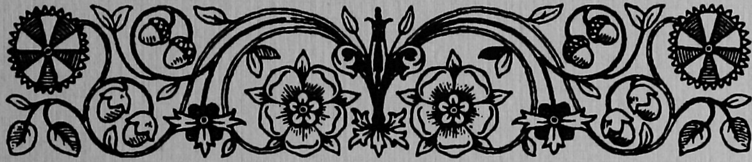

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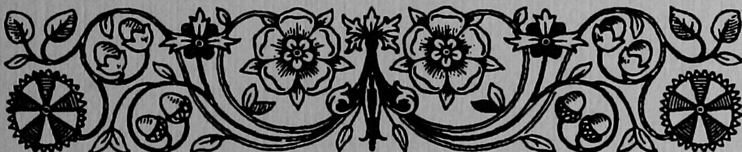

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A Semiannual Journal

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Sir Philip Sidney Satirized in *Merry Wives of Windsor*

Charles Vere

The first question I always ask regarding a Shakespeare play is, "What was the author's motivation in writing this work? On the most immediate level, what is he attempting to convey to us, the readers or spectators?" No author of fiction sets out from the very first to explore abstract notions like love, honor, jealousy, and vengeance: such themes will emerge from his depiction of a specific problem or situation that is a key issue in his life. In other words, the author moves from the specific to the general (his method is inductive) and not the other way around.

One of the great weaknesses of the Stratfordian hypothesis of authorship is that this question of motivation can never be explained on a specific, human level. Thus, Shakespeare, uniquely among great authors, apparently writes simply to explore complex philosophical ideas rather than to heal certain wounds in his own psyche by dramatizing situations from his life. In other words, his works do not seem to be rooted in an individual human life.

After all, Hamlet himself is unequivocal with regard to the purpose of his particular production at court: "The play's the thing/Wherein to catch the conscience of the King." He puts on *The Murder of Gonzago* (or *The Mousetrap*) as a way of telling the truth to the court regarding his father's death, and of undercutting the official story (the propaganda) put out by Claudius and Polonius. For Hamlet is interested not in how things seem, but in how they are. Indeed, just as Hamlet uses the play within the play as a way of telling his story and reporting his cause aright to the unsatisfied, so the author himself, within the wider play of *Hamlet,* is doing precisely the same. Both Hamlet and the author choose a well-known story or history by virtue of its relevance to their own situations and adapt it for their purposes.

Perhaps more than any other figure of the Elizabethan Age, Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, has had his life and achievements obscured and distorted by the official story of the time, and for that we have in large measure to thank the real-life Polonius of Queen Elizabeth's Court, William Cecil, Lord Burghley. For those convinced that Oxford was the true author, the plays on the most

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A trustee of the Shakespeare-Oxford Society, the Earl of Burford is in the midst of a lecture tour of American universities concerning the authorship of the Shakespeare canon.

immediate level become the author's monumental attempt to tell the story of his life to the world, a story which was suppressed by the political power-brokers of the age. Equally important for someone reared in accordance with the feudal code of honor, they are an attempt to defend his good name and reputation: they are an act of self-vindication.

This approach to *Hamlet* should also serve us well in examining the play of *The Merry Wives of Windsor (MWW).* The Elizabethans possessed a very allegorical bent of mind, and just as the court witnessing Hamlet's production of *The Mousetrap* immediately understand that they are not being told about the actual murder of the Duke of Urbino by Luigi Gonzaga in 1538, but that a situation closer to home is being presented, so we must understand that Shakespeare uses the old stories of his plots as a mechanism for saying things that would otherwise (in their undisguised form) be considered too close to the bone. *MWW* is a case in point.

In this play, Oxford is concerned with the story of the courtship of his first wife, Anne Cecil, daughter of William Cecil, later Lord Burghley. In this his chief rival was Philip Sidney. We do not know whose interest in Anne came first, but a formal marriage settlement was drawn up between Sidney and Anne Cecil on August 6th, 1569, and this seems to have remained valid until the summer of 1571, when Cecil announced his daughter's engagement to the Earl of Oxford. While historical accounts have tended to depict Anne Cecil and Philip Sidney as childhood sweethearts, the only basis for this assumption seems to be a desire on the part of historians to paint Oxford as the villain of the story, a heartless cad who broke up a promising love match for his own selfish ends. However, this received wisdom has been consistently questioned in recent scholarship, a good example being Katherine Duncan-Jones's account of the affair in her 1991 book, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet.*

Duncan-Jones is keen to stress Sidney's apparent indifference regarding the proposed marriage. She writes: "Though the Cecil connection was attractive to Sidney, little Anne herself may have been of relatively little interest. It is noticeable that in his three early letters to Cecil, he fails to mention her, although the first two were written during the height of the marriage negotiations." (51) What Sidney was anxious to do, however, was to please the two main negotiating parties, namely Cecil and his uncle, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. This version of events is borne out by the situations described in *MWW*, where Anne Page represents Anne Cecil, Slender is Sidney, Robert Shallow is Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and Fenton is the Earl of Oxford.

There are many portraits of Sidney in the plays, some of which are clearly caricatures, among them Boyet in *Love's Labor's Lost,* Sir Andrew Aguecheeck in *Twelfth Night,* and Slender in *MWW.* (Indeed, the latter two are first cousins,

in a manner of speaking.) The sheer weight of detail of both character and circumstance in Shakespeare's portrayal of Slender make it certain that a specific identity is intended, and that that identity is Sidney's. Those characteristics of Slender's which contribute to his identification as Sidney include:

1. Humorlessness/tedious gravity
2. Slender physique; history of ill-health
3. Lack of interest in women/possible homosexual proclivities
4. Lukewarm feelings toward his prospective bride
5. A clichéd, redundant and often trite use of language
6. His expression of an imagined love in stilted terms
7. His obsession with and insecurity over his family lineage
8. His dependence on the word and wealth of his uncle

In addition, as Percy Allen has pointed out, the financial arrangements for the marriage of Anne and Slender in *MWW* reflect with remarkable accuracy the arrangements agreed upon by Cecil and Leicester in the case of Sidney's prospective marriage to Anne Cecil.[1] At the time of his marriage, Sidney was to have a little over the "three hundred pounds a year" mentioned so disparagingly by Anne Page in III.iv., but with the prospect of substantially more after his mother's death. (Slender of course remarks in I.i: "I keep but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead...") Likewise the "seven hundred pounds" left for Anne by "her grandsire upon his death's-bed" when she should reach seventeen, together with the "better penny" her father will confer, all fit in with the figures contained in the Cecil/Sidney marriage negotiation documents held at Hatfield House.

The deep-seated insecurity of both Leicester and Sidney with regard to their ancestry and social status is reflected with caustic humor in the initial dialogue bewteen Shallow and Slender concerning the former's coat of arms. Slender is very keen to justify his uncle's claim to gentility, just as Sidney was always eager to justify his uncle's claim to nobility, as when he defended Leicester from attacks on his family honor in his *Defense of Leicester* (1584). This was a reply to the anonymous tract of the same year commonly referred to as *Leicester's Commonwealth.* Revealingly, in his *Defense,* Sidney fails to address the main issues raised by the *Commonwealth,* concentrating instead on defending Leicester's genealogical credentials and thus, also, his own:

> I am a Dudley in blood, that Duke's daughter's son, and do acknowledge, though in all truth I may justly affirm that I am by my father's side of ancient and always well-esteemed and well-matched gentry, yet I do acknowledge, I say, that my chiefest honor is to be a Dudley, and truly am glad to have cause to set forth the nobility of that blood whereof I am descended.[2]

Although he was Leicester's nephew and heir, Sidney himself was without title until 1583 when, rather appropriately in the context of *MWW,* he was knighted so that he might act as proxy for his friend, Prince Casimir, at the latter's investiture as a Knight of the Garter. Thus, Sidney's knighthood was very much of the carpet kind, a point driven home by Shakespeare in his portrayal of him as Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night.* Instead, Sidney had to be content to bask in the reflected glory of his uncle. As Slender says of his uncle, Shallow:

All his successors, gone before him, hath done't [i.e., written themselves "armigero"], and all his ancestors, that come after him, may: they may give the dozen white luces in their coat. I.i.14-16

The "dozen white luces" of Shallow's coat of arms is surely mentioned to identify Shallow as Leicester, whose father, John, Duke of Northumberland, had twelve luces (or pikes) on his coat of arms. Moreover, Shallow is an appropriate name for someone of whom it was said, "Wise word or witty never passed his lips. Cool counsel lay beyond him." Leicester's insecurity regarding his ancestry led him to commission extravagant and bogus family trees from the College of Arms. It is interesting, too, that among the titles conferred upon Leicester by Queen Elizabeth were Constable of Windsor Castle and Chief Seneschal of the Borough of Windsor. Windsor was thus a place where Leicester commanded the choice of the Member of Parliament, often by force and intimidation. In this respect, Shallow's (and Slender's) insistence that he, Shallow, is "of the Peace" is highly ironical.

It is appropriate that the subject of the projected marriage between Slender and Anne Page should be raised by the Welsh parson Sir Hugh Evans, since Sidney, Leicester, and Cecil all had very strong Welsh connections, and it was income from lands and benefices in Wales that would have furnished Sidney with a great deal of the income he was to bring to the marriage. Leicester was to provide the lion's share of the financial backing for Sidney, and it is clear from the records that Sidney was loath to offend either his uncle or Cecil in this matter, whatever the nature of his feelings for Anne Cecil. Thus, Slender bows before his uncle's authority, saying in I.i., "Nay, I will do as my cousin Shallow says..." and later in the same scene (to Shallow), "I will mary her, sir, at your request..." In III.iw., speaking directly to Anne, he is equally explicit: "Truly, for mine own part, I would little or nothing with you. Your father and my uncle hath made motions: if it be my luck, so; if not, happy man be his dole!" It is interesting to note that, in using the phrase "hath made motions," Slender is echoing Cecil's own phrase in his letters concerning the proposed marriage.

Slender, then, doesn't so much woo as simply fall in, albeit rather gracelessly, with the plans of his uncle and Anne's father. His attempts to pose as a lover

are feeble in the extreme and consist in the main of such sighings as, "Ah, sweet Anne Page" and "O, sweet Anne Page." "Sweet" is a word Sidney uses often in his sonnets to Stella, which are quintessentially highly stilted and formalized expressions of a love which can hardly have been genuine. That a dig is being made at Sidney's inability to pose convincingly as a lover is confirmed by Falstaff's opening line to Mrs. Ford in III.iii., which is also the first line of Sidney's second song in *Astrophel and Stella:*

Have I caught my heavenly jewel?[3]

In fact, it is probably not farfetched to posit that the very first line of the play, spoken by Shallow, is making indirect reference to Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (which literally means "Starlover and Star"). The line is "Sir Hugh, persuade me not: I will make a Star Chamber matter of it." What is certain is that Windsor is the ideal setting for the theme of Sidney's merits as a love poet. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, with whom modern English love poetry began, spent much of his early life at Windsor as companion to Henry VIII's natural son, Henry, Duke of Richmond, and it was at Windsor that he experienced the first stirrings of love:

...Proud Windsor, where I, in lust and joy,
With a King's son, my childish years did pass,
In greater feast than Priam's sons of Troy.
Where each sweet place returns a taste full sour,
The large green courts, where we were wont to hove,
With eyes cast up into the Maiden's tower,
And easy sighs, such as folk draw in love... (2-8)[4]

Reference is made directly to Surrey in I.i.179-180, when Slender remarks: "I had rather than forty shillings I had my book of Songs and Sonnets here." Surrey's *Book of Songs & Sonnets* had first been published in 1557, with at least eight subsequent editions over the next thirty years. Sidney's poetry is imitative of Surrey's whereas Oxford's is strongly influenced by it. Surrey was, of course, Oxford's uncle. Finally, it may be of significance that Oxford spent a good deal of time convalescing at Windsor in 1570, for this may be the time at which his love for Anne Cecil first truly blossomed.

With regard to Sidney's feebleness as a lover, Shakespeare seems to go even further in *MWW* by suggesting that perhaps Sidney isn't interested in women at all. At the masque of fairies at Herne's Oak, Slender is tricked into making off with the postmaster's boy instead of Anne Page. When Mr. Page exclaims, "Upon my life, then, you took the wrong," (V.v.189) the literal-minded Slender replies:

What need you tell me that? I think so, when I took a boy for a girl. If I had been married to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not

have had him. (V.v.190-93)

Now, not only are there strong indications that Sidney's two best friends, Greville and Dyer, were themselves homosexual, but according to Katherine Duncan-Jones in her biography, there were rumors of transvestism concerning Sidney. Pyrocles, who in many ways represents Sidney in the *Arcadia,* is disguised as a woman almost throughout the action of the romance.

The Earl of Oxford, the successful wooer of Anne Cecil, represents himself as Fenton, the young gentleman. Like Oxford, he is of high birth ("he is of too high a region"), writes verses, has wasted his substance and has kept wild society. As Fenton himself says in explaining her father's objections to Anne:

He doth object I am too great of birth,
And that my state being gall'd with my expense,
I seek to heal it only by his wealth.
Besides these, other bars he lays before me—
My riots past, my wild societies—
And tells me 'tis a thing impossible
I should love thee but as a property. (III.iv.4-10)

Indeed, Oxford was considered of too high a region for Anne Cecil, and so Queen Elizabeth created her father William Cecil, Lord Burghley, to make the disparity in rank less apparent.

Fenton also resembles Hamlet in one most important respect. As the ultimate orchestrator of the fairies' masque at Herne's Oak, he seeks to solve his problems through the drama, and in this particular case succeeds. His adversaries are foiled and bewildered, while he wins Anne. Hamlet, too, uses the drama as a means of resolving issues. In IV.vi., the Host refers to Fenton's theatrical plan as a "device," which is the term Oxford himself used in his early poetry, with the meaning of a masque or theatrical scene staged for a specific purpose. In one of his earliest poems (written in his teens), in which one finds the seeds of Hamlet's later soliloquies and which is entitled *Revenge of Wrong,* he writes in the final stanza:

My heart shall fail and hand shall lose his force,
But some device shall pay despite his due...[5]

So Fenton's triumph is the author's triumph. Here is an author with an intimate knowledge of Windsor and its environs, who has managed in masterful fashion to narrate his own story (the unofficial story) of the wooing of Anne Cecil, and who has given us in the process a hilarious and myth-deflating portrait of his chief rival, Sir Philip Sidney. Not only does he mock Sidney's pretensions to nobility and those of his uncle (both of whom were "new men," relatively speaking), but he also subtly mocks the notion of Sidney as a great love poet and a valorous knight. He makes it clear that he, Fenton, was Anne's

choice, while Sidney, as Slender, was merely the pawn of those negotiating on his behalf.

Thus, not only did the Earl of Oxford have a clear motive in writing *MWW,* but he possessed the intimate knowledge of Sidney needed for such an effective satirization. He knew Sidney well and, mingled with the scorn he felt for the traditional picture of Sidney as England's most complete Renaissance man, was a genuine sense of rivalry. Both men possessed an extraordinarily wide range of interests, and both were discerning and generous patrons. But, ultimately, it was Oxford who was the real-life Hamlet, and he rather than Sidney was "Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,/The glass of fashion and the mould of form." The fact that the two men had wooed the same woman provided an excellent opportunity for Oxford to have a bit of fun at the expense of his old rival.

When Sidney died in the Netherlands in 1586, William Shakespeare of Stratford was 22 years of age and had, as far as we know, never left his native town. How did he come by his personal knowledge of Sidney? What was his motivation for satirizing him? Finally, how could he have hoped to have effected such a satirization with impunity? These are questions that must be addressed. Even if one posits a knowledge of Sidney for the Stratford man, one is still left with a motivational void. Why did he write the play, and what was he trying to say? Ultimately, my contention is that the true Shakespeare was born four years before Sidney, and that the literary debt was not Shakespeare's but Sidney's. Only removing the plays from their historical context can the notion of the Stratford man's authorship be upheld.

Notes

1. Percy Allen, The Case *for Edward de Vere as "Shakespeare"* (London, 1930).
2. K. Duncan-Jones, ed., "Defense of Leicester," *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney* (Oxford, 1973) 134.
3. *Sir Philip Sidney's Astrophel & Stella, Wherein the Excellency of Sweet Poesy is Concluded* (London, 1888).
4. George Frederick Nott, ed., "Prisoned in Windsor, He Recounteth His Pleasure There Passed," *The Works of Henry Howard Earl of Surrey* (London, 1815).
5. J. Thomas Looney, The Poems of Edward de V*ere, 17th Earl of Oxford* (London, 1921).

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Bitter Fruit: Troilus and Cressida in Queen Elizabeth's Court

Charles Boyle

In his introduction to the Folger edition of *Troilus and Cressida* Louis B. Wright wrote, "Some scholars have been tempted to see a precise parallel between the situation in the Grecian camp and conditions in England during the period of the Earl of Essex's quarrel with the Queen and his subsequent rebellion. Such an interpretation, however, raises many problems... [the author] would not have been so unwise as to put his neck in a noose by writing a thinly disguised political allegory certain to bring down upon his head the wrath of the authorities."

Later, however, he makes this observation: "One reason for [the story of Troy's] popularity was the belief that Englishmen were 'true Trojans,' that London had been founded by Brutus, the great-grandson of Aeneas, and that the English nation had sprung from this noble Trojan."[1] R.A. Foakes amplifies this with the observation that the Elizabthan writers Heywood, Spenser, and Drayton also affirmed the London-Troy connection. "These poets were all celebrating the famous origins of Britain, and the ancestry of Queen Elizabeth... The Queen even quartered the arms of a mythical Trojan in one version of her official coat of arms..."[2]

Certainly the author of *T&C* makes little attempt to conceal the contemporary background of his bitter satire, most strikingly in its closing lines when Pandarus recalls "some galled goose of Winchester," a blatantly insulting reference to the Bishop of Winchester, under whose wing brothels so flourished that a prostitute was commonly called a "Winchester goose." The author means for us to understand that, in this play, Troy is London.

In fact, allegory was the accepted literary device for those who wished to comment on the political scene. This was Spenser's method. Indeed, in an age of near total press control ("Art made tongue-tied by authority," as Sonnet 66 complains) what other method would be left? Not that the authorities didn't understand.

Take the case of Elizabeth I and *Richard II.* When reminded that members of the Essex faction had arranged a performance of this play (in which a vain

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and effeminate Monarch is deposed by the virile rebel Henry Bolingbroke) as prelude to the ill-fated rebellion of her favorite (who had often been compared to Bolingbroke), she is said to have snapped, "I am Richard II. Know ye not that?"

Then there was the mysterious uproar that surrounded a 1597 play called *The Isle of Dogs*. England is an isle, of course, and "dogs" was Elizabethan slang for playwrights, but this play was filled with such terrible yet never explained "seditious and slanderous matter" that the authorities wiped all trace of its text from the public record.

In light of this it would be fair to take at his word the declaration Shakespeare put in the mouth of his truth-loving Prince Hamlet when he warns the Queen's chief councilor, Polonius, "The players... are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time." (II.ii) Later, he informs the deceiving daughter of this scheming politician, "The players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all." (III.ii)

This from a character, nominally the prince of a Danish Court long past, who will banter elsewhere about London theater gossip of the years immediately following the Essex Rebellion, including specific reference to the Globe Theater and the "late innovation" (ie, rebellion). (II.ii)

That Shakespeare was playing the same game as many of his fellow writers in self-evident. But the audacity of his political satire has rarely been explored.

It was as far back as 1869 that the scholar George Russell French first identified the character of Polonius as a lampoon of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Queen Elizabeth's principal minister. French even went on to note that Burghley's son, Robert, and daughter, Anne, might be taken for Laertes and Ophelia.[3] Sir Edmund K. Chambers later concurred.[4] Since then, the evidence for this identification has continued to accumulate to the point where it is conclusive.

Following the declaration of Hamlet, I am inclined to study Shakespeare's plays as abstracts and brief chronicles of his time. I find they make a tapestry that provides an illuminating real world background to his art, an art in which the drama of court life is vibrantly reflected. In pursuing this I will cite a number of scholars who have detected patterns of imagery and incident interconnecting the plays and poems of Shakespeare. My assumption will always be that the author was inspired by reality.

The general consensus has been that the plays *Twelfth Night, As You Like It, Hamlet, T&C,* and the enigmatic poem *The Phoenix and the Turtle* were all composed in the years prior to and following the Essex Rebellion, that is, between 1599 and 1602. These are the works we will look at.

In *The Question of Hamlet,* Harry Levin rightly observed, "*Troilus and Cressida* has close affinities with *Hamlet* in composition and in temper."[5] In

his introduction to the Signet edition of *T&C,* the late Daniel Seltzer continues this line of thought: "It may be helpful to observe... that many of the problems that challenge Hamlet's mind are paralleled by those that confuse the Trojan princes and the Greek generals. In both [plays] the authority of law is opposed by individual desire or private principle... the definition of honor, 'rightly to be great,' is strenuously argued by those who have most at stake."[6]

D.A. Traversi, in *An Approach to Shakespeare,* develops this theme. "The Trojan devotion to honor... is devotion to an abstraction that has no sufficient basis in reason... but to abandon honor for its lack of rational foundation is to expose oneself to the danger of lethargy, to a rooted disinclination to act at all." He then notes, "The relation of this to *Hamlet,* and in particular to such a soliloquy as, "How all occasions do inform against me" (IV.iv) is worth careful consideration."[7]

My immediate concern here is to consider the close relationship between the characters, Troilus and Hamlet, as well as the respective courts in which they operate. Both young men are princes of the realm, romantic idealists with a keen sense of honor and a great hunger for truth. (Truth is a word never far from Troilus' lips.) Both experience deep love for women of doubtful constancy. For Hamlet, both Ophelia and the Queen are not to be trusted. Troilus will eventually discover there is little difference between his Cressida and the adulterous Helen of Troy who, like Gertrude, is a central figure in her court.

Some might object that Troilus lacks the stature of Hamlet. He has been decribed by Jusserand in *A Literary History of the English People* as "a whining babbler."[8] But I.A. Richards demonstrates in an essay published in *Speculative Instruments* that that characterization is mistaken.[9]

Ulysses, a man in touch with the "mystery" (ie, the secrets) of the Trojan state as well as his own, describes Troilus to his king as "a true knight... firm of word... his heart and hand both open and both free... manly as Hector, but more dangerous." (IV.v.96-104)

It is in his handling of Cressida's betrayal that Troilus reveals his true depth of character. Richards argues that Shakespeare, either "through the Language or the Tradition," was familiar with Plato's *Republic* and used it extensively in this play. He then quotes from it: "...a good man who is ruled by reason will take such blows of fate as the loss of a son or anything very dear to him less hardly than other people.... Reason says that nothing in man's existence is to be taken so seriously, and our grief keeps us back from the very thing we need as quickly as possible in such times, [which is] to take thought on the event...." (ibid).

Richards goes on to show how Troilus, when he witnesses Cressida's

betrayal (V.ii), goes through the changes advised. He is not torn apart by this profound wounding of his heart. Instead, as Coleridge wrote, "having a depth of calmer element in a will stronger than desire, more entire than choice... the same moral energy is represented as snatching him aloof from all neighborhood with her dishonor."

Troilus is no "whining babbler," he is Hamlet's ideal, the man "that is not passion's slave." *(Hamlet* III.ii)

Add to this that the speech Hamlet requests of the Player King laments the fall of Troy. Or recall Troilus' uncanny echoing of Hamlet's response to a nosy Polonius on what he reads—"Words, words, words..." (Hamlet, II.ii.192)—with his own response to an equally nosy Pandarus—"words, words, mere words; no matter..." *(T&C,* V.iii.108)

But for the alert reader these two scenes, considered together, can yield much interesting matter. In Hamlet's scene he is treating Polonius as a man who would pander his own daughter to a prince. He calls him "a fishmonger," and soon follows this with the extraordinary line, "For if the sun [Sun God, King] breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god [King] kissing carrion—Have you such a daughter?" (II.ii.181-2) Such evaluations of character do not deter the ever ambitious Polonius. Only a little later, in an aside, he tells us he will "contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter." (II.ii.211)

Lest we dismiss this as coincidence, we are given in these same scenes additional echoes, linking both the princes and their busy-body advisors. The book Hamlet reads, written by a "satirical rogue," reports "old men have grey beards; that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams" (196-200). Compare this with the complaining self-pity of Pandarus: "A whoreson rascally tisick so troubles me... that I shall leave you one o' th's days. And I have a rheum in mine eyes too, and such an ache in my bones that, unless a man were cursed, I cannot tell what to think on't." (101-106)

Did the author find in these two a common inspiration? Unless it was he who suffered from a "lack of wit," I think so. There are other subtle touches linking Pandarus to Polonius and his prototype, Burghley.

As the power behind the throne of Elizabeth, William Cecil and Robert, the son he groomed to succeed him, were figures of extraordinary cunning and ambition. The bond the father forged with Elizabeth began when she was a defenseless girl accused of carrying the child of the treasonous Thomas Seymour and Cecil the shrewdest of the court lawyers sent to interrogate her. It lasted with unbroken intimacy till the day Cecil died. On the Continent, diplomats jokingly referred to England under him as "Cecilium."[10] After Robert Cecil had crushed Essex, James of Scotland advised his ambassadors in

London that the little man was "king there *in effect.*"[11]

In *T&C* there is a comic encounter (III.i) between a servant and Pandarus where much is made of confusion concerning Lords, rank and God's annointed. After mixing up the Lords of Troy with the Lord above, the servant tries to pin down Pandarus and the condition of his "honor." "You are in the state of grace," he would know. The misunderstanding in the old man's response is telling. "Grace? Not so friend. Honor and lordship are my titles." Pandarus has not heard what others would have, that is, a reference to the spiritual state necessary for salvation. Instinctively, he has modestly demurred from a title—Grace—reserved for those of royal blood. That he assumes the meaning tells the joke, another pointed jab at the Cecil family's ascendancy over the English aristocracy, represented by Essex.

A number of scholars, including Dover Wilson, have suggested Essex as the model for Hamlet.[12] G. Wilson Knight, however, speaks for a whole tradition when, in *Shakespeare and Religion,* he finds "...the satire in *Troilus and Cressida* far too insulting for a poet whose tragic period was partly brought about by a personal sense of loss at Essex's fall. And if Hamlet was so clear an Essex portrait, and Polonius a study of Burghley, surely Gertrude or Claudius must have seemed to correspond to Queen Elizabeth, and would not this have been suicidal?"[13]

So runs the conventional wisdom and so has it stymied all reasonable inquiry into Shakespeare's relationship to the world he lived in and his favorite setting, the court. But what does the author tell us that could shed some light on this problem?

Daniel Seltzer makes some telling links between the steps Troilus takes on the path to self-knowledge, and those Shakespeare delineates in one of his most personal poems:

> The subject matter of this poem clarifies the nature of Shakespeare's thematic concerns in [T&C]... *The Phoenix and the Turtle* describes the remarkable union of the mythical Phoenix and the Turtledove, in which love was so complete that even Reason stands amazed at the sight. In this mating, we are told, "number... in love was slain," for two separate lovers became one, and "Property" itself—the defining essence of the individual thing—was "appalled." These two lovers, in themselves all "Beauty, truth and rarity," do not survive their own union, but are consumed "In a mutual flame," even as each finds absolute perfection in the other. In this play no miraculous marriage of "Truth and Beauty" deserves the repose of death. What Troilus sees, though the truth, runs counter to his ideal, and to this ideal, he is as constant as any genuinely tragic hero [such as Hamlet]. His vocabulary, as he tries to convince both

> himself and Ulysses that what he has seen cannot actually have taken place, is very similar to that of *The Phoenix and the Turtle.* "If there be rule in unity itself," he cries, "This was not she" (V.ii.138-39)—recalling the paradox in the poem that number (ie, that "one" cannot be "two") "was slain," that the lovers merged into one entity, yet preserved their distinct essences. Building upon the conceit that there must be two Cressidas ["This is, and is not, Cressid."], he elaborates the most painful truth in the play: that what has seemed glorious and admirable, is not so. (xxxiv-v)

No one would suggest Shakespeare wrote *The Phoenix* about birds. Obviously, they stand for real people. Troilus compares himself to that emblem of eternally faithful love, the turtledove (III.ii.179). Hallett Smith, writing in *The Riverside Shakespeare,* comments, "Some critics have thought that the phoenix and the turtle darkly hint at Queen Elizabeth (who was often represented symbolically by the phoenix) and the Earl of Essex."[14]

The great Lord Burghley ridiculed as Polonius and Pandarus? The Virgin Queen of sacred memory scorned as a faithless strumpet? For some scholars these are dark waters indeed. Again, G. Wilson Knight would speak for them. "The whole argument about the Shakespeare-Essex relation is shadowy and without evidence." (ibid)

Yet most of what touches the actual life of Shakespeare is shadowy and without evidence. But if the court of Queen Elizabeth and the Queen herself was his true subject, then this lack of evidence is not surprising, particularly if what Shakespeare has to say is true. Early in the play, Cressida and Pandarus have a curious exchange. He says, "You are such a woman a man knows not at what ward you lie." (Ward is a position of defense in swordplay.) She replies, "Upon my back, to defend my belly; upon my wit, to defend my wiles; upon my secrecy, to defend mine honesty; my mask, to defend my beauty; and you, to defend all these." (I.ii)

Honesty, of course, means chastity. She seems to imply that her reputation for that depends on secrecy and the backing of this key advisor. Is this the Virgin Queen and Burghley in private conversation? I think so.

We have grown used to the idea that Richard III's reputation was blackened by Tudor propaganda and subsequent English historians who followed that line. It has been said that Shakespeare was one of this ilk—though his *Richard III* may, in reality, be a portrait of the crook-backed Robert Cecil. However that may be, it is only very recently that we have come to see how artificially whitened Elizabeth's own reputation has been. The figure drawn by Carolly Erickson in her 1983 book, *The First Elizabeth,* is far closer to a Gertrude or Cressida than the sanitized tradition has ever allowed.

As Seltzer notes, Shakespeare does indeed elaborate the most painful truths

in his plays: "what has seemed glorious and admirable, is not so."

One may well wonder how Shakespeare knew—and how he escaped getting his neck put in a noose for daring to "tell all."

Two plays usually placed in the years immediately preceding the ones under discussion are *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night.* In both appear fools, Touchstone and Feste, as "all-licensed" as the nameless Fool in *King Lear.* And in both plays, Shakespeare has other characters admire in glowing terms the professional fool's ability to speak truth to power and "cleanse the foul body of the infected world, if they will patiently receive my medicine." (*ASYI,* II.vii.61-62) In this regard, it is significant to recall that Olivia reminds her offended steward that Feste is her "allowed fool" (*TN,* I.v) just as Achilles must remind Patroclus, his favorite, that the scurrilous Thersites "is a privileged man." (*T&C,* II.iii) At Elsinore the only fool referred to is the beloved "poor Yorick," whose skull the Prince holds in such proximity to his own. Perhaps there is no Fool in *Hamlet* because Hamlet is the Fool. A disgruntled Polonius does complain to the Queen, "Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with/And that your Grace hath screened and stood between/Much heat and him." (*Hamlet,* III.iv)

I believe Shakespeare drew from life. Like other great writers he wrote what he knew. Since his subject was court life, he tells us plainly he enjoyed the protection of some great patron.

Polonius and Pandarus are Burghley, Gertrude and Cressida the Queen. Hamlet and Troilus may have been inspired in part by Essex but they are clearly mixed with elements of the author himself, the most amazing court jester who ever lived. Who he truly was remains an open question.

Notes

1. Louis B. Wright, *Troilus and Cressida* (1966).
2. R. A. Foakes, "Troilus and Cressida Reconsidered," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 32 (1963).
3. George Russell French quoted in Tom Bethell's "The Case for Oxford," *The Atlantic Monthly* 268:4 (October 1991).
4. ibid.
5. Harry Levin, *The Question of Hamlet* (1959).
6. Daniel Seltzer, ed., *Troilus and Cressida* (Signet Classics, 1963).
7. D.A. Traversi, *An Approach to Shakespeare,* 2nd ed., revised (1956).
8. Jusserand, *A Literary History of the English People,* iii, 253.
9. I.A. Richards, *Speculative Instruments* (1955).

10. Charlton Ogburn, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (1984).
11. Charlotte Stopes, *The Life of Henry Wriosley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton* (Cambridge, 1922).
12. Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet* (Cambridge, 1935).
13. G. Wilson Knight, *Shakespeare and Religion* (1967).
14. Hallett Smith, *The Phoenix and the Turtle,* introduction (Riverside, 1974).

Kill, Kill, Kill

Peter Moore

Shakespeare repeats the work "kill" at three places in his works. *Venus and Adonis* has "And in a peaceful hour doth cry, 'Kill, kill!'" (652) *Coriolanus* features "Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him." (V.vi.130) And *King Lear,* of course, provides:

> And when I have stolen upon these son-in-laws,
> Then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!
> (IV.v. 179 or IV.vi.188, depending on the edition)

It may be added that the French equivalent, *tue, tue, tue,* is found twice in Marlowe's *The Massacre of Paris*, in scenes vii and xii. Edmond Malone asserted that "[t]his was formerly the word given in the English army, when an onset was made on the enemy," and he offered an example from the 1610 edition of *The Mirrour for Magistrates*:

> For while the Frenchmen fresk assaulted still,
> Our Englishmen came boldly forth at night,
> Crying St. George, Salisbury, *kill, kill,*
> And offered freshly with their foes to fight.[1]

Other literary examples of "kill, kill" as an English war cry have been noted in the works of John Cotgrave and Michael Drayton, and in Sir Thomas North's *Plutarch.* [2] The purpose of this article is to show with examples taken from the battlefield, rather than from writers who may never have seen combat, that English and French soldiers of that period actually did use that expression.

The first instances come from a fascinating but little studied work, the memoirs of Elis Gruffydd, a Welsh soldier of long service under Henry VIII and Edward VI.[3] In October 1544, the Dauphin of France (the future Henry II) launched a famous night attack to retake English-held Boulogne. The French overran the lower part of the town, Basse Boulogne, but the English sortied from the houses and then from the citadel above:

> Then the Englismen smote their enemies valiantly and killed them in the cruellest way, at which time the gate of Upper Boulogne was opened and a large number of soldiers dribbled out shouting loudly their warcry "Kill, kill." These words the Dauphin heard and they abashed the pride of his

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> heart which had been lifted up with the greatest joy while he heard the voice of the French shouting Tuwe tuwe tuwe.[4]

In 1545, the French were holding the fortress of Ardres on the edge of the English Pale, where much of the local population had been French subjects of the King of England for two centuries. They attempted to starve Ardres into submission.

> A company of French happened to come with food. The people of Guisnes [an English possession near Calais] got wind of this and went into ambush in the forest between Ardres and Licques. There the French fell into the lap of the men of Guisnes who struck at them crying their cry in English Kil kil kil. This made the French turn and flee back to Licques.[5]

The English cry was recorded in the *Commentaires* of Blaise de Monluc, a Marshal of France. In 1544 de Monluc, then a captain, and a few companions encountered a large troop of Englishmen, who challenged:

> Who goeth there? c'est-a-dire: Qui va la? Je leur respondis en anglais: A friend! a friend! qui veut dire: amy! amy!... Comme ces Anglois eurent faict d'aultres demandes, et que je feuz au bout de mon latin, ilz poursuyvirent en criant: quil! quil! quil! c'est-a-dire: tue! tue! tue![6]

A final French example is found in Motley's *Dutch Republic* concerning the 1583 assault on Antwerp, launched by the Duke of Anjou, longtime suitor to Queen Elizabeth.

> Along these great thoroughfares [leading to the center of the city] the French soldiers advanced at a rapid pace, the cavalry clattering furiously in the van, shouting: "Ville gaignee, ville gaignee! vive la messe, vive la messe! tue, tue, tue!"[7]

In short, Malone was substantially correct about Shakespeare's "kill, kill," though a better definition might be "a war cry used by both French and English."

Notes

1. E. Malone, *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* , (1821), x, 233-4, and 315.
2. P. Brockbank, *The Arden Shakespeare, Coriolanus* (1976), 309-10 and F.T. Prince, *The Arden Shakespeare, The Poems* (1960), 37.
3. M.B. Davies, *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Fouad University* (Cairo), "Suffolk's Expedition to Montdidier" (July 1944), vii, 33-43; "The 'Enter prises' of Paris and Boulogne" (May 1949), xi, i, 37-95; and "Boulogne and Calais from 1545 to 1550" (May 1950), xii, i, 1-90.
4. Davies, "The 'Enterprises' of Paris and Boulogne," 90.
5. Davies, "Boulogne and Calais from 1545 to 1550," 2.

6. Blaise de Monluc, *Commentaires et Lettres* (Paris, 1864), i, ii, 299. [Who goeth there? that is to say: Qui va la! I answered them in English: A friend! that says: ami! ami!... As these English made other questions, and as I was at the end of my Latin (i.e., at my wit's end), they pursued shouting: kill! kill! kill! that is to say: tue! tue! tue!]
7. J.L. Motley, *The Complete Works* (1863), v, 301. [The city is won! Long live the mass! Kill, kill, kill!]

Postscript on the Memoirs of Elis Gruffydd

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss Gruffydd's memoirs briefly. The manuscript, written in Welsh, is in the Mostyn MS in the National Library of Wales. The portion translated and edited by M. Bryn Davies is only a fraction of the whole. Parts of it, translated by Prys Morgan, were used by Muriel St. Clare Byrne in her edition of *The Lisle Letters.* So far as I know, no one has undertaken a scholarly analysis of the work, starting with checking all verifiable facts to gauge Gruffydd's reliability. But, based on my spot checks, he seems to be quite accurate when he is close to events, less accurate concerning distant matters.

Gruffydd was a servant to Sir Robert Wingfield at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, and provides a detailed description of Francis I. Gruffydd followed Wingfield in the Duke of Suffolk's campaign of 1523, and joined the garrison of Calais in 1527. He remained there until at least 1550, when his memoirs end, rising to be a minor officer. I know of no similar memoirs for this period, particularly not from someone of such low social origins.

As Davies remarks, Gruffydd was something of a Fluellen, given to quoting Julius Caesar and praising Harry of Monmouth. Gruffydd was also a chornic complainer, a type familiar in all armies, and to such a degree that he could be labeled a misanthrope. He became a rabid apocalyptic Protestant, and his evaluation of contemporary English generals is largely a function of their religion. Protestants like Lords Suffolk, Poynings, and Clinton are praised, while quasi-Catholic conservatives like the poet Earl of Surrey are denounced as ungodly, vainglorious, and unreasoning, albeit brave and scholarly.

Gruffydd came to suffer from a mental condition that often strikes old soldiers who have been too long in garrison. Specifically, he felt that the armies of his youth were full of brave men and true, as opposed to the young soldiers, and especially young officers, who came through Calais in the 1540s. He saw the newcomers as soft, decadent, rash, and insufficiently respectful toward their elders. A good deal of his bile toward Surrey was caused by the latter's youth. Still, it is very much to Gruffydd's credit as a memoirist that he quotes the response of a youngster to his prosing about the good old days:

Aha sirs now we must listen to an old man of the king's with a red nose [symbol of drinking]. Bring him a stool to sit on and a cup of beer warmed up and a piece of burnt bread to clear his throit [sic] so that he can talk of his exploits at Therouanne and Tournai [in 1513—Henry VIII's first campaign] up to today.

Gruffydd is valuable in a number of ways. First, he provides largely accurate, detailed accounts of events in a stirring but underdocumented age. I came across him while researching a piece on the downfall of the Earl of Surrey. Gruffydd's description of Surrey's defeat on January 7, 1546 tracks very closely with the detailed report that Surrey wrote the next day, as well as adding color and particulars, such as Surrey's rage during and after the rout. Next, Gruffydd offers cameos on famous men, ranging from Great Harry himself to the soldier poet Sir Francis Ryan. Last, he lets you know in often memorable language what it was like to be one of Henry VIII's soldiers, as when he describes the flight of some French cavalry in 1544, "as soon as they heard the sound of arrows flying like a shower of snow, crippling some horses and killing others."

William Shakespeare: Why Was His True Identity Concealed?

Francis Edwards

One danger of contemporary films, plays, and other popular studies on Elizabethan themes is that, if we are not careful, we can see the characters of those times as people like ourselves, except for the fancy dress. It is true that Shakespeare's essential genius lay in his ability to penetrate beyond the fashions of his time to reach the permanent human traits that lie beneath the surface at all ages. Nevertheless, to understand the man himself and certain problems connected with his life and career, one must take into account very real differences of attitude separating the people of his generation from ours. The difference in attitudes to the public stage makes it immediately clear why a man of Shakespeare's genius might really be the alias for another.

In the Bard's own day, the public stage was regarded as a sordid and even disgraceful affair, not one with which anyone having social pretensions would wish to be openly associated. If he were known to be so associated, he could not expect his career in court or society to go unscathed. Social attitudes are not always consistent, and it may be that there was an element of the contradictory in that companies of players were kept by some of the leading men at court. Nevertheless, the distinction between the public stage and the court or private stage is an important one. The names of the Earls of Derby, Leicester, Lord Strange, and the Lord Chamberlain occur as patrons of such companies, although this latter reference was more likely to be the company of the Lord Great Chamberlain, that is, of the Earl of Oxford rather than of Sussex or Lord Hundson, the Lords Chamberlain without the "Great," who showed no literary propensities and had little time for theatrical pursuits. We also note that no company ever carried the name of Lord Burghley or of his son Robert, the first Earl of Salisbury. They may have despised the stage too much even to mention it, although since Queen Elizabeth and James I professed a more direct interest in it, it behooved this all-powerful pair to inhibit any open criticism.

While the Cecils were fully absorbed in their work and politics, the sovereigns

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and their courtiers needed the kind of entertainment sought after by more ordinary mortals. All the same, none would wish to boast a connection with the infant public stage any more than one would boast of visits to the public brothel. The two institutions were associated at this time in the public imagination, and not without reason. Hypocrisy, at least until it is found out, can be a stepping stone to success in any age, and the Elizabethan Age was no exception. Many professed belief and admiration for one thing but did something else when they thought no one was looking. It follows that those who had due regard for their dignity, and especially if they were connected with the Cecils or dependent on them, would be circumspect in declaring any association with the stage, players, or playwrighting. The 17th Earl of Oxford, always aware of his dignity and ancient lineage and intimately connected with the Cecils, would then have been disinclined to involve them by involving himself in a too-open and obvious connection with the common stage.

Since the preliminary point of the poor reputation of the stage and stageplayers is so important, and since this is something which we of the 20th Century find so difficult to appreciate, we should address it fully. Dr. Mary Sullivan has made it clear in her book, *Court Masques of James I*,[1] that the prestigious entertainment events at court were the masques put on in the Christmas season, more particularly at Twelfth Night. International diplomacy was involved on these occasions, and the rivalry between the Ambassadors of France and Spain to secure an invitation to such events makes somewhat bizarre reading for those of our own generation. There was no such rivalry to be present at any *plays* put on in this season. Moreover, if there was any prestige attached to writing for the entertainment world, it belonged not to the writer of plays but to the poets who produced the lyrics for the masques. The greatest of these was undoubtedly Ben Jonson, but even he gained no knighthood for his pains. Indeed, Jonson lived most of his life in relative poverty, so that he was only too glad to accept the commission later to work on the First Folio. (This was far from being the lowest kind of commission he accepted in his lifetime to earn a living.) Royal personages, even King James's queen, might take an active part in the masques; they did no such thing for plays. The prestige of plays compared with masques and the relatively little spent on them in time or money is indicated by the fact that, even though 30 plays were presented at court in the Christmas season of 1603-4, as opposed to only three masques, these three took up most of the attention and available money.

Playwrights were not highly thought of. Indeed, they were so poorly remunerated for their labors that they were frequently content or obliged to spy for the government to earn a few extra crowns. The names of Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kydd, William Alabaster, Anthony Munday, Thomas Church-

yard, and even Ben Jonson, not to exhaust the list, were engaged in this occupation. Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe were not apparently involved in this activity, but that was only because they were considered, with some justice, too tempestuous and untrustworthy in the eyes of government to merit even the limited amount of trust required to pursue the unrespected profession of spy. Any money to be made was not in playwrighting but in running the theaters. This is where Alleyn, Henslowe, and William Shakespeare, the man from Stratford, made their money. But in spite of Alleyn's founding of a celebrated institution at Dulwich, it gained him no knighthood or honor.

Not even the patronage of the Earl of Derby was sufficient to put the new profession above triviality in the eyes of weightier people, who included Sir Robert Cecil. When Lady Derby wrote to him for support of her husband's company of players, she felt it necessary to put her plea in depreciative terms. "If so vain a matter shall not seem troublesome to you, I could desire that your furtherance might be a mean to uphold them; for that my Lord, taking delight in them, it will keep him from more prodigal courses."[2] In a word, there were even worse occupations than the stage, but perhaps not many!

If neither of the Cecils, key figures of the age, ever condescended to mention the theater, and still less to express appreciation of it, it seems no one else did it for them. I have yet to find any appreciative reference to the stage, even by those of higher social station who were not above enjoying this kind of diversion. Indeed, all the references are in the opposite direction. Anne Jennalie Cook's *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London*[3] includes several relevant quotations from contemporary writers. From Edmund Guilpin's "Of Gnatho" we may quote with her:

My lord most court-like lies in bed till noone.
Then, all high stomacht riseth to his dinner;
Falls straight to dice before his meat be downe
Or to digest walks to some female sinner.
Perhaps fore-tyred he gets him to a play.
Comes home to supper, and then falls to dice.
There his devotion wakes 'til it be day.
And so to bed where until noone he lies.
This is a lord's life, simple folk will sing.
A lord's life? What, to trot so foul a thing? (87)

Samuel Rowland's Epigram 7 in *The letting of humour's blood in the head vein,* makes "Sir Revel" speak:

Speak, gentlemen, what shall we do today?
Drink some brave health upon a Dutch carouse?
Or shall we to the Globe and see a play?

> Or visit Shoreditch for a bawdy-house?
> Lets call for cards or dice and have a game.
> To sit thus idle is both sin and shame. (ibid 98)

Nor did those directly connected with stage and players have a much better opinion of the thespian art. Thomas Nashe in *Pierce Pennilesse* gives forth:

> For whereas the after-noone beeing the idlest time of the day, wherein men that are their owne masters (as gentlemen of the Court, the Innes of Court, and the number of captaines and souldiers about London) do wholly bestow themselves upon pleasure, and that pleasure they divide (how vertuously it skils not) either into gameing, following of harlots, drinking, or seeing a Playe: is it not then better (since of foure extreames all the world cannot keep them but they will choose one) that they should betake them to the least, which is playes?[4]

As for the players, Anthony Munday, himself a playwright, in *A 2nd and 3rd Blast of Retrait from Plaies and Theaters,* had this to say:

> Since the retaining of these caterpillars, the credite of noblemen hath decaied. They are thought to be covetous by permitting their servants, which cannot live of themselves, and whome for neerenes they will not maintaine, to live at the devotion of almes of other men, passing from countrie to countrie, from one's gentleman's house to another, offering their services, which is a kind of beggarie.[5]

In *The Anatomie of Abuses,* Philip Stubbes dismissed actors as "ydle persons, doing nothing but playing, and loytring, having their lyvings of the sweat of other men's browes, much like unto drones devouring the sweet honie of the poore labouring bees."[6] All the same, there was money to be made by this worthless profession, as Samuel Cox complained in a letter of January 15, 1590: "Rich men give more to a player for a song which he shall sing in one hour than to their faithful servants for serving them a whole year."[7]

So if the Earls of Oxford, Derby, or other noblemen who kept companies of actors took an interest in the stage, they were careful to keep the distinction between this activity as a court pastime, which was tolerable, and their own connection with any public activity connected with the stage—including publishing under their own name—which was not. As B.M. Ward rightly said, "in court social circles the majority would have deemed it a terrible disgrace for a great nobleman to write, produce and publish plays."[8]

This constitutes the background, then, of the 17th Earl of Oxford's interest in the stage, which was bound to have its effect on the manner of his involvement and the extent to which it was publicly known, in view of his intimate and unavoidable connection with the Cecils and the highest figures in the court circle of his day, including the Queen. Oxford was a man of great

independence of mind and penetrating intelligence, sharpened by the best which the education of his day could provide as a ward of Sir William Cecil. But following his father's interest in theatrical matters from his earliest years, which became total absorption in his later years, Oxford revealed a side of his nature and interests which could never have endeared him to his guardian. From his mature years he kept what William Cecil referred to (in a letter to Francis Walsingham of May 1587) as "lewd friends," meaning the players, writers and other riff-raff who operated outside the city to the north or on the south bank across the river. The theaters existed in the red light districts of London, which had been the custom for several centuries. It was no doubt considered appropriate in contemporary eyes, since the appetite for the one, as we have seen, tended to serve the other.

Oxford's relations with the Cecils show a man who would not be ruled and resented their efforts to keep him in tow. But it was difficult, and indeed impossible, for him to escape their tutelage and the heavy influence of that early training. Throughout his life there existed a peculiar love-hate relationship between the Earl and the Baron, and later the Baron's son. At times Oxford showed a spirit of resentment and rebellion, to be followed by the language of acceptance and apology, with a sense that he had gone too far. More important, he could never break his dependence in one important matter, which also helped to inhibit any connection with the stage he might have wished to express more openly.

Throughout his life, Oxford was financially dependent on the Cecils. Even after his marriage to the heiress Elizabeth Trentham in 1592, he still seems to have been chronically next to insolvency. This meant that he could not act flagrantly in defiance of anything the Cecils required of him. Certainly they would have required of him, if only tacitly, that he would not let his name be coupled publicly with the common stage or players, or even with the known authorship plays, if only for the sake of his noble children and alliances. One could remember what John Davies of Hereford, a friend and admirer of playwrights and poets, found himself forced to admit at the end of his well-known apostrophe included in his *Microcosmos* of 1603.

Players, I love ye and your quality,
As ye are men that pass time not abused.
And some I love for painting, poesy,
And say fell Fortune cannot be excused
That hath for better uses you refused:
Wit, courage, good shape, good parts and all good,
As long as all these goods are no worse used.
And though the stage doth stain pure gentle blood,
Yet generous ye are in mind and mood.

Evidently, Davies had Shakespeare in mind, since against the third line of the manuscript, he put the initials, "R.B.W.S." for Burbage, who was a painter, and Shakespeare, who had the "poesy." But the man from Stratford could hardly be accused of having gentle blood. Indeed, even Ralegh, who came from a family good enough, was still not good enough to meet the requirements of Oxford himself for a courtier. The Cecils would have been even more aware of the fatal tendency of the stage to "stain pure gentle blood." Since they were both only recently established in the higher echelons of gentility (however much Sir William might search for older and deeper roots of some superior descent), they could not afford to countenance in themselves or their relations any factor which might reduce them to a lower level in the esteem of the ruling class—or of the ruled. Nor need we suppose that Oxford was seriously tempted to break loose in this particular direction.

Returning to the prior theme, even if the 17th Earl were inclined by termperament to be any kind of rebel, he would have had to be financially independent to make his rebellion effective. This he never was. It is true that he lacked the Cecilian gift for finance, but he began life especially disadvantaged, and had to endure a good deal of ill-luck. If ill-judgment also entered, it was the kind of ill-judgment that went with the times and was not his alone. His chronic impecuniosity began very early in life with the death of the 16th Earl. Margaret, Dowager Countess of Oxford, wrote to Sir William Cecil on April 30, 1562, to head off the complaints of the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Robert Dudley that she had been reluctant to have the late Earl's will proved. She now knew "the dreadful declaration of my Lord's debts... I had rather leave up the whole doings thereof to my son..." (Ward, 21-2). It was altogether reasonable for her to ask for Cecil's advice about the will since the young Earl was Cecil's ward from 1562 until his majority in 1571.

How much sharp practice for his own benefit did Sir William indulge in during the nine years of his stewardship? In *The Queen's Wards,* Professor Joel Hurtsfield put his readers on the track of many searching questions. Thanks to Cecil's careful manipulation of his opportunities within the law, and the favor of the Queen, the Great Lord Burghley died with no less than 298 estates in his possession. H.G. Wright in his *The Life and Works of Arthur Hall of Grantham,* while writing with admiration for the great man, could not conceal Cecil's selfishness in claiming young Arthur as his ward against the desires and needs of his mother, who was left in difficult circumstances by her husband Francis's death. Indeed, Francis had put in a plea in his will of June 10, 1552, that his wife, Ursula, be allowed to receive the wardship of her son.

But as Wright says, "If Francis Hall's request ever reached the ears of the King [Edward VI] and his counselors, it was allowed to pass unnoticed, for Sir

William Cecil wished to have young Arthur Hall as his own ward. Cecil's estates being so near Grantham, and his influence in the whole district so strong, he had an obvious claim, according to the ideas of the time, to occupy the position of Hall's guardian. It was a lucrative source of income, and hence the eagerness which Cecil displays in his correspondence concerning his ward's possessions... At the inquisition on the lands of Francis Hall in Lincolnshire, Cecil took good care to be represented. The report of his agent shows what pressure could then be brought to bear by a man of influence like Cecil... From the account of the proceedings we gather that everyone present was overawed by the knowledge of Cecil's interest in the matter. The jury was slow to give their verdict and though it was 10 o'clock at night, they asked for another day." In the end they decided in Cecil's favor. "Cecil could therefore rest content for he now had Francis Hall's lands under his control... Nor was Cecil slow to take charge of his new ward, though it cost Ursula Hall many a tear to part with her only son."[9]

There was no mistaking the overlordship of the Master of the Court of Wards, who had literally the whip hand over his charges. They came away with the feeling that even if they had not done badly, they should have done better, and would have but for Cecil's intervention in their affairs. He could dictate later on whom they should marry, unless they could afford an exorbitant fine for their escape, and he could charge enormous fees for his services so that their estates remained at his disposition for a long time after their technical surrender at the ward's coming of age. They even had to pay for the privilege of accepting the wife he chose for them!

All this has a direct bearing on Oxford's case. According to Strype, in 1590, nearly twenty years after his release from wardship, the 17th Earl owed the Court of Wards no less than 22,000 pounds, a crippling sum by any standard. In 1571, according to the Master's right, Edward de Vere was obliged to marry Cecil's daughter, Anne. Certainly, Oxford could not afford to refuse her. The young Earl of Southampton did, but it cost him, according to a reliable contemporary report, a fine of 5,000 pounds.[10] Young Oxford simply did not have the money to refuse—and perhaps only just enough to enable him to accept! Even if he had not been a ward, he would have been under some obligation to follow the dynastic interests of his family, and they might have chosen worse for him. Certainly, they seem to have started out reasonably well.

Lord St. John reported what should have been the happy event in a letter to the Earl of Rutland on July 28, 1571. "The Earl of Oxford hath gotten himself a wife—or at least a wife hath caught him;..." (Ward, 61) Burghley was typically careful to report the same matter to Rutland on August 15th, in terms which suggested not that Oxford had been forced into the match but that he himself had insisted on it to her father with a "purposed determination... For at his own

motion I could not well imagine what to think, considering I never meant to seek it nor hoped for it." But Burghley did not deny being pleased at the prospect and full of affection for the earl. "I do honour him so dearly from my heart as I do my own son, and in any case that may touch him for his honour and weal, I shall think him mine own interest therein." Burghley respected his abilities. "There is much more in him of understanding than any stranger to him would think... I take comfort in his wit and knowledge grown by good observation." (Ward, 62-3) So Oxford became allied to someone who would be no more amused than her father at the prospect of a husband who was widely known to have a connection with public players and the stage.

The marriage took place in Westminster Abbey on December 19, 1571, (Ward, 68) but the wedding feast was scarcely over before the young groom had serious cause of difference with his father-in-law. This concerned the latter's refusal to intervene to save the Duke of Norfolk from execution in connection with the Ridolfi Plot, a scheme undoubtedly engineered by Burghley with the object of removing two prime obstacles to his policies—the Duke of Norfolk and Mary, Queen of Scots. (See my *The Marvelous Chance* and *The Dangerous Queen*.[11]) Oxford could not know this, but he did know that the Duke deserved better than the execution which the Queen delayed for as long as she could, even against the wishes of Burghley and Walsingham.

Again, we are presented with the important difference between Oxford and Burghley, the difference between the tiger and the fox. Like Norfolk, Oxford had been born to honor and position and had never had to fight for them. His were the instincts of a soldier, which made him a natural friend of the Earl of Sussex, with whom he saw service against those who took part in the Northern Rising and in Scotland in 1569-70. (Ward, 47) Oxford's ideals were the fighting Veres, Sir Francis and Sir Horace, his cousins. He was a quick-tempered and impetuous man who spoke his mind as he knew it at the moment. He could flare up and as quickly subside. There is something of Hamlet as well as Laertes in the same man.

Burghley, on the other hand, preferred to lie like a crocodile in the swamp with the broadest and blandest of smiles for all who saw him, apparently inert but capable of the swift movement, calculated all the while, which could destroy his enemies before they knew whose teeth had seized them. Indeed, Burghley always insisted that, if anyone had been seized, it was by someone else's teeth and never his own. He never admitted to an enemy that he was an enemy, for this would only have put him on his guard.

Typically, on the occasion of Norfolk's misfortune, Oxford's resentment faded fairly quickly and the difference with Cecil soon blew over. But Oxford's natural sympathy for the aristocrat of ancient lineage remained and continued to have its effect at the deeper level on anything which touched his own honor

and esteem. Meanwhile, his close alliance with the Cecil house by marriage meant that the Earl would need to observe the social niceties and conventions which bound him to the most powerful family in the land. For the sake of his wife and children, as well as himself, he would need to pursue his literary and theatrical interests with due discretion.

Nothing could have seemed more auspicious for Oxford's career, including his literary and dramatic career, than his brilliant introduction to the life of court. According to all outward appearances, Oxford seemed the epitome of success. However, beneath the surface glittering in the sun of the Queen's favor, the depths of life at court could hide cold currents of jealousy and rivalry. Elizabeth's Court was essentially a court of the Renaissance. There were distinct groupings, alliances and emnities. Private wars could be virtually to the knife for the royal favor and to put a rival out of action. An ideal maneuver was to put one's rival in a position where he was no longer considered to have a presence unsullied enough to be fit to enter the royal presence. This meant that once someone was forbidden attendance at court, his enemies could pour poison into the sovereign's ear on every occasion, like the mime in *Hamlet*, until he could be considered politically and socially dead. This had happened to the unfortunate Duke of Norfolk, who had been eliminated physically as well as socially on a charge of treason.

The Queen, while not unintelligent, could have her judgment distorted by fear. In this way, she was persuaded by false plots, which she herself did not know to be false, to consent to the death of the Duke of Norfolk, Mary, Queen of Scots, and later, the Earl of Essex. She did not need Shakespeare to tell her that uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. She had herself come close to danger at the end of Wyatt's rebellion during the reign of her half-sister, Mary. Elizabeth understood the system and, like Burghley, had learned how to survive and even prosper in it. Anyone else who wished to survive in it must follow her whims and wishes carefully, even those like Leicester and Burghley, who seemed unassailable. Even someone like Oxford who, despite his ancient lineage and some favor with the Queen, was never really a member of the ruling caste. The scion of a noble line of long standing had to take his competitive place with the parvenus, whether he liked it or not. There was a pecking order and a graded system of likely survival among her courtiers.

The elephant, the lion and the rhinoceros, Leicester, Burghley and Sussex, were the unassailable beasts of the jungle. They were surrounded by the rest, who were vulnerable in varying degrees and had to depend for their survival on staying in the protective shadow of one of the larger animals.

A well-defined rivalry existed between the Earl of Sussex and the Earl of Leicester. Oxford, a powerful newcomer from 1571 thanks to the Queen's

favor and his alliance with Cecil, drew to the side of Sussex, with whom he had campaigned during the rising of the north and in Scotland in 1569-70. The Sydneys, particularly Sir Philip, stood by Leicester, as did Sir Thomas Knyvett. The Queen's principal ploy was to speak fair to them all, making easy promises to smooth ruffled feathers and keep all sides close to her—even if the promises were never actually kept. This was also Sir William Cecil's policy, who avoided letting any man think him his enemy even when he wished him destroyed. In short, there was much "smiling with the teeth" in all directions but little real friendship. Oxford, then, had to go along with his nearest thing to a patron, the Lord Burghley. He was obliged to talk to him in terms of deference, and even at times of an admiration which could hardly have been sincere, if he was to maintain any stable position on the greasy pole of court life. As part of the process, he had to pursue his thespian interests with great discretion, especially as they might cost money, money which would be overseen by Burghley.

There was soon another good reason for not disturbing good relations with Burghley. Oxford's rival at court soon proved to be Christopher Hatton, a parvenu from Northamptonshire, ten years his senior. Hatton had come to London to study for the bar about 1560 but, by 1564, had become one of the Queen's gentlemen pensioners. Shrewd and intelligent, his mind was further sharpened by his legal training. He had the pleasant exterior which could win immediate favor in the young Queen's eyes. Indeed, Sir John Perrot, her half-brother, said that he "danced his way into the queen's favour with a galliard" (Ward, 74). Hatton's character, that of a career adventurer, was cast in the mold of Leicester and Cecil rather than Oxford.

Perhaps it was Oxford's success in the 1571 jousting tournament which first drew Hatton into jealous rivalry with the Earl, who now enjoyed much favor with the Queen, a commodity which Hatton would not be happy to share. Edward Dyer, poet and friend of Philip Sidney, advised Hatton in 1572 about reducing Oxford's influence. There is little doubt that Dyer referred to him in a well-known letter: "use no words of disgrace or reproach towards him to any; that he, being the less provoked, may sleep, thinking all safe, while you do awake and attend to your advantages." (ibid) Hatton followed his advice the following year when he wrote to Her Majesty from the continent to acknowledge some gift or other. "It is a gracious favor most dear and welcome unto me: reserve it to the sheep"—Elizabeth's pet name for Hatton—"he hath no tooth to bite, where the Boar's tusk may both raze and tear."

Whether or not Oxford was aware of Hatton's true attitude toward him at this time, a man of the Earl's acumen would have been aware of the dangerous undercurrents and eddies of court life, and would have realized that he could only survive by alliances, the most obvious being Cecil's. Cecil would have been aware of his predicament and would have had no compunction in exploiting his

need to depend on his favor. Not even Oxford in the early days of his court success could afford to ignore Cecil, since while one might dance one's way into the Queen's favor with a galliard, anyone who crossed her favorite, Cecil, might soon be dancing his way out of it. Behind her coquettry, Elizabeth realized that the success of her state depended on much more than the ability to dance galliards. Cecil had this other ability which he had proved to her satisfaction for some twenty years by 1570. No dancer or entertainer, Cecil was secure in the favor of the Queen, and in a way no other had it, apart perhaps from Leicester.

Whatever Oxford's feelings toward the late Duke of Norfolk, who was executed on June 2, 1572, by October 31, Oxford had accepted the wisdom of mending any broken fences with Cecil in a letter from Wyvenhoe. Once again, the existence of dangerous rivalries in the court meant that he could not afford to weaken his own vulnerable position by playing down too far to the populace in the matter of his dramatic interests. In any case, at this time these were not his chief preoccupation. The real ambition of the young Oxford lay in the direction of military exploits and a career at the fighting front. Yet by the combined efforts of the Queen and Cecil, this was not to be allowed him.

Apparently, Cecil had taken the initiative in reconciling with Oxford after the Norfolk contretemps, who had accepted the olive branch with alacrity. Oxford knew that there had been "sinister reports" but he hoped to be "more plausible" to Cecil than before "which hardly, either through my youth, or rather my misfortune, hither-to I have done." Oxford begs Burghley in the fulsome language of the court and the period not to believe the "backfriends" who have been pouring poison into his ear. "Thus therefore hoping the best in your lordship, and fearing the worst in myself, I take my leave, lest my letters may become loathsome and tedious unto you, to whom I wish to be most grateful."[12] The best way to get his wishes would be by way of flattery and apparent docility, however alien to his character. But the desired result did not come quickly enough.

Inevitably, the mind of a man who could have produced the Shakespeare canon could hardly have been satisfied with the confining atmosphere of court life. True, de Vere could use the forced leisure to pursue his literary interests, which were deep even at this time. His introduction to the translation of Castiglione's *The Courtier* and his prefatory letter and poem in *Cardanus' Comforte* in 1573 give us the first taste of more to come. But his main interests at this time, those of a young and active man eager for adventure and the experience of the larger world, were sufficiently proved when, in 1574, without permission from Queen or Lord Treasurer, Oxford did a sudden dash overseas, going as far as Brussels. He did not stay abroad long, if only because he would have heard the rumor that he was deserting to the Catholic exiles, notably the

Earl of Westmorland, who had left England after the Northern Rising of 1569 and lay under the shadow of high treason. Fortunately, Oxford had Sussex, the Lord Chamberlain, and his father-in-law to smooth over matters with Her Gracious Majesty, who nevertheless felt her grace sorely tried by the incident.

Oxford was back in England with his fingers burnt after less than a fortnight abroad. On July 29, he met Burghley and Countess Oxford in London before proceeding to Gloucester in the hope of making peace with the Queen. In a letter to Walsingham, Burghley described Oxford as "fearful and doubtful in what sort he shall recover her Majesty's favor because of his offence in departure as he did without license." So while the young Oxford could be headstrong, he was not foolhardy. He had lost no time in dissociating himself from the rebels who had fled abroad. Significantly, Oxford, who was now in London, felt he needed a new suit of clothes to make himself presentable in court. Equally significantly, Burghley thought he did not. "I would have had him forbear that new charge, considering his former apparel is very sufficient, and he not provided to increase a new charge." (Ward, 95) So the specter of insolvency stalked so close behind the penurious Earl that he could not even afford a new suit! Only Burghley could prevent him from drowning in a sea of debt. And Burghley would never give much help to a man, even his son-in-law and an Earl, who was known openly to throw money away on "lewd companions" who wrote poetry, plays, and wasted their time and substance on similar foolishness. Even if the Earl did not go so far as to acknowledge himself openly as yet another author of such things, it was bad enough to be encouraging those who did, and to be even remotely associated with them.

Walsingham was now asked to prepare the way back to Her Majesty's favor. Burghley thought it "sound counsel to be given to her Majesty, that this young nobleman, being of such quality as he is for birth, office, and other notable valours of body and spirit, he may not be discomforted either by any extraordinary delay or by any outward sharp or unkind reproof," taking into account "his singular loyalty." Cecil then referred to the reaction to which Oxford might give way, were he not generously received back into royal favor. "I fear the malice of some discontented persons, wherewith the court is over-much sprinkled, [may] set to draw him to a repentance rather of his dutifulness in thus returning, than to set him in a contentation to continue in his duty" (Ward, 96). In his oblique style of writing, Burghley referred clearly enough to the continuing danger from the Hatton faction. Walsingham was asked "to remember Master Hatton to continue my Lord's friend, as he hath manifestly been, and as my Lord confesseth to me that he hopeth assuredly so to prove him." Burghley knew the true situation only too well and was using "courtspeak" to say that Hatton had not been "my Lord's friend" and was not likely to change his attitude. At all events, Master Secretary Smith would be another to speak

for Oxford, whose tutor he had been. If Oxford needed Burghley, Burghley also needed Oxford, who had every prospect of becoming again the Queen's favorite, and therefore a most useful ally for his own schemes—if he could be persuaded to fall in behind the great man. Moreover, Burghley, too, had "unfriends" in the court and was anxious to maintain every influence favorable to himself.

Oxford was fully restored to favor by August 7 (Ward, 97) and in proof thereof he spent the rest of the summer and autumn with the Queen on progress. This was more for the sake of correctness and a sense of duty than from any spontaneous or new found love of court life. His acceptance of the situation and obediance to the Queen's wishes, even against his own, paid off, and in the new year 1575, Oxford was at last allowed to travel abroad. But still the financial specter stalked in his rear. His list of debts was drawn up and a modification in the entail of his property introduced so that, in the event of his demise, the whole estate would not pass to Mary, his sister, thus leaving the earldom completely impoverished. Oxford left England on January 7 with Paris as his destination.

From what we have seen so far it is evident that, by birth and training, Oxford was fully inserted into the life, forms, and fashions of his class and time. True, his remarkable poem included in Bedingfield's *Cardanus' Comfort,* "published by commaundement of" and not simply by "the right honourable the Earle of Oxenforde" in 1573, shows an understanding of the predicament of the common man.

The labouring man that tills the fertile soil,
And reaps the harvest fruit hath not indeed
The gain, but pain; but if for all his toil
He gets the straw, the lord will get the seed.

And so through four more verses, until he reaches the last and most significant stanza from our viewpoint:

So he that takes the pain to pen the book
Reaps not the gifts of golden goodly muse;
But those gain that, who on the work shall look.
And from the sour the sweet by skill shall choose;
For he that beats the bush the bird not gets,
But who sits still and holdeth fast the nets.[13]

It would be a mistake to suppose that Oxford was a social rebel or unwilling to respect conventions which acknowledged the superiority of his own class and lineage. While he might respect the laboring man in his proper place, he had no time for those of inferior rank who aspired too high. Certainly, the writer of the Shakespeare plays found none of his heros among the plebians.

Ward writes of his "well-known intolerance even towards upstart courtiers who, though lacking in brith, were nevertheless becoming daily more and more powerful" (Ward, 244). Peck in his *Desiderata Curiosa* says he had it in mind to publish "A pleasant conceit of Vere, Earl of Oxford, discontented at the rising of a mean gentleman in the English Court, curca 1580." It is highly likely that Oxford had Sir Walter Ralegh in mind, who was the rising favorite at this time (Ward, 244, n.2).

The details of Oxford's continental travels, however vital for his later development as a playwright, do not have any bearing on our present question. But by the time he returned to England on April 20, 1576, recent events had produced more than an indirect bearing on our subject. His life was now in turmoil and crisis. He had more to think about than his success or reputation as a poet and patron of poets. On July 2, 1575, the Countess of Oxford was delivered of a daughter. Oxford's first reaction was of satisfaction and delight. Indeed, according to one of Burghley's typical memoranda drawn up in diary form, the Earl wrote to Burghley on September 24 fully appreciative of the happy event (Fowler, 181-195). It was this letter which conveyed to Cecil the Earl's small liking of Italy. "For my liking of Italy... I care not to see it any more." He had thought of going to Spain but "...by Italy I guess the worse" (Fowler, 181). The deep impression made on him by that country is evident from his plays written later, and also by the fact that soon after his return, following the example of his servant, Luke Astlow (if Astlow did not follow his), he became a Catholic. So his letter containing contempt for things Italian could not have been sincere. But he was well aware of Burghley's suspicion of foreign parts. However, the Earl wanted to travel further, more especially into Germany, so that he needed to say the right thing to win the very necessary approval of his father-in-law for extending the exercise.

Most serious of all, he was short of money and had already been obliged to borrow 500 crowns. So, far from mentioning his leading toward Catholicism, he only referred to Astlow in contemptuous terms as one who had "become one of the Romish Church," and as having used "lewd speeches against the Queen's Majesty's supremacy, legitimation, government and particular life." It is difficult to believe the Earl was not yet moving in the same direction as far as conversion to Catholicism was concerned. Evidently, it was all another example of courtspeak, which Oxford by this time had mastered as well as any. If premature news of Astlow's "defection" had already reached the wrong quarter, Oxford was anxious to dissociate himself from it.

By April 4, 1576, while still on the continent, it seems that Oxford received some kind of information intended to convince him that the child recently born to his wife was not his. It is usually assumed that Oxford had merely listened

to malicious gossip from Henry Howard, brother of the executed Duke of Norfolk, and a man Burghley never trusted. It may be that Anne was the victim of malicious gossip, but Dr. Richard Masters reported to the Queen some curious words and deeds from Anne herself. Anne kept the event of the baby's birth secret four or five days from everyone. "Her face was much fallen and thin with little colour." When she was offered congratulations, she expressed sorrow rather than joy, and wondered whether Oxford, if he were present, would "pass upon me and it or not." In short, she had misgivings that it might have been taken for somebody else's child even if in fact it were Oxford's. It is not impossible that in Oxford's absence his lady had been disporting with another, if not others.

Burghley's memorandum mentioned above also showed some preoccupation with trying to make various dates fall out so that Anne's case could appear in the best light. Richard Bayley, admittedly writing some years later to Sir William Stanley on November 19, 1598, reported laconically on the English court, "All other matters go after the old manner. The persecution of catholics continueth. Maids of the court go scarce twenty weeks with child after they are married. Every man hath liberty of conscience to play the knave. Lord Southampton marries Mrs. Barnham whom he hath gotten with child."[14] Oxford himself was to father an illegitimate child on Anne Vavasour in 1581, the consequences of which were to involve him in a duel with the influential Sir Thomas Knyvett, the girl's uncle.

In any case, the Queen supported Oxford, in spite of the best pleas that Cecil could offer in Anne's behalf, and Anne was peremptorily forbidden to come to court throughout the summer (Ward, 123). On the other hand, Anne insisted on her innocence to the end. It may be that she was innocent but in some way found herself in compromising circumstances which could be readily misunderstood. On December 7, 1581, Anne wrote a final and apparently successful appeal to her husband to end their five-year separation. After assuring him that her father wished Oxford well, she admitted, "the practices in Court, I fear, do make seek to make contrary shows." Oxford in a previous letter to one of hers, which broke a long silence, had asked her to avoid the company of Lady Drury. She claimed, "I deal as little with her as any can, and care no more for her than you would have me; but I have been driven sometimes, for avoiding of malice and envy, to do that with both her and others which I would not with my will do." (Ward, 227)

It was probably fairly soon after her letter that Anne and Oxford were reconciled. At all events, it was reported in May 1583 that the Earl had a son who died soon after birth.

The affair of the child in 1576, however, was inextricably woven with

something else. In Oxford's absence, *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowers,* first published in 1573 and which contained, it seems certain, some of Oxford's poems, was taken over completely by George Gascoigne, admittedly the principal original contributor.[15] He reissued the book of 1573, with a couple of additions, under the title, *The Posies of George Gascoigne, Esquire,* as if they were all his own. Also in Oxford's absence, Christopher Hatton had managed to persuade the Queen on January 1, 1576 to appoint George Gascoigne Poet Laureate. This broke an important rule. As Ward says, "In the 16th Century, although many courtiers wrote poetry, it was an unwritten law that nothing of theirs should be printed while they were alive." (Ward, 132) Not that Oxford had been blameless in the matter, if the word "blame" is appropriate. He managed to get hold of the original collection of poems which he published to include some of his own, anonymously of course (ibid). It is significant that, when he cut Thomas Cecil, Anne and his father-in-law dead on his return to England in 1576 when they went to meet him, he repaired at once to the house of Rowland Yorke and his brother, Edward, in London. Yorke was a friend of Gascoigne and doubtless Oxford had it out with him over the whole affair of the publication. It may well be, as Ward says, that Oxford aspired to become the Poet Laureate of England, the first after John Skelton, and resented being pipped to the post by Gascoigne, especially by a Gascoigne aided by Hatton. (Ward, 141)

The 1580s were difficult years for Oxford. The rift with Burghley and Anne over the birth of his daughter, and perhaps other matters, was slow in healing. However, Oxford had enough trouble on his hands to prevent him from stirring up further hornets' nests in the field of publication in his own name, even of his own poems. After the eventual rapprochement with the Cecils, Ward is right in thinking that "beneath this outward display, it is safe to say that never again were relations quite the same between husband, wife and father-in-law." The temperament and interests of the two men grew ever more apart as the years went by. Burghley, wise in the ways of the world and the court, had little interest in anything apart from politics and money and his family, which included his granddaughters. (One thinks inevitably of Shylock and his daughter and his ducats.) Two important factors kept Oxford and Burghley together—the awareness that they had mutual enemies at court bent on their destruction, and the fact that the Queen was anxious to see the end of the rift.

At all events, Oxford felt the need to establish some kind of financial independence in the the next ten years, but there was no way in which he could shake off Lord Burghley. Since Burghley had it in his power to make life difficult or even impossible for Oxford by his financial maneuverings, and since Cecil had no time or sympathy for Oxford's literary pretensions, Oxford could

not have afforded to alienate Burghley further by any kind of public boast of his increasing literary interests. This would have prompted the Lord Treasurer to even more drastic measures to keep his son-in-law under control. The fuller story of Oxford's writhings on Burghley's hook still needs to be told. As G.W. Philips pointed out, it is significant that, before 1576, Oxford sold only one estate. Between 1576 and 1586 he sold no less than 49. This in spite of the fact that in 1578 the Queen made over to him the manor of Rysing, which had belonged to the attainted 4th Duke of Norfolk (Ward, 149).

Ward was puzzled by the reference in the grant to Oxford's "good, true and faithful service done and given to Us before this time." But this need not have been more than a conventional courtly and legal flourish. Oxford was, after all, the Lord Great Chamberlain, and his dancing attendance on her not always gracious Majesty could have been taken as the service belonging to his office. The Rysing estate was worth 250 pounds per annum, no mean sum at a time when a gentleman of modest means might possess no more than an estate of 30 pounds per annum. But still the sales went on. What was Oxford spending the money on? Admittedly, the miniature army of retainers, liverymen and servants would originally have eaten up a considerable sum but, by the early 1580s, the Earl's household had been reduced to four (Ward, 232). One must take into account the presents given to those who dedicated their published literary efforts to the Earl. Considerable sums were also lost by failed speculation on the various voyages in this period, such as Captain Frobisher's attempts to find a Northwest passage to the Orient. To put it mildly, in financial matters Oxford was unlucky as well as lacking genius.

In 1586, the Earl was saved from the complete wreck of his patrimony by the annuuity of 1,000 pounds issued under the Privy Seal on June 26, 1586. There was nothing absolute about the grant, which was only "during our pleasure." It seems that Burghley never mentioned it. It has always been assumed that there is some mystery about it. Perhaps there was. But it is likely enough that it was due to the special intervention of the Queen, who recognized that Oxford, whatever his extravagances, had suffered more than he should have done from the wardship system as operated by the Great Lord Burghley. Apart from the handing over of the manor of Rysing, this seems to have been the only time in her life when the Queen showed Oxford any extraordinary favor apart from fair words. But neither were small favors. Nevertheless, he continued until her death to live in hopes of more. This means that he would have felt bound to go on observing the bounds of propriety and the etiquette of the time, which included not debasing himself and his by being associated even with published poetry, let alone with the more potentially embarassing plays. Some of these could have been taken as a critique of the

times and the ways of court and politics which he knew so well. Even if there were only allusions to family affairs in these—as in *Hamlet,* where Polonius could be identified with Burghley, and Ophelia with his daughter, Anne—the Queen would not have approved of her favorite servant being upset by an appearance on the public stage for the amusement of the vulgar throng. And where a play like *Richard II* could be taken, even by the Queen, as a reference to herself, with its preoccupation with treason and civil strife, clearly the idea of publishing under the Earl's own name was anathema. For all his discretion and conformity, Oxford's hopes of receiving further sources of income in the reign of Elizabeth were not to be fulfilled. However, he lived in hopes and fed them for himself by continuing his discreet behavior. In any case, between 1586 and his death in 1604, he was obliged to sell only one further estate.[16]

It must be admitted that Oxford, at least after 1586 and his generous annuity, which lasted till his death, should not have felt in need of a much larger income—unless he were laying out money on causes altogether unsusual for someone not a Privy Councillor or member of the government. By the 1580s, Oxford's original fine company of retainers had shrunk to no more than four. Clearly, 1,000 pounds per year would have covered a larger household expediture than his present one. Although Burghley was in receipt of 4,000 pounds per annum in his later years, and according to Stow spent 2,000 per annum on Cecil House, this was quite exceptional (Ward, 258). The Earl of Southampton had a net income of 750 pounds per annum while the Earl of Huntington as President of the North had an allowance no greater than Oxford's. (Ward, 259) As Ward suggested, Oxford was no doubt acting as a patron of the arts, and in the role of one who regarded his purse as trash as compared with honor, he responded to demands with a lavishness that may have been undue.

A number of writers acknowledge him as their patron and dedicated their works to him, especially from the late 1570s: John Lyly, Thomas Watson, Angel Day, Thomas Lodge, Gabriel Harvey, Robert Greene, Anthony Munday, and even the musician and madrigalist, John Farmer (Ward, 178-203). There is evidence that Thomas Churchyard was living entirely at his expense (Ward, 301-3). As Ward rightly says, "It is unquestionably in literature, poetry, and the drama that we shall find the key to Lord Oxford's life of retirement from 1589 to 1604" (ibid). After his marriage to Elizabeth Trentham in 1592 and his subsequent retirement to Hackney, he no doubt concentrated his efforts not only on patronizing the work of others but also on writing and polishing his own productions, more particularly his plays. After the marriage of his eldest daughter, Elizabeth, to William Stanley, the brother of Ferdinando, Earl of Derby, on January 26, 1595, Oxford had a closer tie with a man who shared

his interests in the stage and himself wrote plays; though, like Oxford, and for the same reasons, he never published under his own name. As the scion of an ancient and prestigious family, Derby would have shared Oxford's natural disinclination to court the meretricious adulation of the common herd, and maybe their criticism, by publishing his work for all to see. Indeed, Derby's work remains unknown, or at least unidentified. The Shakespeare canon could well present, at least in part, a joint effort of the two Earls.

Mention of Oxford's daughter, Elizabeth, reminds us of a further difficulty and inhibiting circumstnace for Oxford and his father-in-law. We know practically nothing about Oxford's relations with his daughters. One might be tempted to see a comparison in this family situation and that of King Lear, especially after Oxford, by a deed dated July 3, 1587, made over the principal family seat of Castle Hedingham to the Queen. The Queen restored it to Oxford on November 18, 1587, but on conditions. It is likely that while the Queen was fully sympathetic to Oxford's literary and dramatic interests, she also saw the practical problem of providing an adequate maintenance for his progeny. Incidentally, it is also likely that the daughters, realizing or suspecting that their father was more interested in his theatrical pursuits than themselves, would not have been overfond of those "lewd friends" of his. At all events, in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Queen, Burghley got the Hedingham estate by fine for himself in September 1591 (Philips, 116; Ward, 306). The property was eventually bought back by Oxford's widow.

After the property came to Burghley's hands, part of the castle was dismantled, probably to reduce expenses of upkeep and also to bring in a certain amount of ready capital. Burghley, then, took a great interest in Oxford's daughters, and if we read the situation through the hardly impartial letters and relics of the great man, a good deal more than Oxford did himself.

But nothing in this story is simple. The Earl was aware that Burghley had been giving it out that he had been lacking in his duties toward his children. Thus, there was a further effort on Oxford's part to make himself financially independent—of the state and of Cecil. Writing to Burghley on May 18, 1591, Oxford asked that his 1,000 pounds annuity be exchanged for a lump sum of 5,000 pounds with which he might buy an estate in Denbigh worth 230 pounds per annum (Fowler, 411-430). Ward simply commented on Oxford's unbusinesslike approach in wanting to exchange so much for relatively so little (Ward, 306). But de Vere's effort must be seen as a protest and one more gesture of frustration with his father-in-law's proceedings. He clearly resented Burghley's assumption of sole responsibility toward the welfare of his own family. As he said, "he would be glad to be sure of something that were mine own." Further, "I would be glad to have an equal care with your Lordship over

my children" (Fowler, 411). It connected with the Hedingham transfer mentioned above. "If I may obtain this reasonable suit of her Majesty, granting me nothing but what she hath done to others and mean persons and nothing but that I shall pay for it, then those lands which are in Essex—as Hedingham, Brets, and the rest whatsoever—which will come to some 500 or 600 pounds by year, upon your Lordship's friendly help towards my purchases in Denbigh, shall presently be delivered in possession to you for their use." Evidently, the Essex lands were already under Burghley's control since even Oxford, with his lack of financial know-how, would hardly have surrended an estate worth 500 or 600 pounds a year for one worth 230 pounds.

Whether or not the gesture was driven home to Burghley, the latter did not lose his best opportunity for proclaiming to the world how much he had done for the Earl's family, and how little the Earl himself. Oxford's fourth daughter, Frances, died in September 1587. She was soon followed by her mother, Anne, who died on June 5, 1588. The tomb erected in Westminster Abbey not long afterward by Burghley bore an inscription relating to Bridget Vere, who was born on April 6, 1584, "hardly more than four years old... yet it was not without tears that she recognized that her mother had been taken away from her and shortly afterwards her grandmother as well. It is not true to say she was left an orphan seeing that her father is living, and a most affectionate grandfather who acts as her painstaking guardian."[17] Susan Vere, born on May 26, 1587, was recorded as "beginning to recognize her most loving grandfather, who has the care of all these children, so that they may not be deprived of a pious education or of a suitable upbringing" (ibid).

After reading this inscription, if the Earl their father was ever tempted to throw over the traces and desert the family to live openly with his lewd friends on the south bank, it must have been then. A few years before he might have, but by this time he had grown in wisdom, experience and self-restraint.

But it is difficult to disagree with Ward. "As a family man Lord Oxford was hopeless. The ruling passion of his life was poetry, literature, and the drama; and poets, as we know, only too often make dead failures of their domestic lives" (Ward, 331). He might have generalized even further to say that men and women of genius rarely give much of an example of living in their private lives. Burghley, the consummate man of affairs, who managed to keep the Queen's confidence for a lifetime in spite of occasional misunderstandings, could not take seriously a man who occupied himself for most of the time with childhood toys. Oxford was too proud and intelligent not to resent his attitude. In 1584, Burghley raised his hackles by sending for information from one of Oxford's servants about one of the Earl's financial affairs. Oxford's letter to the baron of October 30 did not mince words: "I mean not to be your ward nor your

child" (Fowler, 332-41).

Over the years, Oxford's relations with Queen Elizabeth, as with the court, was a mixture of love and hate, or at least of love, a cooling off, and with much frustration to follow. It was fully in accord with his own poetic nature that he should share with Edmund Spenser, and indeed with most Elizabethans, the concept of Elizabeth as Gloriana and the Faery Queen. It was probably more than this shrewd and formidable woman deserved.

As far as Oxford was concerned, his attitude toward the Queen derived from romantic chivalry. This blossomed in his first triumph at the tourney and in her presence at court during the early days of his success. It never left him. Nevertheless, there were moments, and moments extending into far lengthier periods, when she caused him considerable exasperation. He wrote to his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Cecil, on April 25/27, 1603, to commiserate on the late Queen's death. After the correct expressions of sorrow, he admitted that he saw himself as "the least regarded, though often comforted, of all her followers." As such, "she hath left me to try my fortune among the alterations of time and chance, either without sail whereby to take advantage of any prosperous gale, or with anchor to ride till the storm be overpast" (Fowler, 739-69).

Not content with his 1,000 pound annuity and the Rysing estate, Oxford had asked the Queen for a monopoly of the sales of oils, wool and fruit. He was unsuccessful, but renewed his suit in 1593. Meanwhile, in 1592, he applied for the title to the Forest of Essex, which had been a hereditary perquisite of his family. This time he was "browbeaten and had many bitter speeches given [him]" (Ward, 311). In the year 1587, in which he dropped from public view, he asked "to be gager of vessels of beer and ale, and viewer of the filling thereof with beer and ale. And to have for the gaging and seeing filled of every barrell, one penny of every kildo and kinnish [sic]... to be paid by the brewer."[18] He does not seem to have gotten it. Perhaps the clue to all this insistence derives again from the ball and chain of debt, which shackled him to the Court of Wards even more than from any generosity which he felt bound to exercise toward needy literary suitors. The next year, 1588, he sold his mansion Fisher's Folly to settle part of his enormous debt to the Court of Wards. By a "heads you win, tails I lose" arrangement typical of the system, Oxford had not only been obliged to pay a fine if he refused the hand of Anne, Burghley's daughter, but also had to pay another for accepting her. The full price was never paid but Burghley, after the death of Anne, and perhaps in a spirit of revenge for all the annoyances he thought he had been caused, instituted proceedings against the Earl in 1589, seizing some of his lands in lieu of payment. This prompted Oxford to attempt the sale in order to keep ultimate possession.

After all this, it was no doubt in a spirit of contriving flattery rather than sincerity that Oxford wrote to Cecil in September 1590, telling him, "in all my causes I find [you] mine honourable good Lord, and to deal more fatherly than friendly with me, for the which I do acknowledge—and ever will—myself in most especial wise bound" (Fowler, 378-9). Did Cecil appreciate the irony of it? Many obscurities remain in Oxford's financial affairs, however, and in his relations with his father-in-law in matters of money and property, he would not have wished to complicate his situation further by proclaiming openly an association with the public stage, which could only irritate the older man and the Queen as well.

De Vere had to step warily, sprinkling before him the perfume of flattery, since he would have known that many would have recognized in his plays, especially the histories, scarcely veiled allusions to his own time and the excesses thereof.[19] His works, as he and Cecil knew, were *zamisdats,* searching criticisms of the present in historical guise, passing from hand to hand and presented to the viewer without identification of author, although many at the time must have known well enough who he was and known whom they really meant when they spoke of "Shakespeare."

From 1587, Oxford as the true Shakespeare lived in a retirement from court and public life to write and polish his plays. This lasted virtually until his death, although he did reappear briefly during the reign of James I, who seemed to fulfill at last many of the strivings of a lifetime. After several claims made in the previous reign, Oxford was granted the bailiwick of the Forest of Essex, and the keepership of Havering House on July 18, 1603. There had been an earlier history of continual frustration. He told Robert Cecil in a letter of May 7, 1603, of his former efforts. "What by the alterations of princes and wardships, I have been kept from my rightful possession." He had been "advertised with assured promises and words of a prince to restore it herself unto me, [while she] caused me to let fall the suit. But so it was she was not so ready to perform her word, as I was too ready to believe it" (Fowler, 770-1). In August 1603, Oxford's annuity was renewed and he was appointed to the Privy Council.

After the death of Burghley, his son, Sir Robert Cecil, had assumed the guardianship of Oxford's daughters as the new Master of the Court of Wards. Oxford therefore treated him with outward respect and due deference in his letters. But he could not really trust him any more than his father. He admitted to him in a letter of 1602, "having relied on her Majesty, another confidence I had in yourself, in whom without offence, let me speak it, I am to cast some doubt" (Ogburn, 756). His doubt was no doubt justified; although one need not put it down to any ulterior motive so much as to a genuine feeling that Oxford had enough money to waste on the pastimes which Burghley had also dismissed as futile. Nor was it desirable to reduce overmuch that debt to the Court of Wards

which guaranteed de Vere's relative subservience and obediance.

In July 1600, Oxford sought Sir Robert's support in getting the Government of Jersey. Not only was Oxford's suit rejected but the Governorship went to Sir Walter Ralegh, which must have rankled deeply. After the Essex Rising, Oxford put in a plea for the confiscated estates of the attainted Sir Charles Danvers. This time the Queen agreed but the transfer was never made, even after a second plea in January 1602. The gift never passed the judges, and it seems certain that Sir Robert Cecil was involved in the non-transaction. On February 2, 1601, Oxford asked Cecil to be a "furtherer" not a "mover" in getting for him the Presidency of Wales (Fowler, 558). The principal secretary, after the manner of his father, answered politely but non-commitally. Needless to say, Oxford was not obliged.

However much he may have felt the weight of the yoke, Oxford could not have gone against the wishes of Sir Robert Cecil any more than he could have gone against the wishes of the late Lord Burghley in matters of importance, especially financial. He could not escape a kind of thraldom. Once again, this would have included any breach of the convention that a nobleman should not demean himself by publishing plays under his own name, and certainly not the kind of plays which Oxford could be taken to have written; not only the historical plays but also the comedies, which likewise contained scenes and references to embarrass living contemporaries. These would have been virtually identified if the name of the author had been known. The historical plays could be taken to refer even more clearly to the feuds for place and power among the courtiers and nobles of times ostensibly presented as of long ago.

These plays began to appear attributed to William Shakespeare from 1592, and with his name put to them from 1598, the year of Burghley's death. This was also a year after James Burbage's death, who staged the first Shakespeare plays. By this time, we must suppose, William of Stratford and Edward de Vere knew one another well enough to share the common identity. There was a certain humor in it which would have appealed not only to the pair in question but also to a wider circle of Elizabethans who took great pleasure in riddles, hidden meanings and entertaining obscurities, and who knew this particular secret. As we have seen, it is impossible to believe that the true identity of the writer of the Shakepeare canon could have been concealed from those close to Edward de Vere. The convention of hiding the true name of a writer beyond cryptic initials or obscure phrases, evidenced most typically in *A Hundreth Sundrie Floweers,* was fully understood, and only we who come after, like those who stood outside the charmed circle of the time, remain in ignorance of those darkly indicated identities.

We can hardly doubt that Edward de Vere and William of Stratford came to

know one another well, as de Vere could not have been ignorant of the existence ofWilliam, a man who was certainly significant as a shareholder in the Globe Theatre. Nor can we suppose that Oxford would have assumed the name of the other without something like approval or consent. This may well have turned to the actor/shareholder's profit. Authentic documents reveal very clearly William's interest in money, even small sums. He would have made little difficulty over a concession, presumably with no formal contract, but which brought him profit at least in the way of presents. In any case, for a man of William's negligible social stature, an association with a nobleman of Oxford's standing would have been reward in itself. Not that Oxford needed to be overnice in his choice of soubriquet. For one thing, the device on his hereditary Bulbeck crest showed a lion shaking a spear.[20] For another, the name "Shakespeare" was not uncommon, especially in Warwickshire, and anyone could adopt a pseudonym without a by-your-leave.

It has been conjectured that William Shakespeare's first experience of the stage occurred when he joined the Earl of Leicester's players when they visited Stratford-on-Avon in 1586 or 1587 (Ward, 323). Membership in these companies was very fluid and it was common for a player to pass from one to another. In this way, Shakespeare may have found his way to Oxford's company. But there is another and perhaps even stronger possibility. According to E.K. Chambers, "players under [Oxford's] name were notified to Walsingham amongst others setting up their bills in London on January 25, 1587" (Chambers, I, 101). In the circumstances, it seems at least as likely that Shakespeare migrated to London, like many other young hopefuls. There he might have found and joined Oxford's company. The company was reported in York the same year, but not before June. This would have given him time to meet and cultivate the Earl of Oxford, their patron, and become one of his "lewd friends." One can see Shakespeare in the role of Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale;* a fellow who knew how to use his wits and worm himself into the confidence of others; who had abandoned his father's Catholic recusancy as being without profit; a man with an eye always to the main chance and alert to the prospect of making the proverbial "fast buck." Oxford would have been amused by him, and they would have enjoyed the best joke of all in sharing in some sense the same name. Indeed, could it be more than coincidence that while in 1583, Shakespeare had a daughter, Susannah (Ogburn, 26), Oxford's youngest daughter, born on Mary 26, 1587, was christened Susan (Ogburn, 703), not a very common name?

How widely was the real identity of the author of the Shakespeare canon known by 1598, when the plays first began to be published in Shakespeare's name? Francis Meres' comments on both Shakespeare and Oxford are well

known and often quoted, but one wonders if the precise significance of his mode of expression has not been overlooked. He described Oxford as "the best for comedy" but listed none of his plays. After mention of eminent Latin dramatists he declared "Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the English stage," but this time went on to list several comedies and tragedies. What is the difference between "best" and "most excellent?" Surely there is none. So what was the difference between Oxford and Shakespeare? Could it be that Meres has been telling us all this time that the two men as playwrights were one and the same man? Meres was a cultivated man who knew the value of words. True, he was only the rector of a rather obscure country parish in Rutlandshire, but he had been educated at Pembroke College in Cambridge.[21] He was "also brother-in-law to John Florio, Southampton's Italian tutor in 1594. Frances A. Yates has surmised that Florio was placed by William Cecil in Southampton's household to spy upon him and that while Southampton distrusted Florio, he feared to get rid of him" (Looney, II, 177). Meres, then, had at least one good contact for finding out about what was going on in the literary world, and had come away with information which he would be sufficiently sophisticated to know he could not share with the wider public except in veiled terms. This he did.

Notes

1. Mary Sullivan, *Court Masques of James I* (London, 1913).
2. Sir E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage,* ii (Oxford, 1923)127.
3. Anne Jennalie Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London* (1981) 87.
4. R.B. McKerrow, *Complete Works of Thomas Nashe,* i (London, 1910) 212.
5. Quoted in A.J. Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London* (1981) 101.
6. Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583).
7. N.H. Nicolas, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hattton* (London, 1847).
8. Bernard Ward, *The 17th Earl of Oxford* (London, 1928) 280.
9. H.G. Wright, *The Life and Works of Arthur Hall of Grantham* (Manchester, 1919) 25-6.
10. H. Foley, SJ, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus,* iv, 49.
11. Francis Edwards, SJ, *The Marvelous Chance* (London, 1968); *The Danger ous Queen* (London, 1964).
12. W.P. Fowler, *Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters* (1986) 107-117.

13. Steven W. May, ed., "The Poems of Edward de Vere," *Studies in Philology* 77:5 (1980) 25.
14. London Public Record Office, SP12/268/ff.221-2.
15. Ruth Loyd Miller, ed., *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowers,* 3rd ed. (1975).
16. G.W. Philips, *Lord Burghley in Shakespeare* 116.
17. Charlton Ogburn, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (1984) 703.
18. British Library, Additional MS 12/497/ff.409r-16v.
19. Eva Turner Clark, *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays,* 2nd ed. (1974).
20. J. Thomas Looney, *"Shakespeare" Identified in Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford,* 3rd ed., i (1974) 471.
21. J.S. Smart, *Shakespeare, Truth and Tradition.* 134-5.

On the Meaning of "True Copy"

Robert Detobel

On the title-page of the Shakespeare First Folio the editors inform us that the plays were printed "according to the True Originall Copies." This statement might be understood as the editors' claim to authenticity, that is, to their publishing the version the author himself had or would have authorized for publication. The statement is reiterated in the head-title: "Truely set forth, according to their first Originall." Original, then, is not meant as the first text but as the text the author himself finally considered to be definitive.

However, the folio editors are challenged by the editor(s) of the Second Quarto of *Hamlet,* published in 1604, whose title-page has a very similar claim: "Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie."

In both cases, the published text of Hamlet is said to be based on the true copy, and one could fairly expect both texts to be more or less concordant. In fact, they are substantially different. Nearly 300 lines of the Second Quarto *Hamlet* are not in the Folio *Hamlet,* whereas the latter contains 85 lines which are not in the former. Beyond that, the Second Quarto adds the predicate "perfect," a claim absent from the Folio. Finally, the word "original" does not appear on the quarto title-page. As punctilious as it has often been, orthodox scholarship has avoided the question of sorting out all these differences. Was the game not worth the candle?

Probably not for two of the most reputable, Edmund K. Chambers[1] and Walter W. Greg.[2] Both recognize the problem, or at least acknowledge it; but after a brief reference to the publisher's epistle in the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of 1647, they rapidly turn to another subject.

What does the epistle of Humphrey Mosely, editor and publisher of the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of 1647, tell us? The Moseley text reads as follows:

> When these *Comedies* and *Tragedies* were presented on the Stage, the *Actours* omitted some *Scenes* and *Passages* (with the *Authours's* consent) as occasion led them; and when private friends desir'd a Copy, they then (and justly too) transcribed what they *Acted.* But now you have both All that was *Acted,* and all that was not; even the perfect full Originalls without the least mutilation; So that were the *Authours* living (and sure they can never dye) they themselves would challenge neither more nor lesse then what is here published.

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As in the Second Quarto *Hamlet,* we find the word "perfect." This is defined as going beyond the copies circulating among private friends (as were Shakespeare's sonnets) and beyond the text of the stage (that is, with some deletions, "mutilated"). In other words, the perfect text is the text as the author wrote it and would like to have it printed, although he might have given his consent to its being staged in an adapted or abridged form.

This definition is corroborated by the title-page of John Webster's *The Tragedy of the Duchess of Malfi,* published in 1623—as far as I know, the only other instance of a play where the word "perfect" appears: "The perfect and exact Copy, with diverse things Printed, that the length of the Play would not beare in the Presentment." Here we have the statement directly from the author who, to conclude from the commendatory verses of other playwrights (always absent from Shakespeare quartos) and from the epistle to Lord Berkeley signed by John Webster himself, was his own editor and was still alive (which may deceivingly strike us as a superfluous remark). John Webster does not pretend that his play was published according to the "true copy" or the "true Original."

What, then, does Moseley tell us about the meaning of "true copy?"

Though the term "true copy" is not explicitly used, he states: "So that were the Authours living (and sure they can never dye) they themselves would challenge neither more nor lesse then what is here published." Or, as it is termed in the Shakespeare First Folio: "truely set forth." I cannot see what else this could mean other than being faithful to the intention of the author. Hence, not by the author. This explanation is in accord with another remark of the Shakespeare Folio editors: "It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right..." Since the author was dead and unable to set forth himself, to see to the publication of his work, the editors had to see it "truely set forth," in other words, according to what they took to be the author's true intention. Hence, "true copy" does not refer to the author's own decision but to the editors' caring for the work of a dead author.

There are yet other contemporary examples of the expression "true copy" which are relevant to this argument.

In *Some Aspects and Problems of London Publishing 1550 to 1650,* Walter W. Greg mentions another case presenting the same characteristics as the editorial situation of the Beaumont & Fletcher and Shakespeare Folios:

> William Lambarde wrote his *Archaion,* an account of "the High Courts of Justice in England," in 1591, ten years before his death, but he did not publish it. For more then forty years, manuscripts must have circulated in private among antiquarian lawyers, till in 1635 one happened to fall into

the hands of a stationer named Daniel Frere, who entered it on 27 March forthwith. The text, however, proved to be inaccurate, and the author's grandson Thomas Lambarde entrusted an authoritative manuscript to Henry Seyle. Seyle and Frere got together and a fresh entrance, explicitly cancelling the old one, was made in their joint names on 1 July of what is described as "the true original copy from the author's executor"... Then, Frere having asserted his rights in the copy, withdrew, leaving the accredited stationer, Seyle, to publish the emended edition alone.[3]

Here the "true original copy" is explicitly related to the author's intention by stating that it was the one he entrusted to the executor of his will.

Surprisingly, Greg does not cite the case of Lambarde when briefly raising the question of the "true copy" in his work on the Shakespeare Folio, though it is clear we facing the same type of situation as described by Moseley: several manuscripts in circulation, an author dead for more than thirty years, and thus some doubt hovering over what constituted the authentic manuscript.

Are there any relevant cases in which the term "true copy" was used while the author was known to be still be alive? No.

In the same book, Greg writes of two quarrels that arose among stationers, the first between Abel Jeffes and Edward White, the second between Abel Jeffes and Thomas Orwin. In 1592, Thomas Orwin had printed a translation of the German, *The Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus,* "newly imprinted, and in convenient places imperfect matter amended according to the true copy printed at Frankfort." There was an earlier and, if we believe Orwin's assertion, a more faulty copy printed by Abel Jeffes of which nothing is known today. What version is meant, then, when referred to as the "true copy?"

Despite the obvious references to the true copy being printed in Frankfurt, the reference is certainly not to the German original printed in Frankfurt by Johann Spies in 1587. Though based on a manuscript written between 1572 and 1587, this book was a chapbook bearing, nautrally, no author's name. Moreover, it is hard to see on whose authority, other than the translator's, the printer could have relied. The reference can only have been to the English version, which was as much of an adaptation as an actual translation. Of the English translator only the initials P.F. and his status of gentleman are known. He is thought to be Peter Frenche, who studied in Cambridge between 1581 and 1585. This may seem plausible in light of the particular relationship between the university printers of Cambridge and the Frankfurt fair. (To relieve the conflict between the university printers of Cambridge and the London stationers, Lord Burghley had given Cambridge the monopoly of printing all books brought in from the Frankfurt fair.) But the evidence is still too slender to identify the author-translator with certainty. Moreover, the use

of initials suggests that the printing was done without the consent or, at least, the formal acknowledgement of the translator. There seems no possibility of knowing whether the translator was still alive in 1592. Nevertheless, it may be that the reference to a "true copy" also implies an absentee author leaving to the editor the decision concerning "truefulness."

The other case is more to the point. Abel Jeffes had printed an early and defective copy of Thomas Kyd's The Spanis*h Tragedy.* In 1592, Edward White published another, better version, stating on the title-page, "Newly corrected and amended of such gross faults as passed in the first impression." (Thomas Kyd, it should be remembered, died two years later.) This was the typical statement publishers used when the author was still alive.

An analogous expression is used on the title-page of *Love's Labour's Lost* (published in 1598) and *Romeo and Juliet* (surreptitiously published in 1597 and a second time in 1599). In the first case, the name of the author, W. Shakspere, was also indicated; in the latter, it was not. In the case of *LLL,* this reads: "Newly corrected and augmented By W. Shakspere." In the Second Quarto of *RJ:* "Newly corrected, augmented, and amended." In both cases, the first publication was from a pirated copy and the title-page suggests the author's intervention. (This, however, remains doubtful in light of the signal differences with the Folio texts.) A third case is the title-page of the Third Quarto of *Richard III* (published in 1602), which reads: "Newly augmented."

Corrected, augmented, emended, amended, enlarged, revised, and so on are the usual terms for reprints made during the life of the author. Sometimes, it refers to a previous surreptitious printing, as in the case of Samuel Daniel's poem *Delia and Rosamond* (1594, "augmented"); sometimes the author has only corrected printing errors in a previous edition, as in the case of Michael Drayton's epic poems *Piers Gaveston* and *Mathilda* (reprinted in 1596 as "corrected"); and sometimes the newly imprinted text was an outright revision as, again, Drayton's *Piers Gaveston,* re-published in 1605/06. Some reprints of Thomas Haywood's plays bear the remark, "revised by Th. Heywood" on the title-page. At a time when authors were used to revising their works, even those which had already appeared in print as the definitive version, it is but logical that the "true copy" could not be produced until after their death.

It should be noted, however, that the same terminology—"emended," "corrected," etc.—was used after the death of an author. Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus,* for instance, was reprinted in 1663 "with new additions." So were some plays of Beaumont and Fletcher's and others. But there was never any claim of these additions and/or revisions being done according to the original or to the "true copy." In other words, the authority of the author was never vindicated.

What the term "true copy" tells us is that the editor faced an ambivalent situation like that in Moseley's epistle: having several manuscripts in circulation

without knowing in all certainty which version the living author would have considered the most definitive. Not a situation without a shadow of a doubt, but, in effect, a situation loaded with doubts. This situation could only arise when, as the creator of the work and thereby the sole authority to decide what is the true version, the author had died without having stated so beforehand. It would be as oddly superfluous for an author to speak of his own manuscripts as the "true original copies" as for God to speak of his "true original creation," but it is quite reasonable for those interpreting God's or the author's true intentions to say so. In the case of Lambarde's Archainomia, it was fairly clear that the greatest authority was vested in the version he had entrusted to the executor of his will. On the other hand, Shakespeare of Stratford bequeathed no such authoritative manuscripts to the executors of his will. This point is underscored by the 1641 reprint of George Chapman's most successful play, *Bussy D'Ambois,* seven years after his death. On the title-page, the publisher informs us that it was "being much corrected and amended by the Author before his death," a sentence so essentially different from, "So that were the Authours living... they themselves would challenge neither more nor lesse what is here published," that it needs no comment.

Is there any publication other than the Shakespeare Folio, the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio, and the Second Quarto of *Hamlet* for which the claim is made of being the "true copy"? Only the Second Quarto of *A King and no King,* "Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher," which appeared in 1625. The First Quarto had been published in 1619 by the same stationer. Regarding the completeness of the two quartos, the order of publication is the inverse of that of the *Hamlet* quartos. In the latter case, the First Quarto is a corrupt and considerably abridged text and the Second Quarto the more complete text. In the case of A *King and no King,* the First Quarto is considered the fuller and more authentic text; the Second Quarto adds a few lines, but omits more and is less complete on balance. Nevertheless, it is on the title page of the Second Quarto of 1625 that the statement, "according to the true copy" is to be found, not on the first and slightly fuller version.

Even if the term "true copy" does not and cannot express the author's own judgement, but reflects only the editor's subjective intent, however faithful to the author's true purpose, it is hard to see how any useful information could be gained from a qualification indifferently applied to two opposite cases. On the one hand, to the fuller and better quarto (*Hamlet),* on the other, to the less complete quarto *(A King and no King).* Moreover, the difference between the two quartos of the latter play are mainly variations of spelling and minor amendments, i.e., they are corrections, not revisions. If this is the case, why not speak of "corrections and emendations" rather than of "true copy?" This had been done with the Second Quarto of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster,*

published in 1622 (the First Quarto having been published in 1620). Also in the Second Quarto of *The Maids Tragedy,* published in 1619, being "newly perused, augmented and inlarged." And in the Third Quarto of the same play, published in 1630, being "revised and refined."

The answer seems obvious. The Second Quarto of *A King and no King* was published in 1625, the year that John Fletcher, the surviving author, had died of the plague (in August). We can assume that the Second Quarto was published in the months following and that the main purpose of publication was to pay homage to the deceased. Hence, the term "true copy" is less an indication of an improvement on the former quarto of 1619 (none of the title-pages of their other plays newly published after 1625 bears such a phrase, but the ordinary "revised" or "corrected") than that the author had met with his death, the publication itself being a commemorative act of the kind we are so accustomed to in our own time.

In general, then, the only definitive information to be gained from the publisher's use of the term, "true copy," was to imply that the author was dead and, when this term was used on the title-page of a quarto, that he had but recently died.

That the Second Quarto of *Hamlet* was published in 1604 "according to the true and perfect Coppie" therefore implies that Shakespeare, the author of this play, was by then dead. As some copies bear the date 1605 and others 1604, the printing was probably carried out late in 1604.

That the printing of this quarto was meant primarily as a last homage is even more apparent than in the case of Fletcher. There is the quarto's prominent use of the royal coat of arms, which was displayed on the title-page. It was not unusual for a servant close to the king, especially a member of the high nobility, to exhibit the royal coat of arms on special occasions, such as funerals. Thus, its use points to some particular relationship to the king by a nobleman who was "A companion for a King," to quote John Davies of Hereford.

Yet, when William Shakespeare died in 1616, his company, the King's Men, did not react, although their three leading members knew he had died. There was no "commemorative activity" on the troupe's part. There would be in 1625, when their surviving leading dramatist, John Fletcher, died, and had been in 1604, when their leading dramatist, the author of Ha*mlet,* had died.

It should be noted that, like John Fletcher in August 1625, Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, had died of the plague, in June 1604.

Notes

1. Edmund K. Chambers, *Shakespeare. Vol. I* (Oxford, 1930) 96-97, *412.*
2. Walter W. Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio* (Oxford, 1955) 153.
3. —, *Some Aspects and Problems of London Publishing 1550 to 1650* (Oxford, 1956) 76-77.

Reviews

The Influence of the Italian Renaissance

Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time
by Louise George Clubb. Yale UP, 1989.

Reviewed by Felicia Hardison Londre. Dr. Londre is Curators' Professor of Theatre at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and Dramaturg for Missouri Repertory Theatre.

While the stated purpose of *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time* is to supply "a picture of Italian drama as Shakespeare might have seen it" (ix), its underlying achievement is to demonstrate—to those of us who always regarded Italian Renaissance plays as convention-bound imitations of classical theatre forms—that the dramatic literature of the Cinquecento derived from conscious experimentation with genre and thus exhibited greater originality and relevance to its time and place than has hitherto been acknowledged. In sections devoted to comedy, pastoral, tragedy, and even commedia dell'arte, Clubb elaborates "the simultaneous search for Aristotelian regularity and for mixed structures not in Aristotle's canon, for 'perfect' Sophoclean structure that could represent invisible realities and express contemporary ideology" (250). Although the Shakespearean connection at times seems to be superimposed, as if added as an afterthought, those comments provide an important context for understanding certain formal aspects of Shakespeare's craft.

Major obstacles to appreciation of Clubb's distinguished scholarship are encountered in the book's first paragraph, and therefore must be addressed up front. That the book is pitched to her fellow scholars specializing in the Italian Renaissance is evident in the opening reference to the implicit aims of "Herrick and Lea" (ix). After searching in vain for a bibliography of secondary sources, one turns to the index, which directs the reader to footnotes on pages 12 and 52 respectively. The bibliographical citation for Herrick is complete, but one discovers Lea's complete citation only on pages 51 (not given in the index) and on 249. Granted, the seminal works of Herrick and Lea are already known to most readers of this book, but what about Marie-Thérèse Jones-Davies? On page 227, we are told that "Jones-Davies agrees explicitly with half and tacitly with all of Bentley's idea...." The footnote on the following page provides an incomplete citation for Jones-Davies and none at all for Bentley. The M.T. Jones-Davies index entry refers only to page 227! The only page number under Gerald Eades Bentley's index entry is 206, and that page yields the hidden fruit: complete citations (except for the authors' first names) of both Bentley's and Jones-Davies's books. Of course, the hundreds of sources cited in copious

footnotes that sometimes occupy more of the page than does the text would have constituted a bibliography of inordinate length, but such a bibliography would have saved the reader much confusion and puzzled flipping of pages.

The book is most daunting when inadequate citation is combined with Clubb's frequently obfuscating style. For example: "I propose to illustrate this phase of expansion and diversification by following the fortunes of one particular theatregram, one of the humbler ones, through the century: or, more precisely, by pursuing a complex of specific elements, for to speak of one alone is to reduce it to the abstraction of stock character or situation. (Of the latter a superrational analyst once claimed that there were only thirty-six.) My aim is the opposite, to show the unlimited fertility and transformational capability implicit in each configuration" (7-8). The parenthetical reference, undoubtedly to George Polti's *The 36 Dramatic Situations,* is nowhere specified. Furthermore, Clubb employs Italian terms like *balia, fante,* and *intreccio* without any helpful defining phrase. Those words can at least be found in an Italian-English dictionary, but the term "theatergram" does not appear in the standard dictionaries of theatrical terms.[1] In the prologue chapter, titled "Theatergrams," the first appearance of the word is embedded in as much of a definition as we ever get: "the same theatrical movement that promulgated the imitation of classical models produced romantic comedy and mixed genres, in Italy as well as England, and did so through a common process based on the principle of contamination of sources, genres, and accumulated stage-structures, or theatergrams" (5). Subsequent references to theatergrams of person, theatergrams of association, theatergrams of motion, theatergrams of design, and theatergrams of action offer little clarification beyond what is contextually implicit.

If it seems unfair to begin by pointing out minor flaws in this generally brilliant study, it is a kind of retaliation for what Clubb does to the reader. The book's Prologue is a formidable hurdle to be cleared before getting on to the good stuff. The concepts are difficult only because they are couched in convoluted or abstract language. Sentences like the following try the reader's patience: "Pursuit of signifying form in the Italian theater eventually attached the power of abstract representation to the design of comedy" (12). Often the same ideas reiterated in subsequent chapters are more lucidly expressed and thus appear more forceful.

Clubb begins with the premise that Shakespeare's comedies were influenced not by Plautus and Terence, but by Italian comedies of the 1500s, which were themselves experiments in genre through their borrowings and recombinings of various elements from the fixed genres of the classics. The bulk of the Prologue surveys the Italian Renaissance practice of play construc-

tion by contamination as applied to the Cinquecento's basic genres: *commedia grave,* pastoral play, and tragedy. The principles of contamination and complication led to "experiments in crossbreeding of genres" (6) and resulted, by the late Cinquecento, in a proliferation of dramatic forms which served humanists as a means of controlling perceptions of reality. The *commedia grave* that succeeded *commedia erudita* continued to flaunt its origins in neoclassical theory while gradually borrowing aspects of tragedy. Clubb sees the pastoral play as the result of a conscious progression—a "long humanistic competition with antiquity" (7)—toward the creation of a third genre using "comic theatergrams" in tragic form. The argument sounds plausible, except for the nagging question: why does Clubb avoid any mention of the satyr play? Even if she cannot consider it as an ancestor of the pastoral, she begs the question when she refers to the "third genre" as something "the ancients had not achieved" (13). Clubb concludes the Prologue with examples of Shakespeare's variations on the Italian experiments with genre. *Romeo and Juliet* may be a tragedy, but it employs the plot complications and the *balia* character (the Nurse) of comedy. Othello is caught up in a farce intrigue, which he switches over to tragedy. These and other instances attest to Shakespeare's debt to Italian experiments in theatrical form and his originality in the use of *contaminatio.*

The three chapters devoted to comedy begin with a survey of sixteenth-century efforts to perfect a genre that encompassed so many variations, ranging from the improvisations of commedia dell'arte to the highly formulaic *commedia erudita.* Despite their apparent differences, the professional actors and literary theorists alike upheld certain principles in their establishment of a norm. *Contaminatio,* "the fusion of increasingly numerous and disparate sources" (33), challenged the dramatist's skill at constructing a plot. The emphasis on dramatic structure made a corollary virtue of complications or multiple intrigues; by this standard, the insufficiently complicated *Mandragola* by Machiavelli was judged flawed. A third comic principle was the realistic imitation of middle-class urban life; that is, reality as contemplated from a detached perspective. Clubb analyzes the operation of these principles in Bibbiena's *La Calandria* (1513) and in Della Porta's *Gli duoi fratelli rivali* (ca. 1590), and goes on to show how the complicated action of Cinquecento comedies conveyed the idea that the messiness of reality as humans see it finds providential resolution in a grand design, thus metaphorically seconding the Catholic church's Counter Reformation agenda.

Chapter 2, "Commedia Grave and *The Comedy of Errors,*" raises again the issue of Italian influence on Elizabethan drama. Tracing the evolution of *commedia grave* (spurred by the need to defend regular comedy against the

disorderliness of commedia dell'arte, as well as by the moral imperative of using comic structure to reinforce the idea of divine providence), Clubb shows how *The Comedy of Errors* fits the pattern. Adamant in her conviction that Shakespeare must have been closely acquainted with contemporary developments in Italian comedy, Clubb is unfortunately hampered by orthodox misconceptions such as accepting 1589 as "the earliest likely date for *The Comedy of Errors*" (53). Her insights about the Italian features inherent in Shakespeare's work are so refreshingly honest, so unequivocably based upon the available evidence rather than the wishful conjecture that characterizes Stratfordian thinking, that her forced conclusion is almost heartbreaking: "It cannot be proved that Shakespeare read Italian plays, or saw commedia dell'arte troupes or Italian amateurs perform commedie grave at Elizabeth's court, or heard about them from a friend" (63). Such things can, of course, be proved if only one replaces the pen-name with the real one, Edward De Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* are the apposite texts in Chapter 3, "Woman as Wonder: Theatergram of Italian and Shakespearean Comedy." Both plays correspond to the Italian genre of tragicomedy (which is analyzed as a derivative of *commedia grave,* later taking the form of *tragicommedia pastorale),* and both—like their Counter Reformation-nurtured Italian counterparts—feature a young woman of admirable virtue who acts unconsciously in harmony with providence, bringing the intrigue to a redemptive resolution. Clubb sets up Helena and Isabella in opposition to Shakespearean heroines who correspond to more traditional *innamorata* types, among whom she includes a hitherto unknown figure, "Julia of *Love's Labour's Lost*" (67)! Borghini's *Donna costante* (1578) and Bargagli's *Pellegrina* (1568) further illustrate the genre's conventions: the bed trick and the apparent death. Shakespeare's plays, Clubb observes, both employed and transcended those devices for putting forth church doctrine on free will and its capacity to do good.

The three chapters on the pastoral constitute the heart of Clubb's thesis and her best writing. In Chapter 4, "The Making of the Pastoral Play: Italian Experiments between 1573 and 1590," Clubb gets a handle on her subject by classing twenty Italian pastoral plays according to the kinds of conventions they employ. Although she doesn't clearly achieve her corollary aim of incidentally throwing "into relief some elements that are significant for the English theater" (99), the effort enables her to make several interesting points about the juxtaposition of social classes in the Italian works. The chapter does offer an interesting perspective on *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* especially in terms of its remarkable resemblance to Pasqualigo's *Gl'intricati* (published 1581). Adopting the comic intrigue structure with its intertwined love stories, the

pastoral became an excellent vehicle for "the ubiquitous late sixteenth-century theme of the discrepancy between appearance and reality" (109). The pastoral stage setting typically consists of two simultaneous locations, *selva* (woods) and *prato* (meadow), which serve respectively as scenic metaphors for the labyrinthine erring of love and the revelatory possibilities of sleeping and dreaming that grassy banks seem to invite. Clubb points out some intriguing differences between the *commedia grave* and the pastoral. Whereas the magicians and their ilk who appear in regular comedy "invariably turn out to be charlatans" (116), the sorcerers of pastoral plays do have the power to effect Ovidian metamorphoses. Metamorphosis, occurring only in the pastoral, serves as a means of gaining insight. The changes of heart effected through metamorphosis, according to Clubb, allow greater latitude for character development in the pastoral than is possible within the restricted format of regular comedy.

Understanding of the pastoral from an Italian Renaissance perspective yields useful insights on *The Winter's Tale.* Its pastoral setting in Act 4 is analogous to the green worlds of *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* while its symbolic devices bear interesting resemblances to Guarini's *Il pastor fido* (1589). The philosophical underpinnings of the symbolic pastoral are analyzed in Chapter 5, "Pastoral Nature and the Happy Ending." Clubb explains the Renaissance association of the pastoral genre with a long-raging philosophical controversy over Nature versus Art. How these concepts are reflected, confusingly in Tasso's *Aminta* (1573) and provocatively in *Il pastor fido,* forms the substance of the chapter. Her observations on the pastoral genre's symbolic use of animals—sheep and goats, dogs, deer, lion, wolf, and boar—culminate in a fascinating discussion of the "tragicomic" bear in *The Winter's Tale.*

Chapter 6, "The Third Genre: Pastoral Hybrids," recapitulates in clearer language much of what has already been presented about the Renaissance search for mixed genres. One provocative nugget that pops out of this material unfortunately gets no elaboration; that is the idea of the stage setting as motive for dramaturgical innovation, surely a rare circumstance in theatre history. In Clubb's words: "The playwrights' aim in this systematic transgression was to test the nascent rules and the possibility of inventing a regular genre corresponding to the third of the stage sets extrapolated from Vitruvius by Serlio as 'Scena Comica . . . Scena Tragica . . . Scena Satirica'" (154). Again, there is no mention of the satyr play as a possible progenitor of the Scena Satirica. Clubb goes on to show how the Italian pastoral expanded its scope beyond comedy's aim of representing objective reality, to the representation of invisible reality. One of those realities beyond physical access was "the interior world of emotion, particularly that of love and its related feelings" (161); the other was "a reality of pure idea or abstract pattern, to be seen only by the eyes of the

mind" (162). Clubb finds in the green worlds of seven Shakespeare plays "contemplative space" similar to the pastoral's Arcadia "where self-knowledge is acquired or a celestial design glimpsed" (164). The chapter also reinforces Clubb's commonsense recognition of Elizabethan awareness of new developments in Italian theatre. As she rightly observes, "the evidence is especially important for doing justice to Shakespeare, whose work, albeit quintessentially English and with roots in medieval soil, demands recognition as avant-garde drama in which the latest theatrical fashions were appropriated in dazzlingly new combinations" (157). Those who acknowledge the full extent of the work of a certain "Italianated gentleman" at the court of Elizabeth I would certainly agree. Indeed, Clubb argues convincingly that Shakespeare's so-called "romances" should be more accurately labelled "pastorals."

For readers primarily interested in the Shakespearean connection, the book slowly runs out of steam in the three chapters on tragedy. Chapter 7, "The Arts of Genre: *Torrismondo* and *Hamlet,*" stresses the Nordic historical content of both plays to show that both progress in parallel fashion "from history to myth to genre to criticism" (196). Clubb offers a fascinating and eloquent assessment of *Hamlet* as an experiment in genre, which strengthens the tragic genre by its very incorporation of nontragic elements from the various Italian genres. Here she gives scholarly resonance to Polonius's funny lines (II.2.387-92) on the "tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral," which also serve as the book's epigraph. Chapter 8, "*The Virgin Martyr* and the Tragedia Sacra," analyzes the Dekker/Massinger play in terms of the conventions of the Italian religious drama that evolved from *rappresentazione sacra* to *tragedia sacra.* Chapter 9, "Fate Is for Gentiles: The Disclaimer in Baroque Tragedy," focuses on Dottori's *Aristodemo* (1657) as a baroque masterpiece that manages to reconcile Counter Reformation doctrine with the pagan tragic pattern of the working of fate.

Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time concludes with a charming and enlightening tribute to the linkage between "erudition and entertainment" (249). This chapter or epilogue, "The Law of Writ and the Liberty: Italian Professional Theater," dispels our received notion that the commedia dell'arte and the literary genres of Cinquecento theatre were irreconcilably opposed in their methods, aims, and audiences. Clubb documents the professional players' serious interest in dramatic form and gives Isabella Andreini her well-deserved due in the process.

Clubb's compelling book should go far toward remedying theatre scholars' relative neglect of Italian Renaissance drama, while also giving needed stimulus to further investigation of the relationship between Shakespeare and Italy.

1 Terry Hodgson, *The Drama Dictionary* (New York: New Amsterdam, 1988); William Packard, David Pickering, and Charlotte Savidge, *The Facts on File Dictionary of the Theatre* (New York: Facts on File, 1988); Joel Trapido, ed., *An International Dictionary of Theatre Language* (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1985).

The Elimination of Humanity

Deciphering Elizabethan Fiction
by Reid Barbour. University of Delaware Press, 1993

Revied by Warren Hope. Dr. Hope is author of The Shakespeare Controversy *(1992).*

Academic students of literature have for decades labored under the delusion that books are produced by books. The result is that their studies read clinically, like the writings of sexologists, haunted by technique. Not only is this result off-putting—trying to maintain interest in what they write is like trying not to stare at the little piles of dandruff on a professor's shoulders—it is also fraudulent. Men and women produce books; pretending otherwise keeps us from even approaching the vicinity of truth.

Why should anyone pretend otherwise?

The answer to that one would require a history of the study of English literature in schools of higher education throughout the past century. This is not the place for that history. Briefly, three fashions threatened the once charming study of literature: first, the Teutonic analysis of ancient languages and literatrures came into vogue; second, technology became king of the academic hill; and finally, such "disciplines" as management and marketing squirmed their way to the center of the post-secondary educational trough.

These three fads left literature in a lurch of sorts—trying to defend its once honorable terrain by taking on the superficial characteristics of these perceived threats to its legitimacy and status. Dons and professors, once content to murmur blissfully over their sherry, began to make ominous sounds—sounds reminiscent of philologists, nuclear physicists, and alchemists of greed. Even T.S. Eliot, Lord love us, was driven to comparing poets to catalysts. Catalysts, after all, are so much more objective, measurable, and knowable than, say, Francois Villon or Siegfried Sassoon—men who scratched and bled and did their best to speak the truth they found while passing through this world in verse. Writing about these individuals is all right for amateurs, mere poetry

lovers, but it is not scientific enough for the trendy poo-bahs who hold forth on campuses and deaden in the young the solitary pleasures derivable from reading. No, authors, like readers, are out—eliminated in much the same way that masses of humanity have been eliminated in this century through aggressive, routinized contempt—and technique is in.

Now, at the blighted end of this ghastly tradition, comes Reid Barbour, who earned a doctorate from the University of Rochester and groans for wages in the mines of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, turning his sights on Elizabethan prose and doing his damnedest to squeeze every ounce of life out of it. Listen to the first sentence of his first chapter, on Robert Greene. "The work of this chapter is to reinvent Green's narratives of 'deciphering' as they mark the first half of the author's own schematized career." This poor academic does not only think that books produce books, but also that chapters do work, that this work can be the reinvention of a dead man's work, and that the unwieldly years that Robert Greene, with his long, red, pointed beard and his drinker's nose, spent on this globe can be described as a "schematized career." In the first sentence of the first chapter of his short but far too lengthy book, Barbour has flashed his credentials to his peers and turned Robert Greene into a printed circuit board, a bit of hardware, rather than an individual (you should excuse the expression) soul. Greene has been turned into an interchangeable part to which Barbour can do anything he pleases in an effort to forward his own schematized career. He need not care at all for Robert Greene, much less bring love, sympathy, or understanding to the study of him. All he needs to do is follow through on his first forbidding sentence and produce the umpteenth unreadable but publishable study of the techniques of Elizabethan prose. And that is exactly what he doggedly does.

The problem is not that Barbour has nothing to say. It is instead that he has very little to say and must stretch it to book length in a way that makes that little seem far more original and important than it is. Barbour should have produced a little article on three words—deciphering, discovery, and stuff—and their usefulness in reading the work of Elizabethan prose writers. He could have supported this case with examples from Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe, and Thomas Dekker, the three writers he writes about in his book. The thing could have appeared in one of the multitude of "scholarly" journals and the world would have wagged merrily on its way. After all, for most people, reading Elizabethan prose is like listening to Gregorian chants—the kind of hobby best left off the resume.

Barbour's profession prevents him from displaying the becoming modesty that would have been content with that little article. Instead, he writes as if he's the first person under the sun to notice these three "key terms" and as if the

fact that he's noticed them upsets the interpretive applecarts of all readers of Elizabethan prose from Greene's time to the present. Worse, he argues that his noticing of these terms also overturns long held views on the origin of the novel in English. Barbour should become acquainted with a word traditionally linked with stuff—nonsense.

One of the dangers of writing an unreadable book is that the boredom induced in readers might send them searching for entertainment in odd nooks and cranies of the text. I found mine in the sixth footnote to Barbour's first chapter. That footnote reads: "Grosart defined *deciphering* as 'characterized, or explained, or unfolded' (II, 302). This is not a careful gloss, of course, although it does suggest the close relationship between deciphering and unfolding." Who is this Grosart Barbour is so quick to criticize and so shy about mentioning in the body of his book?

Alexander Balloch Grosart, the son of a builder and contractor, was born in Stirling on June 18, 1827. He was educated at the Falkirk parish school and he attended the University of Edinburgh. He left the university without taking a degree. In 1851, his edition of the poems of Robert Ferguson appeared. In that same year, he entered the theological hall of the United Presbyterian Church. He was ordained as a Presbyterian minister in 1856. From then on, he pursued two careers—as a minister and as what used to be called an antiquarian, a harmless eccentric obsessed with rummaging through old books and documents. He earned a reputation as a powerful and popular preacher, he wrote hymns and books on theology, and it is said that his antiquarian studies—the work of at least five lifetimes—never interfered with the "diligent and sympathetic" performance of his duties as a pastor.

There is no need to list here all of Grosart's scholarly accomplishments. What is pertinent has been described this way: "The Huth Library came to a close in 1886 after the issue of the works of Robert Greene in fifteen volumes, Thomas Nashe in six volumes, Gabriel Harvey in three volumes, and Thomas Dekker's tracts in five volumes." In short, Grosart gathered, edited, commented on, and published the prose works of all three of the writers Barbour considers. What is more, he did this in his spare time, financed only by what he made as a minister and by the payments of subscribers to his publications. How did he achieve all this? We are told he "spared neither time nor trouble in searching for rare volumes and recondite information, and in the course of his career travelled widely, ransacking the chief libraries of France, Germany, Italy, and Russia, as well as those of England, Scotland, and Ireland."

Barbour's entire book is a mere footnote to Grosart's work, a commentary on a commentary. It is symptomatic of the scholars of our ungrateful and self-important age that Barbour inverts this relationship by reducing Grosart to a

disparaging footnote and two entries in his bibliography—the scholarly equivalent of biting the hand that feeds him.

Unlike Grosart, Barbour is neither a scholar nor a critic. He is an ideologue. His book is a proselytizing tract for the ideology now dominant in the English departments of the Republic—an ideology Thomas Nashe called, centuries ago, "Idiotisme." Here's Nashe addressing an Elizabethan version of Reid Barbour:

> Should we (as you) borrowe all out of others, and gather nothing of our selves, our names should be baffuld on everie Booke-sellers Stall, and not a Chandlers Mustard-pot but would wipe his mouth with our wast paper. Newe Herrings, new, wee must crye, every time we make our selves publique, or else we shall bee christened with a hundred new tytles of Idiotisme.

Shakespeare and the Secret Service

The Shakespeare Conspiracy
by Graham Phillips and Martin Keatman. London, 1994

Reviewed by Patrick Buckridge.Professor of English at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, Dr. Buckridge is author of The Scandalous Penton: A Biography of Brian Penton *(Brisbane, 1994).*

This book is targeted at a general readership to whom Shakespeare is not much more than a name but who can be intrigued by a nice bit of detective work designed to show that 'the Bard' was a spy. The authors are not literature professors but part-time media studies lecturers and journalists with a background of working on "unsolved mysteries," the most recent being the true identity of King Arthur.

The book has a number of irritating features: careless factual errors and poor proofreading are two, and the lengthy point by point summaries at the end of each of the sixteen chapters is another. The most irritating feature of all, however, is that the book actually undermines its own credibility by its insistence - after a show of judicious deliberation over the major alternatives (Bacon, Derby, Oxford and Marlowe) - that William Shakespeare of Stratford was indeed the author of the plays.

Readers with an Oxfordian perspective might be interested to to know the grounds on which Phillips and Keatman are able to dismiss the Oxford claim in six pages. First of all, there's the double mention in Meres' *Palladis Tamia*: if Meres referred to both Oxford and Shakespeare as playwrights, then 'it seems

safe to assume that Meres himself did not believe that Shakespeare and Oxford were the same author'. (Not entirely safe, I wouldn't have thought; and we're not told exactly how it would damage the Oxford case even if it were.) The biographical parallels, we are told in a ludicrous misrepresentation, "consist of little more than identifying certain characters in the plays with Oxford's relatives, usually because the name sounds similar" (70).

The other grounds for dismissal are even weaker, consisting of arbitrary assertions about the kind and degree of "patriotism" in Shakespeare's plays, the supposedly incommensurable quality of Oxford's known poems with Shakespeare's plays, and the deferential tone of the dedications to Southampton in *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece.* (The authors don't suggest what other kind of tone might be appropriate in a dedication - haughty, perhaps? It would make interesting reading!) This last argument is said to be so powerful that it 'eliminates Oxford as the author of the Shakespeare plays'.

The more interesting question is whether there is an otherwise credible case here to be undermined. I believe there is. Some of the evidence Phillips and Keatman have come up with really does suggest that William Shakespeare was involved in government secret service activities from the time of Marlowe's death in 1593 until well into the first decade of the new century. The fact that they have saddled themselves with the burden of showing that the man wrote great plays and poetry as well means that this core of real plausibility in their case is needlessly compromised and obscured.

The 'trail of evidence' they follow to their startling conclusions is far from unbroken; indeed the unprejudiced wayfarer would be hard put to discern a trail at all much of the time. But there are interesting moments. The authors associate Shakespeare with the circle of so-called 'atheists' who met under Sir Walter Ralegh's auspices in the early 1590s - conceivably the 'School of Night' alluded to in *Love's Labour's Lost.* There is no evidence for this association Shakespeare's name is not mentioned in any of the several contemporary references to the circle. But the closeness of such doings (and of the government agents who spied on them) to the world of the theatre in these years serves to sketch a rather broader and less salubrious range of employment opportunities for the newly arrived Shakespeare than is commonly recognised. Phillips and Keatman may, in other words, have hit upon a much better motive for Shakespeare's coming to London in the first place than his supposedly overwhelming desire to become a common player. He may have had in mind the much more adventurous and lucrative prospect of becoming a spy or functionary in the vast surveillance network being actively recruited at this time by Burghley and Thomas Walsingham. Phillips and Keatman may even have identified the recruiter in Richard Field, the printer and publisher of *Venus and Adonis*, originally from Stratford and undoubtedly a boyhood acquaintance of

Shakespeare's, whom Phillips and Keatman argue on good grounds was almost certainly the 'stationer in Paul's Churchyard' mentioned by Thomas Kyd during his interrogation by the Privy Council concerning Marlowe's activities in 1593.

Where does speculation like this take us? It gives us a better explanation of the 1596 writ of attachment taken out against Shakespeare. In November 1596 it was recorded on the rolls of the King's Bench in London that one William Wayte craved sureties of the peace against 'William Shakspare' and three others 'for fear of death and so forth'. The murders of Marlowe and, in all probability, of Lord Strange in 1593/94, both within days of testifying to the Privy Council, prove that the denizens of this murky world played for keeps. Why Wayte feared for his life we don't know; but we know that he did, and that it was William Shakespeare, among others, who he feared might kill him.

Wayte's other appearance (in surname only, so the identification is not certain) is as co-recipient of a payment of £15 in March 1596 from the Chamber Treasurer for 'messages' conveyed from the Netherlands to the Secretary of State. The other recipient is named as 'Hall', who may well be the 'Will Hall' to whom a payment of £10 was made in June 1592 for unspecified services to the Archbishop of Canterbury's Pursuivant, Anthony Munday. Munday was a very active spy for Cecil and Walsingham, personally responsible for the arrest and execution of some dozen Catholic priests, including Edmund Campion, in the course of the 1580s. By the 1590s his notoriety was such that he had begun to use proxies, and it is likely that Hall's services were of that kind. William Hall makes a few other appearances during this period, all indicative of secret service connections and functions.

Phillips and Keatman argue that William Hall was William Shakespeare, and it does seem possible. Code names were standard practice in the network, probably used merely as account names for recording payments rather than as genuine double identities. Anthony Munday's code name was George Grimes, and there are neighbourhood and family reasons why William Hall might have occurred to Shakespeare as a suitable *alias*. Even if this is true it doesn't tell us precisely why William Wayte feared for his life, but it certainly suggests that in the 'Spy vs. Spy' atmosphere prevailing in London at this time, he may well have had good reason to, and have had his eye on the right man.

The other possible Hall connection, of course, is with the publication of the Sonnets. The identification of 'Mr W.H.' with William Hall has been suggested before, but never as a Shakespeare code name. Here again, some winnowing of the arguments is necessary. Phillips and Keatman labour mightily to prove what is plainly impossible, namely that the 'onlie begetter' of Thomas Thorpe's famous Dedication is the same as 'our ever-living poet' whose blessings are invoked. If we charitably ignore that syntactically and logically absurd

proposition, their argument for the W.H./William Hall identification is quite strong, bolstered as it is by a lightly cryptographic case for joining the H to the next word, 'all', in the third line of the Dedication. They also argue cogently against both Henry Wriothesley and William Herbert as the dedicatee by pointing out the quite serious indecorum that would be involved in the use of 'Mr' for either of the earls, especially by a publisher.

What this suggests is the possibility that Shakespeare of Stratford had something to do with the posthumous publication of the sonnets, some crucial facilitating role that would warrant the figurative function of 'begetter'. From an Oxfordian viewpoint, that possibility is consistent with the implication of a continuing involvement in the De Vere family affairs of someone referred to as 'my dombe man' by the Countess of Oxford when naming him as a beneficiary in her will. Further investigation along this line would seem to be warranted.

Phillips and Keatman are guilty of one more piece of silliness that deserves to be mentioned before coming to the genuinely valuable contribution they make. True to their self-imposed mission to reveal Shakespeare as the great dramatist, they speculate, with no documentary basis, that he had free access to the Earl of Northumberland's large library at Petworth House in Sussex. This solves the problem of there being no evidence or likelihood that he received any education at all in Stratford, let alone an education sufficient to write the plays. In a scenario that reminds me irresistibly of Superman at work in the Metropolis City Library, Shakespeare is envisaged devouring the contents of Henry Percy's two thousand-odd books in the weeks when he wasn't rehearsing, spying, running secret errands to the Continent, and writing the early plays for which he presumably didn't need an education.

And so to the exciting conclusion. One of the great casualties of James's accession to the throne in 1603 was Sir Walter Ralegh. Robert Cecil, Burghley's son and successor as Secretary of State, had lost no time in turning the King against his father's old rival. In that same year Ralegh was implicated with Lord Cobham and others in the Bye Plot to assassinate James and his sons and replace him on the throne with his seven-year-old daughter, the Princess Elizabeth. Ralegh was tried, convicted (probably justly) and sent to the Tower for thirteen years. The book presents a convincing inference from a range of documents that the informant who brought the plot to the notice of Cecil was none other than William Hall (i.e. William Shakespeare).

If this was the case, and if Ralegh knew about it, his attitude towards the retired Stratford landowner when he emerged in 1616 would hardly have been neutral. Shakespeare made his will - second best bed, illiterate signatures, no books and all - just six days after Ralegh's release from the Tower. One month later Shakespeare was dead after a sudden and violent attack suggestive of

poisoning, and attributed by the local vicar to food or drink taken the previous evening. The circumstances point to the strong possibility that he was murdered at the instigation of Ralegh, and that he knew he was in danger as soon as Ralegh walked free. Here is how the authors sum up their case:

> The evidence for William Hall being Shakespeare is compelling, the evidence for Hall betraying the Bye plot is overwhelming, and that Ralegh was involved in the Bye Plot is beyond reasonable doubt [though why this is relevant is not clear - he did the time anyway]. After thirteen years Ralegh is released from prison. Within only a few weeks the man most likely to have caused his incarceration dies, seemingly from some form of poisoning. (196)

They embellish their picture of Shakespeare's final years with a bizarre and unfounded theory that 'the playwright' burnt his writing hand and suffered facial disfigurement in a desperate but unsuccessful attempt to rescue his original maniscripts from the Globe when it burnt down in 1613. Thus, in one fell swoop, they purport to explain his bad handwriting (which is not noticeably worse in the will than in the other three signed documents, incidentally); his low (actually non-existent) profile as a poet or theatrical identity in Stratford - he became depressed and reclusive because of his deformity and disability; the fact that there are no Shakespeare manuscripts (see Globe fire above); the lack of any authenticated contemporary portraits he destroyed them all (see depression and deformity); *and* Ben Jonson's lines about Droeshout's portrait 'out-doing the life' in his eulogy for the First Folio.

Clearly this is a book to be read with much more than a grain of salt But books, like the curate's egg, can be good in parts. If William Shakespeare really was a secret agent, this is important news not only for Stratfordians (who will now have to fit yet another activity into their candidate's already overcrowded ten years in the metropolis), but also for Oxfordians who have understandably tended to characterise Shakespeare as a person of no inherent interest, an uneducated buffoon who mooched around the London theatres for a few years, had a lucky break, then took the money and ran.

The Shakespeare that emerges from this book is a more unusual and interesting person than the Shakespeare of Looney and Ogburn, a risk-taking, self-motivated, self-promoting man of action ruthless, amoral and violent, more like Webster's Bosola than like any Shakespearean character I can think of (except perhaps Edmund). This may or may not be how others saw him. Clearly if Charlton Ogburn Jr. is right about 'William' in *As You Like It*, it is not quite how Oxford saw him; and Jonson's Sogliardo in *Every Man Out of His Humour*- generally accepted as a satiric caricature of the Stratford man in

at least the coat-of-arms scene (III, i) - projects a similar image of a pretentious but harmless bumpkin. (Has it been been noted before that Sogliardo's coat-of-arms features 'a boar without a head, rampant'? The boar, of course, was Edward De Vere's family emblem, and Sogliardo's modifications seem to express very well the probable relationship between Shakespeare and Oxford.) Oxford and Jonson both might have been deceived.

None of this makes him any more likely to have written the plays, and his interest for those who don't believe he did might seem to be limited by that. It was, after all, an age of intelligence agents and Machiavels, in the world as well as on the stage; in himself the man was hardly unique. But there are, I believe, some important implications for the Oxford authorship claim in the possibilities this book brings to light. One is that, besides the reasons that may have existed for ***divesting*** Oxford of his plays - those reasons of class and family propriety usually mentioned in this context - there may also have been secret political reasons for ***investing*** Shakespeare with them.

For reasons I have not fully fathomed, Cecil and the Walsinghams all seem to have liked using poets and playwrights as agents for their secret European forays. Perhaps it afforded a useful alibi for frequent travelling abroad - 'William Hall' seems to have travelled to at least the Netherlands, Denmark and Prague in the course of his secret service career. It would no doubt have been unusual for a man with little or no education to find a place in such an apparatus, but it is remarkable what an overbearing personality and large amounts of nerve can achieve. And perhaps it was precisely Will Shakespeare's loud promoting of himself as enough of an all-round theatre person ('an absolute *Johannes fac totum*') to pass muster in Europe that Henry Chettle reacted to so angrily in 1592 in his famous (and normally ***misattributed***) pamphlet *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*. Perhaps the 'upstart crow' had been selling himself not primarily as an actor, let alone as a true playwright, but as a serviceable simulacrum of both, able to acquit himself in more lucrative and adventurous spheres abroad.

The further implication for the Oxford claim has to do with the vexed question of why the false attribution remained secret or at the very least unannounced - after Oxford's death, and even reaffirmed (albeit equivocally in places) by the First Folio. Again, it is a matter of supplementing the 'Oxford-side' reasons which are usually offered, and which may well have their own validity: the embarrassment or resentment of those whose families may have been satirised in the 1580s, the snobbery of the Cecils, the merely unmentioned (rather than unmentionable) status of the secret. The 'Shakespeare-side' reasons for continued silence may well have been more important. What if, for example, the government felt it was important, for diplomatic and security reasons related to the activities of Shakespeare/Hall in the 1590s and early 1600s, to maintain the fiction of a commoner-playwright called Shakespeare

resident in London, but never actually available for interview or inspection?

Oxford's own connections with the secret service also remain to be thoroughly explored. His role in the propaganda department of the campaign against Spain has been powerfully argued by the B.M. Wards and Charlton Ogburn, and there is likely to have been some coordination with the government's security effort. Anthony Munday, the 'superspy' of the service, was after all Oxford's secretary for a time.

Some of this is rank speculation, admittedly, but speculation is justified if it opens up new paths for investigation, confirmation and disconfirmation. *The Shakespeare Conspiracy*, for all its faults - and they are legion - raises even more fascinating questions and possibilities than its authors realise.

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