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The Proud Princess Gets Her Comeuppance: Structures of Patriarchal Order

Although, in recent years, the use of the term 'patriarchy' to categorize and define a given social organization has been called into question by anthropologists,[1] for the lay person, no such problem appears to exist. For him, 'patriarchy' or 'patriarchal order' is generally that amalgam of cultural values and social structures corresponding to what anthropologists, in the interests of precision, prefer to call androcracy, 'the domination of a society by male authority,'[2] and in the last decade or so patriarchy, understood as androcracy, has had, to say the least, a very mixed press. In North America, we might cite, inter alia, the position expressed in Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, Eva Figes's use of the title *Patriarchal Attitudes* for her study appearing in a series devoted to 'Women in Revolt,'[3] and the pejoration of terms such as 'paternal' and 'paternalistic' when applied to relations between those who exercise power and those who submit to it; these examples show us that patriarchy, as perceived by the ordinary reader of texts, is no longer unhesitatingly accepted as a self-evident expression of the natural order of the universe.

I shall examine the following texts with respect to 'patriarchal attitudes': the Grimms' 'household tale' *König Drosselbart (King Thrushbeard)*, Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules*, and Austen's *Emma*. These texts possess in common the same underlying scheme and may be described as surface manifestations of the fundamental structures of patriarchal order.

1 Thus, the latest (1974) edition of the *Encylopaedia Britannica* describes patriarchy as 'a hypothetical social system based on the absolute authority of the father or an elderly male over the family group,' yet goes on to state: 'In the 1970's, anthropologists ... found absolute male authority to be rare even in patrilineal descent systems. The word patriarchy, therefore, has fallen into disuse among social scientists as a technical or categorical term' (*Micropaedia* VII, 800).

2 Charles Winick, *Dictionary of Anthropology* ([1956] reprinted New York: Greenwood Press, 1969) 24. Note, however, that the term 'patriarchate' has nevertheless been defined by some anthropologists as 'any society in which the feminine sex has lower status' (M. Jacobs and B.J. Stern, cited in *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, ed. Julius Gould and William L. Kolb [New York: The Free Press of Glencoe 1964] 486).

3 Eva Figes, *Patriarchal Attitudes* (New York: Stein and Day 1970). In the series 'Women in Revolt'

Patriarchy has been defined, in strict anthropological terms, as a society in which 'descent is patrilineal (i.e. the children belong to the group of the father); marriage is patrilocal (i.e. the wife removes to the local group of the husband); inheritance (of property) and succession (to rank) are in the male line, and the family is patripotestal (i.e. the authority over the members of the family is in the hands of the father or his relatives).'[4] In a looser, more general definition, it has been described as 'a social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family ... and the legal dependence of wife ... and children.'[5] Whether strict or loose definition be used, that of social scientists or that of the ordinary user of language, in both cases the texts to be examined in relation to patriarchy may, for heuristic purposes, be categorized as representing either Patriarchy Triumphant or Patriarchy Militant. In Patriarchy Triumphant, the source of authority experiences little or no resistance, and the order guaranteeing its supremacy is essentially undisturbed. A clear mimesis of Patriarchy Triumphant can be found in the Chaucer and Boccaccio versions of the story of Griselda. The Marquis of Saluzzo is limited in his authority only by the imperatives of patriarchy itself. Thus, although he can be 'da prioghi de' suoi uomini costresso di pigliar moglie,'[6] once he has brought a family into being, his treatment of that family cannot be effectively controlled: 'da assai buoni uomini fu molto ripresso. A che null' altro rispose se non que convenia que così fosse' (p 591). Griselda submits to her husband as she would to God: 'She seyde lord al lith in youre plesance / My child and I with hertly obeisance / Been youres al and ye mowe saue or spille / Youre owene thyng werketh after youre wille.'[7] Her submission, proof of virtue, is finally rewarded.

In Patriarchy Militant the source of authority is challenged, some fairly significant resistance is offered, the order is quite seriously troubled, and stringent measures must be taken so that order may eventually be restored. The four texts under discussion may be defined as examples of Patriarchy Militant. In Patriarchy Triumphant, womanly submissiveness assures that the system will function smoothly. In *König Drosselbart* (KD), *The Taming of the Shrew (Taming)*, *Les Précieuses ridicules (Les Précieuses)* and *Emma*, lack of womanly submissiveness hinders the system from functioning smoothly. If Griselda, in the framework of patriarchal order, is a positive

4 A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (London: Cohen and West 1952), cited in *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, ed. Gould and Kolb, 486

5 *Webster's Third International Dictionary of the English Language*, ed. Philip Babcock Gove and the Merriam Webster Editorial Staff (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam [1971]) 1656

6 Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Decamerone* (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli 1914) 584. All references to Boccaccio's text are to this edition.

7 *The Text of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. John M. Manly and Edith Rickert (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1940) III, 2, 347. All references to Chaucer's text are to this edition.

figure, an archetype of virue, then the Princess, Katharina, Cathos-Magdelon, and Emma are negative figures, exemplars of perturbation: they are anti-Griselda, the Proud Princess. For Patriarchy Militant to be transformed into Patriarchy Triumphant, the Proud Princess must be transformed into Griselda. These texts show us under what conditions and by what mechanisms such a transformation may take place.

Patriarchal order, hierarchical as are most kinship structures, organizes its members into greater-lesser, superior-inferior, dominant-submissive, high-low. The categories involved are class and sex. Ranking by class divides a population into dominant / submissive = high(er) degree / low(er) degree = + / −. It is constitutive of sociocultural order as such. Ranking by sex divides the population into dominant /submissive = male / female = + / − and is constitutive of patriarchal sociocultural order.

Patriarchal sociocultural order may be represented by the model below:

	male (+)	female (−)
high(er) degree(+)	+,+	−,+
low(er) degree(−)	+,−	−,−

The system as shown here is upright; if the ranking of the elements were to be reversed, it would then be upside-down. There is, however, an important proviso. In patriarchal order, the rule of male / female takes precedence over that of high(er) degree / low(er) degree; indeed, when the activities of the Proud Princess threaten to turn male / female into female / male, then the temporary reversal of high(er) degree / low(er) degree works as a corrective mechanism to return the system to its original form. Therefore, a more precise model would be:

upper male	+
upper female	−,+
lower male	+,−
lower female	−

The locus of patriarchal order is marriage, the regulated transfer of authority by which, as indicated in the words of the traditional marriage service, a woman is 'given' as wife by the father and 'taken' to wife by the husband. In this way, the principle of patriarchal order is perpetuated and kept intact: + / − = male / female = father / daughter = husband / wife. In the texts under consideration, marriage is the central concern. There are three figures: a Father to 'give,' a Daughter (the Proud Princess) to be 'given' and/or 'taken,' and a Suitor (the potential husband) to 'take':

	Father	Daughter	Suitor
KD	King	Princess	King Thrushbeard
Taming	Baptista	Katharina	Petruchio
Précieuses	Gorgibus	Cathos, Magdelon	La Grange Du Croisy
Emma	Mr Woodhouse	Emma	Mr Knightley

The interaction of these figures gives rise to a movement from equilibrium to disequilibrium to the restoral of equilibrium. This movement, in turn, can be articulated as a sequence of four 'motifemes': Law-Transgression-Punishment-Reconciliation.[8] The following model represents the structural organization of the four texts:

Implicit / Explicit	Explicit		
Equilibrium	Disequilibrium	Equilibrium restored	
Affirmation	Negation	Reaffirmation	
Law (obligatory)	Transgression (obligatory)	Punishment (obligatory)	Reconciliation (optional)

Equilibrium, the principle of order itself, is patriarchal marriage in a class society assuring male dominance and female submission. This is the value system inherent in all four texts; its presence is obligatory. Implicit in KD, *Les Précieuses*, and *Emma*, it is stated clearly by Petruchio in *Taming*: "I will be master of what is mine own: / She [Katharina] is my goods, my chattels; she is my house, / My household stuff, my field, my barn / My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything.'[9] Disequilibrium is introduced when the law of patriarchal marriage is transgressed: the Proud Princess, through her behaviour, hinders the smooth and automatic transmission of authority. In some way, marriage is prevented from taking place: the Princess's mockery of King Thrushbeard, Katharina's shrewishness, Cathos's and Magdelon's scorn of La Grange and Du Croisy, Emma's determination to find a husband for Harriet Smith, yet herself remain Miss Woodhouse. Transgression is explicit in all four texts and its presence is obligatory.

Reaffirmation, establishing equilibrium once more so that Patriarchy

8 As used by Alan Dundes, the term 'motifeme' appears to mean a structural 'slot,' a fundamental morphological unit of a narrative text. It is akin to the Proppian notion of 'function.' See 'Structural Typology in North American Indian Folktales,' *The Study of Folklore*, ed. Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall 1965) 206–15.

9 *The London Shakespeare*, ed. John Munro (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958) I, 1, III. ii. 220–3. All references to *Taming* are to this edition.

Militant can turn into Patriarchy Triumphant, involves two stages. First of all, the Transgression must be punished. All the women in question are humiliated and made to suffer. Punishment is explicit and its presence as a motifeme is obligatory. Reconciliation, on the other hand, is problematic; although it is explicit, it is the only motifeme not appearing in all four texts. It is present in KD, *Taming*, and *Emma*, though not quite in the same way; it is not present in *Les Précieuses* at all. When Reconciliation is present, it indicates that, by and large, the transgressor has atoned and been forgiven.[10] Humbled, she is now Griselda, willing to accept submission as her womanly lot and patriarchal marriage as right order. Once again, it is in *Taming* that this acceptance is most clearly expressed. Petruchio's grotesque contention that the shrewish Katharina "for patience ... will prove a second Grissel" (II,i.287) turns out to be prophetic, since Katharina will eventually echo Petruchio's own description of wife as chattel: "Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, / Thy head, thy sovereign' (v.ii.146–7). In *Les Précieuses*, however, although equilibrium has been regained in the sense that patriarchal order has not allowed itself to be flouted with impunity, Reconciliation does not take place. It will be necessary, in due course, to consider the anomalous aspects of *Les Précieuses* and the question of anomaly in general.

KÖNIG DROSSELBART

In examining KD (Aarne-Thompson 900) the first thing to be noted is the illusory nature of the Princess's freedom. Up to a certain point she is allowed to chose from among her suitors whom she will marry, but she is not allowed to choose not to marry at all. As she delays too long in choosing, the choice is made for her. Her surface Transgression, the belittling of the physical characteristics of her suitors, reflects a more serious Transgression, the perturbation of the marital process and of the sex-class ranking schematized above. By her behaviour she indicates that she intends to pass from (−,+) to (+). In so doing, she repudiates her status as a woman who, princess or not, is still expected to be submissive and puts forth her claim to be considered primarily as a princess who, woman or not, still has the prerogative of showing disdain. This claim is not honoured; married by paternal fiat to a supposed beggar who is King Thrushbeard in disguise, she is ejected from (−, +) and forced into (−). Through the functioning of patriarchal marriage she loses the privileges granted her through patrilineal descent, the identity

10 It is also possible to divide the motifeme Reconciliation into two 'submotifemes,' Atonement and Forgiveness, or alternatively to consider Atonement and Forgiveness as two separate motifemes with Reconciliation as their 'supermotifeme.' This is not necessary in the case of the four texts under consideration. However, there could be texts in which Atonement is present without Forgiveness (see n. 18), or, theoretically, texts in which Forgiveness is present without Atonement.

(princess) bestowed by the father, and takes on the identity (beggar) bestowed by the husband. She is now to be seen as both a woman and a beggar, therefore doubly lowly, therefore doubly submissive, submissive to her husband because he is her husband, submissive to the rest of the world because she is a beggar.

She then undergoes social humiliation and physical discomfort. The painful walk through the forest, the sordid hut, the general poverty, the menial/manual labour, her shaming when, as kitchen-maid, she is forced to dance before the King's guests: these are programmed exercises in misery, devices for curbing pride. 'Das alles ist geschehen, um deinen stolzen Sinn zu beugen and dich für deinen Hochmut zu strafen, womit du mich verspottet hast.'[11] Yet patriarchal order, having chastened, is kind. The Princess is allowed to leave (−) and transfer back into (−,+). Duly humbled, she is raised again to her former rank. More precisely, as her husband casts off his spurious identity as beggar, she automatically loses her derived identity as the wife of a beggar. As her husband takes on his true identity as king, she just as automatically takes on an equally derived identity as the wife of a king.

Because KD reveals so unequivocally the mechanisms of patriarchal order, it can be rewritten exclusively in terms of those mechanisms: 1. Law (implicit); 2. Transgression: (−,+) → [transformed into] (+); 3. Punishment: (−,+) → (−); 4. Reconciliation: (−) → (−,+). It may therefore serve as the model text for Patriarchy Militant.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

The thematic similarities between KD and *Taming* (Aarne-Thompson 901) are easily perceived. In terms of the value-system of the two texts, both the Princess and Katharina are 'shrews,' seeking to dominate their entourage through verbal assertiveness. As far as the text allows us to see, the shrewishness in KD is limited. It functions explicitly only in relation to the suitors and delays only the marriage of the Princess herself. Katharina's shrewishness operates on anyone within reach. Because of Baptista's insistence that the younger daughter cannot wed before the elder, it hinders Bianca's marriage as well as her own. Thus, patriarchal order is twice troubled and the depredations caused by the Proud Princess are correspondingly grave.

Unlike the situation in KD, it cannot truly be said that Katharina, in having marriage forced upon her, suffers temporary loss of social status, for Petruchio, a gentleman, never presents himself in any other social guise. However, the text as such offers elsewhere examples of class reversal. In the

11 *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* (Zürich: Manesse Verlag [1946]) 1, 358

Bianca subplot, 'Tranio is changed into Lucentio' (I.i.228); master appears as servant, servant as master. In the frame of the play, the drunken tinker Sly is disguised as a lord and has by his side Bartholomew the page disguised as his complacent and submissive 'wife.'

Perturbation of class order therefore exists, whether in the form of 'higher appears as lower' (Lucentio) or in that of 'lower appears as higher' (Tranio, Sly). It is the role to be played by Bartholomew that is, for our purposes, the most significant. With Bartholomew (+) appears as (−) in terms of sex. Male appears as female and in so doing, offers an image of how the femaleness of upper-class women in patriarchal order is to be defined. Bartholomew is told to:

> ... bear himself with honourable action
> Such as he hath observed in *noble ladies*
> *Unto their lords* by them accomplished
> Such duty to the drunkard let him do,
> With *soft low tongue* and *lowly courtesy*
> And say! What is't your honour will command,
> Wherein your lady and your *humble wife*
> May show her *duty* and make known her love?
> (Induction, scene I.106–13)[12]

Bartholomew is to represent what Katharina, the shrew, is not, what Bianca first appears to be, and what Katharina, once tame, becomes.

Although Katharina, married to Petruchio, does not directly lose her rank, she does temporarily lose the material comforts associated with it. This, of course, is inherent in the 'taming' which serves as Punishment in response to Transgression and which is explicitly represented as a therapeutic device, a case of quid pro quo, the biter bit. Petruchio, disguising not his rank but his 'humour,' neutralizes Katharina's imperiousness by an even greater imperiousness of his own: 'Though little fire grows great with little wind, /Yet extreme gusts will blow out the fire and all: / So I to her and so she yields to me' (II.i.133–5). Taming is the system's response to anomaly, to the breaking of pattern, and the means by which Katharina is to be brought 'from a wild Kate to a Kate / Conformable as other household Kates' (II.ii.269–70).

By exercising capricious and absolute authority over Griselda, the Marquis of Saluzzo tests the nature of her identity, the validity of her definition: will (−) remain (−) under all circumstances, no matter the intensity of the provocation? By exercising similar authority over Katharina, Petruchio changes the nature of her identity and rewrites her definition: (+) ('shrewishness,' imperious behaviour) → (−) ('taming,' discomfort) →

12 Italics mine

(−,+) (submissiveness, restoration of comfort). Once (−,+) is firmly established, Reconciliation can take place.

EMMA

Of the many critics who have considered Miss Emma Woodhouse, perhaps Lionel Trilling saw most clearly what was truly the nature of her Transgression: 'It is self-love ... [and the] self-love that we do countenance in women is of a limited and passive kind, ... we are troubled if it is as assertive as the self-love of men is permitted, and expected, to be.' What Trilling calls 'self-love' defines not only Emmas, but any woman who figures the Proud Princess; it is self-love that constitutes her 'pride,' the refusal to 'exist in a moonlike way, shining by the reflected moral light of men.'[13]

Emma can be summarized as a chronicle of the movement to Mrs from Miss. It is the story of how Miss Emma Woodhouse is transformed into Mrs George Knightley, Miss Jane Fairfax into Mrs Frank Churchill and Miss Harriet Smith into Mrs Robert Martin. It is equally the story of how the transformation would have come about more effortlessly if Miss Emma Woodhouse had not undertaken to play God with her neighbours' lives. It is therefore the story of how patriarchal order, provisionally thrown out of gear, comes to readjust itself.

Patriarchal order is damaged not only by Emma's behaviour, but also by one whose function, by definition, is to defend it most strongly, by that most inadequate patriarch Mr Woodhouse. Emma's father's strictures against marriage are well known and this refusal to uphold patriarchal order is figured by the anomalous situation his household represents. Emma, mistress in her father's house, dominates Miss Taylor, who is ostensibly in a position of authority over her. Indeed, it is suggested by Mr Knightley that the submissiveness Miss Taylor learned in her dealings with Emma will stand her in good stead once she is Mrs Weston, since she already has the behaviour appropriate to a wife.[14] Emma is Miss Taylor's first 'husband.'

Then too, Emma is her father's 'husband' as well. Mr Woodhouse has the characteristics associated with the female invalid – with Lady Bertram in *Mansfield Park* for example – and, more generally, the characteristics associated with femininity as such: passivity, vulnerability, inertia. Assertiveness, dynamism, activity, characteristics deemed appropriate to men, are concentrated in Emma, protector of the village and protector of her father. The reversal of characteristics leads to a reversal of role and corresponds to a reversal of order. This situation, implicitly defined in the text as fundamentally corrupt, is itself a Transgression and other specific Transgressions must follow as a matter of course.

13 *Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning* (New York: Viking 1965) 38–9

14 *Emma* (London: Everyman's Library 1964) 31. All references to *Emma* are to this edition.

Emma's Transgressions can profitably be discussed in relation to the other unmarried female characters in the novel. These act as her foils and throw her behaviour as Proud Princess into relief.

1 *Emma insults Miss Bates.* Emma's 'sociosexual' definition may be written: sex (−), marital status (−), 'degree' (class/rank/wealth) (+). Miss Bates's sociosexual definition may be written: sex (−), marital status (−), degree (−). Thus, only one trait, degree, separates Emma from Miss Bates, permitting the equation 'Miss Woodhouse > Miss Bates' rather than 'Miss Woodhouse = Miss Bates.' Emma is quite aware of this, as her comparison between poor old maids and rich old maids reveals (pp 74–5). Here, Emma is very close to the Princess in KD. She uses her 'degree' to obtain privileges not normally due her sex. Someone in the position of Miss Bates, 'a single woman, with a very narrow income' (p 74), would not dare to be self-assertive. Thus, although the manifest fault is cruelty, the less visible fault is, as always, the upsetting of order. Emma, 'a single woman, of good fortune' (p 74), demands precedence in society not only in spite of being a woman but also in spite of being an unmarried woman, thus compounding disorder. It is her overvaluation of her patrilineal descent, her stubborn insistence that she be allowed to impose herself as Miss rather than as Mrs, that must be overcome if the system is to right itself.

These tensions inherent in the opposition Miss/Mrs are figured elsewhere in the text with the evocation of Mr Weston's first wife, who 'wanted at once to be the wife of Captain Weston and Miss Churchill of Enscombe' (p 10). The former Miss Churchill is to be compared to the former Miss Taylor. The first marriage disrupted patriarchal order, the second marriage re-established it. Mr Weston found it was 'a great deal better to choose than to be chosen, to excite gratitude than to feel it' (p 12).

2 *Emma is unkind to Jane Fairfax.* Jane's sociosexual definition is essentially the same as Miss Bates's: sex (−), marital status (−), degree (−). Unlike Miss Bates, however, who is no longer considered marriageable and whose definition must therefore remain fixed, Jane's definition is potentially subject to change. For all her financial vulnerability, Jane is not amenable to Emma's domination, and unlike Miss Bates she is presented as so accomplished that she cannot be easily despised. She looks for succour, if any, not to Emma, but to the 'legitimate' authority of patriarchy, to the possibility of an advantageous marriage. She, like Miss Taylor, is a Cinderella figure; it is made amply clear in the text that to find a husband of means, even one as imperfect as Frank Churchill, is infinitely better than spending one's life as a governess.

3 *Emma interferes in Harriet Smith's life. She causes her to cherish inappropriate social pretensions and delays her marriage to Robert Martin.* Harriet is structurally as important as Emma. They are in a relation of

opposition and complementarity, providing reciprocal definitions for each other. Emma is total dominance, Harriet total passivity. Emma is active anomaly, Harriet passive anomaly. Emma disturbs patriarchal order by doing, Harriet by being. Harriet is illegitimate, by definition a disruption of order. Since her father's social identity is not known, her own social identity is not known. Her sociosexual definition reads: sex (−), marital status (−), degree (x). Having no fixed social identity, she can acquire, at least in theory, any social identity. It is this availability that makes her so precious to Emma. Harriet, systemless, is like a wild card; therefore, Emma can annex her and use her as the basis of her own system. Since Harriet is structurally more important than either Jane Fairfax or Miss Bates, Transgressions against patriarchal order involving Harriet are more radical than those involving Jane and Miss Bates.

Discussion of the Punishments can be organized around the various characters involved. There are Punishments linked to Jane Fairfax, to Mr and Mrs Elton, and to Harriet Smith.

1 *Emma hears Jane admired. Emma is apparently snubbed by Jane. Emma is used by Frank to hide his attachment to Jane.* This Punishment, relatively minor, serves nevertheless as a partial rectification of the system of patriarchal order. It emphasizes the fact that Jane, unlike Harriet, is inaccessible to Emma's machinations. Like Katharina in *Taming*, Emma experiences the discomfiture of the biter bit. Forced into a passive role, she who uses becomes she who is used.

2 *Emma is proposed to by Mr Elton*. Emma suffers temporary erosion of her social position. In the normal order of things, Mr Elton ought not to aspire to the hand of Miss Woodhouse since, in the question of degree, he is (−) while she is (+). Emma, however, has herself meddled with degree by encouraging Harriet to aspire to Mr Elton, and the perturbation she causes engulfs her.

3 *Emma is patronized by Mrs Elton*. She is forced to yield precedence to Mrs Elton at the Weston's ball. Mrs Elton, a distorted reflection of Emma's own attempt at domination, is presented in the novel as an unsympathetic character. She is, nevertheless, an instrument of justice and strengthens patriarchal order, since it is as a representative of that order that she bases her claim to supremacy over Emma. Emma may be Miss Woodhouse, but Mrs Elton is a bride and has as her sociosexual definition married woman (+), degree (−), compared to Emma's unmarried woman (−), degree (+). As in other cases we have seen (KD), when patriarchal order is seriously threatened, sex takes precedence to class, since Mrs Elton's (+), due to her status as *Mrs*, is a male principle expressing itself in indirect form.

4 *Emma sees Harriet aspire to become Mrs Knightley*. In the privileged circle of gentry and near-gentry who gravitate around Emma, Harriet is an interloper, imposed by Emma's will. To regularize her presence, she must

achieve marriage with a male member of that circle. In a curious echo of the 'tripleness' present in many folktales, she makes three attempts and experiences three failures. Deluded by a self-deluding Emma, she looks unsuccessfully first to Mr Elton, then to Frank Churchill. Refusing further dependence, she imagines herself the wife of Mr Knightley. At this crucial point in the novel, Harriet, Emma's creature, is transformed into Emma's *golem*. Emma's system of order, already weakened, is shattered when Harriet, its cornerstone, is no longer secured. As Harriet moves from submissiveness to self-assertion in relation to Emma, the latter, overwhelmed by the confusion she herself has brought into being, moves from self-assertion to submissiveness in relation to patriarchal order. She comes to accept the fact that she cannot exercise dominance in her own right; she must not initiate, only reflect. She must die as Miss Woodhouse and be reborn as Mrs Knightley. Thus will Mrs Elton be confounded and Emma's own superior status reconfirmed.

Serenity is therefore re-established, but at Harriet's expense. Following Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism*,[15] we might say that Harriet is Emma's – and upper-class Highbury's – *pharmakos*: she pays for Emma's sins. As the novel ends, Jane, formerly threatened with expulsion, is now reincluded; she will no longer have to be a governess. Emma, sufficiently humbled, is also reincluded; she will, it is hoped, cause no more trouble. Harriet, on the other hand, is expelled; she is cast down into the lower social circle of Robert Martin and his family. The discovery that her father was a tradesman makes her retroactively ineligible for Emma's circle, even for one of its less exalted members, Mr Elton. She is now just eligible enough so that Robert Martin may marry her without too many problems, but not so eligible that a humble gratitude for being married at all is not in order. The proper hierarchy of male over female, previously placed in jeopardy by Emma, is therefore no longer anywhere in danger of being overturned.

Yet patriarchal order, in righting itself, does not go back to an ideal form. It has had to accept a rather disturbing modification. Although the law of androcracy is firmly reasserted, that of patrilocality is contravened. Matrilocal residence is instituted for the Knightleys; they join Mr Woodhouse at Hartfield. Thus, the original locus of perturbation still remains, as an uneasy synthesis of patriarchal and matriarchal elements comes into being. With such serious traces of anomaly persisting, the reader may well wonder if Patriarchy Triumphant is quite so triumphant after all.

LES PRÉCIEUSES RIDICULES

In *Les Précieuses* seven characters share four roles: Father (Gorgibus), Proud

15 *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1957)

Princess (Cathos, Magdelon), Suitor 1 (La Grange, Du Croisy) and Suitor 2 (Mascarille, Jodelet). The Law (implicit) is, as always, male over female, and the Transgression – the mocking of Suitor 1 – has already taken place offstage. What the play shows us, then, is the Punishment: how patriarchy's vengeance, using Suitor 2, is put into effect. Suitor 2 has a double function. He is an instrument of justice, since he brings about the Proud Princess's downfall; Cathos and Magdelon are duped into treating social inferiors as social equals. Yet he is also a threat to order, since he disguises his class not to serve patriarchy, but to betray it. He too deserves – and receives – Punishment.

What makes *Les Précieuses* different from KD, *Taming*, and *Emma* is that we have here less the appearance of anomaly within a given system – the Proud Princess within patriarchal order – than the confrontation of two antagonistic and equally organized systems: the order of preciosity challenges the order of patriarchy. The Proud Princesses of the other texts are, for all their capacities for disruption, merely 'sports,' non-conforming individuals. True, they may be described as 'systems,' but only in the sense that any pattern of behaviour organizes experience and can therefore provide a potential model for imitation.

Preciosity, on the other hand, is explicitly and overtly systematized. Cathos and Magdelon enter into preciosity as into religion, as witness their change of names (Aminte, Polyxène). Preciosity has its sacred tongue: 'Mais de grâce, monsieur, ne soyez pas inexorable à ce fauteuil qui vous tend les bras il y a un quart d'heure.'[16] This is inaccessible to the profane: 'je ne puis rien comprendre à ce baragouin' (p 103). It has its vestments: 'Que vous semble de ma petite-oie? La trouvez-vous congruente à l'habit?' (p 107). It has its rites: 'Il faut qu'un amant, pour être agréable, sache débiter les beaux sentiments, pousser le doux, le tendre et le passionné, et que sa recherche soit dans les formes' (p 102). It has its Codex and Tablets of the Law: *Artamène, Clélie, La Carte de Tendre*.

It is also in the name of preciosity that marriage is either delayed – 'le marriage ne doit jamais arriver qu'après les autres aventures' (p 102) – or categorically decried: 'je trouve le marriage une chose tout à fait choquante' (p 103). Thus, its threat to patriarchy is clearly revealed. Indeed, Molière's play aside – which may or may not be about provincial, 'inauthentic' *précieuses* as opposed to Parisian, 'legitimate' *précieuses* – there is evidence that preciosity as such was seen by its detractors as a feminism and a threat to the marital state.[17]

16 Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, Coll. 'L'Intégrale' (Paris: Seuil [and Macmillan] 1962) 105. All references to *Les Précieuses* are to this edition.

17 See Micheline Cuénin's introduction to her critical edition of *Les Précieuses ridicules* (Genève: Droz 1973).

Cathos's and Magdelon's downfall is correctly perceived by Gorgibus as Punishment for Transgression: 'Oui, c'est une pièce sanglante, mais qui est un effet de votre impertinence, infâmes!' (p 111) Yet Gorgibus himself, a staunch if ineffectual defender of patriarchy, does not remain untouched; he becomes a victim of guilt by association: 'Ils se sont ressentis du traitement que vous leur avez fait, et cependant, malheureux que je suis! il faut que je boive l'affront' (p 111). Thus, the victor leaves behind him a devastated field on which enemy and sympathizer suffer alike. Moreover, this victory is not total, since Cathos and Magdelon, unlike the Proud Princess in the other three texts, do not recant: 'je jure que nous en serons vengées, ou que je mourrai en la peine' (p 111).

The play which began with a call to vengeance by the representatives of patriarchy ends with a call to vengeance by the representatives of preciosity. Cathos and Magdelon remain without husbands; La Grange and Du Croisy remain without wives. The locus of patriarchy, marriage, is still perturbed. It is as though both systems have won and both systems have lost simultaneously. We appear to be left – at least for the time being – with no system at all.[18]

18 The texts examined do not exhaust the possibilities of the Proud Princess, especially if she is defined in the widest possible sense: any manifestation of female assertiveness in the midst of patriarchal order. As additional examples of the sequence Law-Transgression-Punishment-Reconciliation, I offer (1) the Titania-Oberon subplot in *A Midsummer's Night Dream* as well as, in more elliptical form, the frame of the play, the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta, and (2) the Hot Lips Houlihan sequence in *M.A.S.H.* Moreover, there is usually a Proud Princess or two lurking in much of what Hollywood produces. The sequence Law-Transgression-Punishment-Atonement-(Forgiveness at zero) exists in Hans Christian Andersen's *The Swineherd*: Law: patriarchal order; Transgression: the princess refuses to marry the prince and scorns his gifts; Punishment: the prince, disguised as a swineherd, tricks the princess into kissing him, then scorns her in turn; Atonement: the princess repents not having married the prince in the first place.

The sequence Law-Transgression-Punishment-(Reconciliation) does not, of course, belong only to the order of Patriarchy Militant. By reversal of (+) and (−) in the categorizations it could easily be adapted to texts representing Matriarchy Militant, if such existed. It could also, with modifications, be applied to diverse texts representing diverse forms of hierarchical order. Griselda, taken as an example of a 'testing' story, could be described in terms of Law-Punishment-Reconciliation. There is no Transgression, since Griselda has never violated patriarchal order. (The Marquis, to test her, claims that her marriage to him has violated class order.) The testing itself can be considered as a Punishment, since it involves the inflicting of pain and loss. Reconciliation comes when Griselda is considered to have 'passed' and the testing stops. *The Book of Job* is another interesting case. Here, all the motifemes we have been considering appear, but the order Transgression-Punishment is reversed. Law: righteous behaviour; Punishment: testing; Transgression: Job 'fails' – he questions the justice of God; Reconciliation = Atonement: Job repents of his temerity; and Forgiveness: Job is reinstated.

Another modification of the sequence yields Law-Punishment, a description suited to many of Kafka's narratives.

The ideological content of patriarchal order may be recapitulated thus: androcracy corresponds to the natural order of the universe; consequently, self-love and self-assertiveness in women are unnatural; if they appear, they should be suppressed. The 'unnaturalness' of female self-love and self-assertiveness functions as the basic axiom of the system. Nevertheless, the self-evident quality of this axiom can be called into question not only, as is being done at present, by avowed iconoclasts, but by the very functioning of the literary text as text. If, as Sartre has told us, 'les conduites spontanées en passant à l'état réflexif perdent leur innocence et l'excuse de l'immédiateté: il faut les assumer ou les changer' and if the writer, 'du seul fait qu'il propose en silence au lecteur son image ... la lui rend insupportable,'[19] then merely to reflect patriarchal values in a literary text is, whether intentionally or not, to take one's distance from them, or at least to provide manœuvring space for the reader to do so if he likes.

In the four texts examined, varying degrees of distance may be discerned: little or none in KD and *Taming*, considerable in *Emma* and *Les Précieuses*. This distance takes the form of tensions unresolved, which appear most clearly in the movement from Negation-Disequilibrium to Reaffirmation-Equilibrium Restored and affect particularly the most variable and troublesome of the motifemes, Reconciliation. Thus, whereas patriarchy triumphs almost unequivocally in KD and *Taming*,[20] in the other two texts, in order to re-establish at least the principle of androcracy, it has to pay a very heavy price: the loss of patrilocality in *Emma*, the disappearance of marriage in *Les Précieuses*.

Thus, whether explicitly or implicitly, the principles of patriarchal order can indeed be contested; if this happens, then various secondary systems developed within the sociocultural context of patriarchal order may need to be mobilized in its defence. These may serve both as apologiae and as grids of interpretation. Three such grids are here offered as examples.

19 *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?*, Coll. 'Idées' (Paris: Gallimard 1948) 122–3

20 It should, however, be noted that in *Taming*, more complex than KD, rather more manœuvring space is made available to the reader if he wishes to take advantage of it. And, indeed, certain twentieth-century commentators, disturbed by the crueler aspects of the play, have felt the need to do so. Thus, Mark Van Doren tries to justify – or at least explain – the brutality of the 'taming' by presenting it as a necessary consequence of the genre *farce*: 'The interest of the audience will be in the devices, not in the persons who work them or upon whom they are worked. A certain callousness will be induced to form in the sensibilities of the beholder ... The practitioner in farce ... must possess the art of insulating his audience's heart so that it cannot be shocked while the machinery hums.' He also defends Shakespeare against possible charges of being what the more radical feminists like to call a 'male chauvinist pig': *The Taming of the Shrew* ... leans ... on a doctrine which Shakespeare must have adopted in cold blood, for on the evidence of the other plays, it was not his own. This is the doctrine of male superiority' (*Shakespeare* [1939] reprint in *Shakespeare's Comedies: An Anthology of Modern Criticism*, ed. Laurence Lerner [Baltimore: Penguin 1967] 56–7)

1 *Psychoanalytic.* In M. Loeffler-Delachaux's *Le Symbolisme des contes de fées*, a commentary with a Jungian slant, there is a table schematizing 'le symbolisme du Roi, de la Princesse et du Prince Charmant.'[21] It is the symbolism attached to the Princess and to Prince Charming that is here pertinent. We are told that the Prince corresponds to 'Le Conscient (positif-actif)'; he is evoked by the verbs 'combattre,' 'pénétrer,' 'féconder.' The Princess, on the other hand, represents 'L'Inconscient individuel (négatif-passif)'; she is evoked by the expression 'consentir à la pénétration, puis engendrer de nouvelles formes.' If we disregard the psychoanalytic system as such, which does not here concern us, and look only at the specific characteristics that must exist if the system is to function, we can see that Prince Charming, for whatever reason, represents dominance, whereas the Princess represents submission. If we then consider the behaviour of the figures we have called the Proud Princess, we see that by not conforming to the pattern required of Princesses she would, if inserted into the system, disrupt its operation. Her behaviour must therefore appear as an act of sabotage to be deemed illegal. She is not passive, and since by her lack of passivity she hinders or delays marriage she cannot figure as a willing vessel of procreation.

2 *Mythic.* If we follow *Anatomy of Criticism*, the Proud Princess can be interpreted as a 'blocking' character in comedy, the mythos of Spring. A blocking character is one who hinders the crystallization of a new, desirable society around the hero. The new society is most frequently symbolized by marriage. The Proud Princess, by delaying marriage, delays the establishment of this new order. She is a character to be corrected and reformed (Punishment, Reconciliation), or, if not reformable, to be eventually thrust out (Punishment).[22]

3 *Socio-theological.* The value system of patriarchal order has solid theological roots. Consider the following analysis of the Wife of Bath in *The Canterbury Tales*:

> The 'feminine' and 'masculine,' the *resoun* and *sensualitee* [*sic*], are components of every human soul ... The sinful soul, whether that of a man or a woman, was one whose feminine aspects reigned over the masculine ... The inability of the 'masculine' to control the 'feminine' and to live with it in a proper 'marriage' is the allegorical theme of most ... anti-feminist narratives.[23]

21 (Paris: L'Arche 1949) 102

22 It is significant that Frye, who considers the female *alazon* to be rare, nevertheless cites both Katharina and the *précieuse ridicule* [*sic*] as examples: *Anatomy of Criticism*, 172–3.

23 Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press 1966) 94–5

If, as in this frame of reference, 'sin is the turning of the ordinance of God "up-so-doun"' (p 94), then male/female = right side up, whereas female/male = 'up-so-doun,' and the Proud Princess, by definition, is a sinner. She cannot hope to avoid retribution (Punishment), but perhaps, through Reconciliation (Atonement + Forgiveness), she may save her soul at last.

If we remain in *The Canterbury Tales* and turn back to Griselda, the theological aspects of patriarchal order become even more apparent. The Clerk tells us that Griselda's patience and humility are to be allegorically interpreted: 'For sith a woman was so pacient / Vnto a mortal man wel moore vs oghte / Receyuen al in gree that god vs sent / For greet skile is he preue that he wroghte' (p 370). If we wish to try the equation patriarchy = theocracy in another context, we can return to *Les Précieuses* and attempt one more interpretation of the motifeme Punishment in that text. Suppose the argument were restated as follows: this play shows how a woman, by her transgressive behaviour, brings down punishment not only upon herself, but also on all those near her, innocent and guilty alike. We would then have something very familiar indeed, the stories of Pandora and of Eve, the basic patriarchal cautionary tales of the Western world.

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