed Hero—which, when it is exposed, leads to John's flight, capture, and imprisonment. The last we hear of him, Benedick assures Don Pedro that he'll devise . . . brave punishments for him" (5.4.128).

4. Twelfth Night: The lord of misrule, Sir Toby Belch, the foppish lord Sir Andrew Aguecheek and the puritan steward, Malvolio, are exposed—the first for his disorders (he's in many ways a lesser version of Falstaff) and cruelty, the second for his immense stupidity and doltish "love" for
Olivia, and the third for his prating self-importance and in-ability to let others enjoy themselves—the first two recognizing that they don't belong in the play's society, and the third cast out (though Olivia tries to get him to return).

5. *Measure for Measure*: Angelo is a puritan who, once given power, inaugurates a reign of terror among those who are sexually promiscuous or who have sex outside of marriage, yet he proves to be a hypocrite in his attempts to force Isabel to have sex with him. She, with the help of the disguised Duke and Angelo's own forsaken betrothed, Mariana, tricks him into having sex with Mariana—after which he is exposed and forced to marry her and "do the right thing."

6. *All's Well That Ends Well*: Parolles is a typical miles gloriosus, a snob and a sycophantic follower of Bertram who thinks nobility is to be found in clothing and manners and is exposed in an almost Jonsonian manner as one who would betray his friends. Contrite, he is allowed back into the court—but all know him for what he is.

7. *Hamlet*: Osric is a "water-fly," a foppish courtier and a "chough [jawdaw] . . . "spacious in the possession of dirt" (5.2.87-88) whose purpose is to advance the scene by bringing news of Claudius' wager on Hamlet's skill as a swordfighter, and to be exposed as an imbecile for his convoluted speech and pretentious behavior.

8. *Othello*: Roderigo is Iago's dupe, a gull conned into financing Iago by giving him money to woo the already-married Desdemona. Iago uses him to destroy Cassio's reputation and as his pawn in the attempt to murder Cassio later in the play, and ultimately Iago murders Roderigo in order to silence him.

9. *King Lear*: Oswald is Goneril's steward and, according to Regan, is "of her bosom"—has had sex with her (4.5.26). Oswald is loyal to his lady, but he is also a prating knave, beaten twice by Kent (who is disguised as Caius) for insulting the king and later for bringing Goneril's letter against Lear to Regan. Later, when he tries to earn a reward by killing Gloucester, Edgar kills him—and in Oswald's last moments alive, he asks Edgar to take Goneril's letter to Edmund, proving loyal to his lady despite the fact that he is an insinuating and pretentious underling.

10. *The Winter's Tale*: Autolycus is a rogue who would cozen all he meets out of their money. He is a seller of used goods, a wandering minstrel, pickpocket and tale-teller who is at once charming and devious. In the end, his attempts to cheat others are ex-posed, and the Shepherd and his son, newly decked out as lords, advise him to repent and learn how to live properly.

12. *The Tempest*: Sebastian and Antonio, younger brothers to Alonso and Prospero, are a pair of Machiavellian knaves who would usurp power; they mock the innocent Gonzalo and would cut Alonso's throat, but are prevented by Ariel, who wakes the king in time. Later, when they have been thoroughly foiled, Prospero names them for the criminals they are, but does not expose them to the wrath of Alonso—apparently content to curb them (and aware that they cannot be weaned from their villainous ways). Stephano and Trinculo, the drunken butler and jester, also attempt to foment a rebellion and take over the island, but Ariel sows dissension among them in a slapstick scene where Trinculo is beaten and trounced, leads them into a mire where they "do smell all horse-piss" (4.1.219), and sends spirit hounds to hunt them down. Later, Prospero mocks them for their pretensions, but allows them to remain, curbed and penitent.
Bastards / Younger Brothers / Son Rejected as Bastard

Most of these have struggles not only for spiritual / psychological legitimacy, but more importantly for land and title against "legitimate" or older brothers.

1. *I Henry VI*: the bastard of Orleance (a minor character accompanying Joan de Pucelle)
2. *King John*: Philip "the bastard" Faulconbridge > Sir Richard Plantagenet
4. *King Lear*: Edmund Gloucester (bastard brother of Edgar)
5. *AYLI*: Orlando (younger brother to Oliver, who casts him out)
6. *The Winter's Tale*: Mamillius (not a bastard, but rejected as such by his father, Leontes)

Images of the Body / Disability

1. *The Comedy of Errors*: S. Dromio's jests about Fat Nell's body, slapstick humor at her expense (3.2); both Dromios' complaints about physical abuse by their masters (rendered as knock-about humor).

2. *III Henry VI*: 2.2, Richard cursed by Margaret for his deformity; see also 3.2, 5.6. These passages can be taken as Shakespeare damning the disabled through spiritual deformity or, more likely, as his representation of how prejudice against difference can contribute to a sense of isolation and rage.


4. *Titus Andronicus*: Lavinia—see her description under "Women."

5. *Julius Caesar*: Caesar's deafness in one ear and epilepsy, used by Cassius (in his argument with Brutus) as evidence of his unfitness to rule.

6. *Othello*: Othello's grand mal seizure, mocked by Iago as sign of Othello being in his power (4.1).

7. *Pericles*: daughter of Antiochus is victim and partner in sexual abuse by her father; she is a curious figure, damned and suffering, but unable to act or give voice to her horrors.

8. *The Tempest*: Ariel and Caliban, the latter more a focus for disability: Ariel is a genial and androgynous shape-shifter whose freedom, as promised, is delivered; Caliban (an anagram of cannibal) is described as a "savage and deformed slave" [italics mine] who is also variously a monster, a strange fish whose smell is awful, and a commodity that could earn his owners a lot of money when exhibited as a freak in England. He is repeatedly described using metaphors of earth (as Ariel is given metaphors of air); thus Caliban is earthy—coarse, heavy, crass. He is also aware of the history of the island and that his mother held it first, resentful that Prospero and Miranda have tried to graft their language and culture onto him, sexually uninhibited in that he has tried to rape Miranda, and resentful of the yoke that Prospero lays on him. Later, he tries to start a rebellion against Prospero by pretending to be a willing slave to Trinculo and Stephano,
but ultimately he realizes he has thrown his lot in with a pair of dolts, and surrenders to
Prospero—and eventually he gets his island back.

**Madness & Derangement (real & feigned)**

1. *I Henry VI*: Joan de Pucelle is possessed by fiends (see 5.3). Her madness/spirit possession
is related to English propaganda concerning her status as a Catholic martyr (Shakespeare's and
other playwrights' use of the Catholic as the oppressor hated by protestant England, converting an
English sense of otherness on the continent into a privilege in which the symbols & figures of the
oppressor religion are rendered as other in the play)

2. *R & J*: Mercutio, whose flights of fancy betoken an unsettled mind—Romeo must calm him
down. His metaphors of Queen Mab reconstruct a folk understanding of madness.

3. *Hamlet*: Critics still debate about the extent to which Hamlet's "wit's diseased" or whether he
is "mad north-northwest," putting on an act as a stalling action while he figures out what to make
of the ghost's claims and how/whether to kill Claudius—so much of what we can know of him is
predicated on the faces he puts on for those he doesn't trust. He does seem to "lose it" at least
once, in the graveyard scene, but quickly regains his composure, knows that his behavior was
improper, and apologizes for it. Ophelia, on the other hand, is a study in a genuine descent into
madness—dominated and used by her father and the king, abused by her lover, she descends into
babbling and snatches of tunes (which ironically free her from the repression of her feelings)
before she apparently commits suicide.

4. *King Lear*: Lear's rages are legendary, rising to a crescendo in the storm scene on the heath,
and even later Shakespeare shows him vacillating between compassionate tenderness for the
blinded Gloucester and his immense rage at the betrayals of his son-in-laws—"then kill, kill, kill,
kill, kill, kill!!" (see 4.6.176-87). Eventually Cordelia's physician seems to restore him, and he
recognizes his weaknesses (4.7.58-76), later lapsing into a dream of singing like birds in prison,
ending in a howling rage that Cordelia has been killed. Edgar, on the other hand, feigns madness
as "Poor Tom" as a way to save himself (and later his father), only revealing himself and
reclaiming his identity when the time is right.

5. *Macbeth*: Lady Macbeth's arc is a study in a descent into madness and suicide, her madness
activated by the conscience she had earlier denied she had.

6. *Timon of Athens*: Timon becomes the type of the misanthropic homeless man after having
been the free-spending rich man earlier. When his so-called friends are revealed as parasites
unwilling to help him when he's down, and when his creditors relentlessly hound him, he turns
against society and lives apart, in a cave—cursing all those who visit him, until finally he dies,
leaving a curse upon all those who pass his grave. (It may be argued that this is not madness—
that his eyes are opened to the illusions by which society lives—but I suggest that in his inability
to socially integrate himself as he is—employing his own defensive mechanisms in the guise of
free-spending "friend to all" or in the guise of "enemy to all," he blocks himself from his own
sanity.
Race & Ethnicity

1. *The Merchant of Venice:* Shylock is the Jewish "other" in a world of Christian enterprise. His daughter, Jessica, has a different reaction to her Jewish heritage: deserting and robbing her father, she turns Christian and marries Lorenzo, their final scene suggestive that their marriage will not be a smooth one. Her arc may be borne of resentment at her father and/or anger that she cannot fully participate in the society because of her heritage, combined with a heedless love, falling under the influence of a wastrel. *The Prince of Morocco* is seen as an undesirable suitor for Portia because of his blackness (see 2.7.78-79)

2. *I Henry IV:* Owen Glendower displays an ethnic stereotype of the bullheaded egomanic Welshman; Shakespeare develops an interesting comment on lovers who share no language in 3.1, where Glendower's daughter, married to the English rebel Mortimer, cannot speak English, though she attempts to unite and soothe the rebels through her Welsh song (which does not in any way soothe the Northerner, Hotspur, who says he'd "rather hear Lady, my brach [bitch-dog], howl in Irish" (3.1.235-36).

3. *Henry V:* The ethnic captains, Fluellen (Wales), Davy (Scotland), Macmorris (Ireland) all display native stereotypes imposed on them by the English—the Welshman as a bullheaded know-it-all, the Scotsman as a hotheaded warrior, the Irishman as one easily offended when others talk of his nation (and as the "other" among others).

4. *Titus Andronicus:* Aaron is Shakespeare's first portrait of a Moor; he is in league with Tamora as "others" whose interest is in destroying Rome (because they are prisoners and prizes for their Roman captors—and thus his villainy grows directly from the position in which he finds himself. Nevertheless, he engages in horrific acts, eventually getting the now-queen (and wife to the emperor)Tamora with child and, when the child proves a blackamoor (thus revealing both the adultery and its parentage), Aaron abducts his child, damning all that is white as "treacherous" (4.2.117) and asserting that "coal-black is better than another hue" (4.2.99). He is eventually taken by Lucius and, in order to save his child, confesses all, even in his confession claiming that he would've done more villainy against such oppressors (see 5.1.124-50).

5. *Othello:* Othello is the most famous of the represented Moors on the renaissance English stage. See class notes for fuller discussion of how race determines his position and options, and how his position as "other" is mixed up with the privileged position that he otherwise occupies. Note that he is the hero of his play, that his fall is tragic, and that we are encouraged by the text to admire him and pity his fall.

6. *Coriolanus:* Aufidius and the other Volscians are identified as an alien "other" that must be conquered if Rome is to maintain its hegemony. Aufidius, of course, is the villain who ultimately does the hero in.

7. *The Tempest:* Caliban is an "other" variously identified with a cannibal islander (his name's an anagram), the product of a match between a witch and the devil, a character identified with earthiness—ruled by his lower appetites (sexual and bodily needs), psychologically unable to connect with his soul (as in water) or rise spiritually (as with air) or emotionally (as with fire). He is also "deformed"—unlike others in appearance and assumed to be defective—and a "slave"—thus his identification in postmodern productions with slaves in Prospero's colonial project. Shakespeare does not sympathize with him, yet does give him enough intelligence to
know that he's been robbed by Prospero's "colonial" enterprise, see that his hoped-for accomplices are indeed fools, and know when to ask for forgiveness for his rebellion—and ultimately he may get his island back.

**Age**

*Note:* "Age" may signify a variety of constructs in that Shakespeare lived in a period where age was still given respect in ways that our own time has lost; thus contemporary concerns about "ageism" may be somewhat misplaced if applied too strictly. There are plays in which the young villain disrespects the older character merely for his age, but such signification may resonate more as a reflection on the disorders of the younger character than as any marginalization of the elder. In fact, elders are often prominent in the plays—and very often are the characters whose agonies are most prominent—as in the case of King Lear.

Two important points: (1) one may interrogate the characters in the plays from early (youthful) to late (older) to see what, if any, differences Shakespeare may develop in his representations of age, and (2) several plays feature older, but not yet aged characters who are nevertheless typed according to their age—characters such as the Dukes of Exeter, Gloucester, and the Cardinal of Winchester in *I and II Henry VI, Hamlet's* Gertrude and Claudius, and the main characters of *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra* come readily to mind. Their sense of age and aging is perhaps more related to the passages of middle age (e.g. the craftiness of knowing how to manipulate worldly power and systems in ways that the younger may not, and the first realizations that one is losing some of one's powers), and thus—though they are important to any discussions of aging in Shakespeare I have not included them here—focusing rather on those who are identified as old.

1. **Richard III:** The Duchess of York has lost her husband and son Rutland in battle, and though she briefly has moments of triumph when her son becomes King Edward IV, that pleasure is short-lived when her son Richard engineers the deaths of his brothers George (Clarence) and Edward, then has her grandsons, the "little princes," imprisoned and killed in the Tower. She becomes an enraged pathetic, comforted at last by her old enemy, Margaret—herself reduced to an enraged crone whose power resides only in her ability to foresee the ends of Richard, the Yorks, and their minions—in one of the most moving scenes among women in all of Shakespeare (4.4).

2. **Richard II:** John of Gaunt is the heart-broken father of the banished Bullingbrook (the future Henry IV); when on his deathbed he rebukes Richard II for wasting the nation's resources for the sake of his parasites (incidentally giving one of the most-quoted paeans to England as "this sceptred isle"—2.1.40-68), Richard abuses him and Northumberland murders him—after which his and Bullingbrook's lands and goods are confiscated. He presents a picture of a stoutly principled old man even on his deathbed.

3. **Henry V:** Sir Thomas Erpingham is a "good old commander" who lends his cloak to Henry that he might walk unobserved among his men. Erpingham is a very minor character, but both Henry and the ordinary soldiers accord him honor for his age and experience.

4. **The Merchant of Venice:** Portia's father, though unrepresented, is a strong presence in the play, his test of the three chests being the means to her inheritance and the way in which he continues to have a say in whom she marries. The Prince of Arragon is generally represented as old and doddering, a "blinking idiot" (2.9.54) unworthy of Portia's hand both because of his self-importance and age.
5. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: **Dr. Caius** is generally represented as old and doddering, an unworthy suitor for Anne Page's hand because of his age.

6. *As You Like It*: **Adam**, Oliver's servant, respects Orlando as a good young man, and when Oliver abuses him as an "old dog" (1.1.81) and Orlando is banished, Adam warns him that Oliver is out to kill him and gives him his life savings, following Orlando into banishment. Exhausted by the effort, he waits while Orlando goes to seek help, and is brought into the banished Duke's camp and given the honor he deserves.

7. *Troilus and Cressida*: **Nestor** is the oldest of the Greek generals, a man respected by Ulysses as "most reverend for thy stretch'd-out life" (1.2.61); despite his long experience, he is a bit of a romantic, yet asserts that if no other Greek will challenge Hector, he'll do it (1.3.301), a claim that earns a patronizing response from Aeneas.

8. *All's Well That Ends Well*: the **King of France**, the **Countess of Rossillion**, and others of the older generation are contrasted as quiet and civil people whose earned wisdom cannot be passed to a younger generation that must make its own mistakes before earning the peace of maturity. **LaFew**, one of these older folks, has reached his age with a sharp and sarcastic wit.

9. *Measure for Measure*: **Escalus**, an "ancient lord," is trusted as a wise man by the Duke, but Angelo is given the Duke's office when he is absent. Escalus is deeply troubled by Angelo's decision to kill Claudio, but cannot curb him—and lapses into proverbial wit when his advice is not taken. Later, when Pompey and Froth are arrested and talk nonsense, Escalus grows impatient with them, though he ends the scene (2.1) in grief for Claudio: he is a man unmoved by criminals, but compassionate with a good man who's fallen. Later, he plays his part as courtier when the Duke returns, and is both amazed and sorry that Angelo has proven to be both a hypocrite and tyrant.

10. *Othello*: **Brabantio**, Desdemona's father, is emotionally destroyed by what he sees as his daughter's betrayal (when she marries Othello), and later dies, apparently as a result of losing her: her match "was mortal to him, and pure grief shore his old thread in twain" (5.2.205-06).

11. *King Lear*: **King Lear** is perhaps the most famous aged character in the entire canon: his agonies may be understood in terms of problems proper to the aged: that of dividing one's estate among one's heirs in a way that "prevents future strife," that of too readily trusting one's children when their love is mixed with ambition, the problem of one's senses and memory failing—and the frustrations and rages that come with it, and the problem of coming to terms with the reality of death itself. **Gloucester**, Lear's old friend, provides a secondary echo to his master's agony—he too trapped in many of the same nets.

12 & 13. *Timon of Athens* and *Pericles*: both plays present main characters who are made old by the suffering they experience, but *Timon* ends bitterly, savagely, as one destroyed by seeing the falseness of the world, whereas *Pericles* endures to be reunited with his wife and daughter.

14. *Cymbeline*: **Cymbeline** is the aged king of the Britons; he is manipulated by his second wife, the "Queen," who poisons those she wants killed or persuades him to exile those who might threaten her son (by her first marriage) Cloten's path to power. Despite his foolishness, Cymbeline is a forthright warrior king in his battle against Rome, learns the truth about his queen
and is ultimately saved and reunited with / by his daughter Imogen and his two previously lost sons, Guiderius and Arveragus.

15. *The Winter's Tale*: The play presents two "men of winter," Leontes and Polixenes, in their mature years (acts 1-3) and sixteen years later as aged men (acts 4-5); Camillo, a lord attendant first on Leontes and later on Polixenes, and Leontes' wife Hermione and her faithful friend Paulina all go through the same trajectory, which involves the foolish jealousy of Leontes and the fatherly suspicion and tyranny of Polixenes—both men learning at last to see and value the honesty and rightness of those who love them.

16. *The Tempest*: Prospero, the aged duke of Milan, curbs his anger against Alonso of Naples and finds a way to curb Alonso and expose his own younger brother Antonio for what he is; he also subtly guides the budding relationship of his daughter Miranda, uses the gifts of the spirit Ariel and curbs the ambitions of Caliban and Stephano & Trinculo—later freeing them all. At last he gives up his powers, dreaming only of retiring to Milan, "where every third thought shall be my grave" (5.1.311-12).