KAY KINSMAN AND BISHOP'S: THE KINSMAN PAPERS

Selected and introduced by Jack Eby
Bishop's University

On August 5 this past summer, Bishop's University mourned the passing of Kay Kinsman, whose final seventeen years were inextricably and fascinatingly connected with this institution. St Mark's Chapel was full as her family joined with the numerous friends from Bishop's and the town of Lennoxville in celebrating her remarkable life and career, and her association with us. The Archives Department of the Eastern Townships Research Centre at Bishop's has received a number of donations of materials related to Kay, illustrating her life and career. While they are not yet all catalogued, the present study is meant to give a sample of what may be found there.

Much of the collection consists of artwork, notably a number sketchbooks, notebooks, and watercolour books from different times in her life. There is also material relating to different shows, a generous file of press clippings, and a number of photographs. Many will be surprised to learn, however, that the writings Kay left behind are in many ways as interesting as her paintings. She did spend most of those seventeen years as a student, so one of the greatest treasures in the archives consists of papers handed in through the years for different professors at Bishop's. Although there are examples of good, straightforward scholarship, many assignments reveal either the lyrical or the mischievous side of her character. Most of them include delightful title pages, and often additional drawings or paintings later in the text. There are, in addition, several substantial works not connected directly to courses Bishop's: her McGill thesis, a superb lecture entitled "The Way to Compostela," as well as several literary surprises.

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Kay Kinsman had already lived a long and interesting life before she arrived in Lennoxville in November of 1980, and had a lifetime of learning before she signed up for her first-ever university course at

Illustration No. 1.
Caricatures found on the inside cover of the Programme of the Annual Spring Exhibition of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (1949). (Pencil)
(Source: ETRC Archives, Kay Kinsman fonds)

Bishop's in January of 1981. That being said, Lennoxville and Bishop's were the perfect setting for "a single senior woman with a lot of catching up and a whole lot of living yet to do," as her son Jeremy remarked in his eulogy.

Kay's earlier life has assumed almost mythical proportions among locals through frequent retelling and embellishment. She should have written an autobiography. Her early years were chaotic. Her father died of typhus before she was born: "I was a posthumous child," was the way her accounts of her life inevitably began. Although born in Los Angeles, in 1909, she was taken back to Mexico where her grandfather ran the railways. Her lot would have been quite different if there had not been a revolution there in 1911. The grandfather ended up in prison, and Kay and her mother were forced to flee back to the U.S. It was at a local convent school in Texas, at the age of 4, that Kay's artistic skills left their first mark. Finding tortillas more interesting to make funny faces with than to eat, she upset the lunchroom decorum and earned a rebuke from the Mother Superior. In revenge, she drew a priest sitting on the toilet and got expelled. Happily, her mother placed greater value on her creativity and individuality than on the correctness of her demeanour. Those who loved her always would.

The family eventually moved to Cuba after her mother remarried. She was sent on to the Anglican boarding school in Mandeville, Jamaica. Here, again, at the age now of 9, her life was turned upside down, when her mother died while on a visit. She would develop a self-reliance and independence to deal with what life dealt her, but at the same time she managed to keep her sense of humour and an internal joy that expressed itself so clearly in her art. Indeed it would become more and more apparent that art was both her retreat and

her calling.

When Kay reached 18, her grandmother decided that secretarial school was a proper training for life; Kay's response was to sign on as a junior reporter for the Havana Times. One of her assignments was interviewing Al Capone, which she did in a bar in Havana, and I wish we had a sketch of that! Her newspaper career was brief, however, because in 1930, after she received an inheritance and could make her own choices, she was off to Paris and art school.

Here her talent blossomed. The regimen in the drawing course was severe—sketch, sketch, sketch. Twenty sketches a day and more, of anything, of everything. Through training she developed the wonderful skill of catching a glimpse of life on paper, which would be her trademark ever after. The skill at observation was her own—assessing the character of her subject and translating it with a few deft strokes of the pen, or seeing what the rest of us overlooked. She also perfected her watercolour technique. The lush foliage and brilliant colours of the Caribbean no doubt impressed her from an early age, and her perception of colour later in life was always rich; even when she painted an old white house with a black roof, reds and crimsons, purples, blues, greens and browns always flowed from her brush. Seeing her paintings of Jamaica explains much about

Illustration No. 2.
"Looking up the High St. Broadway". *(Pen and ink, mid 1970s)*
(Source: ETRC Archives, Kay Kinsman fonds)

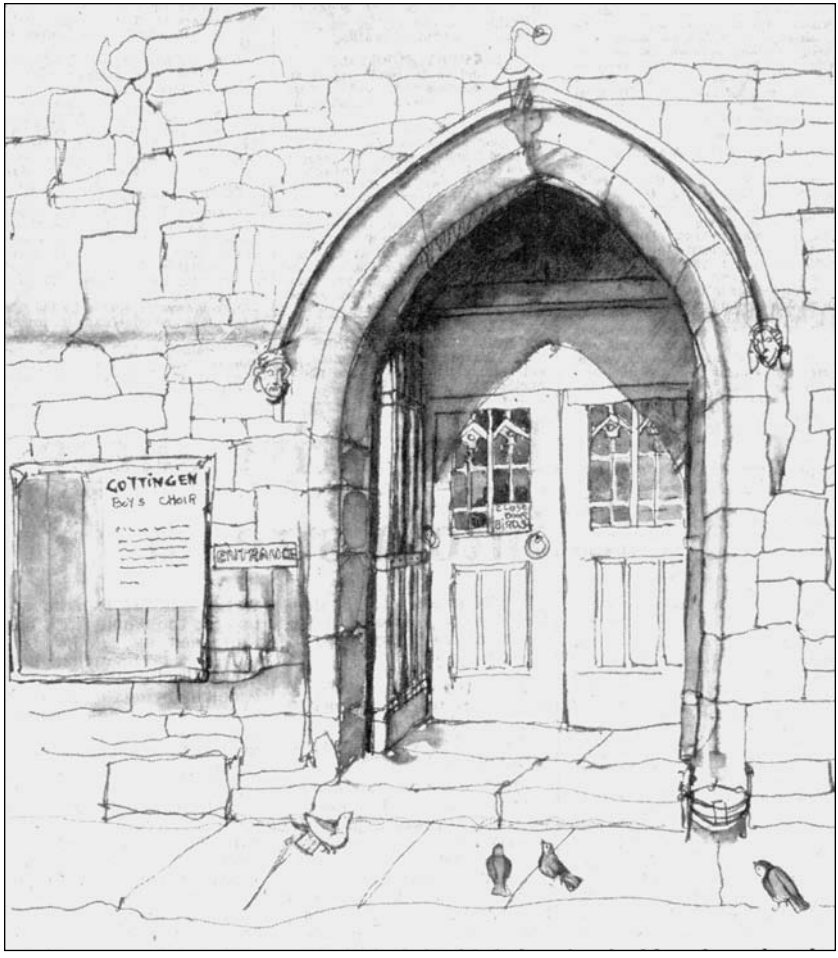

Illustration No. 3.
Sketch of a side-door to Pershore Abbey. (Newspaper clipping from the late 1970s)
(Source: ETRC Archives, Kay Kinsman fonds)

her later style. Paint was always applied with great freedom and dispatch. "Watercolour must be spontaneous" she once said; "in other words you must paint from the stomach, and to my way of thinking it should be entirely impressionistic."

Kay met the Englishman, Ronald Kinsman, in Paris and they fell in love. His career was in business and after their marriage it took them first to Switzerland, then to New York, and in 1939 to Montreal, where Kay would live for the next 33 years. He rose to be VP of Alcan, and entertained himself and others in amateur musicals. She brought up the children, in a rather unorthodox way, studied at

the Art School of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (with Ann Savage and Arthur Lismer), and painted. While the archive has no paintings from this period, there is a charming set of impromptu caricatures—the artistic aristocracy of Montreal one supposes—captured on an MMFA exhibition programme from 1949 [Illustration No. 1].

Ronald took time to prepare an M.A. thesis for McGill on the history of Montreal, and through this Kay's interest was directed to the older parts of the city, which even in the 1940s were disappearing in the face of progress. In addition to their historical importance, her paintings of old Montreal drew critical attention, and found their way into many collections. Some of the fruit of these years would later be captured in the *Montreal Sketchbook*, which was published in 1967.

The Montreal years would end not long after Ronald's death in 1965. Kay moved to England in 1972 to be near some of her family, and settled first in the picturesque Cotswold village of Broadway. Here she discovered the charms of English provincial life, which she captured in her *Broadway Sketchbook*, published in 1974. This volume further revealed the literary side of her talent, as her subtle and humorous way with words is almost on a par with her drawings. She also lived for several years in the nearby village of Pershore, home to a great medieval Abbey. The more ancient sites of England stirred an interest in medieval life and times that Kay was to develop for the rest of her life, culminating ultimately in an M.A. thesis of her own.

Illustration No. 4.
Quick sketch "Monk cleaning floor"*, found in the "Élan" sketchbook, (from the church in Léon?). (Ball-point pen, 1983)*
(Source: ETRC Archives, Kay Kinsman fonds)

Illustration No. 5.
"Medieval Humour". *(Watercolour, n.d.) (Source: ETRC Archives, Kay Kinsman fonds)*

Her work also found critical success in England, with solo shows in Pershore and Malvern, and exhibitions at the Royal Water Colour Society and Royal Academy of Graphic Artists in London, among others.

The archive holdings begin with her English period. The collection includes a number of watercolour sketchbooks, with some excellent paintings. There are also a number of sketches, among them a fine pen-and-ink "*High Street, Broadway*" [Illustration No. 2], and from the Pershore years the reproduction of a fine drawing of a side door, Pershore Abbey [Illustration No. 3]. The literary skills seen in the *Broadway Sketchbook* are brought to mind in a series of essays describing her subsequent experiences in Pershore. These are gathered together under the title "The Bells of Paradise." There was evidently a plan to publish these essays in book form, with appropriate sketches, but it seems that the project was never carried through, possibly because Kay moved back to Canada. The texts survive, however, and make delightfully entertaining reading. The wicked Kay we all knew can be seen, for example, in the chapter marked "Soirée Musicale". [Excerpt No. 1.] It might be worth the effort to get the whole project into print, even without the sketches that were originally meant to accompany it.

Rather at loose ends, Kay returned to Canada in 1980, now 71 years old. Almost by chance she moved to Lennoxville that November, settling first in the Speid house with Janet Motyer. As Jeremy noted, she still had some "catching up" to do. In January of 1981, she applied to Bishop's University (as a Special Undergraduate), and thus began a new era in her life—as a student. That term she dabbled in her first academic Fine Arts course (not a total success), in Music History, and in Spanish, which despite the many years since Cuba and Mexico, came back triumphantly. That summer she tried a course in early British History. She was hooked. Most of the Bishop's community really had no idea who this lady was, but they would soon learn.

In the fall term of 1981, she applied full-time for the B.A. programme in Fine Arts—this after a successful career as an artist! She did not really need a Fine Arts degree, and indeed kept getting sidetracked, intellectually, into Music (she had earned a diploma in piano from the Toronto Conservatory of Music at the age of 57), into Languages (Spanish, French, Italian, to be joined later by German, Latin, and Old English), into History and English literature. In the end, she did not earn a B.A. in Fine Arts, but a specially concocted one in "Liberal Arts"—the much-vaunted mission of Bishop's, after

all—and she accepted her degree in 1983.

That summer she made a trip that had long been on her mind, following the pilgrimage route across northern Spain to the great medieval shrine of Santiago de Compostela. It brought together her increasing fascination with medieval history, architecture, iconography, music, and lifestyle, which would soon crystalize with her study of John of Fornsett, who she believed made this pilgrimage in the 13th century. There are notebooks full of her observations and lecture notes taken on the subject, often supplemented by quick sketches of architectural details or other subjects that caught her fancy [Illustration No. 4]. Later that year, her experiences were presented in the form of a lecture, "The Way to Compostela," given at Bishop's and also in French at the Musée des beaux-arts in Sherbrooke. This work shows us a different writer—a serious one. Although there is still some of the satirist, we also recognize a keen observer—of the landscape, of the art and architecture, and of the people. The prose is most elegant [Excerpt No. 2.].

Academically, Kay hardly skipped a beat, re-applying in the fall of 1983 (a Special Undergraduate again), now just taking the courses she wanted, sometimes more than once! More Fine Arts, more Music, and more Languages, and now courses in Classics as well. Never a semester did she skip, although she would in the meantime be starting on an M.A. in English at McGill. Her interest in medieval times had flowered and she now combined it with her love of England, and of music, in her thesis on one of the most famous compositions of Medieval times, the canon *Sumer is icumen in* written, as she wished to prove, by John of Fornsett, monk of Reading Abbey. Her thesis skillfully combines intellectual curiosity, a good deal of hard research, and her own evocative prose, and forms a fitting summit to her scholarly career. Excerpt No. 3, taken from a chapter entitled "Medieval Lyrics," illustrates all of these elements. In the archives also we find sheaves of notes and preparatory studies for the final work. She was awarded her M.A. from McGill in 1987, at the age of 78.

As a footnote to this study, Kay had planned to write a semi-fictional children's story around the character of John of Fornsett. She spoke often of this project, and indeed seems to have written a fair amount of it. Chapters 1–3 and 9–12 are found in the archives in a virtually complete form. What has happened to the rest? From an attached list of contents, we know that more than 12 chapters were planned. The sections we have, such as Chapter 3 "Daemon's account," [Excerpt No. 4], are delightful in their recreation of

medieval life and times, and we can only regret that she apparently did not finish this project. Nor do we have any artwork to match the text, something that she surely contemplated.

Only Kay, by the way, could transform this delight in all things medieval into a vignette like "Medieval Humour" [Illustration No. 5].

Back at Bishop's, Kay continued to take classes. By 1989, there were enough credits for a second B.A. Her interests had moved back in time to ancient Greece and Rome, and she had decided on Classics as her new major. At convocation in 1989, she accepted this second B.A.. At the same ceremony, however, Bishop's presented her with an honorary doctorate (*D.C.L. Honoris Causa*, which she could

Illustration No. 6.
"Olive tree and birds from Tomb of the Triclinium". *(Watercolour, 1989).*
Taken from the assignment "The Attitude of the Etruscans to Animals and Vice Versa as Gleaned from Their Drawings" *prepared for Classics 207 (Prof. Coyne).*
(Source: ETRC Archives, Kay Kinsman fonds)

have translated). In one sense it was awarded because she was by this time a campus fixture—our own permanent undergraduate. But in a more profound way, she had truly earned it as one of the most honorable examples of the inquisitive mind ever to pass through this university.

Her surviving essays reflect the breadth of her interests, and her consistently fresh approach to learning. Consider, for example, her essay on "The Relationship between Raphael, Baldassare Castiglione and Ladies of the Renaissance," written ostensibly for a Drama course. It would take Kay to remark that Raphael's ladies all look "vacuous" and then seek the cause. (Find out why in Excerpt No. 5.) Or consider the blend of Classical art and contemporary animal rights (Kay spent time on the barricades defending baby seals) in her paper "Animals in Etruscan Art," which incidentally contains brilliant freehand recreations of the Etruscan originals [Illustration No. 6].

She was, in fact, a perfect student, even if she did not always get her footnotes right, and did not always use periodicals. As time went along, she had more and more a way of defining her own essay topics (which usually led to an excuse for some sketches or paintings). Her essays often became highly entertaining as the need to prove her scholarship receded. Their style was *sui generis*—any attempt to correct or amend them at this stage only made the professor look pedantic. Giving a grade was no easier [Excerpt No. 6]. What can you do with an essay entitled "Shakespeare and Parenthood"? It was, she rightly observed, virtually the only thing about Shakespeare that no one has written about. She does justice to the subject [Excerpt No. 7].

In class she mumbled and made rude remarks, she wickedly made fun of those who deserved it, and she frequently used both her professors and her fellow students as subjects for sketches. (They were generally obliged to stay still.) The citation at her 1989 convocation speaks from the professor's point of view:

> In class Kay is a joy and a challenge. She is a joy because for her learning is something to be relished, and knowledge something to be enjoyed, not stored up like gold to a miser. She is a challenge because, as in her art, her free spirit rebels against the orthodox, the pretentious, the dull, the humourless. She has more *pizzazz* than most students one quarter her age. A class full of Kays would be chaotic, but it would be a class full of ideas and stimulation, a class full of life.

In the fall of 1989, Kay carried on at Bishop's (once again a Special Undergraduate). More Classics, Fine Arts, and Music, as well as

History, Drama, Philosophy, and Languages. After 1993, as her health gradually failed, there were fewer courses per semester, and more audits than credit courses (although she was loath to arrive at this point). Her last course came in the winter of 1996, when she was 86 years old.

Her artistic career continued with great vigour through all these years. She would head off every summer to Spain, or the south of France, or Russia, or wherever, and come back with a portfolio full of paintings and sketches. Until the end she was still planning to visit Jeremy in Rome. Even in her 80s, she would set up on her little stool on a country road to paint an old house or barn; or put pen to paper in the chapel, or at the mall, or on a car-seat (incognito), to sketch humanity passing by. Local recognition came with a major retrospective at the Musée des beaux arts in Sherbrooke, in 1987, and with several shows at Bishop's. The first of these was "Life on Campus" and was held in the old gallery in the Student building, in 1991; the second was a retrospective held in the new Artists' Centre, in 1995. The town of Lennoxville received its own *Sketchbook*, complete with running commentary, in 1990. (Note that copies of all three *Sketchbooks*—Montreal, Broadway, and Lennoxville—can be viewed in the rare book room at Bishop's University.) And work has already begun on a proposed *Bishop's Sketchbook* that will chronicle Kay's unique association with the university over the years and seal her special place in our hearts.

Here then, is a portrait of Kay Kinsman as an author, with a few small samples of the artistic treasures that have come to the archives. Everyone who knew her will recognize her voice in these excerpts, but few will have realized how accomplished a writer in many styles she was, and many will regret that this side of her talent was so little acknowledged in her lifetime.

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Excerpt No. 1. From "The Bells of Paradise," an unpublished series of essays on life in Pershore, Worcestershire [ca. 1979].

Soirée musicale

Except for the noise of tipsy youth spilling out of pubs at closing time on Saturday night, and adorning the Abbey Park trees with festoons of loo paper, there's not really much one could call the "carnival spirit" in Pershore.

So, excitement when, on my first Christmas here, an invitation

was dropped through the slot of the front door of the Little House.

It read: "You are cordially invited to attend a gala Christmas dinner given by the Pershore Drama and Operatic Society"." (And in small print): Tickets: Two pounds fifty pence, entitling guest to dinner and one glass of wine."

Aha! This was more like it! A chance to meet the Monde Music, conversation, wit, and a glass of wine. Suave gentlemen bowing to kiss one's hand. Ladies wearing family emeralds. But—what to wear?

Finally, I decided on the long tartan skirt and black turtle-neck pullover, (de rigeur costume for chilly Cotswold halls) and Yves St. Laurent dabbed behind the ears.

Off I went to sample Pershore's night life.

Now, St. Andrew's Hall, where the dinner was to be held, is a fine and suitable place for penitential flagellation (IF you happen to be a remorseful Benedictine Monk) or, in lighter moments, for gregorian chanting. But medieval arch and bleak stone wall are not conducive to levity in this latter part of the twentieth century. Little scarlet candles and sprigs of holly on all the tables helped a little, but not much. Just the same, I refused to be daunted. I paid my fee, hung up my overcoat, and looked around at the guests. The suave gentlemen who were going to bow and kiss the tips of my fingers, those expected ladies in emeralds—they had not yet arrived. There seemed to be a great many Whistler's mothers and a sprinkling of grandfatherly gentlemen. Then, I spotted the Vicar. He was lighthouse in a dense fog. He was an oasis in a boulder-strewn desert. And, usually, an unfailing source of fun. Tonight, though, he was busy looking after his sheep. No help there! Ah well. There I was, and there *was* that glass of wine to look forward to.

Disregarding the air of mistrust worn by the five female occupants of a table laid for six I asked, meekly, if I, too, might sit there. Cold assent. I sat.

Now, my mother taught me always to keep the wheel of conversation turning at dinner parties, no matter what the circumstances, and that it was the duty of a guest to sing for his supper. But my mother had never sat down with five frosty ladies of the Pershore Operatic and Drama Club at their annual Christmas dinner.

There are, in Worcestershire, three reliable conversational gambits: one, the weather—two, roses—three, one's dog. The second was plainly ridiculous in December, the third awkward to introduce, which left number one.

"Nice weather we're having," I said bravely to the right-hand lady. She looked distraught and giggled faintly. "On the other hand," to

the left-hand lady, "it might rain. You never know, do you?" She looked about to faint. "My lord," I thought, it's a table of mutes. They're from an Institution!"

What to do? My mother never told me how to act sitting at table with mutes. So, I plunged wildly on. If they were mutes, they were probably deaf, so what did it matter what I talked about? I found myself describing a recent incident in Quebec in which I was involved. A fellow guest—with whom I'd made friends at a small hotel where I was staying—came to my room one evening. Why *me*, I couldn't say. Anyway, Deirdre, for such was her name, offered to share her "hash" with me. "I could easily spare you a couple of joints," she said. No matter what the circumstances, it always gratifies me not to be considered a square by the young. I gingerly fingered the plastic tube she handed me, filled with what looked like old horse manure. Dierdre gave a sharp glance. "Never smoked, have you?" she asked. I admitted it sheepishly. "Well, then," said she, "You'd better shut your windows before you start." "Why" I asked innocently, "must I shut the windows before I start?" "Because," Dierdre answered ominously, "first time you smoke hash you're liable to think you can fly!" (My son has since told me that she was probably thinking of L.S.D. However—) I looked around at this point in my story to see if there was any glimmer of interest on the wooden faces of the five mutes. They looked quite blank. One of them turned to another and said: "So you haven't seen Irene lately?"

That was when I gave up. Hauled down the flag. Gone, now, any hopes of dark suave gentlemen who bow and kiss your finger tips. Plainly, too, the emerald ladies were not going to come to St. Andrew's that night.

Who did come, was a tall and massive bosomed lady, who sailed across the floor towards me like a Carthaginian trireme.

"We're all going to gather round the piano, now", she said, "and have a jolly sing-song."

And that's when I fled. Past the gothic arches I sneaked, out of the door into cold winter's night. Back to the Little house. There, I poured myself a large gin and tonic, hoisted up by tartan skirt and, with my feet comfortably crossed on the coffee table, I began to laugh.

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Excerpt No. 2, taken from "The Way to Compostela," lecture presented in 1983 (pp. 15–17 of the typed version).

After a while we left the Basque country and then we came to the lovely medieval town of Puente la Reina with its three arched stone bridges over the river Elbro. It was built for the pilgrims by the Queen, Dona Mayor, in the eleventh century and is still as good as ever. A priest wearing a beretta and a soutane passed me. I said "Good morning Father" and he grinned and said "Hola!".

But it was terribly hot and I had no dark glasses. A nice lady named "Conception" allowed me to sit and paint in the shade of her verandah. She even insisted that I wear her wide-brimmed straw hat that she'd brought, she said, from Mexico. I was so sad to see the half-starved kittens running around her garden. "In Canada", I said, "we get our cats fixed". She laughed. "We've no money for that", she said. "Anyway, they all soon get run over by cars!" I wonder what the Moor-slayer would have thought? But then, of course, he came long before Saint Francis.

Now on to Logroño. It was fiesta time and no rooms to be had. We tried everywhere. I've found a note scribbled on my sketch pad which says, translated, "Go to the store on the corner of Colmillos and Barranca, just past the gasoline pump. Ask for Ezequiel and tell him you were sent by Tomas the baker. He has rooms".

I guess this Jo-sent-me business didn't work with Ezequiel, for we seem to have gone on. I remember passing the sad ruins of an ancient pilgrims' hospice where now, this afternoon, a man with his gun and dog seemed after rabbits. It was terribly hot. In Colmillos, once a prosperous little village at the base of an old Moorish castle, I drank three cokes, one after another. I thought of the pilgrims plodding along this dusty road with only a gourd of water to refresh themselves. I sat in the car and sketched the castle perfunctorily. A waggoner plodded slowly by, his wooden two-wheeled cart drawn by oxen. He came over to give my sketch a critical eye. "I paint, too, you know, Senora. I have done many paintings I would like to show you ...!" "Oh Lord, I prayed silently—Not here *please* Lord not here!

We got to Burgos next, once the great capital of Castile. Here was the palace where Philip the Fair died of convulsions on drinking a glass of cold water too soon after tennis. His mad wife, Juana la Loca, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, distraught, refused to allow him to be buried. It was August, too, and extremely hot. However, her confessor persuaded her to at least put a lid on the coffin.

We visited the great Pilgrim Hospital on the outskirts of Burgos where pilgrims received two loaves of bread a day and meat and salad three times a week. A good pub! Then the monastery of Las Huelgas, founded by Alfonso VI and his wife Eleanore (who was the sister of Richard the Lionhearted). Here are interred the medieval monarchs of Castile, surrounded by the small pathetic sarcophagi of all of their poor little children—one wee tomb only two feet long.

Las Huelgas was once the most aristocratic convent in Spain. The nuns were enclosed. Once there were over one hundred, now, only two terribly elderly ones, on the brink of the grave. The Abbess was so grand that it was said that if the Pope could marry he'd take for a wife the Abbess of Las Huelgas. There is a great statue of St. James here in the chapel with an articulated arm, so that the saint could lift his sword and dub the knights of Santiago.

The ladies of Burgos are the most elegant I have ever seen—the children the most exquisitely dressed. As to the teenagers, in pony tails and convent tunics and los "blue jeans", they were mostly chewing bubble-gum. I mused that it must be a Spanish virginity symbol.

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Excerpt No. 3, taken from the M.A. thesis (McGill, 1986) titled "Sing Cuccu Nu", pp. 35–38.

Medieval Lyrics

The thirteenth century was a resplendent period of history which is called by one author, "the Magnificent Century," and by another "The Age of Faith," and which is considered by many to be the heyday of the Middle Ages.

It was at once the age of pageantry and credulity, of saints and unicorns, of noise of trumpets, of vibrant colour, of religious ecstasy and of unparalleled cruelty. It witnessed the piety of St. Francis as well as the horrors of the massacre of the Albigensians, the perfidy of King John and the nobility of William the Marshall; the learning of Robert Grosseteste; the intellectual genius of Roger Bacon and the Vision of Dante. It is also believed by many that John of Fornsett, monk of Reading and dominant personality of this paper was born in this period.

From those earliest dark days in England which followed the departure of the Romans, the arts and music—and particularly music—continued to develop. Music in England, was always high-

ly estimated. Great deference was shown the bard with his harp, and in fact he was held equal in rank with the priest and the warrior. Alfred the Great was a notable harpist, Saint Dunstan was an accomplished organist, and Richard I a polished poet and musician, to mention only three examples.

With the passing of time there appeared the scop and the gleeman, the Saxon composers of mystical lays, (Caedmon), then the minstrels, and in liturgical music those great anonymous composers of the Worcester Fragments and the Winchester troper. By the thirteenth century a wave of music, instrumental as well as vocal, seemed to be spilling over the land.

What gave birth to this phenomenon? Was it the fortuitous mingling of the genes of the poetry-loving Gaels with the music-loving Kelts? And with it the zest of the Vikings for dramatic and blood-curdling sagas combined with the Norman's art of the chanson de geste? Recollect that the first Norman to arrive at the Battle of Hastings was not the Duke of Normandy but his favourite minstrel Taillefer, who, mounted on a great horse and waving this sword in time to music, singing, led the Normans into battle.

It is the musical background in particular that we will now try to explore. Long before the Norman Conquest, the people of the mist-cloaked island had acquired a reputation for musical ability.

There is the frequently quoted excerpt by Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales), from his *Description of Wales*, which establishes the fact that by the twelfth century polyphony was the normal thing in what he calls "west country." He goes on to describe the music that they make in "many notes and phrases", and it certainly sounds like a rondellus. He is also probably describing the provenance of those sources that practised voice exchange, an increasingly notable factor in English medieval music. It is interesting to note that several of the surviving pieces originated in a region no more than twenty or thirty miles to the east of the Welsh border, which therefore covers the area containing Leominster Priory and Worcester. Leominster was a cell of Reading Abbey and so the musical connection here seems to be clearly established. One can also visualize the environment in which John of Fornsett may have been nurtured.

A treatise from Bury St.Edmunds was written by an anonymous Englishman (c. 1272). He was a much travelled man and describes the people of Navarre and the English as being "specially musical." He also gives some useful historical information naming Johannes Filius Dei, Makeblite of Winchester, and one Blakesmit, "a singer in the palace of Our Lord Henry the Last." He makes allusion to the

"ditones and semi-ditones", (major and minor thirds), which, he says, are generally reckoned as dissonances but:

> ...in some places, for instance in that part of England which is called West-country they are thought the best for consonants and are much used by organists.

Thus is appears that pythagorean tuning was not in use in the west of England, although evidently still the norm everywhere else. There is strong reason to think that it is in England that harmony matured, and we can suppose that west-country organists used tuning similar to ours. Now, when thirds were made consonant a harmonic bass was secured, and it is not surprising that the country where this was done should be musically in advance of other countries.

"Among the many glories of England", says Henry Davey, "the creation of artistic music must be reckoned among the highest. Musical historians now admit that the history of English music is longer than that of any other nation."

The most active centres of the cultivation of polyphony until the mid-fourteenth century were undoubtedly the great Benedictine abbeys, and in England there are actual musical remains from Reading, Worcester, and Bury St. Edmunds.

In recent years so many fragments even of religious and secular lyrics have been found that a book compiled by Carleton Brown contains ninety secular lyrics alone, of which some even have their musical notes. Ernest H. Sanders says:

> How significant a role music played in medieval England is indicated by the large number of scraps—fly leaves, paste-downs, and detached fragments of polyphonic music of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that have been discovered in the last twenty years.

He continues, "one realizes that England has a larger number and variety of sources of medieval polyphony than any other area of music."

Growing familiarity with these ancient lyrical compositions moves us at the depth of feeling and emotion revealed, at the imagery and power of expression of these anonymous authors of the thirteenth century. It is interesting too, to see how the identical lyric turns up in so many places at once, carried no doubt by bards and troubadours, jongleurs and pilgrims so that one sometimes suspects the existence of a medieval "hit tune". These would become so popular that bits of their melodies were used again and again as *can-*

tus firmi. Probably many of them penetrated monastery and abbey walls and were familiar tunes to John of Fornsett and his brother monks. The most pious of monks must have been glad to get away from the *Opus Dei* once in a while.

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Excerpt No. 4, taken from a incomplete story based on the life and adventures of John of Fornsett.

Chapter III
Damien, the Best Friend

After collation, we rose and thanked God for our peas-porridge, salt herrings and bannocks (Wednesday's usual fare) and made our way to the east cloister. This was where we singing-boys had our lessons, seated around our teacher on a circle of tree-stumps, and with three boys to a Donatus. I did not like Donatus. I did not like Latin and I hated the skill with which Brother Marius handled his switch when we made a mistake.

On that May day Brother Marius' switch was hard at work because the air was full of the heavy perfume of May flowers and bird song. My mind was not on Latin grammar. My mind was on the joys of hawking and of tilting at the quatrain, and Brother Marius' switch was on the alert to keep our noses to the grindstone. Then, help came to us boys when into the cloister swept the under-prior with a small red-headed boy in tow. This was the first time, but not the last that John was to save us from a switching. He was seven years old at the time, scared but still defiant, and he managed to stick his tongue out at us. I liked him from that moment.

We all rose and bowed low to the under-prior as we had been taught to do.

"This is John," said the under-prior, "who has come all the way from Fornsett in Norfolk to be a singing-boy in our music school. Welcome him!" He then turned to John. "Boy," he said, "worship God, avoid Titibulous, and listen to your betters." So saying, he swept away. Thus John came to us. He was to be my best friend.

John was brave. He, alone, dared to climb the cypress tree that grew in the cloister garth, and from its heights to make queer squeaking noises, pretending he was a bat, in order to frighten poor Brother Innocent, whom we had discovered to be terrified of bats!

It was John who tied together the latchets of Brother Lucius's sandals at vigils and again, it was John who, while apparently inton-

ing Gregorian chants in the approved reverent manner, would make his eyes cross under cover of his hood and cause us all to giggle. That boy! And we loved him, because he never tattled on our misdeeds and frequently took the blame for our misdemeanors and for us received the switch on his little behind.

Whatever happened later, John of Fornsett was my friend and I am proud of it!

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Excerpt No. 5, taken from the essay "The Relationship between Raphael, Baldassare Castiglione and Ladies of the Renaissance", written for Drama 222A (Prof. L. Green).

A little while ago, while taking a course in the History of Art, our class was shown slides of Renaissance art. Of course Raphael figured greatly. What was rather puzzling, though, was why one of the world's greatest painters would choose to give his female models facial expressions of such vacuous detachment that it often amounts to imbecility. However, my query was regarded as being not only *malapert* but even impious! So the question remained unanswered, until one day in Drama 222A we were given as a reading assignment the *Book of the Courtier* by Baldassare Castiglione, and the truth about Renaissance ladies finally dawned.

Baldassare Castiglione was born in 1478, to a very rich and aristocratic family of Mantua. When he reached young manhood he became a model courtier in the court of the powerful Sforzas in Milan, and then later served in the same capacity at the court of Urbino….

Now a chapter in *Il Cortesano* is devoted to his female counterpart and here is where the trouble begins!

If the Renaissance atmosphere of liberal thought was hard on the courtier, it was really tough on the courtier's lady. Under Feudalism (and particularly during the period of the Crusades), a woman was often a power to be reckoned with. She could even have a fiefdom and indeed many great abbesses did. In her husband's absences at wars she had full power over his domain. In love she had autonomy and the double standard had not yet appeared. Although chastity was a good thing, if the lady had also produced other offspring sub rosa—so long as her lord and master was sure of *his* seed, any by-blows were useful as extra warriors. Take Elinore of Aquitaine, while still nominally the Queen of France; she did not hesitate to

dally with Henry II, and got away with it! Four hundred years later in the Renaissance Ann Boleyn and other wives of Henry VIII tried the same thing and look what happened to them!

With the Renaissance, woman's power became more and more curtailed, until suddenly she was nothing but a second-class citizen. From being a suzeraine her role changed to that of servitor and now she becomes a vassal of her spouse and entirely subservient to him. Could this be some sort of pathetic play-acting insisted on by *him* to enact the good old days when her lord and master was himself servitor to *his* feudal lord and master? Now his knightly role has disappeared, and as his position diminishes, so indeed does hers. She is reduced to vassalage and becomes completely aestheticized. Her role and main occupation is merely to charm.

"A lady who lives at court must have a pleasing affability above all else."

"She must have comely conversation suited to time, place and station of person with whom she speaks."

"She must strictly observe certain limits and not exceed them."

"She must be a complete stranger to bodily excess—she must have a soft and delicate tenderness and her conduct must be prudent, and she should have a womanly sweetness in very movement."

(She sounds like a beautiful marshmallow.)

"Let her take care not to offend men by indiscreet praising of herself."

"She must listen with a slight blush of shame to all lewd talk and never show unbridled familiarity with the other sex!"

"It is not seemly for her to carry weapons, play tennis, ride or wrestle, or other things suitable only to a man."

"I would not wish her to make ungainly movements. Likewise the musical instruments she plays should be appropriate. What an *ungainly thing* it would be to see a woman playing drums, trumpets or other like instruments! ….

And now, here is the missing piece of the jig-saw puzzle which features the ladies painted by Raphael. He was, in fact, a very close friend and enormous admirer of Castiglione, and did, in fact, reside for a while at the ducal court of Urbino, where, you see, he, too, became brain-washed.

So this explains the matter of the lack of any mental activity apparent on the face of the pure and lovely but empty face of the Madonna della Sedia, as she looks vacantly from her canvas with all the joie de vivre of a strawberry milk shake….

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Excerpt No. 6. Often a professor would be at a kind of loss. These remarks are taken from a paper lacking a title page, and are therefore anonymous. We all sympathise.

Kay, I find myself not quite sure what to say about your paper and how to mark it. Looked at as a formal essay there are a number of serious problems—incorrect endnote and bibliographical form, lack of a clear thesis in a proper introduction, poor organization of your argument, irrelevant material introduced and an overly colloquial style…. It actually seems more like a magazine article than anything else (and I don't mean to be at all disparaging by that comment). What I have ended up doing, essentially, is giving you an "impression" mark, taking into account your research and your general fluency in writing….

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Excerpt No. 7, taken from the essay "Shakespeare and Parenthood," written for Drama 223 (Prof. Green).

It must me obvious to any amateur psycho-analyst that William Shakespeare must have disliked his parents. This is understandable. Nobody (except for Cordelia in King Lear), liked their parents much in those days. Children in Elizabethan times were regarded with deep distrust and disdain as being merely raw and dreadfully un-finished adults who would, hopefully, one day turn into normal human beings. So, with this in mind they were mercilessly whacked, fed on bread and water and punished in dark closets with the Christian aim of helping them to grow up properly. No child protested or "talked back". If he did he was as good as gone to Hell.

Now, of the two sorts of parents, viz., fathers and mothers, Shakespeare preferred fathers. Mothers got short shrift usually. When his mothers were not being utterly *inane* they were pathologically terrible. Take for instance that old grue Lady Macbeth. She says:

> How tender to love the babe that milks me! But, I would, while it was smiling in my face, have plucked my nipple from its boneless gums and dashed its brains out.

Why, the old bat! Even Grendel's mum would never have said a thing like that! She loved *her* son, ogre or not, and when Beowulf tore off Grendel's arm she fought savagely to avenge the death of her boy. *That's* mother love! However, in the same play (Macbeth)

you get MacDuff. When he receives the news of his family's murder (while he is lying low himself at the English court of Edward the Confessor) he feels terrible. He says: "My wife? All my pretty ones? Did you say *all*? O hell kite, all my pretty chickens and their dam at one fell swoop!"

He is truly upset and off he goes to fix the Macbeths. But, one cannot help asking one self why in the world had he gone off and left his family in the first place, alone and unprotected in their Scottish castle when he must have been acquainted with the Macbethian family trait of bumping off people?....

But he must be followed by the Elsinore families in *Hamlet* where no one can get along with anyone else and it is a case of dog eat dog. Take Hamlet's father. He has been murdered and turned into a really vindictive and grisly ghost. He arrives on the Elsinore battlements on the stroke of midnight and hovers green and ghostly among the swirling clouds of mist. He, naturally, is out to get even with Hamlet's mother Gertrude who is really the reason for his being a ghost at all! Queen Gertrude is a sort of silly woman, but one can sympathize with her because having lived for thirty years or so with Hamlet's father, a rigid and an upright man, and boring like so many Scandinavians, she is ready for tea and sympathy from *anyone*. Besides, I suspect she was approaching the climacteric and felt that life was passing her by, and who was around, for heavens' sake *except* Claudius? It all had a terrible effect on Hamlet who turned mean. This is one trio of parents whom one would certainly not want to be a child of....