

‘MY FATHER HAD A DAUGHTER’ OR THE ANATOMY OF DESIRE

ADRIANA RĂDUCANU

Yeditepe University

***Abstract:** Grace Tiffany’s debut novel, My Father Had a Daughter, is a vibrant tale of uninhibited desire, revenge and loss in the shape of a fictionalized ‘memoir’ of Judith, Shakespeare’s youngest daughter. The present paper will focus on the diegetic narrator’s trajectory of becoming; the theoretical framework will be informed by some of Deleuze and Guattari’s most important concepts, such as lines of flight, desiring machine, nomad and body without organs.*

***Keywords:** body without organs, desire, immanence, lines of flight, nomad, war machine.*

1. Introduction

The godly say that the dead are not dead, but stored up somewhere, and that one day parts of ourselves we have lost will be gathered and bound like the leaves of a book. Whole and perfect we will be, they say, their eyes lifted up to that other world that sent us here and lent us to ourselves. I am down here, in the valley of the shadow, where I walk by the river and at times skim a stone on the bank of the other side. And I hope very much they are right. (Tiffany 2003: 293)

As a character, Shakespeare appeared for the first time in the anonymous *Memoirs of the Shakespear’s-Head in Covent Garden: By the Ghost of Shakespear* (1755). As Dobson (1992: 212) details it, the narrator encounters Shakespeare’s ghost in a tavern and learns that the playwright is compelled to haunt the place, as a chastisement for his adventurous youth, which started with the deer-poaching at Charlecote. There is a moral side of the story related to the connection between the ghost and the personal circumstances of the average man, subject to ordinary weaknesses. Besides the inevitable assimilation of some of Shakespeare’s characters, the narrative also contains interesting anecdotes about his personal life and career. This is a starting point for later narratives, which substitute the ghost with the fallible man (Franssen 2009:15). The subsequent Romantic and Victorian forays into the makings of an authentic genius, while heavily capitalizing on the author’s mythical status, also attempted to render the mere human physicality of his Stratfordian origins and London trajectories. As Bourdieu (1984: 32) claims, this “popular aesthetic” relies on “the affirmation of the continuity between art and life”, which results in the gradual erosion of art’s privileged, autotelic, and self-consistent status, and its shifted focus towards life. In Shakespeare’s case, arguably

because of the many missing pieces from his biography, this has proved a considerable challenge, as well as an inexhaustible topic for generations of writers. Therefore, his life has been fictionally re-created in pop narratives that, whilst evading the inaccessible historical fidelity, adjust and sometimes construct biographical particulars, so that the Man Shakespeare and the 'Author as Myth' Shakespeare come to overlap (Lanier 2007: 100).

Shakespeare's female family members constitute no exception to this fictional mythologizing/humanizing venture. Building on Virginia Woolf's hypotext *A Room of One's Own*, various feminist fictions mirror the frequent disguise-mechanism of Shakespeare's plays. Their general plot is arguably formulaic, featuring the protagonist, a female relative of Shakespeare's, who, stifled by the rigidly male-controlled constraints of Elizabethan and Jacobean England, dons male clothes and flees to London, to become a player or a poet. Among the most significant titles that constitute a particular branch of this Shakespeare-based mythical/biographical fiction, Lanier (2007: 113) mentions Laura Shaman's *The Other Shakespeare* (1981), Mollie Hardwick's *The Shakespeare Girl* (1983), Doris Gwaltney's *Shakespeare's Sister* (1995), Judith Beard's *Romance of the Rose* (1998), Grace Tiffany's *My Father Had a Daughter* (2003), and Peter W. Hassinger's *Shakespeare's Daughter* (2004).

The focus of the present paper is Grace Tiffany's novel which trails the childhood and adulthood of the author's youngest daughter, Judith Shakespeare. My aim is to explore Judith's life path, by focusing on her transgressive, all-consuming desire to escape the fetters of her gender limitations and, even albeit temporarily, embrace a different identity. Although magnified by the loss of her twin and sprinkled with the seeds of revenge against an ever-absent father, this desire is nevertheless, as I will argue further on, a desire towards life, towards *becoming*. Taking my cue from Margherita Pascucci's (2019: 33) Deleuzian-inspired analysis of *Richard III*, I am going to call this 'affirmative desire', i.e., "a desire which stops desiring to repress itself and creates, coming out of the movement of his becoming, a new place of immanence". Moreover, I will connect this to Deleuze and Guattari's 'lines of flight' and 'war machine' and propose a reading of Judith Shakespeare as a 'Body without organs', the originator of an unfettered subjectivity, as the proper environment for desire to explore and surpass the limits of its becoming.

2. The beginning(s) of desire

At the core of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy lies the idea of 'becoming', famously put forward first by Aristotle, a clear departing point from Plato's 'being'. Following in the Stagirite's footsteps, Deleuze and Guattari also distinguish potentiality from actuality, *dynamis* from *entelecheia*. However, there is a fundamental difference; while for Aristotle, 'becoming' is conducive towards an end-point, a *telos*, for Deleuze and Guattari it marks a certain "everdiffering-from-onself", it is "endless", it "governs every aspect of existence", and it "obliterates all conventional notions of "being"":

Indeed, DG pointedly reevaluate Aristotle's distinction between potentiality and actuality. They stress that potentiality and virtuality – what a thing might become through the inexorability of difference and desire – is in fact its reality, rather than the identity that thing might momentarily seem to take at a moment in time. (Lanier 2014: 27)

The above quotation calls to mind the (in)famous Richard III, the acknowledged master of becoming, deceit, and crass manipulation. At a superficial glance, it would be difficult to imagine two literary characters more at odds with each other than Shakespeare's "Richard Crookback" and Tiffany's Judith Shakespeare. However, Freud's insights into the connections between fiction and life can certainly be expanded to encompass similarities between various fictional characters, thus providing adequate grounds for otherwise improbable associations:

[...] we feel that we ourselves could be like Richard, nay, that we are already a little like him. Richard is an enormously magnified representation of something we can all discover in ourselves. We all think we have reason to reproach nature and our destiny for congenital and infantile disadvantages; we all demand reparation for early wounds to our narcissism, our self-love ... Why were we born in a middleclass dwelling instead of a royal palace? (Freud 1961: 161)

Taking my cue from Freud, I would like to initiate my exploration of Judith's character and her desire by remarking on the shared features between her and that of the much-maligned Shakespearean villain. I am not taking this reading strategy as far as to argue that Tiffany construed a contemporary, female counterpart of the last of the Plantagenets. Nevertheless, separated as they are by their inner (im)morality, authorial intentions, and genre conventions, the two characters share a certain *ruthlessness* of desire, fuelled by the unusual circumstances of their being in the world. Richard's frustration with the unbecomingness of his body, his underprivileged position of a third son, and his own mother's cold, hostile attitude towards him resonate with the circumstances of Judith Shakespeare's fictional presence.

Firstly, there is the anomaly of her birth, since she has a copy (or *is* a copy of one organism, as her twin, Hamnet, was born ten minutes before her); secondly, she is a girl child; thirdly, the very beginning of the narrative introduces her as the daughter of a mother whose "wild envy" threatens to "choke her" when, herself deprived of marital affection, is exposed to the daily witnessing of the deep bond between her children (Tiffany 2003: 2). Furthermore, Judith inhabits an unconventional family-structure, where the father is ever-absent, the mother is generally emotionally unavailable, and Uncle Gilbert, the father's brother, is an awkward, albeit constant presence. All these narcissistic wounds are, in Deleuze and Guattari's view, solid foundations for interpreting the character in terms of lines of flight, war machine, and Body without Organs. As what follows will argue, the concepts coined by Deleuze and Guattari, reflected by the narrative, can be directed towards the realization of the character's potentiality, firmly opposing the actuality of the adverse biographical circumstances.

The novel begins *in medias res* with the image of a semi-pestilential riverbank due to the "offal dumped willy-nilly by housewives upstream", the playground and the looking-glass of twin children: "When Hamnet and I looked together and stayed still enough, it was easy to imagine that I was he and he was I, and that truly we were four" (Tiffany 2003: 1). This suggestion of an early conflict between the water's stagnation and the fluidity, multiplicity of the twins' reflected images is an early signifier of the protagonist's future trajectory, shaped by her constant attempts to reject a Platonian 'being' and embrace the Aristotelian 'becoming'. As Deleuze and Guattari explain it, the lines of flight articulate an escape strategy from an obstacle, consequently forging the lines of becoming. In

Tiffany's tale, the obstacle is paradoxically one of *absence*, as it is precisely the father's infrequent presence in the household, for which the twins compensate by mimetically constructing a private world of make-believe, by acting, and reading into his plays. Judith is the main initiator of these childhood games; significantly, her overpowering thirst for pre-eminence contaminates selfless, unconditional sisterly affection and explicates it as the consequence of Hamnet's unfailing obedience to her whims, his not running "riot to my desires", his constant willingness to entertain "all and any of my ideas and plots", as well as his being "the willing reflection of my spirit" (Tiffany 2003: 4). Thus, to the interiorization of an unconventional family structure – which she will betray with lines of flight – she counterposes a form of exteriority (power games with an obedient Hamnet) that from the very beginning of the novel announces her own interiority, directed towards multiplicity.

In *Dialogues*, Deleuze claims that Richard III, far from being a classic case of "trickstering" who cheated his way onto the throne, is one who "does not simply want power, he wants treason" (Deleuze and Parnett 1987: 40). In my reading of Tiffany's narrative, Judith is not a protagonist who simply wants recognition, but one who desires power - over her brother, over her father, later on over her romantic fling, Nat Field, ultimately over all those with whom she interacts. Hence, Richard's absolute treachery read as line of flight mirrors Judith's dreams of power; notably, such dreams are defined by an overwhelming need for an audience, charged with beholding her visions of becoming, despite (or precisely because of) the gender limitations.

One of the most important features of the lines of flight, as introduced by Deleuze, is the so-called evil dimension: "A flight is a sort of delirium. To be delirious [*délirer*] is exactly to go off the rails (...) There is something demoniacal and demonic in a line of flight" (ibid.). Judith's childhood recipes confess to the making of an "off the rails" character and reflect her early allegiance to the world of sorcery and political intrigue that outlines plot, character, and setting in her father's *Macbeth*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *Richard II*. Bearing bizarre names, such as "Horror Soup", "Death Juice", and ingredients of "human toes and rats' bane and papists' tongues and cooking times of a thousand years", they echo the parent's plays where people comment on murder, on "a murderous moneylender" and "about a poor young English king who got stabbed in the prison cell" (Tiffany 2003: 6-7). Significantly, in terms of desire-forging, this gradual exposure to the father's works of imagination has different consequences on the Shakespeare children. While Susanna and Hamnet merely clamour for the right to see the plays, Judith's desire is to be part of one (idem: 9). Unconfessed to anyone, this repressed desire mutates into the production of a new self of a new subject, the free author of a new composition of events. As the following section will reveal, this firm refusal of personal fixity embraces a philosophy of becoming, tragically oblivious to the consequences of its enactment.

3. Becoming a body without organs

In Tiffany's novel, the much-documented historical reality of the plague, responsible for frequently bringing the Elizabethan thespian universe to a standstill, is fictionalized as more of Judith's dabbling into the occult. Her spell calling for plague in London (followed by the father's homecoming) transgresses the safe

boundaries of filial affection and becomes the manifestation of ruthless, dark desire, not only for the return of the father, but also for the recognition of her uncanny power over his comings and goings. To Hamnet's concern regarding the potentiality of brutal death for countless children, she callously points out that "they will be London children", therefore strangers to them (Tiffany 2003: 18), "acres more wicked" than their local playmates (idem: 19). The father's return, albeit short-lived, establishes Judith's reputation as a "fine spell-caster" in her twin's eyes (idem: 26), a title which she proudly acknowledges, although it paradoxically frightens her.

Tragically, her successful experimenting with arcane forces inadvertently causes Hamnet's death by drowning, after yet another spell – cast for the same reason – in the middle of the night, by the same river that has witnessed all their childhood games, now turned into the gate to death. This narrative tragic peak and the complex array of emotions it releases, stretching from the survivor's guilt to the all-consuming desire to punish the author/father for turning this death into art immortal trigger a profound transformation of Judith's character into what can be read from a Deleuzian perspective, as a Body without Organs: "The BwO is what remains when you take everything away. What you take away is precisely the phantasy, and significances and subjectifications as a whole" (Deleuze, Guattari 1994a: 151). The tragic death of her twin thus becomes for Judith an emptying of "phantasy, and significances and subjectifications as a *whole*" (ibid., emphasis mine), a state when everything is taken away – structured organism, meaningful *signifiance*, power of subjectification – and what remains is the immanence of desire.

In *The Highest Altar*, a book on human sacrifice, Patrick Tierney argues that the successful twin symbolizes the society of the living, and the unsuccessful one, his shadowy double – "the one who was sacrificed and then buried under the cornerstone, in order to deal with the Underworld, propitiate the gods, and protect the city" (Atwood 2002: 40). There is a similar mechanism at work in Tiffany's novel; the successful (because alive) twin is compelled to re-fashion herself in/for the society of the living, while the unsuccessful (dead) Hamnet becomes the revered sacrifice which will haunt Judith throughout her life journey. Thus, Hamnet's death is no ordinary death; it can be read as a ground-breaking 'event', as a philosophical concept almost. Hamnet's tragic demise, because of its incommunicability in terms of affect and its everlasting effects, challenges the conventional understanding of time; moreover, it also serves as a magnifier, a reminder of Judith's anterior desire of unfettered becoming. In Deleuze and Guattari's words (1994b: 158):

It is no longer time that exists between two instants; it is the event that is a meanwhile [un entre-temps]: the meanwhile is not part of the eternal, but neither is it part of time-it belongs to becoming. The meanwhile, the event, is always a dead time; it is there where nothing takes place, an infinite awaiting that is already infinitely past, awaiting and reserve. This dead time does not come after what happens; it coexists with the instant or time of the accident, but as the immensity of the empty time in which we see it as still to come and as having already happened, in the strange indifference of an intellectual intuition. All the meanwhiles are superimposed on one another, whereas times succeed each other.

There is a certain Nietzschean echo discernable through Judith's state and actions after her twin's death; this is not to say that the work of mourning and

melancholia does not take its due course. But, overall, we witness the character's superimposing her devastating survivor's guilt onto previous perceptions of her own problematic situatedness in the household. In that sense, elaborations on the 'event' can shed light onto Judith's affirmative, desire-building coming to terms with her brother's death: "There is a dignity of the event that has always been inseparable from philosophy as *amor fati*: being equal to the event, or becoming the offspring of one's own events – "my wound existed before me; I was born to embody it" (Deleuze, Guattari 1994b: 159).

Violently cut off from twinhood, Judith will consequently oppose disarticulation to the organization of the organism, free experimentation to the power structure of *signifiante* and finally nomadism to the suppression of subjectification. She will become, in Deleuze and Guattari's (1994a: 153) words, "matter that occupies space to a given degree – to the degree corresponding to the intensities produced", a BwO as "the *field of immanence* of desire, the *plane of consistency* specific to desire (with desire defined as a process of production without reference to any exterior agency, whether it be a lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it" (idem: 154).

This desire is active in the presence of a BwO, "under one relation or another" (idem: 165). As I have mentioned in the previous section, Judith's 'fall into desire', the re-arranging of the self in a BwO, was initiated before the tragic event of her brother's death, with him as faithful accomplice to her manifestations of desire; post-event, it will continue with a temporary re-location in London, where she will oppose her gender-limited "intensities" to a world of male power and domination. Thus, in Badiou's words, a private world-shattering 'event' will paradoxically generate "Unlimited becoming", the ontological realisation of the eternal truth of the One, the infinite power [puissance] of Life". As such, in no way it can be perceived as a void, or a stupor, separated from what becomes:

To the contrary, it is the concentration of the continuity of life, its intensification. The event is that which donates the One to the concatenation of multiplicities. We could advance the following formula: in becomings, the event is the proof of the One of which these becomings are the expression. This is why there is no contradiction between the limitless of becoming and the singularity of the event. The event reveals in an immanent way the One of becomings, it makes becoming this One. The event is the becoming of becoming: the becoming(-One) of (unlimited) becoming
(http://parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia02/parrhesia02_badiou02.pdf: 38)

4. London calling

In Spinoza's (2000: 171) thought, *conatus* represents any being's "essential and intrinsic disposition to preserve" itself. A person's well-being is that which ensures the capacity for self-preservation, whereas the bad is that which hinders that capability; involved in self-preservation is desire (*appetito*), translated as capacity for action. Pleasure and joy derive from the capacity for action, whereas pain stems from the incapacity to act; moreover, according to Spinoza, pain is passion only, and not action, whereas joy is both pleasure and action. To illustrate this in Tiffany's novel, Judith continues the forging of the BwO by couterposing joy, pleasure, and the action of going to London after two years marked by the devastating pain (as passion, inaction) caused by the loss of her brother. This cluster of mourning-related affects accompanies another type of desire, that of exposing her father's callous adoption/adaptation of his son's death in *The Twelfth*

Night, “a comedy, a monstrous lie to please the public, no doubt to end in a gleeful morris dance” (Tiffany 2003: 67). It is this multi-folded desire which constitutes the grounds for the utmost “mobility”; as Bennet (2001: 28) notices, albeit in a different context, such mobility “is widest when is not random, erratic or too fast”; similarly, “space for becoming is greatest” when it is not the single *telos*.

Judith’s escape to London involves a disguise, a temporary exchange of identity. To survive in the metropolis while pursuing her dream of acting, as well as punishing her father’s cynical appropriation of the family tragedy, Judith dons man’s clothes. In Deleuze and Guattari’s (1994a: 277) words, she therefore becomes a war machine:

When the man of war disguises himself, as a woman, flees disguised as a girl, it is not a shameful transitory incident in his life. To hide, to camouflage oneself, is a warrior function, and the line of flight attracts the enemy, traverses something and puts what it traverses into flight: the warrior arises in the infinity of a line of flight.

The war machine thus creates the possibility for transformation to occur, it represents a site and a condition of possibility; furthermore, it is algebraic, and functions according to the logic of numbering, that which organizes the world to become. It also emerges in conjunction with the nomadic people, whose very existence is pure deterritorialization. To illustrate, in the novel, as a nomad, as a runaway girl disguised as Hieronymus Chupple, an enterprising lad with knowledge of the letters (Tiffany 2003: 88), Judith manages to find work in the Cardinal’s Cap inn, where “the ale and food was good but the patron somehow degenerate”, a place “which indulged a taste for bawdy talk, and sometimes more than talk (idem: 92). This less than respectable environment, by its very proximity to the theatres, allows Judith to closely watch the plays, and thus firmly immerse herself into her father’s thespian universe. Interestingly, she approaches these daily, strategic *reconnaissance* field trips in a double capacity; she is both an outsider, a traveller from elsewhere, a stranger to the inner workings of the Globe and the other theatres, and also an insider, the over-enthusiastic daughter with a previous privileged access to her father’s magic. This double posture enables her to critically assess the plays; the narrative renders such criticism as an echo of Hamlet’s reprimand of the exacerbated acting method, since she gets repelled by “a man or boy [who] did the emphasis ill or marred all with a distracting gesture” and wonders about “how my father bore with their folly” in spite of their overall crafty performance (Tiffany 2003: 96).

Armed with direct knowledge of her father’s theatre, plays and fellow actors, Judith (this time as Castor Popworthy) becomes a lodger of Henry Condell’s and gets to utter her first lines on the stage. This new line of flight, marked by a plausible forsaking of her gender characteristics, is arguably the refined result of “a making strange, or ‘deterritorialization’ of bodily experience, a disruption of its usual habits of posture, movement facial expression, voice” (Bennet 2001: 25). Almost immediately, in the highly competitive world of the Renaissance English theatre, in her capacity as the newest, most promising addition to the Globe, she colludes with the boy-actor Nathan Field’s own need for recognition, fame, and glory. The price he demands in order not to have her gender identity revealed is her virginity, and he obtains it without difficulty. Thus, the pact of youthful lust that brings on her wilful, hasty submission to Nat Field’s desire resembles the “masochist body” who, at his master’s request “dons horse gear - bridle, bit,

harness - and submits to carefully-timed, systematic whipping”; this regimen can be construed as an “attempt to create a new circuit of intensities, a new flow exchange among man, woman, and horse” (idem: 26-27). Significantly, this rushed consummation of youthful lust does not replace Judith’s original purpose to perform in her father’s plays. Instead, Nate’s misplaced remark about girls’ inability to act (Tiffany 2003: 148) reterritorializes her temporarily forgotten desire, which is actualized when she disposes of his rue (a plant consumed by boy actors to prevent their voices from cracking) and, as a last-minute replacement, she gets to stand in for him as Viola in *The Twelfth Night*. Her performance is exceptional, arguably because it challenges the limits of what was permissible in the strictly gender-based world of the Elizabethan theatre. Judith’s dramatic talent, her extraordinariness can be understood in terms of Deleuze and Guattari’s insights into the work of “itinerant labourers”. According to them (1994a: 364) “itinerant laborers – masons, carpenters, smiths” travelled extensively at the time of the building of the old Gothic cathedrals; at these multiple, scattered sites, “so skilled are the stone carvers in stone cutting, that they need make no reference to an architect blueprint, to a theoretical *eidōs*”. Instead, they manage to collapse the “static relation form-matter” which “tends to fade into the background in favour of a dynamic relation, material forces” so that it is “the cutting of the stone that turns it into the material capable of holding and coordinating forces of thrust, and of constructing higher and longer vaults”; such vaults are “no longer a form, but the line of a continuous variation of the stones” (ibid.). Similarly, Judith’s performance creatively departs from her father’s “architect blueprint”, while her “skilled” ‘mistakes’ – admittedly also caused by the excitement of the *debutante* – can be read as a sample of what Deleuze and Guattari (1994a: 368) designate as “nomad science”, a form of production in excess of the disciplinarity of the State’s “royal science”. Thus, the famous “*My father had a daughter lov’d a man*” becomes “*My father had a daughter was a man*” (Tiffany 2003: 159). Arguably, this slight turn of verse both confesses to the fluidity of gender boundaries that paradoxically gained her access into a forbidden world and temporarily rewrites the loss of the past albeit at the expense of obliterating the self. Judith’s most significant ‘addition’ to a play meant to entertain and mollify pain and loss involves a (non)utterance, a silence that can be construed as a symbolical castigation of the author’s callous appropriation of tragic fact to create joyful and optimistic art:

We stared at each other, the boy and I, and then I made my last mistake, which haply no one noted: I could not forbear mouthing along with my twin the lines that only he was meant to say: *Were you a woman,/ I should my tears let fall upon your cheek,/ And say, “Thrice welcome, drowned Viola!”* (Tiffany 2003: 161)

5. Conclusion

Judith’s London adventure ends when she is recognized by her father and swiftly packed off back to Stratford. Once there, she must face the consequences of her flight and the gossip of the townspeople, who, nevertheless, like her mother, attribute her actions not to “mere waywardness”, but to “something nearer to madness” (Tiffany 2003: 186). Interestingly, her London adventure reconciles her to the typical life of a maiden in a small, provincial town; desire(s) fulfilled thus become(s) experience in terms of both gender limitations and empowerment, since she confesses to her mother that London is “a wondrous place for man or boy”

although “it affords little scope for a woman” (idem: 187). Nevertheless, true to her newly gained freedom and ability to act upon limiting circumstances, Judith occasionally breaks the confines of respectable behaviour. On the tragic occasion of Edmund Shakespeare’s death by fever, yet again disguised as a boy, Judith drinks herself into a stupor. Years after, she returns to the big city and briefly resumes her affair with Nate Field, this time from a site of power granted by her privileged position as the daughter of a father comfortably situated in the circle of aristocratic patrons of the arts. However unconventional and wild, these brief interludes do not make a considerable dent in the armour of healthy ordinariness of her (relatively) well-adjusted persona.

What about *affirmative desire*, then? What is left there after a fictional journey marked, as it has been argued so far, by lines of flight, war machine, nomadic science and BwO? Does the return to the point of origin signal the death of Judith’s *élan vital*, to use Bergson’s term, the unquestioning and unquestionable re-arranging of selfhood? The end of the novel extends a new challenge to the architecture of Judith’s hunger for becoming, when Shakespeare himself reveals desire to his daughter as *the* mark of the entire clan, of Hamnet, who “had the Shakespeare blood” and “was mad for fantasies”, of the “Grandfer” who in order to “make good his application for a coat of arms” devised a tale about “his ancestry” (idem: 284), and of Edmund, who died as a young actor, in London. This acknowledgment of desire as a Shakespearean genetic code, since it is made by the most desirous of them all, who had forsaken family ties and affection to carve magic art in London, interestingly opens new, ultimate paths for becoming. When the father asks the daughter to have the “real courage to promise thy care and life’s company to another” (287), he actually engraves on her body and mind his own desire for the continuity of the family, arguably as a transgenerational act of reparation for major personal fallacies. Symbolically, the novel explains the mystery of the “best bed” which is gifted as a wedding present to Judith and Tom Quiney (288). However, there is no adequate analysis of desire which fails to consider the end of desire, no becoming without the ultimate becoming. This is the final interrogation into the workings of becoming, of beginnings and of endings with which an anguished Judith confronts her dying author-father:

If our lives are leant to us, does that mean that when they leave us they go off to where they began? That they came from a place and go back there? His eyes were closed, and for a moment I thought he had fallen asleep, and not heard me. But then he spoke: ‘I... will... find... out’” (Tiffany 2003: 289)

The various ways in which this arcane message can acquire meaning, fluctuating from the literal to the “less hopeful and more determined” with Will taking centre stage, and finally to Will “finding an out, an exit from our worldly stage” (Tiffany 2003: 290) should give us all pause.

References

- Atwood, Margaret. 2002. *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Badiou, Alain. 2007. “The Event in Deleuze” in *Parrhesia* 2, pp. 37-44. [Online]. Available: http://parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia02/parrhesia02_badiou02.pdf [Accessed 2022, September 24].

- Bennet, Jane. 2001. *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachment, Crossings, and Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction*. Trans. Richard Nice. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Deleuze, Giles, Claire Parnet. 1987. *Dialogues*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, Giles, Felix Guattari. 1994a (1980). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, Giles, Felix Guattari. 1994b. *What is Philosophy?* Trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Graham Burchell. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Dobson, Michael. 1992. *The Making of the National Poet*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Franssen, Paul. 2009. "Shakespeare's Afterlives: Raising and Laying the Ghost of Authority" in *Critical Survey* 21(3), pp. 6-21.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1961. "Some character-types met with in psychoanalytic work" in Philip Rieff (ed.). *Character and Culture*. New York: Collier Books, pp. 152-190.
- Lanier, Douglas. 2007. "Shakespeare: Myth and Biographical Fiction" in Robert Shaughnessy (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 93-114.
- Lanier, Douglas. 2014. "Shakespearean Rhizomatics: Adaptation, Ethics, Value" in Alexa Huang, Elizabeth Rivlin (eds.). *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 21-41.
- Pascucci, Margherita. 2019. "I, that am curtailed" in *Journal for Cultural Research* 23(1), pp. 33-48. [Online]. Available: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14797585.2019.1590919> [Accessed: 2022, September, 24].
- Spinoza, Baruch. 2000 (1677). *Ethics*. G.H.R. Parkinson (ed. and trans.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tiffany, Grace. 2003. *My Father Had a Daughter*. New York: Berkley Books.