

and love of his poetry—a love that meant more to her than the “stigma of print”—that allowed her to crack if not topple the state-sponsored image of Sidney that had been erected at the time of his funeral so that he now resides among the English poets:

Leave me, O love which reachest but to dust,
And thou my mind, aspire to higher things.
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:
Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be;
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
O take fast hold; let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide
Who seeketh heaven and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world! thy uttermost I see:
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

The Thirty-Eighth Play

Shakespeare's Edward the Third: An Early Play Restored to the Canon

Ed. Eric Sams (Yale University Press, 1996)

Reviewed by Daniel L. Wright, Ph.D. Professor Wright is Chair of the English Department at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, and is the Director of the Edward de Vere Studies Conference.

Scholars have vigorously debated the question of *Edward the Third's* authorship at least since Edward Capell proposed the likelihood of Shakespearean authorship of the work in 1760. Recently, however, a consensus among scholars regarding the authorship seems to have emerged which suggests that, while *Edward the Third* probably is not entirely a product of Shakespeare's hand, it at least is substantially enough to be his to be considered canonical and worthy of inclusion among a body of thirty-seven (now thirty-eight) plays (inclusive of such enigmatic works as *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*—romances which have achieved Shakespearean attribution that, nonetheless, continue to be disputed as authentically or even pre-eminently Shakespearean by many readers of the Bard).

Eric Sams, editor of Yale University Press's new edition of *Edward the Third*, contends that Establishment Academia's recent, grudging concession of the bulk of *Edward the Third* to Shakespeare's hand is still reflective of a too timid, too conservative (and finally erroneous) judgement—one typical, though, he argues, of the “elitist attitudes of 1920s Oxbridge that still dominate orthodox scholarship world-wide.” It is Sams's conviction, contrary to orthodox opinion, that *Edward the Third* is less likely the consequence of a collaborative effort of playwrights than a work fully Shakespearean—its “deficiencies” attributable only to the probability that it is an early Shakespeare play. Specifically, as an immature composition, Sams argues, *Edward the Third* naturally lacks some qualities that typify the more mature, familiar and indisputably recognizable plays of the Bard. Sams submits that its occasional distinctiveness and marked differentiation from other works in the canon, therefore, are evidence not of deformity by collaboration (or worse—plagiarism—as some have contended); they rather more likely are simply stylistic anomalies reflective of Shakespeare's yet-unripened talent in the rendering of historical drama (an observation much in character with our common-sense recognition of the incontestable inferiority of Shakespeare's Yorkist Tetralogy when those works are contrasted with the more seasoned achievements of the Lancaster plays).

As one who has come increasingly to mistrust the uncritically preservationist and self-interested orthodoxy which cripples more than it enables in contemporary Shakespearean scholarship, I find Sams to be a refreshing voice in Academia and regard his edition of *Edward the Third* as a contribution to Shakespearean studies that should be enthusiastically welcomed. Sams's critical posture with respect to this text is representative of the best work among those inquisitive modern scholars who aren't gloomily resigned to sing continually the fading hymns of a dying chorus which, more often than not, seems passionately intent only on mustering energies to drown out any new voice that challenges the tired uniformity of its repetitious and stale melodies. His study of this play, unprecedented in the breadth of the information it provides us in a handsomely-compressed and well-ordered format, is an estimable addition, complement and successor to some of the newer studies that lately have been published in this area of critical scholarship.

Among the more significant investigations of *Edward the Third* to have appeared in recent months, prior to the release of Eric Sams's study, is Jonathan Hope's *The Authorship of Shakespeare's Plays: A Socio-Linguistic Study* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994). Hope contends that, based on his socio-linguistic analysis of this oft-neglected play, no determination to exclude *Edward the Third* from the Shakespearean canon can reasonably be justified any longer. He proposes, moreover, that despite the merits of other contenders for canonical status, *Edward the Third*, among all of the apocryphal works of Shakespeare, is “the best suited candidate... for inclusion in the canon” (154).

Richard Proudfoot's examination of *Edward the Third* (“*The Reign of*

King Edward the Third [1596] and Shakespeare”), a particularly thoughtful article published in the recently-released edition of *British Academy Shakespeare Lectures, 1989-90* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), is another study that echoes many of the arguments of both Sams and Hope in its robust contention for the canonicity of the play. As Proudfoot declares, “Investigation of the play’s language, particularly its exceptionally large vocabulary, and... those associative links described as ‘image clusters,’ is far on the way to demonstrating a kind and degree of connection between the early works of Shakespeare that amounts to a strong positive case for his authorship...” (162).

Familiarity with such commentary and the scholarship on which it is based is a vital constituent of any serious research that wishes to assist in determining the authorship of *Edward the Third*. One of the especially praiseworthy strengths, therefore, of Sams’s edition of this text is his provision of a comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography of published commentary on *Edward the Third* (including the aforementioned pieces) that directs the reader to such essential studies and recent criticism as fully valuable as Hope’s and Proudfoot’s (although Sams also includes a fine survey of the scholarship and popular commentary on the authorship of *Edward the Third* in a summary account of critical works prior to 1760).

In addition to these valuable critical components, Sams supplies the reader with a thoughtful synopsis of the play, extensive notation of the text of the play, a summary chapter of the case for Shakespearean authorship, and appendices that address important considerations in the debate about the authorship of two other significant Renaissance manuscripts, *Edmund Ironside* and *Sir Thomas More*—each of which has been promoted for elevation to canonical status by those who regard these works as fully Shakespearean or at least marginally indebted to Shakespeare for some of their inspiration and versification.

In his study, Sams does not give any indication that he is anything other than Stratfordian in his authorial assumptions (he is silent on the matter of who the author of *Edward the Third* may be, apart from his insistence that it most likely is “Shakespeare,” although inferences about “Shakespeare” that can be derived from his work suggest putative Stratfordian convictions). Regardless, his research should be embraced by Oxfordians because it significantly advances Shakespearean studies, and inasmuch as it does so, it contributes—however much it presently may seem only indirectly so—to the cause of conclusively demonstrating the Earl of Oxford’s authorship of the Shakespeare plays and poems.

In particular, *Edward the Third*’s dramatic illustration of those conflicts which are begot when private desires become entangled with the inexorable demands of public duty, depicts with astonishing intensity many of the more poignant anxieties that we know preoccupied and almost obsessively troubled the Earl of Oxford. To see in the play the artistic sublimation of so much that defines Oxford’s well-documented inward strife in these contentious

matters may suggest at least one route of endeavor for productive literary inquiry. Although, of course, profitable as such inquiry may prove to be, absent hard evidence, we remain mindful that interpretive constructs alone shall decisively establish but little that will secure a currency of decisive value in efforts to procure recognition of Edward de Vere's authorship of this and other works in the canon.

Love's Labor's Won

Love's Labor's Lost: Critical Essays
Ed. Felicia Hardison Londré
(Garland Publishing, 1997)

Reviewed by Gary Goldstein.

This handsomely produced hardcover of 476 pages assembles a brilliant selection of critical essays, theater reviews, poems and letters spanning four centuries and three continents. By so "merging" the contributions of the scholar, the critic and the theater professional, Professor Londré has provided generalists and specialists alike with that most rare of pleasures: a fully rounded perspective on one of Shakespeare's most misunderstood plays.

Contributors include two contemporaries of Shakespeare, Robert Tofte and Sir Walter Scope, classic essays by Samuel Johnson, von Schlegel, and Coleridge, Hazlitt and Pater, plus modern contributions from scholars, reviewers, directors and actors from Japan, France, England and the U.S.

In her introduction, Londré discusses the Shakespeare authorship question, presents the Oxfordian case, her position (that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford wrote the plays and poems under the pseudonym "Shakespeare"), and expresses the hope that, in the future, scholarly research will be conducted on both sides of the issue and within the Academy.

Shakespeare's Scribe

The Texts of Othello and Shakespearean Revision
by E.A.J. Honigman
(Routledge, 1996)

Professor Honigman offers us several explanations for several long-standing problems regarding *Othello* and the First Folio. He starts off by declaring that "Shakespeare (like other dramatists of the period)