

From the Editor

Of the several recent attacks made by the academy against this journal, the most serious one involves the false charge of misrepresentation.

In the summer 1993 issue of *The Shakespeare Newsletter*—the organ of the Shakespeare Association of America—editor and professor Thomas Pendleton began his critical review by announcing that, "Although the title of *The Elizabethan Review* and some of its announced aims suggest a wider scope, the contents of this new periodical make it clear that it is devoted to arguing the Oxfordian hypothesis."

Pendleton's refusal to inform his readers that *only* the first issue was dedicated to the authorship question was compounded by his additional refusal to wait for subsequent issues of the *Review* to appear, which would have confirmed whether I was publishing a *sub rosa* Oxfordian publication. Instead, he accused myself and the Editorial Board of being ideological stalking horses, referring to the latter as "familiar apologists."

Pendleton wasn't content with attacking the integrity of the *Review's* officers. In the same review was a critique of U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, whose article on the Shakespeare Authorship Question appeared in that inaugural issue.

After outlining Justice Stevens's argument based on the usage of canons of statutory construction, Pendleton

infers that, "Since there is no statute governing the determination of authorship, Stevens' canons have only analogical relevance to another realm of decision-making; they might, one supposes, be equally well applied to managing a baseball team."

Later on, he concludes his review by calling into question the Justice's legal competence, "For those who feel that moot court adjudications on matters like literary authorship are likely to produce little more than publicity, Justice Stevens' essay will confirm their prejudice. For those who would draw even bleaker implications - well, there are eight other justices."

Pendleton's strategy is the obvious one of smearing *anyone* who doesn't agree with his cloistered point of view through personal insult and gross misrepresentation of the record. This kind of behavior has prevented debate from proceeding on nearly every issue in the humanities, compelling scholars to publish outside the politically correct organs that, for the time being, vitiate the reputation of American scholarship.

Despite the kind of *bien pensant* thinking displayed by *The Shakespeare Newsletter* and the Shakespeare Association of America, this issue of *The Elizabethan Review* touches upon several controversial topics, beginning with an article by a non-academic, Elliott Baker, about a neglected 19th Century American historian.

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Elliott Baker's article on Delia Bacon's *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded* shows how significant the American Bacon's accomplishment truly was, for she brought the debate about Shakespeare beyond the superficial issue of who he was—that is, the crossword puzzle aspect of authorship—to the much more important and difficult questions of why he wrote and what he said in his plays, poems, and sonnets.

The second topic of contention that we focus on is that of Christopher Marlowe—his death and the proposition that he was William Shakespeare, dramatist. Thus, the second article by David Chandler, which traces four centuries of evidence in arguing whether Christopher Marlowe wrote the Shakespeare canon despite having died—or not having died—in 1593.

This latter issue isn't the subject of *The Reckoning*, a controversial book by English historian Charles Nicholl, who recently published a biography of Thomas Nash. Rather than engage in polemic over Marlowe's supposed identity as Shakespeare, Mr. Nicholl instead offers an explanation for the untimely death of one of the most brilliant of English dramatists, whom he finds to have been more involved in the secret theater of the time than we imagine.

As Warren Hope argues in his review of *The Elizabethan Underworld*, Marlowe would also be classified as one of the new masterless men in England's waning feudal world. While the Tudors set loose England's masses

by abolishing private armies and pulling down the monasteries, they promoted the rise of a new political class, the printing press, and the theater. Marlowe engaged himself in these and underworld activities to earn a living, ultimately ending up a victim of his secret profession and the political and religious violence of the times.

Finally, we present an article by Ross Duffin that reflects upon the varied influences of popular and refined forms of music in England and Italy on Elizabethan theater.

—Gary B. Goldstein

Letters to the Editor

Peter Sokolowski's implied support for a conventional date of plays (such as *The Tempest*) that postdate the 1603 publication of John Florio's English translation of the *Essays* deserves critical inspection. Use of hypothetical sources as a method of dating the composition of plays is fraught with unacknowledged methodological questions that have not been confronted by students of the Montaigne-Shakespeare question.

First, the large number of phrases common to Florio and Shakespeare which are also current in other works of the period—more than 730 out of a total of only 750, according to the numbers Sokolowski cites from Taylor and Yates—suggests that Florio's translation may be far less influential than has been supposed. It appears that most of the phrases Shakespeare supposedly derives from Florio are common Elizabethan idioms.

Inspection of particulars will only deepen doubts regarding the supposed influence of Montaigne on Shakespeare, at least as Anglophile Shakespeareans have attempted to establish it through lexicographical comparison to the Florio translation. In support of Taylor's argument, for instance, Sokolowski singles out a phrase from *Lear* which he credits with being "very convincing" evidence for Florio's influence on Shakespeare. Other scholars have also elevated this example as one of the key proofs of Florio's influence on Shakespeare:

Shakespeare: Is man no more than this? Consider him well. (III.iv.102)

Montaigne (Florio): Miserable man; whom if you consider him well what is he? (II, 12) (Taylor 9)

Some kind of influence is manifest in the parallel construction of these two passages. But is it, as Taylor argues—and Sokolowski seems to accept—clear evidence for Florio's influence on *Lear*? No, it is not. The phrase originates in a com-

mon source available to Shakespeare from at least 1560 onward—the English Bible.

"What is man...?" occurs in Psalm 8.4 and in II Esdras 8.34, underlined in the 1570 Geneva Bible of Edward de Vere (see my 1992 manuscript report, "A Quintessence of Dust: An Interim Report on the Marginalia of the Geneva Bible of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, Owned by the Folger Library"). More significantly, as Naseeb Shaheen observed in *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Tragedies* (151), the phrase "consider him" occurs in answer to the question "what is man?" at Hebrews 2.6 (citing Psalm 8) in the Geneva Bible:

What is man, that thou shouldst bee mindful of him? Or the sonne of man that thou wouldest *consider him*? (italics added)

Unfortunately, it appears that Taylor's study of Florio's supposed influence on Shakespeare set out to support the predetermined conclusion (derived from biographical assumptions) of a post-1603 date of composition for Shakespeare's plays—and consequently failed to take into consideration that such "very convincing" verbal parallels have obvious counterparts in much earlier sources.

Although we have Mr. Sokolowski's impressive synopsis of scholarly attempts to examine the possible relationship between Montaigne and Shakespeare, what is now required is a more critical examination of the Shakespearean source problem.

Such a study must take into consideration Mr. Sokolowski's notice of the emerging consensus that "Shakespeare simply must have been extraordinarily well educated"—a linguistic genius not just in English and its cousin French, but also in Latin, Italian, and quite possibly Greek.

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