

# A Further Reconsideration of Heywood's Allusion to Shakespeare

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In 1612 William Jaggard published a third edition of *The Passionate Pilgrime*, with a title page boasting that the motley collection was “By W. Shakespeare.” To the existing mix of Shakespearean and non-Shakespearean material (the second edition had appeared in 1599), Jaggard added nine poems from Thomas Heywood’s *Troia Britanica: Or, Great Britaines Troy* (London, 1609). The standard view of what happened next is summarized by F.T. Prince:

Heywood was indignant at this misuse of his poems, and also at the badness of the printing in *Troia Britanica* [published by Jaggard]; and he added to his *Apologie for Actors* (1612) an epistle to his new printer [Nicholas Okes], in which he spoke of his own irritation and also of Shakespeare’s resentment at what Jaggard had done. It seems likely that Shakespeare’s displeasure caused Jaggard to cancel the original title-page... and substitute one without Shakespeare’s name.<sup>1</sup>

In the second issue of *The Elizabethan Review* (1:2), Gerald Downs presented a new and provocative reading of Heywood’s epistle (“A Reconsideration of Heywood’s Allusion to Shakespeare”). He maintained that the address could be read as evidence that the actor “Shakspeare” and the unidentified writer using the pseudonym “Shakespeare” were distinct persons, the former exploiting the unexpected celebrity conferred on his name and gulling Jaggard into publication of *The Passionate Pilgrime*. Downs’ reading of the epistle is, however, heavily biased toward the conclusion he expects to reach, as I shall seek to show here. Downs is strongly critical of “orthodox accounts” (22) of the address (“anti-Stratfordians” can give as good as they get in terms of ill-considered criticism), but even if “little effort has been expended by academics” (19), the orthodox version can be shown to be fundamentally correct, I believe. Before offering the reader a second discursive journey through the confusing address, it seems appropriate to reprint it, followed by Downs’s paraphrase (33) of the problematic sentence:

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THE infinite faults escaped in my booke of *Britaines Troy*, by the negligence of the Printer [William Jaggard], as the misquotations, mistaking of sillables, misplacing halfe lines, coining of strāge and neuer heard of words. These being without number, when I would haue taken a particular account of the Errata, the Printer answered me, hee would not publish his owne disworkemanship, but rather let his owne fault lye vpon the necke of the Author: and being fearfull that others of his quality, had beene of the same nature, and condition, and finding you on the contrary, so carefull, and industrious, so serious and laborious to doe the Author all the rights of the presse, I could not choose but gratulate your honest indeavours with this short remembrance. Here likewise, I must necessarily insert a manifest injury done me in that worke, by taking the two Epistles of *Paris to Helen*, and *Helen to Paris*, and printing them in a lesse volume, vnder the name of another, which may put the world in opinion I might steale them from him; and hee to doe himselfe right, hath since published them in his owne name: but as I must acknowledge my lines not worthy his patronage, vnder whom he hath publisht them, so the Author I know much offended with M. *Jaggard* (that altogether vnknowne to him) presumed to make so bold with his name. These, and the like dishonesties I know you to bee cleere of; and I could wish but to bee the happy Author of so worthy a worke as I could willingly commit to your care and workmanship.

[Downs] Here I am compelled to report an open disservice done me respecting *Britaine's Troy*. Someone whom I shall not name took two of my poems from that book and printed them in a small volume that shall also remain unidentified. This unauthorized use of my poems may make people think I sold them to another after having previously sold them to Mr. Jaggard, who has since republished them in his own name to reassert his ownership. Further, I have something to say about the book in which Jaggard chose to reprint my poems. First, my lines do not deserve to be published in association with the name of William Shakespeare. Next, I find it offensive that the originator of this corrupt volume, William Shakspeare, took credit for the contents as if he were really the poet Shakespeare. Mr. Jaggard did not know better thirteen years ago, and it seems he still has not learned.

As Downs's analysis tends to veer increasingly away from scholarly objectivity, it is reasonable to start with his controversial reading of the statement, "the author I know much offended with M. *Jaggard* (that altogether vnknowne to him) presumed to make so bold with his name." Downs begins his account of this section with the pointless (not to say wrong) remark that this can be read as Heywood's saying, "I know the 'Author'" (30). As he suggests, William

Shakespeare (or Shakspere) of Stratford-on-Avon may well have been known to Heywood, but Heywood was not making that point here. Isolating clauses in this way, we can equally well amuse ourselves by having Heywood boasting, "I might steal them," or Downs congratulating himself "I believe the analysis" (33). This digression, in any case, complicates Downs's argument unnecessarily, for his main point is that while scholars he stigmatizes as "orthodox" have deduced the meaning "Jaggard offended the 'Author,'" we should read "the 'Author' offended Jaggard." We are therefore asked to accept that Heywood was maintaining, "I know the author *and* I know he offended Jaggard." This is just the sort of creative reading that Downs condemns in the orthodox scholars.

Taken independently, the clause does, of course, create some ambiguity as to who was offended. The context, however, is illuminating. The epistle is an attack on Jaggard's editorial practice, and it would seem odd that within its limited confines Heywood wished to portray Jaggard both offending and offended. He was attempting to demonstrate how authors can suffer under publishers/printers, not the reverse, and while it is easy to imagine a publisher "making bold" with an author's name, it takes some ingenious thinking to imagine the reverse. Ordinary sense dictates, then, that Heywood is maintaining that the "Author" had been offended by Jaggard, who "made bold" with the "Author"'s name. This is reinforced in the final sentence, when Heywood speaks of "*These* and the like dishonesties..." (my emphasis). Following Downs, Jaggard's only "dishonesty" is to let textual errors be ascribed to the author rather than himself. But "These" must indicate a plural: presumably also referring to Jaggard's "making bold" with the name of the "Author." It can be noted, in passing, how the postscript follows a pattern: it can be divided in two, each half voicing a complaint about Jaggard, this being followed by a contrast with Okes.

But who is signified by "the Author"? Shakespeare, maintains "orthodoxy"; "Shakspere," maintains Downs (following Alden Brookes [23]), both basing their judgments on the evidence of *The Passionate Pilgrime*. His evidence for this compiler being "Shakspere" is flimsy: a "hypothesis" (31) by Alden Brooks which obviously has no value at all as primary evidence; a brief exchange in a play "possibly in part by Heywood" (32) which makes no mention at all of "Shakspere"; two innocent lines of poetry which "may have no significance";<sup>2</sup> and the probably deliberate misunderstood idea that Heywood claimed to have been writing under "constraint."<sup>3</sup> None of these will-o'-the-wisps of evidence has any authority; they are held together simply by Downs's prior assumption that "Shakspere" and the writer commonly known as Shakespeare are distinct persons. It is on this assumption that Downs offers the creative paraphrase, "the author offended by having readers think Jaggard boldly used Shakespeare's

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name.” My objection to a reading that makes the “Author” the offending party has already been given, but other objections might here be raised. First, Nicholas Okes, Heywood’s addressee, is hardly likely to have made readers think that “Jaggard boldly used Shakespeare’s name,” so he is unlikely to have taken much satisfaction in being told that he was “cleere of” such faults. Secondly, the assumption is made, without any evidence, that William Jaggard was quite incredibly gullible.

It is, in fact, quite unproven that “Author” does mean “compiler,” or that it was this compiler that attached the name “W. Shakespeare” to his collection. The word “Author” can stretch to accommodate Downs’s sense, but it does not normally do so; it is simply Downs’s naive or politic reading that makes “the Author” equate to “the Author [of *The Passionate Pilgrim*].” *The Passionate Pilgrim* has no single “Author,” in the normal sense of that word, or course, but Heywood refers to “the Author,” not in terms of a particular work, rather as the possessor of the name Jaggard made “both with.” As I have suggested already, only prior assumptions about the identity of “Shakspere” can explain Downs’s detection of three protagonists—a writer using the pseudonym “Shakespeare,” the opportunist “Shakspere,” the gulled publisher Jaggard—in this odd drama.

Downs’s attempt to make the parenthetical “that” refer to “the author’s offence” is simply a sly reading, ignoring the fact that the demonstrative pronouns “this/that” are frequently used for the modern “who” in prose of this period. Earlier in the *Apology*, for example, Heywood writes:

*Aristotle* commends one *Theodoretus* to be the best Tragedian in his time. This in the presence of *Alexander* personated *Achilles*, which so delighted the Emperour, that hee bestowed on him a pension...

Downs’s interpretative logic would here make the “this” signify Aristotle’s commendation, which must be then interpreted as having “personated *Achilles*.” Such an obvious absurdity should make it clear that the demonstrative pronoun refers to Theodoretus; by extension it is apparent that the demonstrative pronoun in the passage under review can refer to Jaggard. This is, in fact, the more likely reading as Okes, as suggested above, is most unlikely to have committed “Shakspere”’s alleged “offense.”

With this last problem disposed of, there is in fact nothing wanting to confirm the orthodox interpretation, which effectively paraphrases the statement thus:

I know the author was much offended with Mr. Jaggard (who acted without his [i.e., the author’s] knowledge) having boldly presumed to use his [i.e., the author’s] name.

Downs’s comment about this statement being part of “the rhetorical figure *homoeosis*, signified by the form, ‘As..., so...’” (29), is certainly worth making;

less satisfactory is his application of it. (Downs, his interest taken up with the *homoeosis*, fails to realize the importance of the introductory “but,” although this is significant, as I shall try to show later.) The two elements of the *homoeosis* are logically connected by their being the reactions of two men to one event—namely the publication of the work of one under the name of the other. Downs’s contention that “the similitude must follow in logic and syntax” (29) is simply pedantic; his one example (“But as the watrie showres delay the raging wind,/So doeth good hope cleane put away dispaire out of my mind” [34]) does not support it, and his final paraphrase (34) produces two entirely distinct statements. In Euphuistic prose the device is used all the time, sometimes to introduce supporting imagery (as in Downs’s example), but often simply to balance ideas related in some way, including those in logical opposition (consider, for example, Robert Greene’s famous “as women are constant, so they are easy to beléeve [i.e., credulous]”), the one then tending to color the other. Heywood is stating, simply enough, that just as he must protest that his lines are “not worthy” of appearing “vnder” the name of the “author”—the context in which Jaggard had published them—so he knew the “author” had protested at his (the “author”’s) name being associated with these and other “not worthy” lines. Downs claims to have a problem with the phrase “worthy his patronage,” arguing that “the suggestion of a fellow-poet as a bestower of patronage seems strange” (29). Again, however, we catch him subtly altering Heywood’s sense. Heywood does not say that his “fellow actor-poet” was given to “bestowing patronage,” rather he implies that his own “lines” had been given the unwanted and unwarranted “patronage” of the “author”’s name: but not by the “author.” If any one is described as “a bestower of patronage,” it must be Jaggard.

As I have mentioned already, the “but” in this argument is important. To understand this we need to look again at the first part of the sentence:

Here likewise, I must necessarily insert a manifest iniury done me in that worke, by taking the two Epistles of *Paris* to *Helen*, and *Helen* to *Paris*, and printing them in a lesse volume, vnder the name of another, which may put the world in opinion I might steale them from him; and hee to doe himselfe right, hath since published them in his owne name...

Downs correctly considers “that worke” to refer back reflexively to the “booke of *Britaines Troy*,” discussed in the previous sentence. He paraphrases “in that worke” as “with reference to the... work”; this is not unjust, though “in respect of that work” probably captures Heywood’s sense better. Downs’s principal contention with regard to the next section is that the “lesse volume” was not *The Passionate Pilgrim* but a lost work to which *The Passionate Pilgrim* was a response. His argument is based on what he calls “a pronominal confusion”:

...Shakespeare must be the nominal author, *under whom* the poetry was

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printed. One is forced to equate the *he* who “hath publisth” and the *hee* of the earlier line—who “hath since published them in his owne name”—with William Jaggard, the subject of the postscript. In turn, Jaggard is identified as the *him* from whom the poems might be considered stolen. (28)

As Jaggard cannot have stolen from himself, Downs argues, another publisher must have stolen from him. To a certain point his argument is fine; there is certainly a “pronominal confusion” in the passage, though I disagree with the view that Heywood was being “obscure by design” (32). However, Downs willfully ignores the extent to which English sentence structures are often read according to their perceived sense, rather than according to any strict logic, and the licenses this allows the writer. Consider my previous quotation from the *Apology* (the passage on Alexander and Theodoretos). Who is signified by the pronoun “hee”? Alexander, we assume, largely because he is the only protagonist who is likely to have been in the habit of bestowing pensions. But what if the sentence was written thus?

This [Theodoretos] in the presence of *Alexander* personated *Achilles*, which so delighted the Emperour, that hee was given a pension...

Without being unduly troubled by the construction, we would naturally now read the pronoun as signifying Theodoretos, the only protagonist likely to have received a pension.

In fact Heywood does, like most prose writers of his period and many since, cause some confusion with his pronominal substitutions at times.. Take the following passage, again from the *Apology*, as an example:

Likewise, a learned Gentleman [John Harrington] in his *Apology* for Poetry, speakes thus: Tragedies well handled be a most worthy kinde of Poesie. Comedies make men see and shame at their faults, and proceeding further amongst other Vniuersity-playes, he remembers the Tragedy of *Richard* the third [Legge’s *Ricardus Tertius*], acted in Saint *Johns* in *Cambridge*, so essentially, that had the tyrant *Phalaris* beheld his bloody proceedings, it had mollified his heart, and made him relent at sight of his inhumane massacres.

Note that Harrington is not named; is this, too, evidence of “constraint”? Here three genitive pronouns “his”, with one accusative “him,” encumber the sense, which has to be deduced on a basis of elimination. Does the first refer to Harrington, Richard III, Legge, or Phalaris? What is certain is they do not all refer to one person, which exposes the danger of Downs’s sequential reasoning. Turning almost anywhere in Heywood’s prose we can find similar confusing strings of pronouns. In his list of “the diuers opinions of men, what [the] supreme deity should be,” attached to the front of *Gunaikeion: or Nine Bookes of Various History Concerninge Women* (London, 1624), for example,

occurs the following:

*Cleanthes Aßius* [of Assos] would have his god of the Firmament, as diuerse other of the Stoicks. And as *Arnobius* witnesseth of him, sometimes he called him the Will: now the Minde: then that part of the ayer which is aboue the fire: and sometimes again the Reason. (2)

(It is worth noting the very un-modern use of punctuation; Downs's insistence on reading Heywood's punctuation as though it must conform to modern standards is just one of his many mistakes.) Here we have "him... he... him." Obviously they do not all signify the same person. Our initial impression that Arnobius is being introduced as another authority on the "supreme deity" (signified by the first accusative pronoun), has to be corrected when we realize that the second accusative pronoun must signify the deity. The sentence is, of course, meaningless in an independent context.

Such examples could be multiplied without end in Heywood's prose, and other prose of the period. Here, however, one further example must suffice, again from *Tunaikeion*:

*Iuno* hauing in suspection *Semele* the daughter of *Cadmus* and *Hermione* to haue beene often prostituted by *Iupiter*, shee changed her selfe into the shape of her nource [i.e., nurse] *Beroe*, persuading her that shee should beg of him, That he would grace her so much as to lie with her in the same state and maiestie, with which he bedded *Iuno*; that as his power and potence was great aboue all, so her embracings and wantonings might be remarkeable aboue others; which he vnwillingly granting, and shee as vnfortunately obtaining, was the occasion that she with her pallace were both consumed in his fires and thunders. (5)

It is worth reflecting on just how much intellectual equipment the reader is expected to bring to this sentence, not only in terms of knowledge of the classical myths, but also in terms of narrative paradigms. When Heywood writes "her nource *Beroe*", whose nurse—Semele's or Juno's—do we assume him to be referring to? When he writes "persuading her," do we take this to be Beroe or Semele? When "grace her," Beroe, Semele or Juno ("with which he bedded" may imply "as he used to")? When "her embracings"—whose? Must we read this as referring to the "shee" that was to beg, and/or the "her" Jupiter was to "lie with"? The sentence could be construed in all sorts of ways, but the reader is expected to have sufficient knowledge of the way such stories work to avoid confusion. He or she has, in effect, to *predict* what the sentence is going to say in order to keep a firm footing on its slippery grammar.

The last point applies again with the sentence alluding to Shakespeare; we need to rely on context and expectation. And as with the sentence, "And as *Arnobius...*", we can rely on the previous sentence to orientate us in the

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grammar. It is true, as Downs maintains, that Heywood does not say *who* did him the “manifest injury” of printing his “two Epistles” in a “lesse volume,” but we know he is complaining to Okes about Jaggard’s treatment of “my booke of *Britaines Troy*,” and, no other name being mentioned, the natural inference is that Jaggard printed the “lesse volume,” and it was this that Heywood construed as “a manifest injury” to *Troia Britanica*. Had Heywood written “a manifest injury he did me,” the subject “he [Jaggard]” for this part of the sentence would have been made quite clear, but even as it stands it is implied. As we know that Jaggard published Heywood’s “two Epistles” in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, “vnder the name of another [W. Shakespeare]”, we may suppose that to be the work referred to, unless it is proven that there is another, more likely, contender.<sup>4</sup> This of course makes Shakespeare the “Author” referred to in the second half of the sentence. Heywood’s next statement, “which may put the world in opinion I might steale them from him,” can clearly be treated parenthetically. The sentence can be read without it, but the way in which Heywood felt himself injured is clarified. The crucial question is, naturally, who does “him” signify? Downs would have us believe that it was Jaggard. The principal problem with this is that, according to Downs, Jaggard has not yet been referred to in the sentence, while another subject has been introduced. Thus, he asks us to construe the sentence something like this:

I must mention an injury done *Britaines Troy* by a publisher who took poems from it and printed them in another volume, under somebody else’s name, thus making the world think I might have stolen them from him...

In this context it is remarkable that Downs, who makes much of “logic” when it suits him, should have found any logic in the accusative pronoun referring to neither the anonymous “publisher” nor the “somebody else.” This is not evidence for Heywood writing under “constraint” (indeed, why should he be unable to name the publisher?), simply of Downs’s politic reading. The accusative pronoun must signify one of these and, as I have shown, Jaggard must be the publisher. Downs himself correctly observes that, “it is impossible that a book published by Jaggard could be suspected of containing work stolen from himself” (28). The “him” thus attaches itself to “the name of another,” signifying, as it often does, the last person or name to be introduced in a discussion. As I have shown, this can be assumed to be Shakespeare as *The Passionate Pilgrim* fits all the facts. There is no need to create a myth of a lost publication by an unknwn publisher, as Downs does.

Heywood’s long sentence continues: “and hee to doe himself right, hath since published them in his owne name.” Who is signified by the “hee”? Obviously not the “him” whose “name” Heywood’s work had first been published “vnder,” but Jaggard, the principle subject of the entire “epistle”



the only other person referred to in the sentence. The “in his owne name” alludes to and counterpoises the “vnder the name of another.” Again Heywood’s claims are born out by what we know of *The Passionate Pilgrim*. Jaggard did indeed produce a second title-page that dropped the offensive “By W. Shakespeare” and simply featured his own name as publisher. In other words, Jaggard did rectify his fault, “but,” Heywood significantly continues, he and Shakespeare had still been annoyed at Jaggard’s original unethical practice. The “but” is thus central to the structure of the sentence, pointing out the limitations of Jaggard’s exculpatory conduct.

We can see now that Downs’s base position is the hypothesis that “Shakspere” collected the poems that form *The Passionate Pilgrim*. Arguing backward through Heywood’s sentence, he then has to create a second hypothesis, that of a lost book, to justify the first. Any argument thus framed between two mutually dependent hypotheses should naturally be treated with suspicion, especially when there is a counter-argument that is framed with tangible evidence. While it would be foolish to deny the strength of the case against the overall authorship claims advanced for Shakespeare/Shakspere of Stratford, leaving him to be otherwise accounted for, Downs’s article ought to show the dangers of making that an investigative assumption that actually distorts evidence. Indeed, his assumption does not stop there, but goes on to presume that the Stratford man was an opportunist and a charlatan. His is a theory that, adding little or nothing to the real cause of un-orthodox criticism, rather damages it by association.

Downs ended his account of the passage by offering a paraphrase of the difficult sentence. I here offer my own, leaving it to the impartial reader to decide which they think most accurately captures Heywood’s sense:

Here I must also mention another injury he [Jaggard] did me in respect of that work [*Britaines Troy*], by taking the epistles of *Paris to Helen* and *Helen to Paris* and publishing them in another volume [*The Passionate Pilgrime*], under somebody else’s name [“W. Shakespeare”], which may make readers think I had stolen them from him [Shakespeare]. He [Jaggard] has since attempted to redeem himself by publishing the volume containing my poems under his own name [“W. Iaggard”], nevertheless, just as I must protest that my poems are unworthy of appearing under a greater poet’s name, so that poet [Shakespeare] I know was angry with Mr. Jaggard (who acted without his [Shakespeare’s] knowledge) for having boldly published that unworthy volume [*The Passionate Pilgrim*] under his [Shakespeare’s] name.

Notes

1. *The Poems* (The Arden Shakespeare), 1960, xxii.
2. In the poem that Downs cites, Heywood applies the same formula to fourteen dramatists (e.g. “And famous *Jonson*, though his learned pen/Be dipt in Castaly, is still but *Ben*”); therefore, it is quite impossible to suppose that the lines on Shakespeare had any special “significance.” If Heywood wanted to draw attention to the statement—to make a special point—he would hardly have buried it in this way.
3. Downs’s evidence for Heywood’s being “not always free to speak openly” (32) is the last words in *Troia Britanica*:

Onely thus much let me speake in my owne behalfe: With Ages past I haue been too little acquainted, and with this age present, I dare not be too bold. (466)

By quoting this out of context, Downs unscrupulously gives the statement a sinister implication (knowing, of course, that few of his readers will be able to check the context). The statement is not an independent sentence, but part of a long sentence discussing whether *Troia Britanica* had been comprehensive enough. “Bold,” in context, simply means “ambitious.” Heywood’s reasoning is clear enough when we consider his introductory address “To the two-fold Readers: *the Courteous and the Criticke*”:

I am not so vnexperienced in the enuy of this Age, but that I knowe I shall encounter most sharpe and seuerer Censurers, such as continually carpe at other mens labours, and superficially perusing them, with a kind of negligence and skorne, quote them by the way, Thus: This is an Error, that was too much streacht, this too slightly neglected, heere many things might haue been added.

Heywood thus meant that he could not be “too bold” when it meant exposing himself to such “Censurers;” there is no parallel at all with his alleged lack of freedom to talk openly about “Shakespeare.”

4. Some critics have made heavy weather of the fact that Heywood does not mention his seven shorter poems included in *The Passionate Pilgrim*. As Downs correctly implies, however (27), they are irrelevant to Heywood’s case. The “two Epistles” Heywood mentions include a total of over 1,100 lines of poetry; the seven shorter poems include a total of just over 300 lines. The “two Epistles” alone thus comprise nearly 80% of the Heywood additions, they were the only Heywood poems Jaggard advertised on his title-page, and therefore they were quite enough for Heywood to make his point.