

Listening to the Gaoler's Daughter



Kendra Preston Leonard

Silent Film Sound and Music Archive

In this essay, I explore the concept of madness in relation to the Gaoler's Daughter in Two Noble Kinsmen. By examining her supposed madness in the context of music and disordered vocality expressed through song; in light of the idea that one might talk oneself out of the suffering of emotional trauma to wellness; and in terms of her social class, I offer a new interpretation of the character's behavior. I argue that her music is not mad, but rather a specifically ordered collection of songs that she uses both as a means of communication with others and as a device to work through her emotions and find resolution to her situation.

There are madwomen everywhere, and many of them have been the subjects of case studies, if not entire books and subdisciplines of literary criticism. Ophelia, most famously, stands to represent the madwoman in Shakespeare; her counterpart Lady Macbeth helps fill in our understanding of this type. The actions and speech caused by madness in women is so evident to Shakespeare and early modern audiences that even the Third Countryman in *Two Noble Kinsmen* apprises the Gaoler's Daughter as such when she joins with his group's musicians to sing. He finds her a source of entertainment rather than concern:

There's a dainty madwoman, master,
Comes i'th' nick, as mad as a March hare.

If we can get her dance, we are made again;

I warrant her, she'll do the rarest gambols. (III. 5. 73-6)¹

Yet this particular 'madwoman' remains relatively understudied in comparison with Ophelia and Lady Macbeth. This may be for several reasons: *Two Noble Kinsmen*, being a co-authored work, has not always been treated with the same level of scholarship as other works in the Shakespearean canon; the play is not performed as often as the others featuring madness — *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*, and, indeed, it is not a play in which madness is the indicator of political instability, as it is in those three well-known works. In *Kinsmen*, the madwoman in question is not of high birth, and thus her madness has perhaps been thought of as less important to the whole of the work. By examining her supposed madness in the context of music and disordered vocality expressed through song, in light of the idea that one might talk oneself out of the suffering of emotional trauma to wellness, and in terms of her social class, I offer a new interpretation of the character's behavior. I argue that the Gaoler's Daughter's music is not symptomatic of madness but is, instead, a specifically ordered collection of songs that she uses both as a means of communication with others and as a device to work through her emotions and find resolution to her situation.

SONG AND 'MADNESS'

The argument that disordered vocality, specifically inappropriate singing, is a symptom of madness, has been long established as a trope in English early modern literature.² Because of the widespread belief that inappropriate singing was indicative of mental disturbance, the Gaoler's Daughter's vocalizations in *Two Noble Kinsmen* and her immediate branding as a madwoman by the Third Countryman have been taken at face value. Indeed, there is little question in the existing literature on *Two Noble Kinsmen* about the Gaoler's Daughter's madness. Douglas Bruster writes that she is 'grounded in pathetic madness'; and Duncan Salkeld categorizes her as a

'conventional female innocent turned mad lover'.³ David P. Gontar, a psychiatrist trying to medicalize the character's condition argues that, *pace* Foucault, her 'psychic symptoms are not well explained as oblique messages about social and political problems, but rather represent efforts by traumatized women to shield themselves from facts too painful to be assimilated'.⁴ In addition, the criteria for adducing madness in Shakespeare is not merely, as *Hamlet* proves, any such diagnosis by a character from within the play, but such a diagnosis in the presence of certain behaviors deemed by writers of the early modern period to indicate mental disturbance, and such symptoms are well catalogued by contemporary writers. As Marion A. Wells notes in her study of the love-melancholy, with which the Doctor believes the Daughter to be stricken, physician André Du Laurens wrote in 1597 that one afflicted with 'amorous melancholie' is

Quite undone and cast away, the senses are wandering to and fro, up and down, reason is confounded, the imagination corrupted, the talk fond and senseless; the sillie loving worme cannot any more look upon any thing but his idol.⁵

Certainly, in Act Four, the Gaoler describes his daughter as:

continually in a harmless distemper: sleeps little; altogether without appetite, save often drinking; dreaming of another world and a better; and, what broken piece of matter soe'er she's about with the name Palamon lards it, that she farces every business withal, fits it to every question. (IV. 2. 33–8)

Her symptoms are identical to those of love-sickness as described by Jacques Ferrand in the early seventeenth century:

a pale and wan complexion, joined by a slow fever that modern practitioners call amorous fever, to palpitations of the heart, swelling of the face, depraved appetite, a sense of grief, sighing, causeless tears, insatiable hunger, raging thirst, fainting, oppressions, suffocations, insomnia, headaches, melancholy, epilepsy, sadness, uterine fury, satyriasis, and other pernicious symptoms.⁶

One of these other 'pernicious symptoms' is singing. The Gaoler's Daughter sings to herself in III. 4, and in the presence of others in III. 5 and IV. 1, usually a clear indicator of a disordered mind in early modern drama. However, as Gina Bloom writes, any speech by marginalized characters might have been regarded as untrustworthy or as indicative of an unstable mind:

Noting the frequency with which Shakespeare and his contemporaries dramatize the Pauline prescription for femininity — chastity, silence, and obedience — feminist critics have considered the extent to which a rhetoric of female silence structured and limited women's expressive lives in fiction and in reality. Some critics outline methods by which early modern patriarchal systems tried to prohibit women from expressing themselves through the imposition of ideological and physical constraints on women's bodies and the use of legal and social pressures to discourage women from participating in public life. Other critics point to the many examples of women who circumvent restrictions on their voices and speak powerfully despite various cultural pressures to be silent.⁷

But the Gaoler's Daughter's speech contains broad hints that she is in control of her faculties throughout. There are grounds to think that, despite her songs and dissembled words, the Daughter is not mad at all. Her use of music fulfills two very important functions that are linked closely with her attempts to control her situation. First, the Daughter sings and speaks of her disappointing experience with Palamon in metaphors for herself, from her image of herself as a leaky ship to the Duke's chestnut mare. Through these distancing factors that prefigure the 'talking cure' of nineteenth-century psychiatry (about which more below), the Daughter deals with the hurt of being abandoned by Palamon. Second, the Daughter borrows the musical trappings of madness in order to resolve a strangely unmentioned-upon part of her difficult situation: that she might be pregnant by Palamon. She sings so that she — or rather, the playwrights — can make provocative suggestions about her backstory without anyone but the audience listening; those inside the diegesis simply assume that, because of her singing, she is mad and her speech is nonsense. As Wells writes, the

Daughter's use of music is in keeping with early modern beliefs that disordered song was a symptom of love-sickness. However, listening to music and singing could also 'assuage the particular psychosomatic suffering of lovesickness'.⁸ African physician Constantine, whose eleventh-century treatise on health was widely printed and read in the sixteenth century, claimed that, just as the body can be soothed with baths and wine, singing, which requires breath control and regulation of the lungs, vocal folds, and mouth, could calm the mind.⁹

At the beginning of the play, the Gaoler's Daughter's speech is rational, as evidenced by her soliloquy in II. 4, in which she explains her predicament of being in love with a man above her class and attributes the fervor of her lust to her adolescent physical state:

Why should I love this gentleman? 'Tis odds
He never will affect me; I am base.
My father the mean keeper of his prison,
And he a prince. To marry him is hopeless;
To be his whore is witless. Out upon't!
What pushes are we wenches driven to
When fifteen once has found us! (II. 4. 1-7)

She goes on to describe his attributes, finding him physically attractive ('a goodly man') and kind and gentle ('Fairer spoke / was never gentleman'). She admits that he has kissed her: 'Once he kissed me / I loved my lips the better ten days after'. She asks 'What should I do to make him know I love him?' and answers that she shall set him free as her expression of this love and desire, expecting, based on their shared kiss and his positive treatment of her, that he will return her ardor (II. 4. 8-33).

The Daughter continues to speak sensibly in III. 2. She understands that Palamon has not rewarded her release of him with his love but instead has gone after his new(er) love interest ('He has mistook the brake I meant, is gone / after his fancy') (III. 2. 1-2). She discloses her own continuing love or lust for him ('but for one thing /

I care for nothing / and that's Palamon') and realizes that the forest is dangerous for both herself and Palamon (III. 2. 5–6). Far from fantasizing about Palamon's possible death and her father's possible hanging, the Daughter engages in a fact-based stocktaking of her situation. Palamon is unarmed (III. 2. 13) and there are predators in the forest; hanging would be a reasonable punishment for a gaoler who let his charge escape.

Lois Potter suggests that the Daughter is overtaken by love-melancholy in III. 4, in which the Daughter *herself* testifies to her lack of appetite and sleep. Here, Potter writes that the Daughter begins to move uncertainly or erratically, 'her uncertain movements showing her loss of direction'.¹⁰ However, the text from III. 4 is inadequate on its own as a tool for diagnosing the Daughter's madness by early modern standards. Much of the Daughter's speech here is clear and easy to follow. She herself notes that she is 'very cold' (III. 4. 1) and 'very hungry' (III. 4. 11), and she believes that Palamon, despite his prowess in battle, may have died in the woods. She sees a ship in the clouds, perhaps — her first lines suggest that she is looking at the night sky — and adopts the image of the ship as a metaphor for her own distress. The ship tumbles, and she springs a leak: she must be protected from the wind, and turn away from it; the Daughter herself does and needs these things as she cries in the windy night. She envisions an escape from her sadness through a 'carrack of a cockleshell, and sail / by east and north-east' (III. 4. 14–5) to a fantasyland. But even in the next lines, she reasserts her sanity by continuing to realize, as she has before, that her father could be executed for Palamon's escape.

At this point in her soliloquy, the Gaoler's Daughter sings for the first time, and this may be why Potter thinks her mad in this scene. But the Daughter's vocality here does not fit the characteristics of the mad female singer. First, she is alone, in a private — not public — environment. Just as Desdemona's singing in the presence of Emilia is done in a private space and therefore does not suggest inappropriate vocality, the Daughter's singing here is to herself and follows immediately from her comment

about her father's presumed fate. Second, there is no indication as to whether her singing is supposed to be pathetic, happy, or of any particular quality. It can be interpreted as vocalization that, as the text intimates, is simply a way of keeping herself awake; indeed, she calls for 'a prick now, like a nightingale, / to put my breast against; I shall sleep like a top else' (III. 4. 25–6). While we can read double entendre in 'prick', we can also read these lines as the Daughter's fight against sleep and the dangers that being unaware of her surroundings might bring.

The Gaoler's Daughter first sings publicly in III. 5, when she encounters the Schoolmaster and his followers. But her singing here, in which she addresses the company as 'jolly gallants' (III. 5. 64), still does not fall into the category of 'mad' singing. She retains the ship metaphor from the night before, and then might well be singing with the musicians of the group. Instead, she appears to participate in the singing and dancing going on around her. Prior to her entrance, the Second Countryman has called for the Taborer, and the Schoolmaster has called for couples to dance and for the rest of the musicians present to play; thus they are already making music when she enters. Although the Third Countryman declares the Daughter a 'dainty madwoman' (III. 5. 73), the Daughter is sly and wary. She affirms their belief in her madness, but in doing so — 'I would be sorry else' (III. 5. 78) — ironically confirms that she is well aware of her actions and presentation. Certainly her speech in this scene does not suggest true madness, but contrived simplicity and witlessness. Her treatment of the Schoolmaster, in which she declares him a tinker and warns him against raping her, condenses and mirrors Hamlet's feigned madness in the presence of Polonius far too closely not to be viewed with suspicion. Hamlet insults Polonius, offers him dubious advice, and follows up with a warning:

HAMLET: Excellent well. You are a fishmonger.

POLONIUS: Not I, my lord.

HAMLET: Then I would you were so honest a man.

POLONIUS: Honest, my lord?

HAMLET: Ay, sir. To be honest, as this world goes, is to be

one man picked out of ten thousand.

POLONIUS: That's very true, my lord.

HAMLET: For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog,
being a good kissing carrion — have you a daughter?

POLONIUS: I have, my lord.

HAMLET: Let her not walk i'th' sun. Conception is a blessing.
But as your daughter may conceive, friend, look
to't. (*Hamlet* II. 2. 174–86)¹¹

The Gaoler's Daughter's defense against the schoolmaster and his rowdy fellows is similar: she too insults the Schoolmaster, gives him strange advice, and warns him against improper sexual conduct:

GAOLER'S DAUGHTER: I can tell your fortune.

You are a fool. Tell ten; I have posed him. Buzz!

Friend, you must eat no white bread; if you do,

Your teeth will bleed extremely. Shall we dance, ho?

I know you, you're a tinker; sirrah tinker,

Stop no more holes but what you should. (*III. 5. 79–84*)

Hamlet and the Gaoler's Daughter even use the same word, 'buzz', to suggest that their interlocutors are full of useless noise, thus demonstrating that they themselves are capable of such discernment and commenting sanely on their talk (*Hamlet* II. 2. 392; *Two Noble Kinsmen* III. 5. 80).

In IV. 1, in the absence of the Gaoler's Daughter, Wooer proclaims her to be mad, citing her singing to herself by the water. Wooer goes into great detail about her songs beginning at IV. 1. 66: 'She sung much, but no sense', he says, before rattling off a list of lyrics and tunes. But as in the previous passages in which she sings, the Daughter is not doing so in a disorderly or mad way, according to Wooer. She thinks she is alone, and sings songs that continue to help her process what has happened to her. She sings of Palamon's disappearance into the woods without her and of finding

a way to rescue him, even pleading a pardon from the Duke. She sings about her father's execution, which she still fears will take place. And finally, according to Wooer, she sings of not being able to win Palamon's affection, and pledges her continuing love for him. Her songs, rather than confirming her madness, reinforce the concept that she is singing through her grief. Wooer startles her, and she runs away from him, only to be brought home by her uncle.

When she is brought to the Gaoler, the Gaoler's Daughter does at first seem to be nonsensical. But while the Doctor thinks she is utterly mad and that 'her brain coins' fancies with no relation to reality, the Daughter, like Ophelia, is saying something significant about the off-stage action (IV. 3. 40). She says she has forgotten her song, and those around her brush off her comment as an indication of her diseased brain. But what she is saying is crucial information about Palamon and herself, and the reality of her situation. At first she suggests that Palamon will finally pay attention to her if she is dead, picking flowers with Proserpine, but then she remembers that suicides are punished in the afterlife; and she refers to those who are punished as 'we', not 'I'. Just as her more famous counterpart sings of 'being a maid at your window / to be your Valentine', the Daughter, too, sings and speaks of young women used and discarded by men (*Hamlet*, IV. 5. 51). She claims Palamon has seduced hundreds of maids and will sire hundreds of illegitimate children. She demands her wedding gown and states that she must 'lose my maidenhead by cocklight' (IV. 1. 112). In her oblique way, she suggests that Palamon's lovemaking is quick but pleasurable: 'I'll warrant ye, he had not so few last night / as twenty to dispatch; he'll tickle it up / in two hours, if his hand be in' (IV. 1. 36–8). And she references the pain of childbirth and the regrets about having had sex that laboring women of all classes shout during their confinements. All of this raises a question: has the Gaoler's Daughter, in fact, had sex with Palamon? Is she pregnant by him? Must she pretend to lose her maidenhead by cocklight because she will soon begin to show? Does she threaten that she 'twill never thrive else' because, if she is not bedded, giving her a plausible and sanctioned

father for her child, she will resort to abortion, which could leave her unable to bear more children (IV. 1. 113)? Her speech in 4.3 strongly suggests the possibility of her pregnancy: she talks of 'we maids that / have our livers perished, cracked to pieces with love' (IV. 3. 22–23); of going into the 'barley-break', part of a couples' game (IV. 3. 31); and of the damnation that awaits 'Lords and courtiers that have got maids with / child' (IV. 3. 41–42). Her speech that follows only further strengthens the possibility that she is pregnant by Palamon and is trying to communicate this as best she can without putting herself in physical danger, from her father, who has already confessed his anger with her. She continues, 'one would marry a leprous witch to be rid on't, I'll assure you' (IV. 3. 47), hinting that if only Palamon would make her his legitimate wife, he would be spared the 'very grievous punishment' (IV. 3. 45) that is the consequence of 'such a trifle' (IV. 3. 46). The Gaoler's Daughter exits the scene singing of a pledge she has made to love forever, but whether she addresses this to Palamon or to her potential child is unclear.

Having discharged the secret that is causing her such distress without having been chastised or worse, and perhaps having even overheard the Doctor's plan for Wooer to present himself as Palamon, the Gaoler's Daughter has a solution for her situation. She cannot appear to become well miraculously and at once, but with Wooer's intentions clear, she can at least disguise her illicit pregnancy as a legal one. This explains her repeated attempts to have Wooer engage in sex with her. The Daughter is also free to discuss her feelings and thoughts about the solution presented by Wooer with the Gaoler, albeit in terms that the Doctor still hears as 'stuff' (V. 2. 66). By casting Palamon and herself as horses, the Daughter continues to use metaphors for her situation, in this case reassuring her father that she is fully cognizant of the situation: that Palamon will never love her, and will marry Emilia, even making a pun on Emilia's name and calling her 'a miller's mare'. She will accept Wooer, have Palamon's child, and pass it off as her husband's (V. 2. 67). At the end of V. 2, the Daughter's comment that Palamon is 'now at liberty' (V. 2. 96) confirms her sanity and

understanding of everything around her, and her near-final comment that the Wooer 'shall not hurt me' is a final confirmation of what the audience has gleaned from her 'madness': she's no maid (V. 2. 112).

MUSIC AND CLASS

If the Gaoler's Daughter's cues to her activities and condition are apparent at all, why have they been ignored in the scholarship about, and productions of, the play? It is easy to draw comparisons between the Daughter's love-sickness and that of Ophelia. However, the two women could not be more dissimilar. The reactions to Ophelia's and the Gaoler's Daughter's behaviors are treated differently because of class and the women's differing abilities to control their narratives; these reactions help propel the women's trajectories in their respective plays. For Ophelia, as Maurice and Hanna Charney write, madness is what 'enables her to assert her being; she is no longer enforced to keep silent and play the dutiful daughter'.¹² Ophelia's madness is encoded by gestures widely used on the early modern stage: she 'beats her heart' (IV. 5. 5) and 'winks and nods and gestures' (IV. 5. 11). Furthermore, her mentions of suicide, her nonstandard syntax, and her innuendos and allusions indicate to the audience that this is a madness that has taken root in a noblewoman.¹³ All of these behaviours, as well as Ophelia's customary appearance, costume, and props, Elaine Showalter has found, were commonly accepted physical signifiers of women's mental illness, often defined in early modern England as erotomania.¹⁴ Wells concurs:

a pale and wan complexion, joined by a slow fever that modern practitioners call amorous fever, to palpitations of the heart, swelling of the face, depraved appetite, a sense of grief, sighing, causeless tears, insatiable hunger, raging thirst, fainting, oppressions, suffocations, insomnia, headaches, melancholy, epilepsy, sadness, uterine fury, satyriasis, and other pernicious symptoms that are, for the most part, without mitigation or cure other than the [established medical] remedies for love and erotic melancholy.¹⁵

The established medical remedy for such love-melancholy is having sex.

Ophelia's inappropriate vocality, though, is what confirms to Elizabethan audiences her unstable mental condition. As I have written elsewhere, Ophelia's singing is perhaps the most famous connection between madness and song.¹⁶ Leslie Dunn has noted that the relationship between song and madness 'reflects the broader discourse of madness in early modern English culture, with its persistent associations between music, excess, and the feminine'.¹⁷ Audiences who may have missed Ophelia's physical cues would likely have recognized her as mad through her insistence on singing in the presence of Claudius and Gertrude. Ophelia's words and song lyrics are highly symbolic, and Foucault has argued that she serves as a truth-teller, speaking truth to power when she sings and speaks to the court in her madness.¹⁸ Ophelia, a high-born woman, shocks those around her with the bawdy and suggestive content of her songs. As a result of this social disruption, the shaken Claudius and compassionate Gertrude order Horatio to follow Ophelia and watch her closely, as is deserved by her birth. Ultimately, though, Ophelia is allowed to drown, by accident or suicide. Because of Ophelia's class, the cure for madness suggested for the Gaoler's Daughter is so entirely inappropriate that it is not even mentioned.

The response to the Gaoler's Daughter's 'mad' singing itself is somewhat different. The audience hears her singing before any of the characters within the diegesis do, as her first episodes of singing and what to the casual listener might sound like disordered speech occur when she is alone. Unlike Ophelia, she has no serving women to care for her, no court to address with her distracted songs and statements. Her songs are not out of place for a woman of her social standing in the way that Ophelia's are. When she is finally first noticed to be displaying potentially atypical behavior, it is by the Third Countryman, who points her out to his fellows upon their arrival, not her father or the Wooer (III. 5). And while her songs, too, are full of sexual allusions, she also incorporates references to the class differences between herself and Palamon, and her lower, country-based station, as well as references to herself as livestock, suggesting that she understands her body to be disposable property.

Indeed, the reactions to the Daughter's performances are that she is 'harmless' (the Gaoler) and useful for entertainment purposes (the Rustics) (IV. 3. 3). Her lower social status and lack of accompanying attendants means that no one thinks twice when the Daughter remains alone in the woods after freeing Palamon. This treatment is only reversed when the Wooer surprises the Daughter while she is again singing alone and, startled, appears to court an Ophelia-like 'watery death' as she 'sought the flood'; Ophelia, of course, is nonetheless observed, but unaided, in going to hers (IV. 1. 94). The Gaoler and Doctor discuss the Daughter in the same way that Lady Macbeth's woman and the Doctor observe her sleep-walking. Unlike the firm diagnosis of madness and the 'watch and wait' approach counseled by Lady Macbeth's Doctor, the Gaoler's Daughter's physician, hearing of her actions secondhand, prescribes that the Wooer pretend that he is Palamon, court the Daughter, and have sex with her. That the Daughter may be mad is not an issue: consent is given by her father, not her. The Gaoler's Daughter's singing is not heard as the radical disruption that Ophelia's is, and so it is not truly heard at all; no one seems to be listening to the words the Daughter proffers, whereas Ophelia's words and song texts are repeatedly interpreted both within the diegesis and in the scholarly literature.

But because the Gaoler and his Daughter are not of the aristocracy, the Daughter's virginity at the time of marriage is 'but a niceness' (V. 2. 20); she is of a lower class, in which case such premarital sex might be less a scandal; and besides, the Doctor notes, she will be wedded to Wooer as soon as her 'melancholy humor' (V. 2. 40) is relieved. Richard Greaves has written that, statistically speaking, some twenty percent of early modern women engaged in premarital sex.¹⁹ Johanna Rickman has also noted that relatively few law-breakers faced the punishments available to the law, and that consent — such as that the Gaoler gives Wooer — would have meant that this case would likely not have been prosecuted by the church.²⁰ And of course, Anne Shakespeare was pregnant at the time of her wedding. Thus, in part possibly because of class, the Daughter is branded mad and a situation is contrived in which her 'cure'

— ironically possibly the same activity that has led her to her distress — is directed to be delivered to her by way of her father's friend, the Wooer.

THE MUSICAL 'TALKING CURE'

The 'talking cure', or 'talk therapy' was popularized by Josef Breuer in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The primary goal of the therapy is to allow individuals struggling with difficult emotional traumas or disorders to express themselves verbally in order to affect changes in their behavior or emotions. Breuer himself, in developing the practices that would become the talking cure, called it the 'cathartic method', suggesting that through open discussion and revelation of one's fears, obsessions, desires, and other feelings, such emotions could be regulated or managed in such a way that they did not interfere with normal life. Where Ophelia's words show her to be a classic Foucaultian truth-teller, speaking truth to power, the Gaoler's Daughter's texts suggest that she is sanely singing and talking herself through the trauma of being rejected by Palamon.²¹ Indeed, the Daughter's musical texts can be seen as using another modern psychological concept — the five steps of grief defined by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross — in her autonomous talking cure.²² These techniques eventually help the Daughter realize that, while she will still be unhappy about losing Palamon as a lover, she can repair her situation somewhat by accepting the Wooer.

Ophelia's songs appear to be straight from her subconscious, revealing truths, whereas those sung by the Gaoler's Daughter have a linearity that suggests that they move through Kubler-Ross's stages in a way that enables her to get over her broken heart. The Daughter's songs are thematically related to her actions and to those of the characters around her: Ophelia is in the past, but the Daughter remains in the present, identifying her changing situation through her songs.

The Gaoler's Daughter begins her musical talking cure while speaking rationally of the consequences of her freeing Palamon (III. 2). In III. 4, she quotes from three songs, 'For I'll Cut My Green Coat', 'The *George Alow*', and 'Three Fools', and begins her path through Kubler-Ross's stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. The Daughter's denial of Palamon's rejection is manifest in the first of these, in which the Daughter first denies the reality of his rejection and imagines following Palamon wherever he goes, putting herself in the role of a faithful ship's boy. 'The *George Alow*' refers to a naval battle in which the *George Alow* (or *Aloe* or *Aloo*), a ship sailing with its sister craft the *Sweepstake*, is sailing for home when the *Sweepstake* is captured by French brigands and its crew is thrown overboard. The same song allows for the Daughter to express her anger, the next stage in engaging with her grief. The *George Alow*'s crew, furious and out for revenge, pursues the French vessel; when the brigands ask for mercy, the Englishmen of the *George Alow* treat them as they treated the crew of the *Sweepstake*, and throw them overboard to die.²³ This ballad, dating from 1595, is full of anger and the sweet taste of revenge; should Palamon come to her now or need help again, the Daughter sings obliquely, she will show him the same treatment he has shown her. There will be no mercy.

The 'Three Fools' reference here seems to be directed at the Schoolmaster and the Countrymen and Countrywomen who accompany him; there are three of each. The Gaoler's Daughter soon progresses to singing about bargaining, referencing the song 'Chi passa', saying 'Raise me a devil now, and let him play / Chi passa o' th' bells and bones' (III. 5. 86–7). In 'Chi passa', the protagonist sings:

He who passes down this street without
sighing is one who is blessed,
Blessed is he who can well do it
on this royal way.
Show yourself at the window lest I die right now.
Show yourself at the window, for you are
the source of my life, Poor me,

May the sky be your comfort
on this royal way,
Show yourself at the window lest I die right now.

She begs for a glimpse of her lover to assuage her emotional pain, asking for a look to trade for her life and devotion. By calling for the devil to play the song, the Daughter suggests trading her soul in exchange for the relief of her heartbreak; but she herself knows it is an unrealistic and foolish bargain, and she leads the Schoolmaster and his companions on without further singing or much speech at all, a sign that she has entered the depression stage of grief.

In the stages of grief, the Gaoler's Daughter moves from denial, anger, and bargaining to depression and finally to acceptance. The Gaoler, for his part, initially does not think that his daughter is mad, but rather that she is childish, silly, and feigning innocence. The Wooer describes the Daughter as singing 'Willow, willow, willow', in a setting much like that of Ophelia's last reported actions; here it seems that she has passed into depression (IV. 1. 80). Both of the songs she refers to in IV. 1, 'The Broom' and 'Bonny Robin', tell stories of maids betrayed by the men they loved. In IV. 3, the Daughter has long passages of prose that seem to the Doctor and Gaoler as nonsense. But the Daughter's rambling here describes her own depression: she continues to praise Palamon's beauty, but for the most part, her talk is also concerned with her plans to find a way to the afterlife, noting that she must carry silver for Charon, but also that suicides will be punished as sinners. In imagining her fate in either or both the Classical and Christian hell, she begins to understand within the context of society that she has no clear way out of her misery but to continue on and through it. Thus, when the Wooer pretends to be Palamon, the Daughter allows him to kiss her, indicating that she has come to acceptance. In the same scene, the Daughter plays along with the Doctor and her father; she notes the song 'Light o' Love', about a faithless lover. She has come to regard Palamon as unworthy and says so, making fun of him by imagining him as a horse dancing a morris-dance and as coy and scornful,

having stymied the attentions of the Duke's chestnut mare (poking fun at herself) while desiring that of the miller. While the Gaoler takes her talk of Palamon's horse seriously, the Daughter's double-meanings and jokes here signify her own sense of humor has returned. At the end of the scene, she asks the Wooer if he is not Palamon and, with full acceptance of her situation, responds that she knows he does not care for her. Her journey through the grief for her love of Palamon is concluded, and she offers herself to the Wooer.

MUSIC AND MADNESS IN PRODUCTION

Ross Duffin has identified twelve of the Gaoler's Daughter's songs and matched them to likely melodies; while some of these matches are problematic, they nonetheless offer an approximation of the soundscape of the play.²⁴ However, the use of period music for *Kinsmen* appears to be rare; from the available reviews of performances over the past several years, I have found that most stagings use either all twentieth-century popular music, or a mix of popular music and Elizabethan music for dancing; productions using the songs Duffin attaches to the texts or other early modern songs exclusively are very rare. This phenomenon leads me to believe that the music chosen and created for today's productions of *Kinsmen* is done so in such a way as to assist the audience's understanding of the playtext itself as well as the direction from which the troupe and director approach the material and construe it.

Several productions of *Kinsmen* use music to bolster the interpretation of the Gaoler's Daughter as mad, and in most cases, the music is chosen for its abilities to assist in the audience's understanding of the interpretation they are experiencing. At the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, Virginia, the actors regularly provide live music during the pre-show and the interval that relate to the play being performed and the director's or actors' approach to it.²⁵ While many of the troupe's songs for their 2013 production of *Kinsmen* were obviously referencing the titular

nobles, such as Philadelphonic's 'Gimme Some Lovin'', Primus's 'Air is Getting Slippery', and Spin Doctors' 'Two Princes', the troupe also performed several songs that appear to reference the Daughter's talking cure. These include Soul Coughing's song 'Soft Serve', in which the narrator describes the subject of the song as trying to control a situation through words, albeit words that do not seem to quite make sense in the context of the goings-on around them; appropriate for the Daughter's attempt to discreetly explain her relationship with Palamon. This was followed by Mary J. Blige's 'Real Love', in which the first-person narrator sings that she is searching for 'real love', but realizes that there are both false and real suitors. In lyrics that could explicate the Daughter's depressed phase, the narrator exclaims in dismay that she has to end her life because she can't find the true suitor:

Oh when I met you I just knew
That you would take my heart and run
Until you told me how you felt for me
You said I'm not the one
So I slowly came to see
All of the things that you were made of
And now I hope my dreams and inspiration
Lead me towards a real love
[...]
You see I'm searching for a real love
And I don't know where to go
I've been around the world and high and low
And still will never know
How it feels to have a real love
Cuz it seems there's none around
I gotta end it in this way
Because seems he can't be found.²⁶

Johnny Cash's 'Daddy Sang Bass' serves as an allusion to the Gaoler and the Gaoler's Daughter's origins and the function of family in the play; and the final song of the

interval, Loudon Wainwright's 'Daughter', speaks to the Gaoler's state of mind in watching his child suffer and his inability to resist her demands. In this last song, we have an interpretation of the Gaoler-daughter relationship in which the Gaoler's permissiveness of his daughter and desire to see her happy results in allowing — even encouraging — her to engage in the single woman's ultimate permissions-required act of their society: premarital sex.

Other productions provide the Gaoler's Daughter with a narrative that seems to accept the traditional reading of the Daughter as mad but also has some uneasiness embracing it fully. Kate Fleetwood, who played the role in 2000 at The Globe, noted:

I have soliloquies where I'm more or less sane, and later ones when I'm more or less insane. If I play the more mad soliloquies also as direct addresses to the audience they may feel challenged. I hope they think 'we thought we knew you' or feel like 'we know you more now'. The Jailer's [sic] Daughter wants to talk to so many people.²⁷

That Fleetwood feels that her character moves fluidly between sanity and madness suggests that she, too, interprets the character as using her communication skills to return to sanity in a manner convincing and appropriate to the setting. In a 2013 modern-period staging of the play by Dead Playwrights Repertory, Eric Minton writes the Daughter 'is inclining toward insanity from the start, walking on stage and singing a verse of 'Chain of Fools'', and later becomes 'something of an MTV addict, doing the 'Safety Dance' and then singing 'Girls Just Want to Have Fun' when she takes the Wooer off to bed'.²⁸ The critic may feel that the Gaoler's Daughter may be 'inclining towards insanity', but the musical selections indicate that she is in full control of herself and knows exactly what is going on in regards to her relationship issues.

In these productions, the music helps interpret the directors' and actors' approaches to the Gaoler's Daughter's behavior, be it mad or simply sad. In conjunction with her text, the Daughter's music can offer us considerable insight into the reception of women's love-melancholy, madness, sexuality, and agency. I suggest

that we listen closely to the Gaoler's Daughter, both to her speech and her songs. She has much to tell us.

Notes

- ¹ Quotations are from *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. Lois Potter (London: Bloomsbury Arden Third Series, 2015) and *Hamlet*, ed. by Neil Taylor and Ann Thompson (London: Arden Shakespeare/Thomson Learning, 2006),
- ² See, for example, Maurice Charney and Hanna Charney, 'The Language of Madwomen in Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists', *Signs*, 3 (1977), 451–60; Leslie C. Dunn, 'Ophelia's Songs in Hamlet: Music, Madness, and the Feminine', in *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, ed. by Nancy A. Jones and Leslie C. Dunn (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1994), pp. 50–64; Linda Phyllis Austern, "'For, Love's a Good Musician": Performance, Audition, and Erotic Disorders in Early Modern Europe', *The Musical Quarterly*, 82, (1998), 614–53; Kendra Preston Leonard, *Shakespeare, Madness, and Music: Scoring Insanity in Cinematic Adaptations* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009).
- ³ Douglas Bruster, 'The Jailer's Daughter and the Politics of Madwomen's Language', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 46.3 (1995), 277; Duncan Salkeld, *Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 135.
- ⁴ David P. Gontar, 'On the Frontiers of Psychiatry: Ophelia and the Jailer's Daughter', abstract <http://www.newenglishreview.org/David_P._Gontar/On_the_Frontiers_of_Psychiatry%3A_Ophelia_and_the_Jailer%27s_Daughter/> [accessed 27 August 2015].
- ⁵ André Du Laurens, *Discourse of the Preservation of Sight* (London: Felix Kingston, 1599), p. 118 quoted in Marion A. Wells, *The Secret Wound: Love-Melancholy and Early Modern Romance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 1.
- ⁶ Jacques Ferrand, *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, trans. and ed. by Donald A. Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), p. 229, quoted in Wells, p. 223.
- ⁷ Gina Bloom, *Voice in Motion: Staging Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 15.
- ⁸ Wells, p. 83.
- ⁹ The *Viaticum* (Constantinus Africanus, *Viaticum peregrinantis*, eleventh century) was a popular treatise in the sixteenth century. Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The "Viaticum" and Its Commentaries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), p. 41.
- ¹⁰ John Fletcher and William Shakespeare, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. by Lois Potter (London: Arden Shakespeare/Thomson Learning, 2002), p. 222, fn line 32.
- ¹¹ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, p. 250–1.
- ¹² Charney and Charney, p. 456.
- ¹³ Charney and Charney, p. 456.
- ¹⁴ Elaine Showalter, 'Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism' in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. by Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 77–94 (p. 80).
- ¹⁵ Wells, p. 223.
- ¹⁶ Kendra Preston Leonard, *Shakespeare, Madness, and Music: Scoring Insanity in Cinematic Adaptations* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), p. 3.
- ¹⁷ Dunn, 'Ophelia's Songs in Hamlet', p. 52.
- ¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Vintage, 1988), p. 14.

- ¹⁹ Richard R. Greaves, *Society and Religion in Elizabethan England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), p. 205.
- ²⁰ Johanna Rickman, *Love, Lust, and License in Early Modern England: Illicit Sex and the Nobility* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 14–19.
- ²¹ Foucault, p. 30.
- ²² Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: Scribner, 1969), passim.
- ²³ Francis J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882), p. 133.
- ²⁴ Ross Duffin, *Shakespeare's Songbook* (New York: Norton, 2004).
- ²⁵ Kendra Preston Leonard, 'Hearing the Scene: Approaches to Live Music in Modern Shakespearean Productions', *Early Modern Studies Journal*, 5 (November 2012).
- ²⁶ L. A. Reid and Mark Morales, 'Real Love', *What's the 411?*, Mary J. Blige (Uptown, MCA, 1992).
- ²⁷ Jaq Bessell, 'Actor Interviews 2000', *Shakespeare's Globe Research Bulletin*, 18 (March 2001), p. 22.
- ²⁸ Eric Minton, 'Bringing Friendship to the Fore', *Shakespeareances.com* <http://www.shakespeareances.com/willpower/onstage/Two_Noble_Kinsmen-03-DPR13.html> [accessed 18 October 2013].



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License