



# Shakespeare Matters

"The Voice of the Shakespeare Fellowship"

## Hamlet's First Soliloquy: Imagery Beyond the Language

By David Korr

In *Hamlet*, the depth and intensity of the author's investment in his hero all but compel the assumption that the play is autobiography. For Oxfordians, the assumption has of course emerged as an established tenet, drawing its core of certainty from a wealth of references to historical and biographical fact — and from a correspondence between the character of Hamlet and what is known of Oxford's psyche and circumstance during the period when, many believe, he first conceived a play he would revisit and re-work for the rest of his life.

Echoing and supplementing both the conjecture and the historical evidence is compelling testimony of a very different kind, derived not from interpretation but from an analysis of certain consistent patterns in compositional devices and strategies in the play. The study shows the author to have been greatly less occupied with the conflict of dramatic tragedy and the logic of a given narrative than with what it was to be Hamlet (or like Hamlet): brilliant, betrayed, and — above all, alone and utterly

(Cont. on p. 6)



*In David Warner's 1965 Hamlet production, thought by many to be the performance of the century, audience members were so moved that when Warner asked, "Am I coward?" some shouted back: "Yes!"*

## Richard II, Part 1 And The Crisis Of Shakespeare Scholarship

By Michael Egan

Many readers will know that among the British Library's treasures is a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century folio volume, Egerton 1994, containing a number of old manuscript plays. One in particular, *Richard II, Part One or Thomas of Woodstock*, has attracted considerable scholarly attention since its discovery and publication in 1870, chiefly because it might be by Shakespeare. Some of the best critics these 135 years have published critical editions, including Geoffrey Bullough, A.P. Rossiter, George Parfitt, Simon Shepherd, Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge.<sup>1</sup>

Here's the shock: A close reading of their work, together with an examination of the manuscript of the play, reveals appalling academic failures — blatant plagiarisms, deliberate distortions of the text, intellectual sloppiness, a cavalier disregard for the truth, manipulation of the evidence, editing of the most incompetent sort. If this is typical of Shakespeare scholarship, and there is no reason to believe that it is not, the whole field is in serious jeopardy.

The worst aspect of this egregious tale is the perpetrators' confidence that they would not get caught. Nor have they been, until now. In Bullough's case it is forty years too late, in Rossiter's, sixty. Their ineptitude and careerism have done incalculable damage to Renaissance studies, not least delaying by almost a century the recovery of an important Shakespeare play.

*Thomas of Woodstock*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (1960)

I'll take Bullough first, since 'from *Thomas of Woodstock*', in his magisterial *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol. III*, is probably the most influential and widely read version

Dr. Michael Egan, formerly a full professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, is the Distinguished Scholar in Residence at Brigham Young University, Honolulu.

(Cont. on p. 13)

## Letters:

To the Editor:

It seems that the English professor quoted in the Fall issue of *Shakespeare Matters* was inaccurate in asserting that Shakespeare's use of the words *seethes* and *sodden* in *Troilus and Cressida* indicates a knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language. Upon looking through several comprehensive Anglo-Saxon dictionaries on line, I do not find these words listed. According to *Webster's*, they are long-standing English words derived from the Middle English words *sethan* and *soden*, the Old English word *seothan* and the Old High German word *siodan*. Shakespeare's forms are not even as old as Middle English; neither form appears, for example, in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer used *seeth*, *sethe*, *sode* and *soden* in their more common meaning of the time: *boil(ed)*.

Shakespeare used these words a few other times; *seethe* appears in *Timon of Athens*, and *sodden* in *Henry V* and *Pericles*. It may be of interest that John Lyly also used the term. In *Euphues and His England* (1580), he writes of a potential repetition "...which I must omitte, least I set before you, Colewortes twice sodden." In this case the word has the archaic meaning: *boiled*. An Oxfordian might say that as Oxford matured, so did the meaning of his occasionally used word, *sodden*.

A colewort, by the way, is a cabbage-like vegetable, thus the term *cole slaw*. *The good Huswives Handmaide for the Kitchen* (1594) instructs us, "Take a good quantitie of Colewortes and seeth them in water whole a good while...."

Thirteen years before Lyly, Arthur Golding used both terms in his translation of the tale of Philemon and Baucis in Book 8 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: "Hir Husband from their Gardenplot fetcht Coleworts... and in the pan to boyling did it put./ And while this meate a *seething* was...." Isn't it interesting where these obscure terms tend to pop up?

Robert Prechter

To the Editor:

I would like to thank Howard Schumann for pointing out an egregious error on my part. I wrote that Diana Price recorded that William Shaksper was back in Stratford selling malt to Phillip Rogers at the time of King James' procession through London on March 15, 1604. He was indeed selling malt, but the recorded date of the transaction is 12 days later, on March 27. Therefore this record does not preclude Shaksper from having rushed down to London and back—a three-day trip each way—to participate in the procession, returning quickly to effect his petty transactions in Stratford as recorded throughout the springtime of that year. The transaction records do prove that he was uninvolved in the presumed "resumption of public performances" (Price 34) of the King's Men in April. They are therefore suggestive that he stayed in Stratford, particularly given that there are no records of his being in London at all during 1604. But they do not prove it. My primary point remains: "Edward de Vere and 'Shakespeare' attended the same function on the same day, at the behest of King James." I am mystified, though, as to

how I overlooked this clearly stated time difference and sincerely regret the error.

Robert Prechter  
Executive Director,  
Socionomics Institute

And, speaking of errors, we're surprised nobody noticed (or if you did, you were shy, right?) the blunder on page 32 of issue 6:2, where your editor suffered a temporary lightning strike in the brain and wrote "Agincourt" in place of Barnet. The battle at which soldiers of the 13th Earl of Oxford were fired on by their own Lancastrian allies was, of course, Barnet (April 14, 1471), not Agincourt. Like Mr. Prechter, we sincerely regret the error. Keep those letters coming! — Ed.

It is with sadness that we record the passing of Gordon Cyr, resident of Baltimore, MD., and former past-President of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. A memorial tribute will appear in the next issue.

### Shakespeare Matters

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The purpose of the Shakespeare Fellowship is to promote public awareness and acceptance of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), and further to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication into all aspects of Shakespeare studies, and also into the history and culture of the Elizabethan era.

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*From the Editor: Paradigm Shift*

## Why *Richard II, Part 1* is Even More Important Than You Think

This issue of *Shakespeare Matters* features an extended article by Dr. Michael Egan, one of the longest and most detailed in the history of our publication. Egan's article catalogs the editorial practices of three generations of Shakespeare scholars who edited successive editions of the curious Elizabethan history play, *Richard II, Part 1* (hereafter sometimes referred to by its more traditional name, *Thomas of Woodstock*, or *Woodstock* for short). Part editorial exegesis, part exposé, and part morality lesson, Egan's article pursues with relentless single-mindedness an editorial history of "intellectual sloppiness...cavalier disregard for the truth...manipulation of the evidence" and "editing of the most incompetent sort" that has plagued the history of this unique and perplexing treasure of Elizabethan literary history. Echoing the caustic words of former Folger Library Educational Director Richmond Crinkley in his 1985 *Shakespeare Quarterly* review of Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, Egan concludes: "If this is typical of Shakespeare scholarship, and there is no reason to believe that it is not, the whole field is in serious jeopardy."

But there is reason to believe that even more is at stake in Egan's work on *Woodstock* than the revelation of this sordid history of scholarly incompetence and mendacity might suggest. *Woodstock* is, in critical respects, a wild card in the Shakespearean authorship question. And that is precisely, I believe, why Egan's own fastidious edition of the play, published in 2005 by The Edwin Mellen Press, has received the indifferent (and sometimes hostile) reception it has so far gained from the English literary es-

tablishment. This is not to say that the dangers posed by this brilliant little history play are grasped with full consciousness by the guardians of the Shakespeare mystery; it is rather to suggest that there is something deeply disturbing about this play for an orthodox literary sensibility which eschews the relevance of censorship – and self-censorship – as factors in the development of Elizabethan poetics.

*Woodstock*, in fact, is double trou-

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ble. First, it is a play that self-consciously explores the dramatic implications of early modern censorship, going so far as to stage the comical arrest of an innocent man for "whistling treason," because the king's mercenaries allege that the words to the tune he's whistling contain treasonous innuendo. On top of this, it is a history play that takes curious, and ultimately *subversive* liberties with the known history on which it is based. On

this score, Egan's commentary is appropriately conservative in its premises and arguments. Because *Woodstock's* alleged factual distortions have played a significant role in shaping conceptions of authorship,<sup>1</sup> Egan is anxious to exonerate the playwright from charges of historical misconception: "long-standing, carelessly repeated complaints about *I Richard II's* historical inaccuracy are simply unfounded," according to Egan. "In its fundamentals the play is a remarkably sound portrait [of] Richard's reign and the personalities defining it, as scholars are beginning to accept" (I 157). But if scholars are really beginning to accept the play as a "remarkably sound" portrait of Richard's reign, then they have badly misconceived either the history, the play, or both.

Such confusion, on the other hand, is understandable – a predictable consequence of the play's carefully contrived rewriting of the history of Richard's reign, a reconceiving which is in essence *historiographical* in the proper sense of the term: "the nature of History itself is one of the drama's themes," remarks Egan, and the playwright "comments implicitly on issues of historical semantics still unresolved" (438-39).

The foregrounding of historiography is most obvious in scene 2.1, lines 75-115 (Egan, II.1.244-115), in which Richard is being read to from the English chronicles and discovers through simple arithmetic (he believes) that he is actually eleven months older than his advisors have told him, and therefore has achieved the age of his majority without notification from them. Needless to say, he's not happy about it. The

(Cont. on p. 26)

# From a Never Writer to an Ever Reader: News...



*Noted poet S.A. Griffin and SAC Chairman John Shahan enjoy a humorous moment at the April 14 Geffen Theatre signing of the "Declaration of Reasonable Doubt."*

## Shakespeare Authorship Coalition Launches Signature Drive

A new organization, spearheaded by Southern California Shakespeare skeptics John Shahan, Virginia Renner (former head of Reader Services at the prestigious Huntington Library), Charles Champlin, Barbara Crowley, and many others, has launched a Declaration of Reasonable doubt signature drive. The Shakespeare Authorship Coalition kicked off the drive at UCLA's Geffen Playhouse April 14, and plans to gather thousands of signatures in support of its statement of skepticism over the traditional view of Shakespearean authorship: "We have nothing against the man from Stratford-on-Avon," announced the group, "but we doubt that he was the author of the works. Our goal is to legitimize the issue in academia so students, teachers and professors can feel free to pursue it. This is necessary because the issue is widely viewed as settled in academia and is treated as a taboo subject. We believe that an open-minded examination of the evidence shows that the issue should be taken seriously. Your signature on the declaration will help us make the case that there is reasonable doubt about the author." The group's website, <http://www.doubtaboutwill.org>, features online signing, so get thee to the internet and sign on if you have not already done so.

## Nominations for Shakespeare Fellowship Board Approved

The Nominating Committee of the Shakespeare Fellowship made the following recommendations, subsequently unanimously approved by the entire board of trustees, for the 2007 annual elections: For membership on the Board of Trustees: Lynne Kositsky, Marty Hyatt and Sean Phillips. For President of the Board of Trustees: Alex McNeil. All the nominees have agreed to serve.

## Anderson to Lecture In Taiwan

Mark Anderson, author of the acclaimed Gotham Books title, *"Shakespeare" By Another Name*, recently reprinted in paperback, has been invited to lecture on the authorship question at Tamkang University, outside of Taipei. Anderson's three lectures will focus on Edward de Vere, the authorship question, and the evidence for de Vere's authorship contained in his book. As Anderson's blog suggests, the Taipei bookings are a hint of the potentially explosive interest in the authorship question, worldwide: "if Shakespeare is an extraordinarily popular author around the world (as he most certainly is), then ultimately the Shakespeare authorship problem—and the Oxfordian solution to it—will also command a global reach."

## Beauclerk Planning Book on Authorship

Charles Beauclerk, the descendant of both Edward de Vere and Nell Gwyn who during the 1990s provoked considerable interest in the Oxfordian theory on his U.S. speaking tour, has thrown his hat back into the ring. During the years since Beauclerk's U.S. tour, he completed a critically acclaimed biography of Gwyn, *Nell Gwyn: Mistress to a Queene* (2005, Grove Atlantic): "Nell Gwyn is Charles Beauclerk's literary debut and it has about it a humanity, empathy and freshness of which his subject would undoubtedly approve... His grasp of Restoration literature and culture is impressive and there is nothing he doesn't know about the politics," raved the *Sunday Telegraph*. Having won critical accolades for his biography of Gwynne Beauclerk is now working on a new book about de Vere. You can catch up with him on his new website, <http://www.whowroteshakespeare.com>.

## Shakespeare Fellowship Announces 2007-8 Essay Contest

The Shakespeare Fellowship has announced the resumption of its annual Shakespeare Authorship essay contest for high school students. Once again, cash prizes totaling \$1350 will be awarded to the top six essays submitted by High School students from around the world. The deadline for the 2007-8 essay cycle will be January 15, 2008. For contest details please consult the Fellowship website (<http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/essaycontest2007.htm>).

### Authorship in The Washington Post

The March 18 issue of the *Washington Post* Outlook section contains dueling essays on the authorship question by Shakespeare Fellowship Vice-President Roger Stritmatter, Assistant Professor of Humanities at Coppin State University in Baltimore, and Dr. Stanley Wells, co-editor (with Professor Gary Taylor) of the Oxford University edition of the *Collected Works*, Chairman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford, and Emeritus Professor of the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham. To those who have followed the authorship question in recent years, there were no surprises in Dr. Wells's defense of orthodox assumptions. Indeed, as Stephanie Hughes wrote in a letter to the editor: "Recent books and articles on the question have proven every point raised by Wells to be irrelevant; why, then does he and every other defender of the (lucrative) Stratford biography continue to bang the same old drum?" Details of the experience, as well as analysis of Dr. Wells' case, will appear in a future issue.

### Triumph of Will: *New York Times* Survey Shows Stratford Myth is Alive and Well in Academia

When *New York Times* culture desk editor William Niederhorn, who has written for the *Times* on Shakespearean topics including the authorship question at least since 2002, initiated an online survey for academicians to measure their views on authorship last month, some of the respondents were

practically apoplectic that anyone would bother to ask them about a subject they know doesn't exist. Now that the results are out, the professors can heave a sigh of relief. Or can they? The survey of 265 professors who teach Shakespeare in English departments of public and private four-year-colleges and universities, selected randomly, reveals that 82% say that there is no reason to question the traditional account of authorship. Only 11% say there is "possibly good reason" to question authorship, while a measly 6% say there is good reason to do so. Sounds like a slam dunk for the "stubborn bear, authority," doesn't it?

But wait. It wasn't that many years ago when Cal Tech Professor Jenijoy La Belle, in her 1994 "Happy Birthday

William" column in the *Los Angeles Times*, assured us that 99.99% of all Shakespearean professors knew that anyone who questioned Shakespeare's authorship was a "noodle" – a word apparently used in some English departments to signify an "errant addle-patted miscreant." If La Belle's statistic is valid (and, after all, as a reputable Shakespearean

scholar, she must have known what she was talking about, right?), that means that the decline in support for the traditional view of authorship within English departments is nothing short of precipitous. Alternatively, hiring committees have for over a decade done a poor job of keeping the loonies out of the institutions. Perhaps someone should contact Homeland Security

### Anne Barton on Authorship in the *New York Review of Books*

Things are heating up in authorship land. Professor Anne Barton, the distinguished Fellow at Trinity College Cambridge known (among other things) for her illuminating introductions to several plays in the Riverside edition of the *Collected Works* (my favorite being the one to *Measure for Measure*), leads off her March 29 review of Ron Rosenbaum's *Shakespeare Wars: Clashing Scholars, Public Fiascoes, Palace Coups* with a quote from Logan Pearsall Smith's classic, *On Reading Shakespeare*. The

(News, cont. on p. 25)



Stritmatter vs. Wells in the *The Washington Post*: "The nonsense," declared Wells, "started around 1785."

(Soliloquy, cont. from p. 1)

at odds with — evoke a perceptual sense of disconnection, alienation and unease that is independent of the meanings of the words themselves.

In the hope of smoothing the way in what I acknowledge to be a subjective and notional exercise, I offer the reader two assurances:

1) I don't contend that the poetic choices remarked on were matters of deliberate technique, or that Oxford

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**The study shows the author to have been greatly less occupied with the conflict of dramatic tragedy and the logic of a given narrative than with what it was to be Hamlet (or like Hamlet): brilliant, betrayed, and — above all — alone and utterly at odds with evoke — a perceptual sense of disconnection, alienation and unease that is independent of the meanings of the words themselves...**

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was conscious of them himself. Rather, I suggest that they are the unforced product of virtuosic intuition and sensibilities, and that the resulting resonance assured the playwright he was rendering in Hamlet's speech their shared emotional perspective.

2) Neither do I take for granted our own responses in reading or hearing the lines in question, nor do I assume that we even attend the devices and implications described. I do assume,

though, that — as with poetry in general — close analysis can make available for appreciation much that may not otherwise strike the eye or ear, even in repeated readings or hearings. A serviceable analogy might be the brush strokes and palette in a representational painting; though they are unlikely to carry literal meaning, they may contribute greatly to the work's effect and yield insight into the artist's approach to the subject.

In short, my intention is to illustrate how figurative devices in the soliloquy offer clues to the driving need behind the words and, perhaps, to how they even invite a sensory or perceptual rapport with the content of the speech, a sort of empathy that can deepen interpretive understanding.

The edition of the play on which I have depended is the Arden Shakespeare *Hamlet*, edited by Harold Jenkins (New York, 1982). Of my ten endnotes, all but the first elaborate on points made in the body of the article. Also appended are a partial bibliography and a list of speeches from *Othello*, *Lear* and *Macbeth*, selected for their instructive contrasts with the language of Hamlet's first soliloquy:

Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.

**Hamlet.** O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,

Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God! God!  
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on't, ah fie, 'tis an unweeded garden  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature

Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
But two months dead — nay, not so much, not two  
So excellent a king, that was to this Hyperion  
to a satyr, so loving to my mother That he might  
not beteem the winds of heaven Visit her face too  
roughly. Heaven and earth, Must I remember?  
Why, she would hang on him  
As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on; and yet within a month —  
Let me not think on't — Frailty, thy name is woman —

A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears — why, she —  
O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason  
Would have mourn'd longer — married with

my uncle,  
My father's brother — but no more like my father  
Than I to Hercules. Within a month,  
Ere yet the salt of most righteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,  
She married — O most wicked speed! To post  
with such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.  
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

(I.ii.239-159)

In his first appearance, Hamlet speaks but fourteen lines before he is left alone, and Oxford wastes no time in ratcheting him to full intensity. The opening sentence of his first soliloquy is a sort of

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**I don't contend that the poetic choices remarked on were matters of deliberate technique, or that the author remarked on them himself. Rather, I suggest that they are the unforced product of virtuosic intuition and sensibilities, and that the resulting resonance assured the playwright he was rendering in Hamlet's speech their shared emotional perspective.**

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preface to what follows:

O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter.

(129-132)

Removed from their context, the lines offer themselves up for interpretive dissection. We could, for instance, lift out "sullied flesh" and toss it into Carolyn Spurgeon's statistical pot with other

references to “disease or blemish of the body.”<sup>1</sup> We might then continue with the observation that such references to physical corruption reflect the general decay in Denmark. We might also elaborate on certain metaphysical and religious connections that yield clues to Hamlet’s — and, incidentally, Oxford’s — range of reference and associative reach and help anchor the passage and Hamlet in a tradition of thought.<sup>2</sup>

In context, though, the lines are above all a declaration of Hamlet’s despairing state, establishing that this particular tragic hero has at a remarkably early point in his play suffered sufficiently to be contemplating death.

The information that Hamlet is despondent might be conveyed, however, in any number of ways, either more or less subtly. It is noteworthy that the passage is shaped by compositional gestures reflecting Oxford’s overriding concern with Hamlet as an estranged figure, cut off from life around him.

What, here, are such compositional gestures? To start, an almost too obvious remark: in I.ii, only briefly into Hamlet’s first appearance, Oxford leaves the character to himself, in literal isolation. The situation he explicitly and quickly presents is that of *a man alone*, speaking the particular lines under consideration.

The more revealing — if much subtler — point is that the lines he now assigns Hamlet reflect a subjective or experiential tension that may be distinguished from the (narrative) tensions the words are describing. The character’s painful wish that his flesh would “melt, Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,” however expressive of desperate grieving, has little imaginal weight. Regardless of its seemingly descriptive qualities, it does not suggest an easily realized image. Rather, the implied image is itself, in a sense, unattainable, removed from reach, much as the object of the wish is.

The opposition of an imaginably challenged image with a) the focused objectivity of “this too too sullied flesh,” b) the pun on “solid” that may be heard in “sullied,” and c) the substantial, realistic image of a particular figure (whether actual, on stage, or an imagined incarnation of Hamlet) is in an experiential way meta-

phoric of the tension between Hamlet’s vain wish to be relieved of his substantiality and the substantiality itself.<sup>3</sup>

If, as is likely, the point seems tenuous, it may help to draw a revealing contrast between the use of irreconcilable impressions — dissolving flesh or forbidden release versus solidity or actuality — and one of the alternatives Oxford chose not to employ. If, for instance, Hamlet spoke realistically of a violent act or event that would end his life, its mere objective possibility and concreteness would give immediately imaginal<sup>4</sup> form to the idea, and so undercut the tension between unattainable desire and reality that is central to the figurative

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device Oxford did choose.

With “self-slaughter,” the second pair of lines does raise the idea of a suicidal act, but both denies it any particular mental representation and counters its potential as act and image by preceding it with the negating reference to religious precept. The operative expression here is “the Everlasting,” a phrase that permits only the vaguest imaginal resolution because it implies a dimension for which we have no perceptual mode — time. Its vagueness, however, is at the heart of its appeal as a device for Oxford. Its intangible quality pairs it both with the language of Hamlet’s wish and with the unrealistic nature of the wish itself. Moreover, in its contrast with

the immediate image of the flesh-bound Hamlet, “the Everlasting” highlights the opposition between Hamlet’s desire to impose a finite boundary on his existence and the infinitude of the cause of his inability to do so.

The soliloquy’s first four lines, then, contain both a tension and an ideational interplay between a) the realistic, logical impact of the image of Hamlet alone — an image to which the character concretely and objectively refers — and b) tenuous, elusive mental representations that are responsive to the figurative language of the lines. Whatever the process by which he arrived at his choices, I think we may conclude that Oxford found in the resulting tension and interplay a resonance that rewarded him with the sense that he was saying what he felt. Indeed, we actually see in these four lines a kind of schema that not only applies to the remainder of the soliloquy but that is discoverable in imagery throughout the play:

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses [customs] of this world!  
Fie on’t, ah fie, ’tis an unweeded garden  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely....

(133-137)

“How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable Seem to me all the uses of this world!” — not “the world” or “my world” or “our world.” The second appearance of the demonstrative adjective “this” would seem to bring Hamlet’s world within the same focused conceptual scope as “this...flesh.” “This world” may be equated, in fact, with an “unweeded garden,” a concise and concrete image that in itself implies nothing of the enormity of an entire “world” but does recall Hamlet’s flesh.

Such dual perspectives are a not uncommon device. We are reminded, for instance of Hamlet’s own “I could be.” Equally weighted, however, is the suggestion of an entire world overrun with the “things rank and gross in nature” that corrupt the order and beauty of an untended garden;<sup>5</sup> his “bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space” (II. ii. 254-255) and Blake’s “To see a world in a grain of sand.” That the device is not merely

(Cont. on p. 8)

*(Soliloquy, cont. from pa. 7)*

incidental here, and that Oxford felt it to offer some exceptional service, is supported by consideration of several word choices. The four adjectives assembled in “weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,” for instance, are — in this context — not only almost identical in implication but also strikingly without imaginal content. “Uses” is equally lacking in particularity, and is also equally sweeping, but although the word specifies nothing, neither does it exclude any part of human action or activity. “Unweeded” describes no action, nor does it characterize the implied neglect. “Things rank and gross” offers nothing imaginatively specific or concrete, however suggestive the figure is of Hamlet’s disgust. And “possess,” though powerful and also suggestive, here lacks any descriptive effect.

The remarkable and consistent lack of specificity and concreteness and, therefore, of easily realizable imaginal content — even a sense of scale — insists on subjective concerns beyond those of tone and mood. I suggest that the general imaginal neutrality avoids the evocation of strong and distracting mental representations that could dispel awareness of opposed perceptual perspectives (world versus garden) and the crucial implication of a perceptual (or spatial) tension.

How unusual it is that such non-imaginal terms dominate in such a context — and how probable, then, that they do provide special service — may be seen by comparing the ways Oxford dealt elsewhere with similar moods and content. Consider, for example, Macbeth’s “Life’s but a walking shadow,” Othello’s “O now, forever, Farewell the tranquil mind,” and Lear’s “Thou’dst shun a bear.” (See the attached list for line numbers and for several other contrasting examples.)

...That it should come to this!  
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:  
So excellent a king; that was, to this Hyperion  
to a satyr...

(I.ii. 137-140)

“That it should come to this!” The remarkably serviceable “this” makes its third appearance in nine lines. Though now a pronoun, designative rather than demonstrative, it is performing as before,

drawing into a tiny focus the whole of Hamlet’s circumstances in a gesture expressive of their tangible immediacy (as in “this...flesh” and “this world”). While it calls up no mental pictures itself, “this” here refers to the narrative exposition that follows, in the balance of the soliloquy. The word does not, however, simply introduce Hamlet’s aggrieved and disjointed summary of his understanding of his situation. It also sets up a palpable echo two lines later: “So excellent a king, that was to this.

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**We next encounter a name so equipped with evocative implications that the movement isn’t merely from “this” to “Hyperion” (a Titan, sun-god, and in some accounts father of the sun-god Helios). The leap is also from a word empty of imaginal content to one rich enough in association and grandeur that the functional difference alone declares a contrast. We move both from associative emptiness to associative richness and from a suggestion of what is humanly proximate to one of vastness, godly remove, and mythological distance.**

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...” The striking repetition of “to this” in the same placement at the end of the line invests the pronoun with some of the weight it was given just above. The result is a connection or near identity — still unspoken — between Hamlet’s circumstances (compressed in the first “this”) and his uncle (represented by the second). But “this” now takes on an expanded role. Not only does it here collapse everything that signifies Hamlet’s uncle into one

dismissive and non-imaginal syllable, the understood contrast with Hamlet’s father sets up a leap across an enormous conceptual distance.

Prepared only by the structure of “So excellent a king, that was to this,” we next encounter a name so equipped with evocative implications that the movement isn’t merely from “this” to “Hyperion” (a Titan, sun-god, and in some accounts father of the sun-god Helios). The leap is also from a word empty of imaginal content to one rich enough in association and grandeur that the functional difference alone declares a contrast. We move both from associative emptiness to associative richness and from a suggestion of what is humanly proximate to one of vastness, godly remove, and mythological distance.

The “king”-to-“this” movement is then paralleled but amplified in the fall from “Hyperion to a satyr”<sup>6</sup>, and the conceptual oscillation continues:<sup>7</sup>

so loving to my mother  
That he might not be teem [permit] the winds  
of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth,  
Must I remember?

(140-143)

“The winds of heaven” is a return to mythological distance, and in spite of its majesty the phrase offers little more in imaginal content than does “the Everlasting.” But the implied touch of heavenly winds on a particular human face creates another doubled opposition between a) the celestial and the earthly and b) imaginal vagueness and great specificity (as between “the Everlasting” and “this...flesh”). The pairing of “Heaven and earth” then makes the motif almost explicit, through both its invocation of opposing extremes and its independent summation of everything Hamlet’s thought can take in.

In the soliloquy’s second half, an intricate variation of Oxford’s perceptual and spatial mechanism comes into play.

With “Frailty, thy name is woman” (l. 146), Oxford and Hamlet give an abstract quality a generalized, tangible embodiment. “Woman,” though, concrete as its meaning may be, can embody “Frailty” (here meaning inconstancy and lack of



moral strength) only through examples or associations — and not with the easily-imagined metaphoric equivalence that, for instance, “slender reed” offers. But of course “Woman” here does have an immediate resolution. Hamlet is speaking of a particular woman, of whose character we have some knowledge and whose behavior we understand to have great significance to him. The movement is therefore from “Frailty” to “Woman” to Gertrude-mother-queen — i.e., clarification from a broad concept to an emblematic specific. (“Woman” is a necessary step here. Consider it otherwise: “Frailty, thy name is Gertrude,” or “Frailty, thy name is Mother.”)

Now consider the choice in the light of the much more typical format that proceeds in the opposite direction, and that would yield “Woman, thy name is frailty,” thus characterizing an actual or representative figure with a generalized quality. Woman is not merely characterized when it is Frailty that is renamed. Oxford’s method has been to draw everything an abstraction might convey into a concrete specific, weighting the specific with all the implications the abstraction carries. There is a kind of “friction” in the device’s reversal of the more usual movement from the specific to the general. The gesture here is one of reaching, grasping, containment — a powerful compression of circumstance into symbol that reflects the conceptual distances over which his hero’s thoughts ceaselessly range. “Woman, thy name is Frailty,” in spite of its algebraic identity, would hardly suggest the same restlessness or scope.

(A more current application of the typical process might be “Women are fickle,” which, in fairness, invites a reply such as “Men are insensitive.” Try rephrasing either in a reversed construction to sense some of the tension implicit in Oxford’s choice.)

Three related but subtler uses of the same approach follow. The first two are:

(1) A little month, or ere those shoes were old/With which she followed my poor father’s body... [she] married with my uncle.

(147-151)

(2) Within a month,/Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears/Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,/She married — O most wicked speed!

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**Why shoes? Why not another garment or incidental? What drew Oxford to the device?...**

**If only by implied contrast with more likely associations, there is a sense of dumb, inexpressive, unsymbolic ordinariness in shoes. They are prosaic, lowly objects on which to focus in a context of death. ...Even if the suggestion of a royal funeral invites only a fleeting mental representation, the lines’ focus on shoes would seem to impose on the imagination an almost perverse reduction in scope — a subjective response reinforcing the portrayal of the despondent, disgusted, and diminished view of circumstance encapsulated in the single word “poor” with which Hamlet...describes his dead father...**

(153-156)

Why shoes? Why not another garment or incidental? What drew Oxford to the device?

If Gertrude’s behavior is to contrast sharply with Hamlet’s expectations of her or, for example, if “month” is to feel “little,” the pattern of the soliloquy requires

imagery that compresses her actions and apparent sensibilities into an accordingly little and — in order that it remain little — relatively unevocative mental representation. In “shoes” there is nothing of the glamour or pageantry a cape or gown or jewelry might suggest; shoes are, somehow, among the least — and least likely — of all the items one might expect a character to connect with the rituals of formal mourning. What’s more, they are all that Hamlet depicts Gertrude having about her as she followed his father’s body. Nor does he allow her any redeeming display of grief or station. Any choices she might have been supposed to make regarding her dress and comportment are reduced by him to “shoes,” as if her regrettable limitations (“Frailty, thy name is woman” immediately precedes) had yielded an ironically vain preoccupation with irrelevant detail.

If only by implied contrast with more likely associations, there is a sense of dumb, inexpressive, unsymbolic ordinariness in shoes. They are prosaic, lowly objects on which to focus in a context of death, grief, and royal funeral. (They are so lowly, in fact, that — given the dress of the period — they would for all purposes have gone unseen.)<sup>8</sup> Even a vaguely literal response to “shoes” also calls into play a particular imaginal perspective in the funeral scene, thus reflecting a second opposition or tension — the first being that between emotional context and choice of imaginal symbol. Even if the suggestion of a royal funeral invites only a fleeting mental representation, the lines’ focus on “shoes” would seem to impose on the imagination an almost perverse reduction in scope and a sensory downward pull — a subjective response reinforcing the portrayal of the despondent, disgusted, and diminished view of circumstance encapsulated in the single word “poor” with which Hamlet now describes his dead father, in enormous contrast to the “Hyperion” figure only eight lines above.

The “shoes” device clearly models the compression and reduction, the implied opposition of imaginal perspectives, and the tension between figurative image and corresponding narrative that underlie the more sweeping images discussed earlier. In the examples at hand, our understanding

(Cont. on p. 10)

(*Soliloquy, cont. from p. 9*)

of the lines is at least potentially responsive to Oxford's invitation to view circumstances of great import and emotional horror through a lens that first puts shoes in the foreground, and then focuses on the salt in tears. (The latter device and its function are much like those of the former, and need no special consideration. The image may recall, however, "the fruitful river in the eye," the contrastingly hyperbolic metaphor Hamlet assigned his own

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In combination with the experiential qualities of the imagery, the result is a process of negotiating pairs of extreme and contradictory perspectives in one perceptual effort. The imagery reflects an apprehension of undefined space through which thought moves rapidly and ceaselessly, pulled one way and then another by leaps in perspective. The movement is at once emblematic of a wrenching narrative and suggestive of an effort to impose intellect on powerful feelings. The effect is a subjective suggestion of what Oxford meant Hamlet to feel, and of what he meant Hamlet to perceive: a world where understanding paradoxically forbids concrete, articulate resolution, and where but to think is to be alone and to despair of gathering the scattered pieces of an enormous puzzle.

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tears only 75 lines earlier, implying in "river" the constancy of his grief, and in "fruitful" a sense of its fitting richness.)

(3) O most wicked speed! To post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! 156-157

Here, "sheets" joins with the homely — if less charged — "shoes" and "salt," in a fascinatingly restrained trio of symbols for the developments Hamlet is deploring. It is not, I think, a

coincidental touch that "shoes," "salt" and "sheets" are all compact and sibilant. The poet's ear was in tune with his imagination.

In the lines that bring Hamlet's narrative to a close, Oxford employs again a figurative device in which the image itself is much less striking than certain attendant effects. The unseemly, beast-like haste and facility of Gertrude's remarriage are decisively characterized and conveyed by "post" and "dexterity," but the assumed acts that follow, and with which the line tacitly concludes, are left utterly to implication. Gertrude's shoes, with which she followed the king's body, at least imply the wearer; her "galled eyes" synecdochically offer us the person. "Sheets," though, is impersonal, and utterly dependent on context for its intended meaning. The reference neither literally nor imaginably suggests incest, and in itself denotes nothing of the acts so repellent to Hamlet. Nonetheless, the distillation or compression of the history into the allusive, insinuating "sheets," a single concrete word that imaginably conveys little while meaning much, gives the image a startling, climactic suggestiveness, into which Oxford and Hamlet seem to release all the tensions and momentum of the soliloquy. Indeed, the device is perhaps as evocative of powerful feeling as the explicit and grossly descriptive terms Hamlet employs later, when he turns his rage on his mother directly and addresses the same acts:

Nay, but to live  
In the rank sweat of an enseamed<sup>9</sup> bed,  
Stew'd<sup>10</sup> in corruption, honeying and making love  
Over the nasty sty! (III.iv.91-94)

### Conclusion

The marked distinction between the language of the first soliloquy and that of the "enseamed bed" speech sharply suggests (as do other such paired examples) that — whatever his process — the author used imagery in certain of Hamlet's speeches with a particular if intuitive sense of implications separate from the expressive content of the words. In soliloquy (and in some of his "antic" exchanges), Hamlet's lines need not acknowledge the limitations or mechanisms of an exchange in which the character is assumed to desire another's understanding; conversely, in passages such as Hamlet's graphic speech to Gertrude, his language ensures the point that he and she do share his words unambiguously. The underlying experiential element that analysis highlights in the soliloquy is not a constant in Hamlet's style, but one that is responsive to opportunities for the author to discharge a subjective identification that other dramatic contexts do not invite.

With the first such opportunity, in Hamlet's first soliloquy, the author introduces his hero's gift for bringing into opposition conflicting or incongruous terms that on the one hand represent a ferocious intellectual sweep and on the other suggest an ability to find extraordinarily telling specifics on which to fix. In combination with the experiential qualities of the imagery, the result is a process of negotiating pairs of extreme and contradictory perspectives in one perceptual effort. The imagery reflects an apprehension of undefined space through which thought moves

rapidly and ceaselessly, pulled one way and then another by leaps in perspective. The movement is at once emblematic of a wrenching narrative and suggestive of an effort to impose intellect on powerful feelings. The effect is a subjective suggestion of what Oxford meant Hamlet to feel, and of what he meant Hamlet to perceive: a world where understanding paradoxically forbids concrete, articulate resolution, and where but to think is to be alone and to despair of gathering the scattered pieces of an enormous puzzle.<sup>11, 12</sup>

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Spurgeon, Carolyn, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*, Cambridge University Press, 1935, page 316.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Jenkins cites Paul "on the desire to be dissolved and the necessity of living in the flesh" (Philippians i.23-24). Also possibly relevant are the medieval concept of resolving from a baser element into a higher, and the association of the melancholy humor (the source of Hamlet's supposed affliction) with the earth and with the corresponding qualities of coldness, dryness and hardness of the flesh, which may be remedied by the melting of its (or earth's) excess into water. (See Jenkins's footnotes to the scene and his "Longer Note," 436-438.)

<sup>3</sup> Without pushing a subjective observation, I suggest that "my too too sullied flesh" would invoke an awareness of the body as sensory medium, rather than direct appreciation to its role as container, or prison. It would also imply a distinguishing gesture (i.e., "my" flesh as opposed to others' flesh) and heighten the recollection that others are nearby if not actually on stage — whereas "this" supports the immediate, concrete image by denoting all flesh that is present, Hamlet's and Hamlet's alone.

The obvious appropriateness of "solid" (as suggested by the [corrupt?] Folio and by early editors who adopted it) gave it the edge as the preferred reading until Dover Wilson established Q2 as the authority and critics and editors acknowledged that "sullied" (or "sallied") yields deeper implications and the echo of "solid." (See Jenkins's footnotes and his "Longer Note," 436.)

<sup>4</sup> Imaginal: of or relating to the imagination or mental images.

<sup>5</sup> Even if — in addition to its role as a symbol of harmony — one finds in "garden" a reference to Eden, and in its possession by "things rank and gross" a reference to Eden's corruption, the rather forced connection does not argue against either the more telling use of "world" as a general and inclusive figure or that of "unweeded garden" in its mundane sense.

<sup>6</sup> For the sake of a balanced figure, the opposite of "Hyperion" must also lie in mythology, of course, but the use of mythological terms actually permits a greater and more easily resolved sense of contrast than would a structurally more consistent pairing

with a strictly human earthly partner.

<sup>7</sup> Even the revision of "two months dead" to something less than two months (line 138, between the two *this*'s) suggests contraction or reduction, echoing half the movement in the "oscillation."

<sup>8</sup> Nothing I've found so far suggests any reason to suspect an Elizabethan would have felt different. ("I do affect the very ground, which is base, where her shoe, which is baser, guided by her foot, which is basest, doth tread." [Don Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost*, I.ii]).

<sup>9</sup> Enseamed: saturated with animal fat or grease (Jenkins)

<sup>10</sup> Stew'd: pun on "stew," Elizabethan slang for brothel.

<sup>11</sup> The juxtaposition of extreme perspectives in figures of speech is, in fact, but a particular instance of a tendency the character of Hamlet manifests at all levels of expression and behavior. For one thing, he employs a rhetorical process of pairing opposites for the sake either of contrast or elaboration. He contrasts his own failure to act with the First Player's apparent passion, for example (II.ii.545-584); he matches the merits of heroic action against the fear of death's mystery in the "To be" soliloquy (III.i.57-88); he opposes the glories of creation to his own supposed melancholy in the "o'erhanging firmament" speech (II.ii.295-310); and, as seen here in the first soliloquy, he takes two differing (and yet tellingly balanced) approaches to the predicament of his imprisonment in life, typically making the point twice, as emphasized by the characteristically precise "Or" (lines 129-132).

Above all, of course, Hamlet's play-long deliberation about what to do and how to reconcile his warring needs is a study in opposing perspectives. Also, as Wolfgang Clemen points out, Hamlet's range of imagery serves "to give relief to his conflicting moods, to his being torn between extremes . . . This characteristic . . . also expresses itself in the sudden change of language and in the juxtaposition of passages which are sharply contrasted in their diction" (109).

<sup>12</sup> It is illuminating to compare Hamlet's poetically imaginal movement with the sequentially associative procedures and relatively linear elaborations of conceits that typify the great imagery-filled (and despairing) speeches of other of Shakespeare's tragic heroes — speeches that do not, for example, raise irreconcilable perspectives or challenge one mental image with another. See the attached list for a small catalog of instructive passages from speeches of Othello, Lear and Macbeth.

*Soliloquy, cont. from p. 11*

Passages of imagery from speeches  
of *Othello*, *Lear* and *Macbeth*

## Suggested Reading

*Othello*:

III.iii.177-183: Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy . . .  
III.iii.344-354: O now, forever Farewell the tranquil mind!  
V.ii.264-277: Here is my journey's end . . .  
V.ii.339-352: Then must you speak . . .

*Lear*:

I.iv.267-273: O most small fault . . .  
I.iv.276-291: Nature, hear!  
I.iv.299-314: I am ashamed That thou hast power . . .  
II.iv.213-218: O heavens, If you do love old men . . .  
II.iv.248-255: But yet thou are my flesh . . .  
II.iv.305-320: You heavens, give me that patience . . .  
III.ii.1-9: Blow, winds . . .  
III.iv.13-21: Thou'dst shun a bear . . .  
III.iv.107-113: Is man no more than this?  
IV.vi.128-147: The wren goes to it . . .  
V.iii.9-20: Come, let's away to prison.

*Macbeth*:

I.iii.148-156: If good, why do I yield . . .  
I.iv.57-61: Stars, hide your fires!  
I.vii.2-29: If the assassination . . .  
II.i.42-70: Is this a dagger . . .  
II.ii.49-54: Methought I heard a voice cry . . .  
II.ii.77-81: What hands are here?  
II.iii.101-106: Had I but died . . .  
III.i.100-111: Ay, in the catalog ye go for men . . .  
III.ii.15-29: We have scotched the snake, not killed it.  
III.ii.51-60: Come, seeling night . . .  
III.iv.123-129: Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear...  
V.v.10-14: I have almost forgot the taste of fears . . .  
V.v.21-30: Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow . . . [includes  
"Life's but a walking shadow . . ."]

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*(Richard II, Part 1, cont. from p. 1)*

today. Derived from W.P. Frijlinck's 1929 'diplomatic' edition,<sup>2</sup> as he acknowledges, its most notable feature is an abridgment of the text by some 1880 lines.<sup>3</sup>

No matter how one figures it, Bullough cuts out more than half the play's approximately 3,000 lines. Tallying only the spoken text, he deletes I.i, 80 lines; I.ii, 36 lines; all of I.iii and II.i; II.ii, 142 lines; II.iii, all but three lines; III.i, 80 lines (about half the scene); III.ii 126 lines; III.iii 140 lines; IV.i 105 lines; IV.ii 118 lines; IV.iii all but 13 lines; V.i 205; V.ii, the whole scene; V.iii, all but the first 26 lines; V.iv, all but 29 lines; V.v, the whole scene; V.vi 18 lines.

Most of these omissions are replaced by summaries—but by no means all. The following are indicated only by ellipses: I.i.31-40, 71-98, 110-130, 198-222; III.i.83-163; IV.i 1-61, 151-163, 196-228; IV.ii.197-215; V.iii.27-128, some 380 lines. In addition, the whole of V.v is mysteriously omitted without comment, explanation or scene summary, though until now no one seems to have noticed. In addition to this important episode (we learn that the King has been taken prisoner, in effect deposed), many of Bullough's excisions include some of Anon's best lines and moments. Their deletion evinces no logic or consistency other than the desire to establish *1 Richard II's* marginality, in every sense. I'll come back to this point.

Bullough's summaries are also of doubtful value. The wonderfully comic scene with the Spruce Courtier (III.ii), arguably a source (even in Bullough's terms) for Osric, is omitted and then superficially thus described:

'A spruce courtier on horseback' enters to bid Woodstock back to Court. Mistaking the Duke for a groom he asks him to mind his horse. The Duke does so, and when the mistake is revealed, demands the tip promised him.<sup>4</sup>

But the business with the tip is trivial compared to the theatrically bold and inventive dialogue between Woodstock and the horse, which anticipates Launce and Crab. Also ignored are the subtle class dynamics of the encounter between an old-style noble and a Ricardian 'new man,' and the deep social satire leading to the remarkable pre-echoes of Osric. Nor does Bullough mention the scene's narrative crux, Woodstock's refusal to return to Court, though it is this which gives rise to Richard II's decision to abduct and then murder his uncle—the first fatality in the Wars of the Roses, obliquely referred to in *2 Richard II*, I.i.5.

The conclusion of III.iii (103 lines) gets the following dismissive treatment, i.e., completely overlooking its menacing portrait of the Elizabethan police state and—in a study, mind you, devoted to Shakespeare's narrative and dramatic sources—the proleptical Dogberry and Verges in Simon Ignorance, the Bailiff of Dunstable. It cannot be said that Bullough simply failed to notice the pre-echoes: Boas had pointed them out in 1923 and Rossiter again in 1946.<sup>6</sup> Here is Bullough's almost meaningless summary:

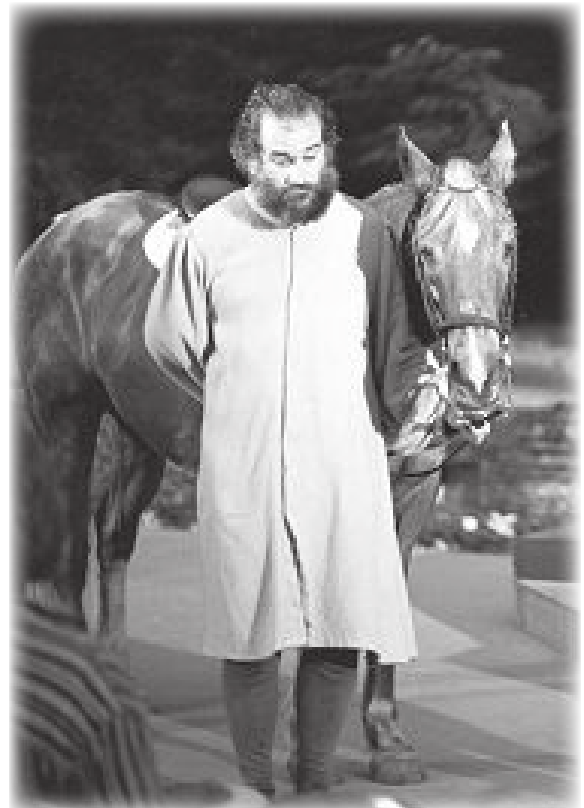
They arrest a schoolmaster for singing a rhyme satirising

the favourites, and a cowherd for 'whistling treason.'<sup>7</sup>

Another big cut, V.i.19-202, is misrepresented in this way:

The Ghosts of the Black Prince and Edward III appear to Woodstock in a vision and he awakes in terror. Lapoole urges him to write & submit to King Richard. Woodstock agrees to write, not to submit, but to admonish the King.<sup>8</sup>

Lost are any references to Lapoole's Macbethian



***Thomas of Woodstock (played by Dan Popowich) commiserates with his horse in the 1999 production of the play by the Hampshire Shakespeare Company. A trial run for Launce and his dog Crab in Two Gentlemen of Verona?***

psychomachia as he contemplates Woodstock's murder, the deep connections between the scene's visionary ghosts and King Hamlet—'thy royal father's ghost,' (*1 Richard II*, V.i.79); 'thy father's spirit,' (*Hamlet*, I.v.9)—and the preemptions of Richmond's ghosts at Bosworth (*Richard III*, V.iii.143ff.). Also unremarked are the ways these astonishingly innovative *gengangere* ushered in a whole new dramatic style in the Elizabethan theater.<sup>9</sup>

Bullough's distortions and elisions are at best reprehensible and at worst deliberate, i.e., driven by a commitment to the prevailing orthodoxy that '*Thomas of Woodstock*' should be considered a minor influence upon *2 Richard II*, no more.<sup>10</sup> In other words, we're dealing with an interpretation, not a text, an essay with a very long supporting quote. Here's its thesis:

*(Cont. on p. 14)*

(Richard II, part 1, cont. from p. 13)

I believe that Woodstock preceded [2 *Richard II*] and slightly affected [Shakespeare's] handling of the reign...Apart from [2 *Richard II*, II.i] Shakespeare included few references to the other play...readers may like to compare the passages given below [i.e., from 1 *Richard II*] with Shakespeare's treatment.<sup>11</sup>

Note the phrase 'I believe,' and the suggestion that the given passages are representative. Until *The Tragedy of Richard II*,

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**Until *The Tragedy of Richard II*, Part One (2006) no one accepted Bullough's obviously rhetorical challenge, and it does not stand. In fact 2 *Richard II* contains more than 60 direct or near-direct quotations from 1 *Richard II*, not to mention the carryovers of major characters and important background information, such as the murder of Gloucester and Richard's conversion of his kingdom into a 'pelting farm' (1 *Richard II*, IV.i.136). Readers trusting Bullough's scholarship and reputation have simply accepted his evaluation and assessment.**

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There are other difficulties with 'From *Thomas of Woodstock*.' An editorial note claims that the MS.'s punctuation has been modernized, though in practice it's a decidedly hit-or-miss affair. A small example: III.iii.98 appears virtually in its archaic form, i.e., unedited except for the upper-case M: 'Mass neighbors. heeres

nothing that I see.' On the other hand, all lower-case line-starts are given capitals throughout, and medial *u*'s and initial *v*'s replaced (e.g., MS. *heuey* reads *heavey* and *vnclcs* reads *uncles*). For the rest, the changes are capricious and unsystematic (e.g., some but not all consonantal *i*'s are replaced with *j*'s), leaving readers to wonder if what's on the page represents the original or editorial interventions.

The only route to certainty is by comparing Bullough's text line by line with the MS. or Frijlinck's literal transcription. When we do, we find the editor's intervening hand gloved deceptively as pristine authenticity. Consider I.i.20-2, which reads in MS./Frijlinck (square brackets indicating deletion):

good ifaith are his vnclcs deathes become  
health to king Richard: how cam it out  
S<sup>r</sup> Thomas Cheney pray resolue vs [this doubt]

But Bullough edits this quite substantially, though silently, providing a text which appears authentic but is not:

Good; ifaith, are his uncles deathes become  
Health to king Richard? how cam it out  
Sir Thomas Cheney pray resolve us.

From time to time apostrophes are inserted, e.g., *joyn'd* (I.i.63), at others the original, meaning Frijlinck (who almost never employs apostrophes), is followed, e.g., *revenge'd* (I.i.71) and *deriv'd* (I.i.158).

Again, sometimes the full-stop is retained, e.g., after *Tressillian* (I.i.65-6):

And that sly machavill Tressillian.  
Whome now the king elects for lord Cheefe Justice

while at others it is replaced with a comma, e.g., after *name* (I.ii.27):

And shortly are to underprop the name,  
Marke me, Tressillian, of lord-cheefe Justice of England.

My point is not that these edits are unreasonable but that readers have no way of knowing which parts of Bullough's text follow the original and which do not. It all looks like the real thing, as he claims, but is actually quite thoroughly emended.

The difficulty extends to the layout. Bullough renders every court scene in full verse yet the MS. is far more varied, with many speeches by Tressilian and the minions, etc., explicitly cast in prose. Indeed, Anon's use of prose closely resembles Shakespeare's.<sup>12</sup>

Nimble's declaration (I.ii.100-3) is obviously not verse, yet Bullough prints it as such:

I, saving your honnors speech, your worshippfull tayle was whipt  
For stealeing my dinner out of my Satchell: you were ever  
So craftye in your childhood, that I knewe your worshipp would

Prove a good lawyer.

Another prose example is Green's speech at IV.i.139-42, which Bullough misrepresents in the following cumbersome versiform:

Sfoote, what neede you care what the world  
talkes, you still retayne the Name of kinge, & if any  
disturbe ye, we four comes presently from the Four  
parts of the kingdome, with four puesant Armies to  
assist you.

These are not minor points. Bullough's edition is accepted at face value by readers interested in Shakespeare's literary background—that's the premise of his book. Yet his text is so misleading, anybody wondering whether such *soi-disant* poetry could possibly be by the Bard would of course come away certain that the answer must be no.

Bullough's editing is also just sloppy. Apparently he did not understand Frijlinck's type conventions, and so made no effort to discriminate between stage directions proper and the MS.'s marginal notations, e.g., various stage managers' self-reminders. The result is that they are all included as directions, creating some spectacular redundancies. Among many examples which Bullough himself might have noticed, or at least puzzled over, we may cite his l. 1136 (*1 Richard II*, III.i.6), where a meaningless 'Blankes' suddenly materializes in the middle of a speech. Both MS. and Frijlinck's transcription show unambiguously that the word is merely a logistical note to ready this prop for later use.

In addition to the major elisions and departures already discussed, Bullough's text contains at least one significant inaccuracy and several minor ones. At V.vi.6, he omits, 'Who is't can tell us which way Bagot fled?' making complete nonsense of what little is quoted of the rest of the scene. He also incorrectly gives *Lights*, *light* for *Lights*, *lights* at I.i.1; *kindsmen* for *kinsmen* at I.i.134; *well not* for *not well* at II.ii.147; *for all whisperers* instead of *all for whisperers* at III.iii.49, *Their* for *There* at III.iii.117; and *dist* for *didst* at IV.i.193.

*Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* is a valuable resource, as every Shakespeare scholar knows, though I for one will consult it again with some caution. Bullough's *Woodstock* is the *Reader's Digest* condensed version and about as useful.

#### A.P. Rossiter: *Woodstock, a Moral History* (1946)

After Bullough, *Woodstock, a Moral History* is the play's best-known and most influential edition, though it is more often referred to than actually read. Scholars tend to gesture vaguely towards it as though Rossiter had settled all the drama's questions, especially of course the key matter of its authorship, which he agnostically attributes to 'Anon.'<sup>13</sup>

But unfortunately, while Rossiter was a good critic, he was in some respects editorially challenged—either that or, like Bullough, a researcher who willfully 'beautified his data' (as the scientists say). I mean by this that the changes he silently introduced into

the text conveniently support his critical judgments, positive and negative. *Woodstock, a Moral History* is riddled with errors, eccentricities, misprisions, interventions of incredible arrogance, even deliberate falsifications. Many of its best edits are plagiarized and a quantity of scholarly Notes stolen from elsewhere.

I'll substantiate each of these charges in a moment. Let me say first that Rossiter's errors have had, and continue to have, enormous consequences for Shakespeare studies. In his 2002 Arden edition of *2 Richard II*, for example, Charles Forker unquestioningly accepts the two-author hypothesis when arguing that *1* and *2 Richard II* 'embody opposed theories of monarchy—contractual versus sacramental.'<sup>14</sup> Forker's assertion is that they exemplify distinct politico-historical philosophies. But actually both explore equally the tensions between these antitheses, God *versus* Man, resolving them too in ways that are quite similar. The single quote from *1 Richard II* Forker offers in support of Anon's purported view is an inaccurate passage drawn in good faith

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**Bullough's edition is accepted at face value by readers interested in Shakespeare's literary background—that's the premise of his book. Yet his text is so misleading, anybody wondering whether such *soi-disant* poetry could possibly be by the Bard would of course come away certain that the answer must be no.**

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(which is my point) from Rossiter: Woodstock's exclamation, 'Let me be chronicled Apostata,/Rebellious to my king and country both!' (III.ii.77-8.) But in the MS. the key phrase is actually '... rebellious to my god and country boeth,' the religious invocation of course completely transforming the political semantics. 'King and country' allows Forker to advance his theory of a monarch *sub judice* in *1 Richard II* as against his Christological variety in *2 Richard II*. This is compounded by the absurd claim that *1 Richard II* accuses the King of having 'violated his coronation oath...and is therefore no longer worthy of the crown.'<sup>15</sup> However, the play's politics are considerably more complex and historically nuanced than this.

As this indicates, Rossiter's text is simply unreliable. Here's another unambiguous example. We learn in IV.iii that the saintly Queen Anne has passed away and that Richard is overcome with grief—rending his hair, beating his breast, falling to the earth and groveling, even wishing to die so as to be with her.

At this moment the Duchess of Gloucester arrives (offstage)

(Cont. on p. 16)

(Richard II, part 1, cont. from p. 15)

to comfort her nephew. On stage, the minions grow fearful that in his emotionally overwrought state the King will divulge their plans to murder Woodstock. Bushy reports:

He [Richard] takes her [the Duchess] in his arms, weeps on her breast,  
And would have there reveal'd her husband's fall  
Amidst his passions, had not Scroop and Green  
By violence borne him to an inward room ...

(IV.iii.119-22)

Shortly afterward the King himself enters, still accompanied by Scroop and Green. Bagot whispers: 'Here comes King Richard, all go comfort him' (IV.iii.134). Rossiter notices, however, that for the remainder of this scene Green says nothing which means, in Rossiter's opinion, that he isn't really there at all:

Greene's name appears in MS. s.d. but deleted (Ink VII). K[eller]. keeps it. As G. does not speak, I argue he cannot be there.<sup>16</sup>

Rossiter thus unwarrantedly intervenes and, frankly, mutilates the text. Green is expunged and (much more seriously) Bagot's line, 'Here comes King Richard, all go comfort him,' is also quietly deleted. But clearly this will not do, above all because Rossiter neither mentions nor attempts to justify the line's removal, an editorial silence which conveniently strengthens his case for the absence of Green. As Bagot's urging suggests, all Richard's friends both should and would be comforting him at this terrible moment. And indeed Green has been doing so, as we've just been told: he is the King's favorite Favorite and may even be his lover.<sup>17</sup> Where else would he be at this time but at Richard's side? In an earlier scene the other favorites jealously complain that he is always there: 'See, see, he comes, and that flattering hound Green close at his elbow' (IV.i.62). Psychologically and dramatically it is imperative that Green enter with Scroop and Richard, just as the original mandates.

Secondly, even by Rossiter's own account, Green's deletion in MS. is at best doubtful. Ink VII has no textual authority; its user was probably a stage manager or prompter (Frijlinck, p. xii), who at IV.i.203 'blunderingly gave an obvious Bagot speech to Scroope' (Rossiter, p. 172). What's most likely is that at some forgotten performance the actor playing Green was required elsewhere; perhaps he doubled up and, since he does not in fact have anything to say, was quietly excised from the scene. One cannot conclude from this that the author had the same intent. On the contrary, the original directs Green's entrance.

Some of Rossiter's other misrepresentations are merely oversights, though no less excusable. At III.ii.102-3 the MS. gives—

farwell good brothers, Cheney conductt them forth  
adue good yorke & Gaunt farwell for euer

but Rossiter loses the first 'farwell' and in its place mistakenly repeats the 'adue' from the next line:

Adieu, good brothers. Cheyney, conduct them forth  
Adieu, good York and Gaunt, farewell for ever.

Since Rossiter neither comments upon nor rationalizes the edit, and it's not borrowed from elsewhere, it must be an error. Additional unexplained mistranscriptions include: I.ii.44, *subtle law for stubborn law*; I.ii.93, *against* for *'gainst* (but also at IV.i.157-60, so this may be policy rather than oversight); II.ii.1, *How now for Now*; II.iii.103-7, *starv'st* for *starvest*; III.i.27-30, *our* for *out*; III.ii.78, *king and country* for *God and country*; III.ii.178-9, *If you so please* (twice) for *If so you please*; III.ii.202-3, *as twere*

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for as it were; III.iii.92-3, *There's* for *There is*; III.iii.206, *if a man whistles treason* for *if any man whistles treason*; IV.i.189-90, *ever* for *never*; IV.ii.39, *the* for *her*; V.i.203-6, *breath'st* for *breathest*.<sup>18</sup> Some of these are obviously trivial, though still unacceptable by scholarly standards; others, like *king and country* and if a man whistles treason have had—as we've seen and will see—exegetical consequences for the critics who accept their accuracy on trust. Like lexicographers, scholars may be harmless drudges but their mistakes sometimes have repercussions.

In addition to these distortions, the pointing throughout Rossiter's edition is idiosyncratic, to say the least, with a strong predilection for often irrelevant or arbitrary dashes, brackets and multi-dot ellipses—two, three, four, and in one case seven in a row. These intrusions and eccentricities alter the rhythm, emphases and feel of the text so that it hardly resembles a Shakespeare drama in any familiar way.

Rossiter was also a plagiarist. He has gotten away with it until



now because no one ever looked closely enough to detect it. The worst example occurs at V.i.245-51. Woodstock has just been murdered and, while his assassins are dragging the body off to be arranged neatly on his bed, since it must appear that he died naturally, his jailor-murderer Lapoole prepares a small troop of soldiers to kill his killers and so cover up the crime (again reminiscent of Macbeth).

Wolfgang Keller, *I Richard II's* second editor (1899), brought order to this confusion by assigning the correct lines to their speakers, inserting speech-heads, making a few deft word edits, directing the entrance of a couple of soldiers, and giving them a short verbal response. The square-bracketed speech-heads and stage directions represent Keller's emendations:

**La.** What, is he dead?

**2 M.** As a doore nayle, my lord.  
What will ye doe with his bodye?

**[Lapoole.]** Take it vp gently, lay hime in his bed./Then shutt the doore, as if he ther had dyd.

**[Murderer.]** It cannot be perseued otherwise, my lord: neuer was murder done with such rare skill. At our return we shall expect reward, my lord.

*Exeunt with the bodye*

**[Lapoole.]** 'Tis ready tould; beare in the body, then returne and take it. With-in ther, hoe!

*[Enter Souldiers.]*

*[Souldier]* My lord!

Here is Rossiter's version, an almost straight copy from Keller, followed by a deliberately misleading Note:

**LAP.** What, is he dead?

**2ND M.** As a door nail, my lord.  
What will ye do with his body?

**LAP.** Take it up gently, lay him in his bed./ Then shut the door, as if he there had died.

**1ST M.** It cannot be perceived otherwise, my lord;/ Neuer was murder done with such rare skill./ At our return we shall expect

reward, my lord.

**LAP.** 'Tis ready told./ Bear in the body, then return and take it.

*(Exeunt MURDERERS with the body)*

Within there ho!

*[Enter Soldiers.]*

**SOLD.** My lord!

Rossiter flags this passage and comments: 'I supply *Enter Souldiers*.'<sup>19</sup> It cannot be supposed that he merely

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**That Rossiter knew what he was doing is borne out by the context of these dishonesties, a flurry of distracting statements calling attention to Keller's supposed errors and misjudgments. What they actually reveal is that Rossiter minutely examined Keller's text and consciously stole important ideas and contributions.**

**Indeed, one almost gets the impression of a pathology, a kind of scholarly kleptomania extending even to the tiniest objects...**

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overlooked this pillage—Frijlinck clearly records Keller's edit in her notes, and it simply can't be missed by anyone working closely through the text. In other words, it's theft or editorial plagiarism. That Rossiter knew what he was doing is borne out by the context of these dishonesties, a flurry of distracting statements calling attention to Keller's supposed errors and misjudgments. What they actually reveal is that Rossiter minutely examined Keller's text and consciously stole important ideas

and contributions.

Indeed, one almost gets the impression of a pathology, a kind of scholarly kleptomania extending even to the tiniest objects, e.g., a pair of clarifying dashes at I.ii.27-8. Such small potatoes would hardly be worth commenting upon except that Rossiter goes out of his way to note, 'my dashes.'<sup>20</sup> The fact is, they appeared in Keller's text first.

But Keller is not Rossiter's only victim; he stole liberally from everyone. Like the above, some of his embezzlements are quite substantial, such as Halliwell's brilliant emendation at V.iv.20, s.d., *They fight and Green is slain*, which is silently assimilated.

Rossiter also credits himself for Halliwell's conjectural speech-head *Maid* at II.iii.59, noting, 'No speech-heading in MS. but the *sir* makes the guess easy.'<sup>21</sup> Note the sly ambiguity: Rossiter doesn't actually claim to have made the guess himself, though it is to be understood.

Many of Rossiter's other apparently sharp-eyed observations are actually taken from an obscure essay by Professor F.I. Carpenter, who appears to have been preparing his own edition of the play in 1899-1900.<sup>22</sup> They include *banded for landed* (V.iii.72), *Certiorari* for *Surssararis* (I.ii.118, V.vi.27), the s.d. *Paper* (II.ii.61) together with its explanatory note, *while for wilse* (III.ii.190-3) and the correction of Keller's *care all for by are all for* (III. i.38-9).

Scholars who have naively accepted Rossiter's emended *Certiorari* as accurate include the eminent New Zealand attributionist MacDonald P. Jackson, who uses it to mistakenly ascribe the play to Samuel Rowley in the 17th century (*certiorari* being the more modern word).<sup>23</sup>

Occasionally Rossiter's scholarly asides also seem dangerously second-hand. At one point he notes that Halliwell's *paleing* (an error for MS. *pooleing*, II.iii.25) was accepted by the *O.E.D.* 'on the strength of this misreading!'<sup>24</sup> Exclamation point aside, this observation derives from Frijlinck (xxxiii), although Rossiter does not acknowledge it.

Of II.iii.101, 'To feast and revel in;

*(Cont. on p. 18)*

(Richard II, part 1, cont. from p. 17)

and when abroad they come,' Rossiter comments:

*&revell* is deleted in MS., perhaps by mistake, the aim being to regularize the line by deleting *feast &*.<sup>25</sup>

Compare this with Frijlinck's note:

Presumably *feast &* instead of *& reuell* should have been deleted.<sup>26</sup>

This list could be extended but I'll confine myself to one last example. In a "General Notes" comment on II.i.45-6, Rossiter perceptively observes:

From this point Tresilian does not speak in this scene: the only one

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**That Rossiter knew what he was doing is borne out by the context of these dishonesties, a flurry of distracting statements calling attention to Keller's supposed errors and misjudgments. What they actually reveal is that Rossiter minutely examined Keller's text and consciously stole important ideas and contributions.**

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in which he meets (if he does) any of the Lords, except when he is a prisoner in [V.vi]. In that scene (*q.v.*) York's name is cancelled in the s.d. Impossible as it seems, one has to wonder whether 'York' doubled 'Tresilian.' If so, he must exit soon after the present speech. But I don't see how [I.ii] was managed very easily after [I.i].<sup>27</sup>

And elsewhere, in a "Text Note" to V.vi.0.s.d. he says: 'Why York should be removed here is mysterious. See [II.i 45-6n.] for my own unconvincing guess.'<sup>28</sup> All this seems engagingly modest, but in fact

the unconvincing guess is really Keller's, who remarks in his introduction:

I am unable to decide whether Tresilian is always absent from those scenes in which the Lords and minions confront one another, but the possibility is worth commenting upon. The purpose would have been to save an actor.<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately for Keller (see, for example Parfitt's and Shepherd's note to their own V.vi.0.s.d.), Rossiter is the scholar who has received whatever kudos arises from this insight. Crime often does pay, at least in the groves of academe.<sup>30</sup>

**Thomas of Woodstock, ed. George Parfitt and Simon Shepherd (1977, 1988)**

These two texts are virtually identical, and therefore may be safely treated as one, though the 1988 edition inexplicably fails to reprint pp. 3 (I.i.1-34) and 66, (V.i.146-199), some 87 lines.<sup>31</sup> The original was prepared for the Nottingham Drama Texts series (published by Nottingham University), and the second for Brynmill Press. The chief purpose of the 1988 edition was to accompany Ian Robinson's groundbreaking essay, 'Richard II' & 'Woodstock' (Brynmill, 1988), which includes the first extended attempt to make the case for Shakespeare as the play's author.

Parfitt and Shepherd's text appears to have been typed on an IBM Selectric and then photocopied. The layout is crude and unattractive, with gaping white spaces, varying page lengths and erratically set footnotes full of typographical redundancies (e.g., single quotes surrounding italics) and inconsistent abbreviations (sometimes *N* for *Nimble*, etc.). Its text is preceded by a short Introduction and a list of earlier editions that omits Armstrong, Bullen and Bullough.<sup>32</sup>

Brief descriptive notes accompany the bibliographical entries for Frijlinck, Rossiter and Everitt. Frijlinck is described as having provided a 'detailed but unscientific account of the state of the ms and its hands and inks, but a less thorough critical appraisal.' Rossiter published 'much the most useful edition,

although [he] imposes on the text his own notions of dramatic speech,' with notes that are 'thorough and helpful, although the viewpoint is often perverse.' Everitt's text 'is highly dubious,' without 'worth-while commentary' except for 'postulated relationships which teeter on the incredible.'<sup>33</sup>

The editors repeatedly claim or imply that they have consulted the MS., but tell-tale errors show that at best they glanced occasionally at Frijlinck while deriving most of their material from Rossiter and Everitt.<sup>34</sup>

Trace elements, that is, unacknowledged copies of Rossiter's edition which repeat his idiosyncratic readings, include:

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**Scholars who have naively accepted Rossiter's emended Certiorari as accurate include the eminent New Zealand attributionist MacDonald P. Jackson, who uses it to mistakenly ascribe the play to Samuel Rowley in the 17th century (*certiorari* being the more modern word).**

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Accomp'nied with the dukes of Yorke and Lancaster / Who as I guess intends to ride with him

—II.iii.82-3

And peers and people all shall stoop to him.

—III.i.41

Ay, sir. (Would you and they were sodden for my swine!)

—III.iii.108

Had they concern'd myself, my fears were past;

—IV.ii.12

Rossiter alone among Parfitt's and Shepherd's predecessors (excluding Armstrong, who follows him virtually down the line, and of whose text the editors seem

unaware) gives the doubtful emendation *Accomp'nied* for MS. *accompined*, *peers* for MS. *peere*, parentheses and an exclamation point for MS. *I sir, would yo<sup>u</sup>*, and *they were sodden for my swyne*, and the unnoted edit *they* for MS. *the*.

Trace elements from Everitt's 'highly dubious' text include:

I think he dares not for fouling on his

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**As we've seen, Parfitt and Shepherd repeatedly imply and even claim to be working from the original. Their introduction refers confidently to the MS. which, they say, 'shows evidence of political intervention...[and] deletions seemingly made by the scribe.' But in fact the editors have not consulted the MS., or did so only sporadically. This may be inferred from their descriptive errors and the fact that almost all their scholarly observations are transparent paraphrases from others.**

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feet my lord. I would have him 'light, but he swears as he's a courtier he will not off on's horse back till the inner gate be open.

—III.ii.121-23

which Omits *had* from *have had him light*.

Yes, anything: so your Honor pray not for me, I care not; for now

you're Lord Chief Justice if ever ye cry 'Lord have mercy' upon me, I shall hang for't, sure.

—1.ii.90-2

Everitt's unique pointing of *'Lord have mercy' upon me*,

Thou makst me blank at very sight of them.  
What must these?

—III.ii.57-8

The same meaningless, incomplete second sentence.

But perhaps the editors' cheekiest act of burglary from Everitt occurs at II.ii.201-2, which in the MS. is badly damaged:

Sblud & I were not a counsellor.  
I could fynd in to dyne at a Tauerne to day: sweete kinge Shalls be merry

Following Everitt to the comma, Parfitt and Shepherd emend and punctuate as follows,

'Sblood, and I were not a councilor,  
I could find in [me] to dine at a tavern today, sweet king. Shall's be merry?

—II.ii.201-2

and then outrageously add a footnote suggesting that the emendation is their own, claiming: '*me* supplied.'<sup>35</sup> As we shall see, however, this is petty theft compared to the grand larceny committed upon Rossiter.

Elsewhere, Parfitt and Shepherd slightly vary the punctuation found in their two source texts, substituting semicolons for commas, periods for colons (or *vice versa*), etc. It's all done in a fairly random way, especially when it comes to vocative parentheses normally surrounding the name or title of someone addressed, as in, 'No doubt, fair queen, the righteous powers will quit you / For these religious deeds of charity,' (II.iii.69-70).

In the above example Parfitt and Shepherd include the twin commas. At other points, however, they are arbitrarily omitted, e.g., 'True Greene and we will do it in spite of them,' (IV.i.163). Sometimes only one of a pair is given, as in IV.ii.1-4: '...

make haste good wife, / Thoul't be belated sure... Good troth my lord, I have no mind to ride,' etc.

Indeed throughout their text the editors display a kind of comma-phobia, with frequently disastrous results. For instance, at III.iii.187 they give

Well, sir, if we be, we'll speak more ere we be hanged in spite of ye.

which absurdly suggests 'we'll be hanged in spite of you' rather than 'we'll speak more, even if you do hang us.'

Gratuitous ambiguities of this sort are compounded by small inaccuracies. Apart from the errors carried over from

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**Then they outrageously add a footnote suggesting that the emendation is their own, claiming: 'me supplied.' As we shall see, however, this is petty theft compared to the grand larceny committed upon Rossiter.**

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Rossiter and Everitt, at I.iii.120 *you* is given as *ye*; at II.i.30 *think'st* appears as *thinkest*; at II.ii.98 a period is missing; II.ii.105 gives *has* for MS. *hast* (while the antique *burthen* is retained); at II.ii.134 we read *leanest* for *lean'st*; at III.i.64 *King's* is given for *Kings*'; at III.ii.118 the editors emend MS. *agods-name* to the rather bizarre *O'God's name*; and V.i.281 misprint *baron's* for *barons*' (possibly copying a similar Everitt mistake).

As we've seen, Parfitt and Shepherd repeatedly imply and even claim to be working from the original. Their introduction refers confidently to the MS. which, they say, 'shows evidence of political intervention...[and] deletions seemingly made by the scribe.'<sup>36</sup> Throughout their extensive footnotes they tell us that the

(Cont. on p. 20)

(Richard II, cont. from p. 19)

MS. is 'damaged' or 'damaged here,' (e.g., II.ii.188, III.ii.173-4, III.iii.206-11, V. ii.25), or that a particular ink or hand has been used (I.i.129-30, I.ii.108, II.i.159-62, II.ii.35, II.ii.40, II.iii.27-69, III.ii.75, V.i.21, etc.).

But in fact the editors have not consulted the MS., or did so only sporadically. This may be inferred from their descriptive errors and the fact that almost all their scholarly observations are transparent paraphrases from others.

For example, at V.i.184 the MS. reads:

& such liues heere: though death  
King Richard s

As all other editors, Parfitt and Shepherd conjecturally emend the last word to *send*, adding in a footnote:

*send*: MS. s damaged.<sup>37</sup>

But no, it is not; in fact, the *s* is the only part of the word that survives. The editors have simply misread someone else's comment, perhaps Rossiter's 'All but the *s* of *send* is gone,'<sup>38</sup> taking it as 'The *s* in *send* is gone.'

A similar blunder occurs at III.iii.193, which reads in MS.:

I see ther are knaues abroad indeed  
sir: I peake for myne owne p

Parfitt and Shepherd follow Rossiter, who follows Keller (who silently follows Halliwell) in emending the last word to *part*. Rossiter at least acknowledges Keller's emendation, but Shepherd and Parfitt attribute it to themselves, roundly (if inaccurately) noting:

*I...part*: MS. 'I peake for myne own par'<sup>39</sup>

This cutpurse mentality extends to their description of the manuscript. Compare, for example, Frijlinck's note concerning I.ii.108. The line contains the phrase, 'to be a pleading lawyer,' which, she observes, was inserted by a different hand

in a space left by the scribe.<sup>40</sup>

Here is Parfitt and Shepherd on I.ii.108, noting that 'to be a pleading lawyer,' was inserted in space left in MS. by different hand.<sup>41</sup>

The words *a bed / for woodstock* appear in the MS. left margin at IV.iii.170-1, apparently a stage-manager's self-reminder concerning this property which features in the next scene, the room at Calais where Woodstock is murdered. Rossiter comments:

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**Throughout their extensive footnotes [Parfitt and Shepherd] tell us that the MS. is 'damaged' or 'damaged here'...But in fact the editors have not consulted the MS., or did so only sporadically. This may be inferred from their descriptive errors and the fact that almost all their scholarly observations are transparent paraphrases from others.**

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In MS. margin a memorandum for V.i. in Hand D: *A bed / for woodstock*.<sup>42</sup>

Parfitt and Shepherd dutifully echo:

MS. s.d. *A bed for Woodstock* in different hand; prompter's preparation?<sup>43</sup>

At I.i.128 the words 'My God' are deleted in MS. Rossiter notes (in part):

*my God* is deleted in MS. but nothing put in. The ink is not one used by the scribe or MS.-writer, but is the same as that used in cancelling [ll. 128- 30].<sup>44</sup>

Parfitt and Shepherd's comment:

*my God*: MS. marked for omission in same ink as [ll. 128-30], leaving a damaged line.<sup>45</sup>

Please note, I'm not saying that there is anything wrong with learning from others – far from it. But our duty is to acknowledge quotes and sources, and pay our intellectual debts. Parfitt and Shepherd signally fail in this, and indeed go out of their way to take credit for the work of others.

The editors also pretend to have fully reviewed the literature, but the footnote to I.i.79 ('Some friend of theirs wanted my earldom sore') shows that their credibility rests on the trust and assumed ignorance of their readers:

*sore*: thus MS.; some eds have *sure*.<sup>46</sup>

In fact, no editors give *sure*. Parfitt and Shepherd are guessing, so they gesture vaguely, hoping that some previous editor jumped for it. Unfortunately, none did.

At II.ii.180 the MS. is obscured. All we get is the half-verb *sha* followed by *country*. The missing words have been variously supplied by editors since Halliwell (*rule the*), and Keller (*change the*). The topic is beards and shaving, and Rossiter successfully provided the most useful conjectural emendation (perhaps himself helped a little by Frijlinck's note '*sha*<] probably *shave*'<sup>47</sup>):

Pox on't, we'll not have a beard amongst us. We'll [shave the] country and the city too, shall we not, Richard?

Parfitt and Shepherd copy from both, without acknowledgment, brazenly adding in a note:

for *shave*, MS. 'sha'; we add *the* before *country*.<sup>48</sup>

MS. II.ii.191 is another broken line:

Troth, I think I shall trouble myself but with a few

Halliwell supplied the missing

final word, *counselors*, followed by all subsequent editors (except Everitt, who leaves the line incomplete). Unsurprisingly, Parfitt and Shepherd also give *counsellors*, which they found in Rossiter; Halliwell and Keller spell the word with one *l* and then in a sort of what-the-hell spirit award themselves all the credit anyway:

*counsellors*: MS damaged after 'few' we supply on basis of probable play on king's 'counsel' [l. 190].<sup>49</sup>

Green's speech at II.ii.197-8 contains one of Rossiter's more successful emendations. The damaged MS reads:

an excellent deuce, the commons  
has murmord a g  
a great while, and thers no such  
meanes as meate to stopp

Halliwell and Keller tried 'angrily,' and 'stopp them,' and Frijlinck suggested against you.' But Rossiter supplied the widely accepted conjecture:

An excellent device: the Commons  
have murmured against us a great  
while, and there's no such means  
as meat to stop *their mouths*.

You wouldn't know this from Parfitt's and Shepherd's footnote, however, which proudly announces:

[ll. 197-8] damaged MS.; we supply 'a [gainst us]' (G would probably identify with the king), and 'their mouths'.<sup>50</sup>

At II.ii.203 a speech-head is missing. Frijlinck notes

This line probably begins a fresh speech though no rule (on either page) or speaker's name is visible.

Halliwell and Keller supply [*Scroope*].<sup>51</sup>

And Rossiter follows:

The lines have no speech-heading [but]...this seems clearly another

speech, and sounds like the reckless Scroope.<sup>52</sup>

Parfitt and Shepherd pillage them all, most likely *via* Rossiter who first assembled the booty:

MS. no speech-heading; probably Scroop, who has already shown interest in money.<sup>53</sup>

Halliwell's superb emendation assigning a small but clarifying speech

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**Please note, I'm not saying that there is anything wrong with learning from others—far from it. But our duty is to acknowledge quotes and sources, and pay our intellectual debts. Parfitt and Shepherd signally fail in this, and indeed go out of their way to take credit for the work of others.**

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to 'A Maid' at II.iii.59, it turns out, was apparently not made until a hundred years later, as Parfitt and Shepherd straight-facedly explain:

We give [these lines] to one of the maids on stage since the tone seems respectful.<sup>54</sup>

In the same remarkable way, Parfitt and Shepherd post-anticipate Keller's 'Your raven will call ye [rascal,]' at III.iii.208, patting themselves on the back for it (and all the other long-established edits in Nimble's speech, ll. 206-11):

MS. damaged; 'yet', 'whistle' completed, 'rascal' supplied as alliteration.<sup>55</sup>

This list could be extended, but there seems little point. Readers can assess the

utility of the Nottingham/Brynmill edition for themselves and, where interested, consult my *Text and Variorum Notes*.

**Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (eds.): *Thomas of Woodstock or Richard the Second Part One* (2002)**

Early in the new millennium the established team of Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge produced a fresh edition for Manchester University Press in its well-known Revels Plays series. These two editors have worked together on similar projects for over twenty years, and *Thomas of Woodstock* displays all the hallmarks of their long collaboration, both good and bad. A workmanlike Introduction reviews the main editorial issues without coming to any fresh conclusions: the MS. is 'probably' a Jacobean transcription of a 1590s text,<sup>56</sup> its author 'of considerable range and competence' capable of 'singular dramatic skill in providing [his] audience with a variety of dramatic tone and linguistic register,'<sup>57</sup> while 'any ascription of the play to Shakespeare or any other dramatist must, however, remain highly speculative.'<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless (the editors add) it seems indisputable that *1 Richard II* influenced *2 Richard II*, especially in the 'telling phrases' about England becoming a pelting farm and Richard its landlord. Shakespeare's portrayal of Gaunt too 'appears to be modelled on Woodstock.'<sup>59</sup>

As this suggests, Corbin and Sedge evince an unusually high opinion of the play, a sign of the respect it is finally being accorded.<sup>60</sup> *1 Richard II*, they conclude, 'presents a significant democratisation of the drama' by speaking to the political concerns of its audience, and thus constitutes 'a significant advance' in opening up the processes of government to scrutiny and judgment.<sup>61</sup> This is a remarkable claim for such an obscure work, and should encourage critics to take a second and less dismissive look at it. Corbin and Sedge approvingly references Stavropoulos's view of the masque's narrative originality, adding that IV.ii.103-55 'does not follow the elaborate patterning of the Jacobean masque but is closer to the "disguising" in which

(Cont. on p. 22)

(Richard II, part 1, cont. from p. 21)

Henry VIII courts Anne Boleyn in [*Henry VIII*, I.iv.64-86].<sup>62</sup> These observations, together with some fine critical insights in the textual notes, add weight to the case for Shakespeare's authorship and an Elizabethan date for the play. A further mark of the editors' enthusiasm is the fact that they successfully persuaded the Royal Shakespeare Company to give a 'rehearsed reading' of their text in August, 2002 at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon.

But, as in the case of all editors since Frijlinck, much of Corbin and Sedge's scholarship and textual readings are

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**Nonetheless...it seems indisputable that 1 Richard II influenced 2 Richard II, especially in the 'telling phrases' about England becoming a pelting farm and Richard its landlord. Shakespeare's portrayal of Gaunt too 'appears to be modelled on Woodstock.'**

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disconcertingly secondhand. For example, at II.i.14, 'As if the sun were forced to decline,' Corbin and Sedge footnote:

*'decline] declyne* Keller (not as emendation); *delyne* MS.<sup>63</sup>

It's taken from Rossiter, who comments:

MS. *delyne*: K[eller] *declyne* (not as emendation).<sup>64</sup>

At III.i.92, 'Or let all our successors yet to come,' a line with a long and interesting history, Corbin and Sedge overlook Rossiter's successful emendation, now generally accepted, and simply transcribe Frijlinck's outdated scholarship. This is not only the crudest plagiarism, but it allows them to bolster the claim that their

observations are based on an examination of the MS. Here are Corbin and Sedge:

*successors] successessors* MS. (owing to faulty correction *succe* being interlined by another hand in darker ink above *predi* which is deleted).<sup>65</sup>

and here is Frijlinck:

*successesso's]* sic, owing to faulty correction: *succe* being interlined by another hand in darker ink above *predi* deleted.<sup>66</sup>

At II.i.60-5, part of a long reading by Bushy from a fictional chronicle of English history, Corbin's and Sedge's footnote is a virtual transcription from the Nottingham edition:

Roger Mortimer of Wigmore who became Lord Protector on Edward II's imprisonment (the young Mortimer, lover of Queen Isabella in *Edward II*, see [V.vi.20-66]) was hanged at Tyburn by Edward III. Rossiter suggests that the detail of the fifty-foot gallows was drawn from Holinshed's description of the execution of Hugh Spencer, Earl of Gloucester, one of Edward's favourites.<sup>67</sup>

This is Parfitt and Shepherd:

The chronicle B[ushy] reads from appears, from Rossiter's evidence, to be a composite of Holinshed, Stowe and Grafton. The proud Mortimer of [l. 64] (lover of Isabella in *Edward II*) was hanged at Tyburn by Edward III. As Rossiter says, the detail of [the] 50-ft. gallows seems to come from Holinshed's account of the hanging of Hugh Spencer.<sup>68</sup>

Corbin and Sedge's laziness becomes increasingly marked in the later acts: either the editors' interest flagged, or they divided the work between themselves and whoever had responsibility for the latter half felt less committed than his partner. I found only one minor error in Act I (*nourishèd*

at I.iii.161, where MS. gives *norisht*), but seven in Acts III-V: *yet* for *ye* at III.i.12; solecistic commas after *Let* (III.i.5), *bumfiddle* (III.i.146), and *black book* (III.i.147); *we'll* for *we* at IV.iii.7; *owest* for *ow'st* at V.i.151; and a full stop in the middle of a sentence at V.vi.13-14 ('Our proclamations soon shall find him forth. The root and ground of all these vile abuses.')

The edition's references also contain minor errors following the same pattern, among them, *R2, 33.4* for *R2, 3.4*,<sup>69</sup> *1.4.641-112* for *Henry VIII, 1.4.64-86*,<sup>70</sup> *spoke* for

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**But, as in the case of all editors since Frijlinck, much of Corbin and Sedge's scholarship and textual readings are disconcertingly secondhand...Corbin's and Sedge's footnote is a virtual transcription from the Nottingham edition.**

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*spoken* at IV.i.0.s.d.,<sup>71</sup> and *drudgery* for *drudger* at V.vi. 30.<sup>72</sup> A footnote to V.i.32 ('And yet, by all my fairest hopes, I swear') claims that the editors conjecturally replace *I swear* with *I protest*.<sup>73</sup> In fact, they don't. What's likely is that at one point they intended to, then changed their minds, later proofreading so sloppily that the old note was left in place.

The data contained in this essay are disturbing, since they were uncovered fortuitously. Nor have they been noticed before and, indeed, have been around for so long they've hardened into orthodoxy. If random samplings of this sort produce such distressing outcomes, and from such distinguished names, it's likely that we'll find them elsewhere too. Poor scholarship may be—appears to be—endemic in Shakespeare studies.

Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>J.O. Halliwell, ed.: *A Tragedy of King Richard the Second, Concluding with the Murder of the Duke of Gloucester at Calais. A Composition Anterior to Shakespeare's Tragedy on the Same Reign, Now First Printed from a Contemporary Manuscript.* (London: Printed by T. Richards, Great Queen Street. 1870); A.H. Bullen (ed.): *A Collection of Old English Plays in Four Volumes*, Vol. I (London: Wyman & Sons, 1882-5), Appendix I, pp. 427-8; Wolfgang Keller (ed.): *Richard II. Erster Teil. Ein*

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**1 Richard II, conclude Corbin and Sedge, 'presents a significant democratisation of the drama' by speaking to the political concerns of its audience, and thus constitutes 'a significant advance' in opening up the processes of government to scrutiny and judgment. This is a remarkable claim for such an obscure work, and should encourage critics to take a second and less dismissive look at it.**

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*Drama aus Shakespeares Zeit (Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft XXXV*, ed. Alois Brandl und Wolfgang Keller, Berlin 1899); Wilhelmina P. Frijlinck: *The First Part of the Reign of King Richard the Second or Thomas of Woodstock* (London: Printed for the Malone Society by J. Johnson at the Oxford University Press, 1929); A.P. Rossiter (ed.): *Woodstock, a Moral History* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1946); Geoffrey Bullough (ed.): 'from *Thomas of Woodstock*,' in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Vol. III (London

and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul and Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 460-91; William A. Armstrong (ed.): *Woodstock (Anonymous)*, in *Elizabethan History Plays* (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965); E.B. Everitt (ed.): *Thomas of Woodstock or 1 Richard II*, in *Six Early Plays Related to the Shakespeare Canon* (Copenhagen: *Anglistica*, Vol. XIV, Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1965; George Parfitt and Simon Shepherd (eds.): *Thomas of Woodstock* (Nottingham Drama Texts, Nottingham University Press, 1977), and *Thomas of Woodstock: An English History Play of Shakespeare's Time Otherwise Known As A Tragedy of King Richard the Second The First Part of the Reign of King Richard the Second, Woodstock: A Moral History* and *Woodstock*. (Doncaster: The Brynmill Press, 1988); *Thomas of Woodstock*, compiled by Louis Ule, reviewed by M.W. A. Smith (ca. 1998-2001, <http://ota.ahds.ac.uk/>); Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (eds.): *Thomas of Woodstock or Richard the Second, Part One* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002); Michael Egan (ed.): *The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One: A Newly Authenticated Play by William Shakespeare, Edited and Introduced with Variorum Notes* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).

<sup>2</sup>Wilhelmina P. Frijlinck: *The First Part of the Reign of King Richard the Second or Thomas of Woodstock* (London: Printed for the Malone Society by J. Johnson at the Oxford University Press, 1929), checked for accuracy by W.W. Greg. This is a literal transcription of the original MS. using font and type conventions to reproduce the effect of the handwritten page. No attempt is made to edit the text, modernize the spelling, or complete word or sentence fragments, though editorial footnotes sometimes speculate or suggest, and Halliwell's and Keller's variations are briefly (and occasionally inaccurately) noted. Line breaks are given as in the original, deletions indicated by square brackets. A scholarly introduction completes an invaluable contribution to the text history of this play. A 'plain-text' version, omitting Frijlinck's introduction, notes and type conventions, is available at

the Chadwyck-Healey Literature On Line (LION) web site.

<sup>3</sup>Including stage directions and some run-over lines which are reckoned as two, e.g. V.i. 235-6, '...Stifled, & life & soule prest out together. Quickly, ye hell /hound.' References throughout are to my edition, *Richard II, Part One*, Vol. I, pp. 538-658.

<sup>4</sup>Bullough, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

<sup>5</sup>*2 Richard II*, the canonical drama, to distinguish it from *1 Richard II*.

<sup>6</sup>F.S. Boas: *Shakespeare & the Universities And Other Studies in Elizabethan Drama* (Oxford: Basil

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Blackwell, 1923) p. 151, with a brief additional comment, p. 153; A.P. Rossiter, (ed.): *Woodstock, a Moral History* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1946), p. 42.

<sup>7</sup>Bullough, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

<sup>8</sup>Bullough, *op. cit.*, p. 487.

<sup>9</sup>See, e.g., Charles Edward Whitmore: *The Supernatural in Tragedy* (New York: P.P. Appel, 1971) p. 227ff.

<sup>10</sup>Expressed, for example, in Peter Ure's Arden edition, *Richard II* (1956) pp. xxxvii-xl.

(Cont. on p. 24)

(Richard II, Part I, cont. from p. 23)

<sup>11</sup> Bullough, *op. cit.*, pp. 358ff. Bullough does offer one non-Richard II insight, noting of his cut I.ii.70-85: 'Nimble jests impudently with Tresillian. Did the speech-heading *Nim* suggest the name Nym to Shakespeare in [*Henry IV*]?' (*Op. cit.*, p. 465.) As I show in my *General Introduction*, however, this is stolen from John James Elson, 'The Non-Shakespearian *Richard II* and *Shakespeare's Henry IV, Part I*.' (*Studies in Philology*, 1935) pp. 177-88, an article we know Bullough was familiar with because in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol. IV* (1966) pp. 177-8, he dismisses it out of hand.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Brian Vickers: *The Art of Shakespeare's Prose* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1968).

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Nicholas Brooke refers readers to Rossiter's *Woodstock* where 'the relationship with Shakespeare's play is fully discussed' ('Divine Substitutes and Streams of Blood,' in Nicholas Brooke (ed.): *Richard II: A Casebook* pp. 187 and 247n. Also: 'These are discussed by Rossiter, *Woodstock*, 47-71' (Macd. P. Jackson: 'Shakespeare's *Richard II* and the Anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock*,' in John Pitcher, et. al (eds): *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, Volume 14 (Cranbury, CT: Associated University Presses and Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp., 2001) 38, 62).

<sup>14</sup> Forker, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>15</sup> Forker, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>16</sup> Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 202.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Richard's lament over Green at V.iv.32-6, '...my earthly joys...This body, that I held so dear,' etc., directly recalling his grief at the death of his wife. Corbin and Sedge also note: '[Green's] absence from the scene is odd as he is the favourite whom one would expect to be most prominent in comforting Richard.' (*Thomas of Woodstock*, p. 157n.)

<sup>18</sup> In his review of *Woodstock, a Moral History*, Harold Jenkins noted some of these mistranscriptions (especially I.ii.44 and I.ii.93) and complained of Rossiter's 'occasional inconsistency in small matters.' (*Review of English Studies*, 24:93 [January 1948], p. 67.

<sup>19</sup> Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 205.

As I note below, Parfitt and Shepherd ironically 'expropriate the expropriator' by themselves taking credit for these emendations, apparently unaware that they originate with Keller.

<sup>20</sup> Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 184.

<sup>21</sup> Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 192.

<sup>22</sup> Frederick Ives Carpenter: 'Notes on the Anonymous *Richard II*,' *The Journal of Germanic Philology*, Vol. III, No. 2 (Bloomington: Journal Publishing Co., 1900) pp. 138-42.

<sup>23</sup> MacD. P. Jackson: 'Shakespeare's *Richard II* and the Anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock*,' in John Pitcher, et. al (eds): *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, Volume 14 (Cranbury, CT: Associated University Presses and Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp., 2001) p. 31.

<sup>24</sup> Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 191.

<sup>25</sup> Rossiter, p. 192.

<sup>26</sup> Frijlinck, *op. cit.*, p. 39 n.

<sup>27</sup> Rossiter, p. 215.

<sup>28</sup> Rossiter, p. 208.

<sup>29</sup> Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>30</sup> Keller's critical analysis of *I Richard II* has not received the recognition it deserves, probably because it is in German. F.S. Boas is another English scholar who drew heavily, but without acknowledgment, upon his work. Compare his *Woodstock* chapter in *Shakespeare and the Universities* with Keller's Introduction.

<sup>31</sup> The same edition typographically resets the short introduction and is freshly subtitled (slashes indicating line breaks), *An English History Play of Shakespeare's Time / Otherwise Known As A Tragedy of King Richard the Second / The First Part of the Reign of King Richard the Second / Woodstock: A Moral History/ and / Woodstock*.

<sup>32</sup> William A. Armstrong (ed.): *Woodstock (Anonymous)*, in *Elizabethan History Plays* (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965); A.H. Bullen (ed.): *A Collection of Old English Plays in Four Volumes*, Vol. I (London: Wyman & Sons, 1882-5), Appendix 1, pp. 427-8; Parfitt and Shepherd (1988), pp. vii-viii.

<sup>33</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd (1988), pp.

vii-viii.

<sup>34</sup> E.B. Everitt (ed.): *Thomas of Woodstock or I Richard II*, in *Six Early Plays Related to the Shakespeare Canon* (Copenhagen: Anglistica, Vol. XIV, Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1965).

<sup>35</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 27n.

<sup>36</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd (1988), p. vii.

<sup>37</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, (1977) p. 66 n. As noted, p. 66 is missing from Parfitt and Shepherd 1988 edition.

<sup>38</sup> Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 204.

<sup>39</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 45n.

<sup>40</sup> Frijlinck, *op. cit.*, p. 13 n.

<sup>41</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 10 n.

<sup>42</sup> Rossiter, p. 203.

<sup>43</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 61 n.

<sup>44</sup> Rossiter, p. 183.

<sup>45</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 6 n.

<sup>46</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 4 n.

<sup>47</sup> Frijlinck, *op. cit.*, p. 35 n.

<sup>48</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 26 n.

<sup>49</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 26 n.

<sup>50</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 27 n.

<sup>51</sup> Frijlinck, *op. cit.*, p. 37 n.

<sup>52</sup> Rossiter, p. 190.

<sup>53</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 27 n.

<sup>54</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 29 n. Cf. Rossiter's nicely ambiguous self-attribution, 'No speech-heading in MS. but the *sir* makes the guess easy.' (*Woodstock*, p. 192.)

<sup>55</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 45 n.

<sup>56</sup> Corbin and Sedge, *Thomas of Woodstock*, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Corbin and Sedge, pp. 4, 33.

<sup>58</sup> Corbin and Sedge, p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> Corbin and Sedge, p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> See for example Edgar Schell: *Strangers and Pilgrims: From The Castle of Perseverance to King Lear* (The University of Chicago Press, 1983) pp. 77-112;



Charles R. Forker (ed.): *King Richard II* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2002), pp. 144-152; Janet C. Stavropoulos: "A masque is treason's license: the Design of Woodstock," *The Journal of the South Central Modern Language Association* (Summer, 1988) pp. 1-12; Alzada J. Tipton: "The Meanest Man...shall be permitted freely to accuse: The Commoners in Woodstock," (*Comparative Drama*, Vol. 32, 1998), pp. 117-145.

<sup>61</sup> Corbin and Sedge, , p. 14.

<sup>62</sup> Corbin and Sedge, p. 36.

<sup>63</sup> Corbin and Sedge, p. 78 n.

<sup>64</sup> Rossiter, p. 187.

<sup>65</sup> Corbin and Sedge, p. 105 n.

<sup>66</sup> Frijlinck, *op. cit.*, p. 43n.

<sup>67</sup> Corbin and Sedge, p. 80n.

<sup>68</sup> Parfitt and Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 20 n.

<sup>69</sup> Corbin and Sedge, p. 73n.

<sup>70</sup> Corbin and Sedge.

<sup>71</sup> 'Before a word is spoke the stage image graphically conveys the link between Tresilian's legal trade and his greedy rapacity,' etc. ( Corbin and Sedge, p. 130n.).

<sup>72</sup> Corbin and Sedge, p. 186n.

<sup>73</sup> Corbin and Sedge, p. 161n.

(*News, cont. from p. 5*)

quote is along the lines of, "aren't those silly anti-Stratfordians a riot?" Here's how Barton makes use of Smith's quote:

the cries of the distracted inhabitants sometimes reach us from the dark realm of Shakespearean interpretation. We hear the bleating of idiot adorers and the eternal swish of their whitewash brushes; we hear the squeals of the idealists...the war-cries of the Foliolators and Disintegrators as they rush upon each other and even wilder battle cries than these (for it is impossible to exaggerate their strangeness) will reach our ears. For listen!

Smith then reminded his readers (writes Barton)

of the cries emitted by the followers of "no less than five ghostly resurrected Elizabethan Earls"; of those heard from the supporters of Derby, Oxford, Rutland, and other claimants to be the true author of the man from Stratford's plays; of the Pembrokeians and Southamptonians quarreling vociferously over the identity of the young man addressed in the Sonnets; and finally, "as the wind shifts, we hear the ululations of those vaster herds of Baconian believers, as they plunge squeaking down the Gadarene slope of their delusion."

My, my. It couldn't it be more obvious, could it? To Smith the anti-Stratfordians are buffons and ignorami, "idiot adorers" and ululating pigs preparing mass suicide by leaping of the cliff of reason in the sea of Galilee. If not contempt, they at least deserve our pity. But wait! What, you may ask, does Smith have to say about the orthodox Shakespearean establishment for which Professor Barton is here functioning as public apologist? Listen:

Can these things be? [i.e., the deification of Shakespeare]. Or are we imposed upon, hocused, and bamboozled, the dupes of a gigantic

Brockenspectre of make-believe and mist, and victims as Tolstoy so impressively maintained, of a great collective hallucination, one of those crazes and epidemic manias, like the belief in witches or in the approaching end of the world, by which whole nations and whole ages have often been obsessed? Even the high priests of this established Shakespeare worship seem to betray, now and then, an uneasy consciousness of something equivocal about the object of their devotion; of things to be hushed up, and the need of whitewash.

(7)

Hmm... "an uneasy consciousness of...things to be hushed up, and the need of whitewash." Now, there's a phrase to ponder. One doesn't even need a classical education to understand the symbolism.

Wouldn't Smith be surprised to learn how his own words would one day be used to tint up the latest batch of whitewash? Then again, maybe he wouldn't. He strikes us as someone quite capable of maintaining his intellectual independence, and not a bit naive about the real world. Certainly, contrary to the impression the casual reader of Barton's review might leave with, Smith was no apologist for the orthodox view of authorship.

## Say It With Music

By Bonner Miller Cutting

When Dartmouth Professor Dr. Louis P. Benezet first became interested in the case for Edward de Vere's authorship of the Shakespeare Canon, he was chided by his colleagues in the English Department. Dr. Benezet, an early convert to the Oxfordian case as presented by John Thomas Looney, was drawn to the similarities between Oxford's extant early poems and the works of Shakespeare. As noted by Ogburn in the *Mysterious William Shakespeare*, Benezet was puzzled why professors of Elizabethan literature could not see the "common origin in the two sets of verses." Benezet's test of literary discernment -- in which he seamlessly interspersed lines from both Oxfordian and Shakespearean

(*Music, cont. on p. 30*)

*(Paradigm Shift, cont. from p. 3)*

critical exchange comes in lines 109-11:

**Rich.** What year is this?

**Greene.** 'Tis now, my Lord, 1387.

**Rich.** By that account, the third of April next/our age is number'd [two and twenty years].

By that same account, so foregrounded in the text, the time is out of joint: to any Elizabethan schooled in Holinshed's narrative, the date would have supplied an unambiguous referential frame, and with this frame in mind it is obvious that the play achieves dramatic coherence only by invoking a tectonic shift in the actual sequence of events (as represented in the chronicles *and* by modern historians).

Richard's reign was marked by the ascendancy of two very distinct sets of favorites at different times: In the 1380s the most prominent were Sir Robert Tresilian, created Lord Chief Justice in 1380, and Robert de Vere, the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. In the later period, during the 1390s the court favorites included Sir Henry Greene, Sir John Bushy, and Sir John Bagot. Scholars have long recognized that Anon's representation depends on the historical anachronism of transporting Bagot, Bushey, and Greene, favorites who belong to a later period of Richard's reign, backwards in time to become actors in the events of 1387-88 alongside Chief Justice Tresilian. Bushy's announcement of the date in the earlier scene confirms the direction of the manipulation. Correspondingly, Robert de Vere, with Tresilian the other true agent of the play's period, has been airbrushed from the play, as Daniel Wright recognizes in his recent synopsis of Anon's deft historical revisionism:

The author [has]... inexplicably determined that Robert de Vere neither be seen, heard nor indicted in this play ...[he] transports Sir Robert Tresilian forward in time to become ... the principal agent of the King's corruption ... Bushy ... Bagot ... and Greene ... were not leading courtiers of the 1380s ... the leading courtier

of the 1380s ... was Robert de Vere. Bushy, Bagot and Greene came into the King's service much later—after the Duke of Gloucester's death.

(Wright 15)

Although this shift in personnel has thus not passed entirely unnoticed, its significance for evaluating the play's contribution to matters of "unresolved historical semantics" has been radically



**Figure One: Robert de Vere escapes the battle of Radcot Bridge in an illuminated illustration from Froissart's Chronicle. The illumination reveals how large the account of de Vere's flight loomed in the early modern historical imagination, confirming its relevance to the historical liberties take by the author of Richard II, Part 1. Image copyright the Bibliothek Nationale de France.**

underestimated. The playwright's conspicuous violation of historical accuracy in portraying Henry Green as Richard's sexual favorite (in 1387) disguises Anon's transparent awareness of the King's actual relationship with de Vere, according to Rainbow Saari (2002). There can be no doubt that in 1387, precisely the period of Anon's play, de Vere was the King's most notorious favorite as well, allegedly, as his homosexual lover. He had excited the hostile envy of the commons and the implacable hatred of Richard's uncles, the Lords Appellant, by being created Marchioness of Ireland in 1386. The appointment exacerbated an already existing alienation of Richard from both the aristocracy and the commons and led eventually to open civil war. On December 20, 1387, overpowered by the superior forces of the Lord's Appellant, de Vere, with Tresilian, met his fate at the battle

of Radcot Bridge. Their forces in disarray, Tresilian was arrested and executed, but de Vere leapt into the Thames river and fled to Holland, dying five years later, it is said, from wounds inflicted by a wild boar.

Not surprisingly, given this history, de Vere is the aristocratic bogeyman of every historical narrative—Froissart, Polydore Virgil, Holinshed, Stow, and Grafton, to name only the most obvious—of the middle years of Richard's reign. In all the chronicles his story takes up a great share of the events of 1387. Holinshed devotes many paragraphs to his promotion by the king, his quarrels with the Lords Appellant, his mustering of troops for the Radcot battle, and his subsequent flight from the battle. Of his unexpectedly swift and crushing downfall, Polydore Virgil remarks: "Marquis Robert had no idea that his power and authority could come to naught so quickly, for originally he imagined he could touch the sky with his finger, because Richard entrusted everything to him, and nothing to anybody else" (II 14). So important a figure is de Vere in Froissart that at least some manuscripts contain an elaborate illuminated illustration of his flight across the English channel to Brabant (Figure One). But Anon has erased him from *1 Richard II*, as surely as Stalin airbrushed his murdered enemies from photographs (though doubtless with less sinister motives).

A close reading of the play alongside its historical sources suggests that this erasure of de Vere, and the allocation of his historic role to other characters, is systematic and structural, not incidentally related to a single character. Saari herself observes that Anon has also interpolated into the play de Vere's wife, the Duchess of Ireland, a figure of no consequence in the Chronicles. Apparently the Duchess is introduced for the sole and express purpose of being a mouthpiece to exculpate her (missing) husband from the historical accusation of committing sodomy with the King:

My husband Ireland, that unloving lord,/(God pardon his amiss, he now is dead)<sup>2</sup>/King Richard was the cause

he left my bed.

(II.iii.10-12)

Surely this combination of historical alterations is suggestive. Not only has Green been substituted for de Vere as Richard's favorite (recalling Shakespeare's *hapax logemena* in the Sonnets, "so you *o'ergreen* my bad, my good allow" (112.4), but as a corollary de Vere's wife is introduced, apparently for the almost exclusive purpose of audaciously attributing the cause of her husband's sexual indiscretions (and in the presence of the Queen!) to King Richard – a bizarre violation of early modern decorum. Surely this constitutes a pattern requiring some explanation. Saari accordingly speculates that "the writer may have changed the character to avoid offending the contemporary Oxford, Edward de Vere" or his father-in-law, the powerful Lord Treasurer William Cecil, Lord Burghley (in Egan, III:345). Whether such a desideratum is sufficient to account for the liberties taken by the playwright may, however, be worth further consideration.

### The Devil's Lawyer

Although several characters in *Woodstock* are translocated in time or otherwise given a position that bears little or no relation to their historical role in the Chronicles to accommodate the dramatist's erasure of the Marquis of Ireland, only one major character is wholly invented: "Nimble, the lawyer's devil." Viewed historically, the character descends from the vice figure of the medieval moralities, but this generic ancestry should not conceal his unprecedented semiotic function in *1 Richard II*. Like Anon's Sir Henry Green, Nimble bears a paradoxical relationship with the missing de Vere: both become agents of Anon's systematic and self-conscious rewriting of the actual events of 1387 to exclude him. While Green assumes the role de Vere played in history as the King's male lover, in Act 5 scenes 2-6 Nimble imitates his notorious cowardice on the battlefield at Radcot Bridge. Close comparison with Holinshed leaves little room to doubt the premeditated character of the parody. A running joke of the Radcot Bridge scenes in the fifth act of *Richard II.1* is that

Nimble and Tresilian will take off their armor to more swiftly escape the scene of the King's defeat. This is a direct parody of Holinshed's account of de Vere's flight:

striking his horse with spurs, [the Duke of Ireland] fled from them for fear had set wings on his heels.... In the mean time the Duke of Ireland (as ye have heard), seeking to escape by flight, came to the

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**Surely this constitutes a pattern requiring some explanation. Saari accordingly speculates that "the writer may have changed the character to avoid offending the contemporary Oxford, Edward de Vere" or his father-in-law, the powerful Lord Treasurer William Cecil, Lord Burghley. Whether such a desideratum is sufficient to account for the liberties taken by the playwright may, however, be worth further consideration.**

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rivers side; but finding the bridge broken, he galoped till he found an other bridge, where he found a number of archers readie to stop his passage. When he saw that he was thus inclosed with his enemies on the one side, and the river Thames on the other, he thought to put all in adventure; and *casting away his gantlets, and sword (to be the more nimble) gave his horse the spurres, and lept into the river.*

(461; Wvi: emphasis supplied)

De Vere's purpose for removing his armor in Holinshed's narrative – "to be...*more nimble*" (emphasis added) in

negotiating the Thames – may elicit a shock of recognition; that the passage is indeed the origin of the name of Anon's witty vice character is suggested by iterated references to Nimble's encumbering armor:

*Enter Tresilian and Nimble with armour...* (5.2)

*Tress.* Where art thou, Nimble?

*Nim.* So loaden with armour, I cannot stir, my lord (5.2.4-5)

*Nim.* It is the wisest course [to flee], my lord, and I will go put off mine armour that I may run lustily too. (5.2.41-42);

*Tress.* Where are thou, Nimble?

*Nim.* As light as a feather, my lord, I have put off my [armour]<sup>3</sup> that I might run lustily.

(5.5.1-3, emphases supplied).

The repetition is a sign of comedic intent, and the joke depends, at least in part, on the reader's awareness of de Vere's infamous cowardice in fleeing from the battle, a flight dramatized – but without the episode's historic principal – by the scenes in which these jests occur. Strikingly, Nimble's repetition of the joke also marks the specific locus of the name's origin in Holinshed, as if the armor has literally been exchanged for the character, the character bloomed from Holinshed's word. It seems difficult to avoid a deeply heretical conclusion of the sort unpublishable except in the pages of a rag like *Shakespeare Matters*: not only is Nimble's imaginative genesis intricately interwoven with Holinshed's account of de Vere's fate, but Anon's erasure of him has also been carefully premeditated to coincide with the drama's systematic exploration of principles of historical (mis)representation, a focus that anticipates by three centuries, in a distinctly "Shakespearean" turn, the Freudian principle of the return of the repressed.

As we have seen, Rainbow Saari (an independent Shakespearean scholar) has suggested that the noted anomalies might be accounted for on the hypothesis that

(*Cont. on p. 28*)

(*Paradigm Shift, cont. from p. 27*)

the dramatist wrote to please powerful patrons such as the 17th Earl of Oxford or his powerful father-in-law. Saari was probably not aware that she was revisiting territory onto which the haplessly honest Seymour Pitcher, in his edition of *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, had been forced to tread in 1958. In that play, Pitcher was attempting to account for the lionized role of the 11th Earl of Oxford, who is unhistorically portrayed as a close confidante of Henry IV and major player

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**Nimble's repetition of the joke also marks the specific locus of the name's origin in Holinshed. It is as if the armor has literally been exchanged for the character, as if Nimble has bloomed from Holinshed's adjective, a word applied to the cowardly de Vere. It seems difficult to avoid a deeply heretical conclusion... not only is Nimble's imaginative genesis intricately interwoven with Holinshed's account of the de Vere's fate, but Anon's erasure of him has also been carefully premeditated....**

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on the historical stage (Pitcher 182-195).

These two cases form an intriguing set of mirrored problems of representation. It was Pitcher's misfortune to be in the midst of making a persuasive case for the Shakespearean authorship of *Famous Victories* when he discovered the unhistorical role conferred by the play on Edward de Vere's ancestor. *1 Richard II*, stylistically a more mature play than *Famous Victories*, has the opposite problem: It airbrushes out of existence another ancestor of the 17th earl, this time one whose

embarrassing role in history could only have been a source of shame to historically attuned descendents like Earl Edward.

Were these isolated incidents in the tapestry of the Elizabethan genre of the history play we might be tempted to dismiss them as mere coincidence. However, as Ramon Jiménez and Richard Desper have each noted, they are in fact elements in a larger pattern which cannot fail to provoke suspicion of premeditated intent. The same 13th Earl of Oxford who is given a leading role in *Famous Victories* is entirely missing from *Henry V*: "If *Henry V* is drawn from *Famous Victories*, as both Pitcher and Jiménez contend, then Oxford seems to have been deliberately written out in the process of the revision" (Desper 26). Exactly the same procedure seems to govern the relationship between the early anonymous play *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third* and the canonical Shakespearean play about the same tyrant. In *True Tragedy*, "in each of the three scenes in which Henry Tudor appears, the author... has placed the [13th] Earl of Oxford at his right hand, making him the leading spokesman for his supporters" (Jiménez 133-5). The same Earl has only two lines in the Shakespearean play.

Accepting as a premise the Jiménez-Pitcher theory of shared authorship of apocryphal and canonical plays, Desper suggests that the revision "may be readily explained on the hypothesis that possible clues to the playwright's identity were removed in the transition from the court version to the public stage version" (28).

The case of *Woodstock*, which arguably intervenes as a bridge between the circa 1570s apocryphal versions and their revised canonical rewritings, suggests that certain deeper motives may be at play in the excision of the Earls of Oxford from the Shakespearean history cycle than a mere attempt to tidy up the plays for public appearance. In writing *Woodstock*, the author confronted a very different problem from that posed by the historic materials for plays on the reign of Henry V and Richard III. Here was a de Vere ancestor who, unlike the 11th and 13th Earls, was not a subject for family pride, but an embarrassment and source of shame. The dramatist accordingly found clever ways to write *around* the character; those who

didn't know their history very well would never realize he was gone. Those who did, on the other hand, would not only realize that history was being tampered with, but might even be tempted to notice a pattern in the tampering. Accordingly, if Anon's intent in substituting Green and Nimble for de Vere was the utilitarian objective of flattering his Elizabethan patrons or audience, then he followed a peculiar and dangerous path to his objective. Anyone who reads Holinshed can see that what the dramatist has removed he has also conspicuously parodied; for an alert reader de Vere is most present in Anon's

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**Anyone who reads Holinshed can see that what the dramatist has removed he has also conspicuously parodied, and that for an alert reader de Vere is most present in Anon's text precisely when he seems most absent. Surely those who the writer was, according to Saari's theory, most concerned to avoid offending, would know their history well enough to realize the depth of the literary offense.**

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text precisely when he *seems* most absent. Surely those who the writer was, according to Saari's theory, most concerned to avoid offending, would know their history well enough to realize the depth of the literary offense when Robert de Vere's infamous flight is mercilessly parodied by a Nimble who can't stop talking about taking off his armour so he can run away faster.

Harold Bloom says that Shakespeare grew as an artist by "overhearing" himself – through linguistic and dramatic experiment he expanded his grammar of motives and bag of stage tricks. In writing *Woodstock*, we might suppose, he learned (or perhaps applied more vigorously something he already knew) that you can't really

airbrush out a character, however much you try. Conscience will come back to haunt you: “Killing cannot, according to Shakespeare, be a solution; because, in the final sense, killing is impossible. The ghost always comes back” (Vyvan 26). And if you understand this, and you really don’t want to airbrush out your character in the first place, but instead feel that you are being compelled by some external political threat or power to conform your history to a party line, you’ll find other, even more allusively clever ways, to keep him present. Such a realization would lead naturally, directly, to the historical “mousetrap” that Dick Desper has identified in Henry V, wherein the French soldiers on the eve of Agincourt unconsciously are made to refer to the death by friendly fire of the men of the 13th Earl of Oxford during the battle of Barnet.

Of course, responsible Shakespearean professors have dedicated their careers to the principle that any connection between such alterations of the historical record is tantamount to treason against the guild. The sorts of intellectual divagations and duplicities that have sustained such a pre-intellectual belief system are ably documented by Dr. Egan in this issue of *Shakespeare Matters*. Yet there seems little ground to doubt that Shakespeare understood the Freudian principle that what you try to leave out always comes back to haunt you, but the scholars dedicated to the study of his writings, in their scramble to get to the top of the academic heap, seem to have willfully missed the point. How else could Geoffrey Bullough have thought that there was any point to omitting — “mysteriously without comment, explanation or scene summary” (Egan 13) — *Woodstock* V.v, the scene which parodies Robert de Vere’s flight from Radcot Bridge, from his widely consulted “edition” of Anon’s play? Having read his *Holinshed*, Bullough must have understood what he was doing.

In fact, Bullough’s duplicity is demonstrable. The “Chronological Table” which accompanies his reproduction of the redacted play is remarkably detailed and covers all of the critical events of Richard’s reign from 1377 until his death in 1400 — all, that is, except one. You guessed it: The one critical event that Bullough omits is the rout at Radcot bridge and the surrender of Richard’s forces to the Lord’s appellant in

1387. The naive reader of Bullough’s text won’t know this scene has been redacted from both play and historical chronology by Professor Bullough. Conveniently, the entirety of the play’s “historiographical” scene (II.i) has also been cut, along with V.v (for a complete tabulation of all the cuts, see Egan this issue, p. 13), but 1387

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**Harold Bloom says that Shakespeare grew as an artist by “overhearing” himself -- through linguistic and dramatic experiment he expanded his grammar of motives and bag of stage tricks. In writing *Woodstock*, one might surmise, he learned (or perhaps relearned) that you can’t really erase a character, however much you try, even if you want to. Conscience will come back to haunt you: “Killing cannot, according to Shakespeare, be a solution; because, in the final sense, killing is impossible. The ghost always comes back.” How much more interesting this becomes if your Shakespeare doesn’t really want to airbrush out the character in the first place, but instead feels compelled by an alien political force to conform to a party line.**

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happens to be the one date conspicuously mentioned (II.i.103) to establish the play’s historical frame. It’s an irony that boggles the imagination: the one date mentioned in Bullough’s play (the only specific historical date mentioned, to my knowledge, in any Elizabethan history play) is also the date

conspicuously missing from his chronology. Make no mistake, the omission has served its purpose. The naive reader will not know that it was in 1387 that Robert de Vere shed his armour at Radcot bridge and ran away, following in Nimble’s footsteps, so even the reader lays hold of an unredacted text of the play, he’ll never grasp the significance of Bullough’s textual omissions -- unless, that is, he turns to Bullough’s source for his Table, K. H. Vickers’ *England in the Later Middle Ages*. That book has plenty to say about the year 1387:

Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick gathered their forces at Waltham, whence on November 14th they sent a deputation to the King, explaining the reasons for their conduct, and charging Archbishop Neville, Vere, Suffolk, Brembre, and Tresillian with treason....The Archbishop ultimately found refuge overseas, Tresillian hid himself in London, while Vere, audacious to the last, tried to raise an army at Chester....Thus when on December 20 Vere fell in with the enemy near Radcot Bridge, he realised that his own forces were few, and that he could not hope for reinforcements, and therefore made his escape across the river while his followers dispersed.

(274-275)

Funny how different history sounds when you’re not trying to hide anything, isn’t it?

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Keller (1899), representatively, surmised that “given Shakespeare’s careful accuracy, *I Richard II*’s factual distortions would have stood out...glaringly for audiences familiar with *The Tragedy of King Richard II*” (III 243). Egan appropriately resists this misplaced romanticization of a Shakespeare dedicated to historical literalism and instead insists that the canonical histories are, in Hattaway’s provocative phrase, “political plays,” in which the dramatist “shifted the evi-

(Cont. on p. 31)

(*Music, cont. from p. 25.*)

poetry, then challenged the doubtful to tell them apart without a concordance – has driven the Stratfordian faithful to distraction. Yet as the case for the 17th Earl's authorship continues to strengthen with ever more powerful arguments and persuasive research, the "good enough" question (whether Oxford's early poems are of adequate literary merit to be precursor works to the great Shakespeare canon) is becoming a last resort of the orthodox position. Thus the "good enough" critique remains a Stratfordian mantra, and the good Dr. Benezet's test has drifted into undeserved neglect.

Scholars on both sides of the issue have upped the ante with the advent of information age technology. Computer driven stylometric tests have been devised to bring objective measurement (theoretically speaking) to what is ultimately a subjective

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**Rarely do Stratfordians and Oxfordians agree on an element in the authorship debate; therefore, it is of striking significance that both Stephen May and Robert Brazil, Stratfordian and Oxfordian adherents respectively, concur that a substantial portion of Oxford's early poems were song lyrics. Still, Stratfordian partisans of the stylometric exercises insist upon utilizing them in direct comparison with Shakespearean poetry. The "apples to oranges" comparison causes a genre problem, rendering unreliable test results.**

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element of the debate. For a thorough examination of the present state of the argument, the article by John M. Shahan and Richard E. Whalen, published in the most recent issue of the *Oxfordian* (2006: 113-125), should be gratefully referenced.

Entering into this battle of words and computer programs, there has appeared yet another Stratfordian adversary. Oxfordian impresario Dr. Earl Showerman has produced a CD of Renaissance music which lifts the sights – not to mention the sounds – of the "good enough" debate to a new level. And one that is laden with elegance. The happy result, entitled "My Lord of Oxenford's Maske," is a logical progression of Showerman's recent work on the play *Horestes*, which he has convincingly demonstrated to

be a work of Oxford's youth.

Rarely do Stratfordians and Oxfordians agree on an element in the authorship debate; therefore, it is of striking significance that both Stephen May and Robert Brazil, Stratfordian and Oxfordian adherents respectively, concur that a substantial portion of Oxford's early poems were song lyrics. Still, Stratfordian partisans of the stylometric exercises insist upon utilizing them in direct comparison with Shakespearean poetry. The "apples to oranges" comparison causes a genre problem, rendering unreliable test results. The purpose of the present realization of Oxford's music – aside from making a beautiful CD – is to bridge the stylistic chasm, presenting the song lyrics in their proper musical context.

The Renaissance ensemble Mignarda, a collaboration of Renaissance specialists led by the husband/wife team of lutenist Ron Andrico and mezzo soprano Donna Stewart, selected and arranged songs, ayres, ballads, and dances that are connected historically to the 17th Earl of Oxford. Several of the twenty-eight pieces in this recording even bear his name, most notably "The Earl of Oxford's Galliard." Andrico has given it here its first recording on the lute. Also impressively brought to the attention of the listener is the song "When Gripping Grieffs," which appeared first as poetry in the 1576 *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, and was later incorporated into *Romeo and Juliet*. The Renaissance harmonies take on a surprisingly modern feel in Stewart's rendition of the epic ballad of Helen of Troy from *Horestes*, and her languid "Willow Song," Desdemona's famous lament from *Othello*, pulls at the heart strings as it surely was intended to do centuries ago.

For musicologists, it should not matter that this CD is a radiant display of the poetry and music of a 16th century English nobleman. Like most things Shakespearean, it is "not for an age but for all time," and this ambient, fresh take on the ancient Renaissance art forms will find a comfy home in your car's CD player. It should justly find a place, too, in music libraries throughout the country.

Oxfordians can enjoy bedeviling the orthodox establishment with the luminous presence of Oxford's music, provided here through the courtesy of Dr. Showerman. It is an adventure in sound made all the more bewitching through the talents of Renaissance past-master Andrico and enchantress Stewart. In fact, the Mignarda recording is so good that it invites the criticism (always close on the heels of any Oxfordian achievement) that the success of the music is more a function of the consummate skill set of the musicians. But all composer/lyricists deserve the recording artists who can best make manifest their style. Certainly audiences will forever recall Burt Bacharach's songs sparkling in the dynamic brilliance of Dionne Warwick. Does not the music of Irving Berlin still deserve to bask in the warm glow of Bing Crosby? It is only fitting that posterity place at the disposal of the beleaguered Earl of Oxford the musicians that fully understand him. He's been waiting a long time.

*Paradigm Shift, cont. from p. 29*

dence, rearranged sequences, and invented both character and incident, often finding the right dramatic metaphor to express – as he understood them the Chronicles’ deeper truths” (I 152).

<sup>2</sup>The Duchess’ claim that her husband is deceased is impossible to reconcile with any coherent theory of the play’s chronology, since de Vere did not die until c. 1392, five years after the explicit date of the play’s action.

<sup>3</sup>Egan’s conventional emendation “shoes” misses the context suggesting that this word should in fact be “armour.”

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Portions of this Essay were previously presented By Roger Stritmatter, PhD, at the 2006 Annual Conferences of the Shakespeare Association of America in the Seminar on Shakespearean Apocrypha, chaired by Dr. John Jowett.

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The Mouse That Roared: Members of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition Present their “Declaration of Reasonable Doubt,” which sets forth the basis for an anti-Stratfordian perspective. The group hopes to attract thousands of signers through a campaign launched April 14 at UCLA’s Geffen Playhouse. From left to right (back): Lorraine Perrotta, Head of Technical Services, The Huntington Library; Virginia Renner former Director of Reader Services, The Huntington Library; SAC founder and CEO John Shahan; Sally Mosher, and Harry Schwartzbart, and (front): Barbara Crowley and Sylvia Holmes. Details on p. 4. April 14 signatories not pictured include former *L.A. Times* Theatre Critic Emeritus Charles Champlin, Jane and Richard Roe, and John Crowley.

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