

# ON LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S OXFORD

## *A Personality Profile of the Seventeenth Earl*

Richard F. Whalen

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KING: And can you, by no drift of circumstance,  
Get from him why he puts on this confusion.  
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet  
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

*Hamlet: Act II Scene 2*



EDWARD DE VERE, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and the leading candidate for true author of the works of Shakespeare, has proved a difficult subject for historians and biographers. They are puzzled by the contradictions in his personality. They find that his contemporaries were sometimes shocked by his behavior, sometimes full of admiration for him. Stories about his personal behavior, whether true or libelous, were outrageous, even scandalous, for a nobleman of his rank. Yet more than once he was referred to as “great” or “great-souled.”

The seeming contradictions in Oxford's personality and behavior, however, can be reconciled and better understood in light of two very different authorities—an ancient Greek philosopher and a modern-day psychologist. Insights derived from their works explain why Col. Bernard M. Ward's book-length biography of Oxford describes him as receiving during his lifetime both “scurrilous abuse and unstinted praise” (vii). These insights, when applied to Oxford's life story, can help clarify what he was like as a person, how he was perceived, and whether he fits the personality profile of one who could have written Shakespeare.

Oxford's biographers, as well as his contemporaries, have often commented on his difficult personality. The first scholarly account of his life was written by Sidney Lee in *The Dictionary of National Biography*. In Lee's short entry, Oxford was an eccentric, profligate, violent nobleman in Queen Elizabeth's court, who nevertheless wrote verse “of much lyric beauty.” Oxford's personality, he said, was one of “eccentricities and irregularities of temper.” Despite his “violent and perverse temper,” Queen Elizabeth found him gallant; and Lee judged him the best of the Courtier poets in the early years of her reign.

Writing in the late 1800s, Lee could not know that in 1920 J. Thomas Looney would publish “*Shakespeare Identified in Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*.” Looney

lamented the difficulty of “reconstructing a personality from the most meagre of data” (173). He regretted the lack of evidence because he had two goals: to prove that Oxford was Shakespeare and “to help towards a fuller and more accurate view of the life and personality of the Earl of Oxford” (173). In his attempt to reconstruct Oxford’s personality, Looney relied mainly on Lee, suggesting that Oxford was an eccentric given to “fierce outbursts” (232). Having identified him as Shakespeare, Looney proposed for his personality “a vigorous conception of tragic and poetic realism: the picture of a great soul misunderstood, almost an out-cast from his own social sphere, with defects of nature, to all appearances one of life’s colossal failures, toiling on incessantly at his great tasks” (368). A rather grim portrait.

Eight years later, in the first book-length biography of Oxford, Ward tried to rehabilitate Oxford’s reputation as a nobleman and man of letters, although he stopped short of identifying him as Shakespeare. While the “scurrilous abuse” of him by his contemporaries has been readily accepted, says Ward, their “unstinted praise” has been unfairly doubted (vii). In his view, most of the stories told against Oxford were unfounded. According to Ward, the manuscript records he drew on for his documentary life told a very different story.

In the admiring view of Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, authors of *This Star of England* (1952), “Edward de Vere was a man of sanguine temperament, affectionate nature and large generosity”—although often to the point of extravagance (660). In his youth, he was a “proud young earl, sensitive, generous, impetuous, bred in a conception of honor as absolute as a religious code, warm in his affections, ardent in his loyalties” (15). At the same time, they recognize that he “was, indeed, a complex, many-sided person and must have been inexplicable to many people” (202). They do not expand on this complexity, however, and their view of him, in general, is unreservedly admiring.

Their son, Charlton Ogburn, returned to a grimmer view. In *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality* (1984), he suggested that based solely on the biographical record, many if not most people would call Oxford “not likable.” Oxford’s behavior may have been “deplorable” in some respects; it seems he was guilty of heedless extravagance. “Divorce him from Shakespeare’s works and what remains is a man ostensibly unprepossessing—arrogant, unstable and erratic, self-centered, given to wild schemes for making money, a poor father and worse husband, high-handed and reckless in antagonizing those deserving of respectful treatment” (397-99).

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### Chapman's Oxford

Oxford's contemporaries left tantalizing glimpses of what he was like as a person. One of them was the playwright George Chapman. Familiar to Oxfordians are the oft-quoted lines from Chapman's play, *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* (c. 1610), wherein the protagonist, Clermont, describes Oxford:

I overtook, coming from Italy,  
In Germany, a great and famous earl  
Of England, the most goodly fashion'd man  
I ever saw; from head to foot in form  
Rare and most absolute; he had a face  
Like one of the most ancient honor'd Romans,  
From whence his noblest family was deriv'd;  
He was beside of spirit passing great,  
Valiant and learn'd, and liberal as the sun,  
Spoke and writ sweetly, or of learned subjects,  
Or of the discipline of public weals;  
And 'twas the earl of Oxford. . . ”

But that's not the end of it. Not generally considered is the fact that the passage continues for another seventeen lines to describe a rather different side of Oxford's character. The passage tells how Clermont wondered why Oxford refused to review a duke's army:

. . . ; and being offer'd  
At that time by Duke Casimir, the view  
Of his right royal army then in field,  
Refus'd it, and no foot was mov'd to stir [him]  
Out of his own fore-determin'd course.  
I [Clermont] wondering at it, ask'd for his reason,  
It being an offer so much for his honour.  
He, all acknowledging, said 'twas not fit  
To take those honours that one cannot quit [repay].

Clermont goes on to explain Oxford's belief that a true aristocrat should hold himself above the "servile" reviewing of troops, which Oxford considered the fashion of "common" noblemen:

And yet he cast it only in the way,  
 To stay and serve the world. Nor did it fit  
 His own true estimate how much it weigh'd,  
 For he despis'd it; and esteemed it freer  
 To keep his own way straight, and swore that he  
 Had rather make away his whole estate  
 In things that cross'd the vulgar, than he would  
 Be frozen up still like a Sir John Smith,  
 (His countryman) in common nobles' fashions,  
 Affecting as the end of noblesse were  
 Those servile observations. (1:115-16)

Chapman wrote Clermont's recollection of the incident into the play even though it has nothing to do with the plot; and in his extended description, Oxford comes across unexpectedly as haughty, ungracious, and disdainful of Smith—almost surly to a reader today.

Although Clermont is semi-fictional, the incident probably did take place, as Hilda Amphlett makes clear in an article in the *Shakespeare Authorship Review* (1965). Duke Casimir, the Earl of Oxford, and Sir John Smith were all in France in 1576 when Oxford was on his way home from Italy. Casimir (a German Calvinist prince and a leader of the Huguenots in their battles with the Roman Catholic armies of Henri III) had 6,000 soldiers mustered in Burgundy in January of that year. She also identifies the Sir John Smith whom Oxford disdained. Smith, like Oxford a native of Essex, was in France on a government mission. Thereafter, his diplomatic career went into decline because, Amphlett says, of his "querulous temper and defective judgment" (702-05).<sup>1</sup> Thus does Chapman in this extended passage portray Oxford not only as great-spirited, valiant, learned, generous, and an excellent writer but also as unpredictable, difficult, and seemingly haughty.

Chapman had more than a passing interest in Shakespeare's plays and in the Earl of Oxford, who was about ten years his senior. Chapman's commentators note that his plays reflect passages in Shakespeare. They even speculate that Chapman had a hand in some of Shakespeare's plays and that he was the rival poet of the *Sonnets*. They hear echoes of *Hamlet* in *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*. (Chapman 1:573; *Reader's Encyc.*) Like Hamlet's revenge,

Clermont's revenge is long delayed. Hamlet is incited to revenge by his father's ghost, Clermont by his brother's. One scene is a patent imitation of the closet scene with Hamlet, his mother, and the ghost of his father. The stoic Clermont is Chapman's philosophical response to the mercurial Hamlet.

In another play, *A Humourous Day's Mirth*, Chapman seems to be depicting Oxford in the character of Lemot, a witty courtier who controls the action of the play. "Lemot" is French for "the word," suggesting that Lemot is a writer as well as a wit. When a female character addresses him in Latin as "Monsieur Verbum," Lemot retorts, "Why, 'tis a green bum. Ver is green and you know what a bum is. I am sure of that." "Ver," of course, can also stand for Vere in *Edward de Vere*, thus making it a tri-lingual pun, all but confirming that Lemot is meant to represent Oxford, the punning courtier, sometime jester, and recognized writer at Elizabeth's Court (1:55, 60). Scholars have also suggested that the title character in another play by Chapman, *Monsieur d'Olive*, also represents the Earl of Oxford.

Chapman moved in much the same political circles as Oxford. Early in his career, he described in minute detail an incident in Sir Francis Vere's campaign in the Netherlands, while late in his career he urged the rescue of Sir Horace Vere and his troops who were besieged in Germany (DNB). Known as "the Fighting Veres," Francis and Horace were cousins and friends of de Vere. George Chapman, therefore, almost certainly knew Oxford personally. Taken in its entirety, his description of Oxford's personality in *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* is as informative as the better known descriptions by Gabriel Harvey in the satirical poem, "Mirror of Tuscanism," where he calls Oxford "a passing singular odd man" and "peerless in England," and in his speech in Latin before the Queen, where he propounds that Oxford's "countenance shakes spears" (Ward/Miller 64-66).

### Aristotle's great-souled man

George Chapman and Gabriel Harvey were two of four contemporaries of Oxford who referred to him as "great"—all in contexts that also questioned his behavior or status. Chapman has his hero Clermont call Oxford the "great and famous earl," though seemingly haughty and disdainful. King James I referred to him as "great Oxford" while noting that his "state was whole ruined" (Ogburn 766). Francis Osborne, Master of the Horse to one of Oxford's sons-in-law, referred to him as "the last great earl of Oxford," despite the existence of his heir (the eighteenth earl) and his notoriety for a sexual escapade.<sup>2</sup> Harvey, a classical scholar, addressed Oxford in his speech before the queen as "*praenobile pectus*"<sup>3</sup> (Ward/Miller, 65) which can be translated as "great-hearted" or "great-souled," a term which leads to a consideration of Aristotle's definition of a great-souled man.

In his *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle defines the peculiar and complex nature of his

great-souled man—in Greek *megalopsychia*, i.e. great + soul.<sup>4</sup> Aristotle’s extended definition may sound unusual to modern-day readers. Excerpts give the tone and thrust of his concept of “greatness of soul,” a definition that may surprise modern readers, so far have we moved away from early concepts of nobility or classical *virtus*:

A person is thought to be great-souled if he claims much and deserves much. He who claims less than he deserves is small-souled. . . . Great honors accorded by persons of worth will afford [the great-souled man] pleasure in a moderate degree; he will feel he is receiving only what belongs to him . . . yet all the same he will deign to accept their honors because they have no greater tribute to offer him . . . . Honor rendered by common people and on trifling grounds he will utterly despise. . . . Great-souled men are thought to be haughty. . . . He is fond of conferring benefits, but he is ashamed to receive them, for one is the mark of a superior, the other of an inferior. . . . Great-souled men are haughty towards men of position and fortune, but courteous towards those of moderate station. . . . A great-souled person cares more for the truth than what people will think. . . . He is outspoken and frank, except when speaking with ironical self-deprecation, as he does with common people. . . . Greatness of soul thus is concerned with honor on the grand scale. (Kaufmann 10)

Aristotle calls greatness of soul “a sort of crown of the virtues” because “it makes them greater and is not found without them; therefore it is hard to be truly great-souled, for it is impossible without nobility and goodness of character” (10). His description of the great-souled man may help to explain why Oxford said he would rather waste his estate on “things that crossed the vulgar” than stoop to “common nobles’ fashions.”

As it happens, it was a philosophy professor, who was not concerned with the authorship issue, who was the first to call attention to the way in which Aristotle’s great-souled man fits the authorial persona revealed in the works of William Shakespeare. In *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (1959), Prof. Walter Kaufmann of Princeton University suggests that Aristotle provides a new perspective on Shakespeare’s tragic heroes, in particular, *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, and *Timon of Athens*, and also on *The Sonnets*, particularly *Sonnet 94*: “They that have the power to hurt and will do none. . . .” *Sonnet 94* has been called one of the most enigmatic and discussed of the sonnets, but it makes good sense when read as the words of Aristotle’s great-souled man.

Kaufmann notes that Aristotle goes so far as to say that “the great-souled man is justified in despising other people, for his estimates are correct,” and he finds the same haughty attitude in Shakespeare: “Surely Shakespeare’s acid contempt for men and women is one of the central motifs of his tragedies” (11). This contempt and disillusion, he adds, is coupled paradoxically with a world-embracing tolerance and understanding.

### The artistic temperament

If Aristotle sheds light on a puzzling incident in Oxford's life, a psychologist's description of the artistic temperament illuminates his personality as revealed in the story of his life. In *Touched With Fire* (1993), Kay Redfield Jamison analyzes what the Elizabethan poet Michael Drayton called "that fine madness . . . which rightly should possess a poet's brain" (106-110). Jamison considers "that fine madness" to be the natural temperament of many artists, writers, and composers. The lives of many of them are punctuated unexpectedly by periodic mood swings from euphoria to despair. A consideration of these characteristics helps in understanding the complexities and paradoxes of the personality of the Earl of Oxford, who, for all his eccentricities, was recognized by his contemporaries as an excellent writer and musician.

Jamison found these mood swings in the biographies of scores of artists, writers, and composers. These men and women behave normally most of the time but are subject to powerful cycles of elation and depression that can make them difficult and unpredictable. When depressed they become cynical, immersed in melancholy, and despairing almost to suicide. On swings into euphoria, they become manipulative, mercurial, and reckless, while a vastly inflated self-esteem assures them they are capable of anything. At such times they can become erratic and reckless with money, spending foolishly and obsessively. They may indulge in binges of drinking and non-stop talking. They can be promiscuous and reckless in sexual adventures, indulging in sexual excess and experimenting with perverse forms of sexuality. When crossed, they are apt to get irritable and rage against both adversaries and friends. Their reckless ebullience disrupts the lives of all who have anything to do with them. Like Lord Byron, they seem to be at war with the world and become the subject of attacks, rumors, and scandal.

On the positive side, they can also be tremendously dynamic and creative in their

#### SONNET XCIV

*They that have the pow'r to hurt, and will do none,  
That do not do the thing they most do show,  
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,  
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow –  
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces,  
And husband nature's riches from expense;  
They are the lords and owners of their faces,  
Others but stewards of their excellence.  
The summer's flow'r is to the summer sweet,  
Though to itself it only live and die,  
But if that flow'r with base infection meet,  
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:  
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;  
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.*

work; energetic and tireless, going with little sleep, though that sleep is often fitful and disrupted. Witty, quick-thinking, they bounce from idea to idea, producing keen insights, creative associations, and dazzling word play and puns. A heightened awareness about everything makes them extremely perceptive and intuitive about people, revealing both compassion and scorn. With almost limitless energy, they can be amazingly prolific in their creative endeavors.

These mood swings are symptoms of manic depression or bipolar disorder, labels that carry, unjustly in many cases, the stigma of mental illness.<sup>5</sup> But Jamison, a professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University, stresses that the milder and more common form often termed *mood swings* can be highly creative and rewarding for an intellect of artistic genius working within the discipline of his craft. So does Dr. Ronald R. Fieve, a psychiatrist at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City. "In some individuals," he writes in *Moodswing*, "there is clearly an adaptive, beneficial aspect to some forms of mood disorder" (58). In *Manic Depression and Creativity* (1988), D. Jablow Hershman and Julian Lieb assert that "the manic depressive harbors no demons and is not 'sick' or 'diseased' the way one usually thinks of illnesses." They claim that, when not severely disabling, manic depression is "almost indispensable" to genius (6, 11).

Jamison reviewed a number of research studies showing that at least 40 to 50 percent of

**"O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!"**

*King Lear's* apparent "madness," the object of psychological studies for two centuries, has been diagnosed recently by a psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins Hospital as the manic phase of extreme mood swings.

Alexander Truskinovsky makes the diagnosis in the March 2002 issue of the *Southern Medical Journal*, noting that in the first three acts: "Lear's mood is either expansive . . . or irritable," a predominant characteristic of mania, as are his rapid changes of mood, from prickly and ill-tempered rages to moments of despair and weeping. As Goneril complains, "Every hour he flashes into one gross crime or another . . . and upbraids us on every trifle." Truskinovsky cites other symptoms of the manic phase: *Lear indulges in grandiloquent monologs, his speech is rapid and pressured, his train of thought is easily derailed, he can go without sleep or rest; in the last act, he is inappropriately cheerful when talking to Cordelia on their way to prison.*

Concludes Truskinovsky (in psychiatric language), "The case of *Lear* probably warrants the diagnosis of bipolar I disorder, most recent episode manic, severe with psychotic features." At the same time, he notes that *Lear* is physically fit, has excellent short-term and long-term memory and demonstrates "unimpaired reasoning and abstract thinking." Despite his agitation and extreme irritability, the King remains intelligent and perceptive about what is going on around him and what's being done to him. He's usually in a passionate rage, but in moments of self-awareness he knows it's not true insanity: "O, that way madness lies; let me shun that."

*Lear is not insane; his struggle to maintain self-control while in a stress-induced manic state has offered a powerful catharsis for centuries of readers and viewers./ RFW*



writers, artists, and composers who were studied exhibited such mood swings—more than ten times the incidence in the general population. She cites Lord Byron in particular<sup>6</sup> and names dozens more, including Tolstoy, Balzac, Dickens, Poe, Ruskin, Tennyson, Coleridge, Wolff, William James, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Dylan Thomas, Styron, Sexton, Robert Lowell, Graham Greene, and Silvia Plath. Also Van Gogh, Beethoven, Handel, Rossini, Robert Schumann, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and Theodore Roosevelt. In euphoric moments, Roosevelt found time to write 150,000 letters. Dickens's son said, "He was of course a man of moods, highly strung and very emotional, full of confidence at times and depressed at others" (Hershman 106). Van Gogh wrote, "Some days I still suffer from unaccountable, involuntary fits of excitement, or else utter sluggishness" (161). Beethoven was notorious among his friends for his unexpected, even violent shifts of mood.

### Biographical glimpses

The personality of Edward de Vere, as reported by contemporaries and his biographers, fits both Aristotle's definition of a great-souled man and Jamison's description of the artistic temperament. By all accounts, Oxford was impulsive and mercurial. As a youth, he was precocious, difficult, and headstrong. He perplexed and exasperated his guardian, William Cecil, the Queen's most capable minister. When he was eighteen, he killed a cook under questionable circumstances in Cecil's household. While a courtier he delighted the Queen despite his often erratic and unpredictable behavior. Oxford's contemporary, Gilbert Talbot (later Earl of Shrewsbury) wrote that his friend would surpass all the courtiers "were it not for his fickle head" (Ward 94). One of the senior members of the Court, Sir Walter Mildmay, wrote that "it were a great pity he should not go straight, there be so many good things in him" (Miller 1:478). While planning a strategy that would reunite Oxford with his estranged wife, the Countess of Suffolk wrote to Anne's father (Cecil): "I would wish speed that he might be taken *in his good mood*" (Ward 155, emphasis added).

Reckless in youth, Oxford frequently defied authority. He ran off to Brussels without Elizabeth's permission, mightily offending her Majesty. On another occasion he openly defied her orders to dance for the French envoy. Bantering dangerously, he threatened to join the forces of Don Juan of Austria, her mortal enemy. A prankster, he was accused of fomenting a robbery ambush at Gads Hill; two of the victims wrote to Cecil complaining that Oxford's men shot at them with "determined mischief" and citing his "raging demeanor." It seems no one was hurt and no loot was taken (90-91). Sir Walter Raleigh, trying to reconcile disputes between other courtiers and Oxford, refers in a letter to Cecil to "so many disgraces" (244). Cecil deplored not only his "boldness" in offending the Queen but also his "lightness in sudden joy" when assured of her forgiveness (96), a reference to his mood swings.

Oxford's exhibitionism was noted by Gabriel Harvey when he lampooned him as "smirking, with forefinger kiss . . . large bellied codpeased doublet . . . quaint in array . . . a passing singular odd man" (Ward/Miller 64-6) and by Thomas Nashe who seemed to be referring to Oxford when he declared that "one of best wits in England" would maul Harvey by so much jesting that readers would die laughing (Ward 191). During the Queen's progress to Plymouth in 1577, Oxford apparently clowned for the benefit of bystanders; an anonymous account says in part: "Then came the lord chamberlain with his white staff, and all the people began to laugh" (Ogburn 636-37).

When Oxford was thirty, he was the target of an astonishing assortment of allegations brought by two men he had accused of treason: that he got drunk and told outrageous stories, that he made insulting remarks about the Queen, that he engaged in sexual adventures and "confessed to buggerie."<sup>7</sup> None have been corroborated; but like Lord Byron, Lord Oxford apparently lived a lifestyle such that his enemies believed they could effectively counterattack with a barrage of extraordinarily malicious allegations, whether true or false.

These are but a few of the anecdotes that have been passed down in the historical record about Oxford's escapades and behavior, tales that were common gossip among his contemporaries. No other aristocratic in the age of Elizabethan was described so often as such an eccentric and in such vivid terms. Oxford was certainly considered "a passing singular odd man."

He was also, to put it mildly, improvident with money, another symptom of manic-depression. A spendthrift in his youth, he sold off his inherited estates to pay for travels and lavish Court entertainments and, although he did not die broke (in modern terms), he had nothing left of the lands and estates that gave noblemen their status in society.

The darker aspect of Oxford's personality, his moodiness and melancholy, is quite evident in his early poetry, which appeared under his own name, initials, or posies:

Sitting alone upon my thought in melancholy mood. . . . (Miller/Looney 1:560)

I am not who I seem to be, for when I smile I am not glad. . . .

I most in mirth, most pensive sad. . . . (1.587)

And, "I smile to see me scorned so, you weep for joy to see my woe. (1.587)

What plague is greater than the grief of mind? / The grief of mind that eats in every vein. . . . (1.599)

Framed in the front of forlorn hope past all recovery,

I stayless stand to abide the shock of shame and infamy.

My life, though lingering long, is lodged in lair of loathsome ways . . .

The only loss of my good name is of these griefs the ground. (1.580)

Shakespeare frequently describes similar mood swings. As Hamlet says:

I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises. And indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory. This most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave overhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire—why, it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. (2.2.293)

Throughout the play, the “melancholy Dane” swings from manic, ribald wit to thoughts of suicide, making him one of the most complex and fascinating characters in literature, the subject of hundreds of books and articles analyzing his difficult personality. The genius of the play and its enduring power to fascinate readers and audiences is due in large part to the author’s brilliant depiction of the mood swings of a great-souled man under stress. Similarly, it was Oxford’s mood swings, his extravagant behavior and his haughty and disdainful personality that dismayed his contemporaries and puzzled his twentieth-century biographers.

“Great Oxford”—brilliant, moody, eccentric, outrageous, scholarly, outspoken, self-centered, a target of vicious attacks, generous to a fault, passionate about life, a spendthrift and renegade earl in Queen Elizabeth’s Court—was not only Gabriel Harvey’s “great-souled” aristocrat but also his “passing singular odd man.” Oxford’s complex personality perfectly fits the profile of a literary genius—a poet and dramatist who had “that fine madness . . . which rightly should possess a poet’s brain,” a trait that may have tormented his family and perplexed his biographers, but also qualifies him to have written Shakespeare. \_\_\_\_\_ ©



## NOTES

1 Amphlett's own opinion is that, in the incident reported by Chapman, Oxford believed that Smith was attempting to use him to inflate Smith's position with the duke. Her brief biography of Smith (b. 1534) suggests that Oxford may well have been reading the situation correctly, though his handling was perhaps not sufficiently tactful. Smith's grandiose behavior may have stemmed from his early connection with the Crown (his mother was the Protector's sister). That his military talents were not always seen in a favorable light is revealed by a report from Leicester to the Queen just before the attack by the Spanish Armada in 1588, in which he stated that Smith had "entered into such strange tries for ordering men, and for the fight with weapons as made me think he was not well and God Forbid he should have charge of men that knoweth so little as I dare pronounce he doth." In 1595 Smith got drunk and attempted to raise a rebellion among soldiers practicing in a field, for which he spent a year in the Tower (704).

2 Osborne relates one of the favorite "twice-told tales" about Oxford, that one of his daughters was the product of a "bed-trick," conceived on an occasion when, in the dark (and probably the worse for drink), he "slept with" his wife, who, he had been led to believe, was someone else (Looney 234).

3 My thanks to Andrew Hannas, Latinist, of Purdue University, for translating *praenobile pectus*.

4 Translators of the section wrestle with the rendering of the Greek *megalopsychia*. The Oxford English Dictionary says that modern translators render the Greek as "greatsouledness" or "highmind-edness." J.A.K Thomson's translation, revised by Hugh Tredennick (1955), opens: "Greatness of soul, as the very name suggests, is concerned with things that are great." For unstated reasons, however, he then switches to "magnanimous" and "magnanimity." The OED defines "magnanimous" as "high-souled; nobly ambitious; lofty of purpose; noble in feeling or conduct. Now chiefly: Superior to petty resentment or jealousy, loftily generous in disregard of injuries." But this modern-day usage of "magnanimous" is too narrow for Aristotle's meaning in context. In a footnote, Tredennick defines *megalopsychia* as "magnanimity, proper pride, self-respect" but adds immediately, "there is no real English equivalent for this very upper-class Greek virtue." Like Thomson's opening-words translation and the OED note, Kaufmann uses "great-souled" throughout, as we do here. Terence Irwin (1985) uses "magnanimity" as "the traditional Latinized form of *megalopsychia*, allowing that this "captures some aspects of it fairly well." W.D. Ross (1915) surprisingly uses "pride," footnoting: "'Pride' of course has not the etymological associations of *megalopsychia* but seems in other respects the best translation." Modern-day pride, however, is not Aristotle's subject; he is not writing about the first of the Seven Deadly Sins, or the Bible's "pride that goeth before a fall," or Alexander Pope's "pride, the never-failing vice of fools." These are the modern-day primary meanings. What Aristotle meant was what the word meant in Greek: "great-souled."

5 Mood swings are not considered to be a mental illness unless and until they escalate into destructive, anti-social behavior or debilitating depression and suicide attempts, at which point, of course, the condition must be diagnosed and treated.

6 For an in-depth look at the many characteristics shared by Oxford and Lord Byron, see Stephanie Hopkins Hughes's *Oxford and Byron* (Paradigm Press, 1993).

7 From the Oxford/Arundel "libels," letters and interrogatories as transcribed by Alan H. Nelson and posted on his web site, <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~ahnelson>. (See also Ogburn 535-6, 644-6.)

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