

The Troublesome Raigne of John, King of England **Shakespeare's First Version of *King John***

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The anonymous history play *The Troublesome Raigne of John, King of England* occupies an ambiguous place in the limbo of extant Elizabethan plays whose authorship has not been determined. It has been ascribed to as many as eight different playwrights, as well as to William Shakespeare. There is no edition readily available, and nearly all the critical attention it has attracted has been as a source (and sometimes as an imitation) of Shakespeare's *King John*.

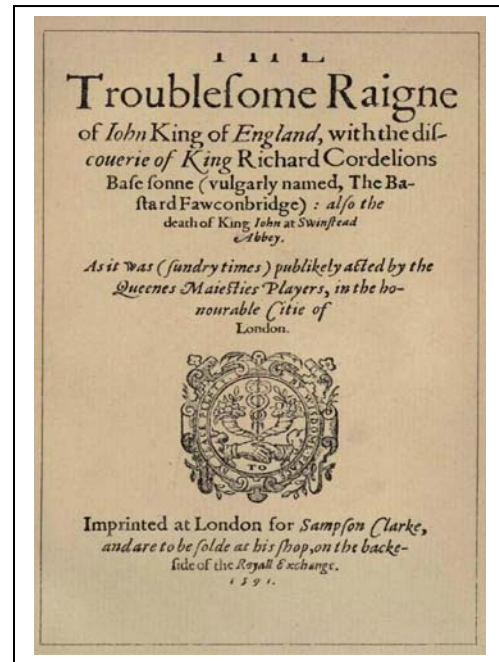
Beginning with the earliest commentators, both the play's authorship and its relationship to Shakespeare's *King John* have been in dispute. For several hundred years, most writers on the subject agreed that *Troublesome Raigne*, published in 1591, was the earlier play, that it was written by someone other than Shakespeare, and that Shakespeare used it as his sole or primary source for *King John*. Several recent studies have come to different conclusions about the play's date, authorship, and relationship to *King John*, but the prevailing opinion today has not changed.

This re-examination of the entire matter has produced substantial evidence that *Troublesome Raigne* was the earlier play, that Shakespeare wrote it himself at an early age, and that he rewrote it in his middle years as the *King John* that was published in the Folio of 1623. These conclusions are based on three categories of evidence—the striking similarity of *Troublesome Raigne* to Shakespeare's *King John*, the numerous parallels of all types between *Troublesome Raigne* and Shakespeare's acknowledged plays, and the substantial absence of such parallels from the works of other playwrights of the period. It appears that Shakespeare wrote *Troublesome Raigne* before any of his canonical history plays. It was thus the first of his plays to be printed. Moreover, this evidence suggests that with few exceptions the phrases, images, and ideas in *Troublesome Raigne* that are also found in the plays of Marlowe and Peele, as well as in later Shakespeare plays, originated in *Troublesome Raigne*.

Early Ascriptions to Shakespeare

The Troublesome Raigne of John, King of England was published anonymously in two parts in 1591 without an accompanying entry in the Stationers Register. On the title page is the name of the publisher, Sampson Clarke, and the sentence "As it was (sundry times) publickly acted by the Queenes Majesties Players, in the honourable Citie of London."¹ On the basis of the ornament on the title page of Part 1, W. W. Greg identified the printer as Thomas Orwin (I, 178).

A second quarto of *Troublesome Raigne* containing both parts was printed by Valentine



Simmes “for John Helme” in 1611. On the title page is the same reference to the “Queenes Majesties Players,” but the City of London is not mentioned. Also on the title page is the phrase “Written by W. Sh.” A third quarto containing both parts was printed by Augustine Matthews “for Thomas Dewe” in 1622, the same year in which printing began on Shakespeare’s First Folio. On that title page the play was described as “(sundry times) lately acted” and “Written by W. Shakespeare.”

Critics customarily dismiss the ascriptions to Shakespeare on the second and third quartos as fraudulent attempts to capitalize on the cachet of the Shakespeare name. But the evidence does not support this conjecture. The printers of these quartos, Simmes and Matthews, were each in business more than thirty years, and there is no record of accusations against them of piracy or false attributions. Shakespeare’s name did not appear on three of the six editions of four Shakespeare plays that Simmes printed.² After printing the third quarto of *Troublesome Raigne* in 1622, Augustine Matthews printed nothing by Shakespeare except the second edition of *Othello* in 1630, on which the author’s name appeared. None of the three publishers—Clarke, Helme, and Dewe—had any known connection with any Shakespeare play. As for the Shakespeare name, Edward White Sr., a bookseller in business since 1577, had three editions of *Titus Andronicus* printed in 1594, 1600, and 1611 to sell in his shop in St. Paul’s Churchyard. Neither Shakespeare’s name nor his initials appeared on any of them, even though by 1598 the play was known to be by him. The first three quartos of *Romeo and Juliet*, published in 1597, 1599, and 1609, appeared anonymously, even though Shakespeare was identified as its author in 1598.³ Thus, at the time of appearance of the second quarto of *Troublesome Raigne* (1611), publishers of known Shakespeare plays were still issuing them anonymously.

The 1598 identification of *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet* as Shakespeare plays was

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made by Francis Meres in *Palladis Tamia*, where he also included a “*King John*” in his list of six Shakespeare’s “tragedies.” Although there is no additional evidence, this has

generally been assumed to be a reference to the *King John* of the First Folio. It is noteworthy that the other three Shakespearean “tragedies” listed by Meres were all first published anonymously.⁴

Shakespeare’s *King John* was not published before it appeared in the First Folio in 1623. It was not included in the lengthy Stationers’ Register entry for the plays in the Folio, suggesting to E. K. Chambers that it was “regarded as commercially identical with its predecessor [*Troublesome Raigne*] (*Shakespeare* I, 365).”⁵ Aside from the title pages of *Troublesome Raigne* and a mention of *King John* in a list of plays performed at Court in 1669, there is no record of a performance of either play until 1737 (Nicoll, *Restoration* 315; Campbell and Quinn 424). In fact, it is quite likely that the play to which Meres referred in 1598 was *Troublesome Raigne*. The play was clearly a popular one—being performed by at least two different playing companies, and belonging to the small group of Elizabethan plays that were printed three times, the last nearly thirty years after the first. As Michael Egan demonstrated with persuasive bibliographic evidence, the Folio text of *King John* “was probably never performed during Shakespeare’s lifetime” (“*King John*” 170). Two early ascriptions of *Troublesome Raigne* to Shakespeare by Edward Archer in 1656 and Gerald Langbaine in 1691 may be of only historical interest because ascriptions of several other plays to Shakespeare by both critics were incorrect (Sider I-li).

Alexander Pope attributed the play to Shakespeare and William Rowley in 1723, but supplied little evidence (III, 115n.), and today’s scholars do not assign Rowley any part of it (Cerasano).

George Steevens included it in volume two of his edition of *Twenty of the Plays of Shakespeare* in 1760. In his foreword Steevens wrote that “the Author seems to have been so dissatisfied with this Play as to have written it almost entirely anew, reserving only a few of the Lines and the conduct of several Scenes” (II, 1). He is reported to have later changed his mind about Shakespeare’s authorship.

In 1779 Edward Capell claimed the entire play for Shakespeare, and the German critics J. Ludwick Tieck (1811) and Hermann Ulrici (1839) agreed with this attribution (Furness 448-9). However, nearly all other nineteenth century critics disparaged the play, and assigned nothing in it to Shakespeare. Nor has it been included in collections of Shakespearean apocrypha.⁶

As regards genre, style, and subject matter, *Troublesome Raigne* falls into the category of early history plays based mainly on chronicles about English kings written or translated in the Tudor period. These include Peele’s *Edward I* (1593), Marlowe’s *Edward II* (1593), Shakespeare’s *Edward III* (1595) and Henry VI plays, generally assigned to 1591-93, and several other anonymous plays of the early 1590s. In dramatizing the events of John’s seventeen-year reign, the author of *Troublesome Raigne* offered a full range of stagecraft typical of the early Elizabethan theater. In the words of John Munro: “. . . he gives us three battles, disputes of monarchs, a coronation, prophecies and marvels, a betrothal, humour in a friary, plots, rebellions, proclamations, the sufferings of the innocent, a death-scene, some bombast and satire, and much patriotic feeling” (Furnivall and Munro xxii). On the religious spectrum, the play is strongly Protestant and anti-Papal. In one scene, three friars and a nun are sent to the gallows for hiding their money; in another, the monk who has just poisoned King John is murdered on stage.

The style of *Troublesome Raigne* is largely end-stopped blank verse, with occasional passages of rhymed iambic couplets, as well as irregular lines of wooden prose. The poetry is uneven, but the language is vigorous, declamatory, and metaphorical. The author frequently employs simple rhetorical devices, such as stichomythia, antithesis, word play, and heavy alliteration. The play contains more than a dozen phrases and sentences in Latin, several of them quotations from Ovid or Horace.

Although *Troublesome Raigne* has been routinely reviled for its clumsy rhetoric and bombastic style, the plot structure and especially the characterization attracted notice because of their position in the development of the Elizabethan history play. Felix Schelling commented: “. . . in the personages of *Troublesome Raigne*, especially in the King and Faulconbridge . . . we have the earliest vital representation of an historical personage upon the English stage” (Furness 467).



King John of England

Order of the Plays

The first dissent from the traditional order of the plays was registered in the 1930s, when A. S. Cairncross, Peter Alexander, and others asserted that Shakespeare's *King John* preceded *Troublesome Raigne*, and that the similarities between the two plays were the result of the anonymous author's borrowing from *King John* (Cairncross, *Hamlet* 136-43; Alexander 85). Cairncross called *Troublesome Raigne* a "loose piracy" of *King John* on the grounds that it "contains a number of lines so exactly similar to lines in *King John*, and not derived in that form from any other known source, that one of the plays must have been indebted to the other" (*Hamlet* 137). He concluded that the author of *Troublesome Raigne* was the debtor because of his "indiscriminate borrowings not only from other plays of Shakespeare, but also from Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*, and from various other plays" (*Hamlet* 137).

In his 1936 Cambridge edition of *King John*, John Dover Wilson disagreed at length, describing the anonymous dramatist as the man who laid the ground for Shakespeare:

Indeed, his play possesses all the ingredients of historical drama except dramatic life. Nor did these ingredients consist of ill-assorted lumps of information got together by laborious pedantry. The stuff had been pre-digested for Shakespeare, fused in the crucible of an imagination of no mean order, though not of a high dramatic order (xxxix).

Besides the numerous parallels of thought and phrase between the plays, Wilson cited half-a-dozen instances where language, behavior, or detail in *King John* are unclear or contradictory except by reference to *Troublesome Raigne*. He also pointed out that if the author of *Troublesome Raigne* were the borrower he would have had to have obtained a prompt copy or some kind of transcript of *King John* in 1591 or earlier, since it did not appear in print until 1623. Other critics have cited several inappropriate, or even inexplicable, stage directions in the Folio *King John* that are identical or nearly so to those at the same places in *Troublesome Raigne* (Beaurline 206-7). Since these stage directions are perfectly appropriate in *Troublesome Raigne*, this strongly suggests that in writing *King John* Shakespeare worked from a printed copy of *Troublesome Raigne*, routinely copied the stage directions into his revision, and then failed to correct them in several cases after he had altered the scene. Furthermore, no editor or critic, except those who argue its precedence to *Troublesome Raigne*, assigns *King John* to such an early date, virtually at the beginning of Shakespeare's career—a redating that would require a major revision of the chronology of the early plays in the canon.

As regards the idea that *Troublesome Raigne* was based upon Shakespeare's *King John*, Wilson asked:

why [would] the author, having apparently ample material at his disposal, should have completely stripped the play of all its poetry and taken the trouble to dress it up in fustian verse of his own; should have reconstructed the whole in the light of an independent reading of the chronicles, so that he produced a text which followed them far more closely than Shakespeare himself had done; and should have gone out of his way not only to infuse the play with a strong anti-Catholic bias but also to substitute a harassed, if erring, martyr-king for Shakespeare's sinister John; and all this in order to prepare copy for a publisher, who could not have given him more than a few shillings for his pains! (xxxii).

In his Arden edition of 1954, and in several later publications, E. A. J. Honigmann reiterated the theory of the precedence of *King John* and suggested that *Troublesome Raigne* was a “bad quarto”—a hasty and thoughtless reproduction of *King John* (*King John* liv-lviii, 174-5). Despite the external evidence of its priority, and its obvious inferiority to Shakespeare’s play, he maintained that both plays were written in the 1590-91 period, and that *King John* was written first. A good portion of his argument was devoted to demonstrating that Shakespeare did not use *Troublesome Raigne* as a source, but depended directly on Holinshed’s *Chronicles*, as well as on Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* and histories by Matthew Paris and Ralph Coggeshall. But showing that Shakespeare could have obtained all the historical details he used in *King John* from sources other than *Troublesome Raigne* does not go far toward showing that his play was the earlier one.

To support his charge of piracy, Honigmann suggested that the Queen’s Men, losing ground to other companies after the death of their star comedian Richard Tarleton in 1588, resorted to copying and rewriting Shakespeare plays, such as *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Richard III*, in the early 1590s, and did the same with *King John* (lv-lvi). But all three of these piracy allegations suffer from the same disability—no text of the three Shakespeare plays existed, so far as we know, in the early 1590s. Even though it is conceivable that this was done, the piracy theory, especially as it relates to these plays, is very far from proven, and is a decidedly minority view.

In support of an early date for *King John*, Honigmann also noted more than a dozen historical details in the play that he considered to have parallels with events and circumstances in Elizabeth’s reign prior to 1591 (xxix). Many of these are questionable but, what is more important, they all appear in *Troublesome Raigne*. Thus, they are useless to show the priority of *King John*.

The best explanation for what Hemings and Condell did is that they knew that Troublesome Raigne was Shakespeare’s first version of King John, and that the printing of the play had, in effect, already been authorized.

Two reviewers of Honigmann’s Arden edition, T. A. Parrott and Alice Walker, disagreed with him about the precedence of *King John*. Parrott wrote that “there are few better examples of his skill [Shakespeare’s] as an adaptor than the transformation of the crude Faulconbridge matter of *T. R.* into the amusing and entertaining passages in *King John*” (299). Parrott also observed that if *Troublesome Raigne* were a bad quarto of Shakespeare’s play, “we would expect to find many of his lines and phrases reproduced, badly perhaps, in *T. R.*—compare the treatment of the suicide soliloquy in the ‘bad quarto’ of *Hamlet*,—but none such has been detected” (302).

Robert A. Law echoed this argument in a 1957 article on the date of *King John*. Citing half-a-dozen particularly felicitous passages in *King John*, he compared them to the corresponding passages in *Troublesome Raigne*, and found Shakespeare’s versions far superior. “Personally, I cannot conceive of any playwright’s crossing out” the Shakespearean passage “and substituting the bald language of [*Troublesome Raigne*]” (122). Law also rejected Honigmann’s claim that the Queens Men pirated *King John*, and added that if *King John* were written and performed in 1591 or earlier, “. . . we are forced to conclude that the Queen’s Players in 1591 ventured to duplicate in its characters, its setting, and practically its entire action a play that had just been given by a competing company” (120).

In 1964 Peter Alexander repeated his claim that *King John* preceded *Troublesome Raigne* and identified the latter as an “imitation.” There was “no known author,” he wrote, who was capable of constructing “a series of scenes so skillfully devised that Shakespeare had only to take over his arrangement with little alteration” (168). He also noted that “Heminge and Condell treated the

publication of *The Troublesome Raigne* as authorizing the printing of *King John*, a claim which could hardly have been maintained had *The Troublesome Raigne* been an original play by an author other than Shakespeare” (171). But as Eric Sams and others have pointed out, the best explanation for what Hemings and Condell did is that they knew that *Troublesome Raigne* was Shakespeare’s first version of *King John*, and that the printing of the play had, in effect, already been authorized.

In his Penguin edition of 1974, R. A. Smallwood wrote:

If *King John* is the earlier play, one must therefore imagine the author of *The Troublesome Raigne* as a man capable of remembering, with meticulous care, the details of a plot from scene to scene throughout an entire play; capable also of getting by heart one or two lines and pieces of information of a rather precise kind; and with the ability, finally, to forget the whole of the rest of Shakespeare’s language (368).

Summing up the case for the priority of *Troublesome Raigne*, Marco Mincoff wrote that it was “a fairly simple matter” to derive *King John* from the anonymous play, but “the converse process would be a nerve-wracking work of reshuffling, mostly for no obvious purpose . . .” (52). He described Honigmann’s arguments for Shakespeare’s precedence as no more than a “plea” that they were no worse than those for the anonymous author.

These and other supporters of the precedence of *King John* appear to base their position on the improbability that there was any Elizabethan playwright capable of writing *Troublesome Raigne* from scratch, so to speak, in 1591. Peter Alexander complained, “Yet we are asked to regard the author of *The Troublesome Raigne* as capable of giving Shakespeare a lesson almost in his own specialty” (168). There being no such a man known to us, a pirate, copyist, or imitator is proposed. Although a few continue to hold to the notion that *Troublesome Raigne* was the later play, most modern critics and editors agree that it not only preceded *King John*, but was Shakespeare’s primary source.

Twentieth Century Assessments of *Troublesome Raigne*

In 1911 the critic and poet W. J. Courthope asserted that Shakespeare was the author of *Troublesome Raigne*, and compared his rewriting of it as *King John* to his rewriting of *The Whole Contention* and *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York* as the final two parts of the *Henry VI* trilogy. He observed that in all three instances Shakespeare employed “almost precisely the same process of reconstruction” and “kept all the characters and the entire framework of the action.”

But while he imitated the leading dramatists of the day, the writer of *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* gave evidence of striking genius. In the energy and dignity of the State debates, the life of the incidents, the variety and contrast of the characters, and the power of conceiving the onward movement of a great historical action, there is a quality of dramatic workmanship exhibited in the play quite above the genius of Peele, Greene, or even Marlowe. It is noteworthy also that the representation of mental conflict is a marked feature in *The Troublesome Raigne* (IV, 463-6).

Even though he cited passages in it that he considered to be imitations of their style, Courthope’s overall assessment was that the play was “knit together in a manner far superior to any historic play of Marlowe, Greene, or Peele” and that it contained “more of the elements of

greatness than any historic play which had yet been produced on the English stage” (IV, 366). J. D. Wilson commented that the author of *Troublesome Reign* may be “an insipid versifier and an uninspired journeyman playwright, but he knew how to distil the most excellent dramatic material from the chronicles in which he was soaked” (*King John* xxxix).

In his influential 1944 study of Shakespeare’s history plays, E. M. W. Tillyard wrote that he did not think that *Troublesome Raigne* could be considered “an authentic, consistent, and self-supporting composition,” and that its “masterly construction is quite at odds with the heterogeneous execution.” He suggested that it might be a bad quarto of an even older play about King John, one also by Shakespeare (247-8).

Many other modern critics have remarked on the playwright’s success in drawing together unrelated incidents throughout John’s reign into a reasonably cogent story about a self-doubting ruler whose ineptness led ultimately to his banal murder. “Considerable skill as a plotter is shown by the playwright who wrote *T.R.*” was the comment by John Elson in his 1948 study of the play’s sources. He added that “Another feat of the dramatist’s creative power is his depiction of the Bastard’s magnetic personality” (185). While noting the mediocre verse of *Troublesome Raigne*, J. L. Simmons called it “in many ways remarkable; of the known contemporary dramatists, only Shakespeare and Marlowe show the structural powers for handling such sprawling events from the chronicles” (54). Irving Ribner wrote that “There is certainly no extant play earlier than *Tamburlaine* which handles history as skillfully and maturely as it is handled in *The Troublesome Reign*” and described it as “a heroic play which draws its hero from actual history and treats him with serious historical purpose” (77).

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Despite his successful marshalling of multiple characters and events, the author of *Troublesome Raigne* left us abundant evidence that he was a beginning dramatist. One early critic observed, “We may pronounce them [the two parts of *Troublesome Raigne*] as his first undisputed excursions into the regions of drama; and, as such, they are but a feeble performance, sprinkl’d with some quotations from classics, and, in the comedy part, with some monkish Latin” (Capell I, pt. 1, 115). The nineteenth century critic J. A. Symonds described *Troublesome Raigne* as “a dull specimen of solid play-carpentry in the earliest and crudest age of blank-verse composition” (299). Other critics have noted the play’s rhetorical outbursts and heavy-handed argument. Geoffrey Bullough cited “lengthy Senecan threats,” “turgid soliloquizing,” and “long didactic passages” (IV, 11, 12, 21). Other commentators mentioned pedestrian meter, bombast and brag patriotism, purple patches, and artificial sentiment (Furnivall and Munro xl). Honigmann noted the play’s “extraordinary mish-mash of styles” and the fact that “the verse collapses six separate times into prose in the first scene alone” (*Impact* 133). In her analysis of forty-one “suspect texts” connected with Shakespeare, Laurie Maguire listed numerous instances in *Troublesome Raigne* of missing, inconsistent, or incorrect stage directions and speech prefixes (314-16).

But even Honigmann, who decried the author as a shameless imitator, praised *Troublesome Raigne* as “a beautifully plotted play in its analysis of complex political maneuvers and its dramatic control. . .” (“Self-Repetition,” 53). Yet he and most modern scholars find *Troublesome Raigne*, whether they think it preceded or followed *King John*, to be too poorly executed and too awkwardly written to be even an early Shakespeare play. Those who have an author in mind

propose Marlowe, Drayton, Kyd, Thomas Lodge, William Rowley, Robert Greene, Anthony Munday, or George Peele. Ascriptions of the entirety of *Troublesome Raigne* to Shakespeare have been made by Ephraim Everitt and Eric Sams, whose findings are incorporated into this analysis.⁷ But “unknown” is the only word the majority of critics can find for this scholarly and patriotic dramatist, whose poetry tended to polemic and bombast.

Evidence for Shakespeare’s Authorship

In the present context, the most noticeable thing about *Troublesome Raigne* is its remarkable similarity to Shakespeare’s *King John*. Both plays tell the same story in the same sequence of events, with only minor variations. The same characters appear in both plays, except that Shakespeare added a single inconsequential character, James Gurney, and removed ten or so minor ones. Shakespeare’s play contains the same scenes in the same order as *Troublesome Raigne*, except that he has deleted three and shortened several others. The plot adheres to the typical dynamic of almost all of Shakespeare’s history plays—a feud within England’s extended royal family combined with a rebellion against the king. The time period of both plays encompasses the entire reign of King John (1199-1216).

The long first scene in both plays exemplifies the comparable liberties that each playwright took with the historical record and how each introduced the same fictional material. In both plays, King John, accompanied by the identical four characters—his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and the Earls of Pembroke, Essex, and Salisbury, greets the French ambassador, Chatillion, at the English court. John has just been crowned, following the death of his brother, Richard I. The French support the competing claim to the English throne of John’s young nephew, Arthur of Brittany, who has come under the protection of the French King Philip II. In both plays John refuses the French demand that he yield the throne to Arthur. In *Troublesome Raigne* Chatillion replies:

I doo defie thee as an Enemy,
And wish thee to prepare for bloodie warres TR I.i.47-8⁸

In *King John* he replies:

Then take my King’s defiance from my mouth,
The farthest limit of my embassy. *King John* 1.1.21-2⁹

In both plays this unhistorical scene is interrupted by the Sheriff of Northamptonshire, who brings before the King a personal dispute that he is unable to resolve. Robert Falconbridge, son of a recently-deceased knight of the same name, claims that it is he, and not his older brother Philip, who should inherit his father’s lands and title. He declares that Philip, though born of the same mother, was actually fathered by King Richard I while Sir Robert was away on a diplomatic mission to Germany. After first disputing this charge of bastardy, Philip asserts that he *is* King Richard’s son, and relinquishes to Robert his father’s inheritance. In both plays Philip’s mother, Lady Falconbridge, at first vigorously denies the liaison with Richard, but finally admits it. King John observes that Philip resembles King Richard, pronounces him Richard’s son, and knights him on the spot, renaming him Sir Richard Plantagenet.

In *King John* Shakespeare handles the scene in a slightly different way, but the presentation of the situation and the interaction of the characters are identical. Both plays depart from the historical chronicles, which record that King John met directly with the French King Philip in Nor-

mandy, and that the Queen mother was elsewhere at the time (Warren 51-3). Nor is there any record of the Falconbridge family and the dispute between the brothers. There is mention in several chronicles that King Richard had a bastard son named Philip who avenged his father's death by killing the Viscount of Limoges, occupant of the castle Richard was besieging when he was killed. But his paternity was apparently never in question, and he had nothing to do with John's court or his campaign in France.¹⁰

In both plays the fictional Philip the Bastard becomes King John's right-hand man and plays essentially the same role throughout, even to the final scene, which ends with his patriotic speech containing the nearly-identical lines about the need for England to remain united:

If Englands Peeres and people joyne in one,
Nor Pope, nor Fraunce, nor Spaine can doo them wrong. 2 TR 1195-6

Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true. *King John* 5.vii..116-18

As one recent editor wrote, “. . . the plays match so closely in the selection of characters, the sequence of events, and the management of scenes that they cannot have been written independently. Sometimes they parallel not just scene for scene but (substantially) speech for speech” (Beaurline 195). This close similarity of structure and plot is all the more significant because neither play adheres to the historical order of events and both attach results to historical events that did not cause them. Geoffrey Bullough pointed out the most drastic of these rearrangements: “. . . the plays make Arthur's death (in 1203) the immediate cause of the nobles' rebellion (1216) and both occur just before John surrenders his crown (1213)” (IV, 10).

Further departures in both plays from the historical record occur in the descriptions and behavior of several characters. For instance, Hubert de Burgh was a high official under Richard I and became Justiciar of England late in John's reign, but in both plays he is presented as a person of much lower rank. Both playwrights conflate several Papal representatives during John's reign into the single character, Pandulph, who describes himself as a “Cardinal of Milan.” But the historical Pandulph was not a Cardinal of Milan nor a Cardinal at all, as both plays have him, but a Vatican lawyer and only one of several Papal legates who visited John. Similarly, both playwrights attach the title of Leopold V, first Archduke of Austria (1157-1194), to a different person—Vidomar, Viscount of Limoges (d. 1200), and thus conveniently consolidate (as Limoges, Duke of Austria) two enemies of Richard I, and allow his bastard son Philip to avenge his death by killing them both at once.

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At least a dozen additional unhistorical characterizations and incidents have been inserted into *Troublesome Raigne* by its author, and carried over into *King John* by Shakespeare.¹¹ These additions to, and rearrangements of, the historical record were obviously undertaken by the anonymous playwright to create a logical story line, to improve the play's dramatic interest, and to support the motivation of its characters. Shakespeare's ready use of them suggests that he created them himself, and had no compunction about retaining them in his revision.

Further inaccurate or invented names and details throughout *Troublesome Raigne* are repeated in Shakespeare's play: the use of the title "Dauphin" ("Dolphin" in *Troublesome Raigne*) for the French King's son, a title that came into use only in the mid-fourteenth century; the confusion of the town of Poitiers with the province of Poitou; John's creation of Arthur as Earl of Richmond, an act that never took place; the anachronistic reference to cannons, which did not come into use for another one hundred years; and the suggestion by a "Citizen" of Angiers (modern Angers) that the two Kings' differences could be settled by a marriage between Louis, the French King Philip's son and Blanche of Castile, King John's niece. Although this marriage actually took place, both plays present it, unhistorically, as the arrangement that ended the simultaneous siege of "Angiers" by King John and King Philip.

Nearly all commentators have found numerous instances of phrasing and vocabulary in *Troublesome Raigne* that are repeated or echoed in *King John*. In his text of the anonymous play, Bullough found over ninety in Part One alone, and another thirty-five in Part Two. E. K. Chambers wrote that "in some 150 places [in *King John*] a few words from *T.R.* are picked up and used" (*Shakespeare* I, 367). Many of these borrowings are distinctive or unusual words and phrases, such as Constance's use of the word *perjured* to describe King John, King Philip's claim that Englishmen have greeted him with shouts of *Vive le roy*, and Blanche's complaint that her wedding will be marred by warfare—*dreadful drums* in *Troublesome Raigne*, *churlish drums* in *King John*.

Most of the verbal parallels, however, are ordinary words and phrases, such as Arthur's reference in both plays to his *soul* passing into *heaven* at his coming death, and the references in both plays to the *tide* at the *Lincoln Washes* that has destroyed John's ships. These similarities suggest that the words and ideas were not consciously appropriated, but were the natural expression and use of words by the same writer.

Shakespeare's Modifications

Similarly, Shakespeare's modifications of the plot and characters' motivations are consistent with the scenario of a mature playwright revising an earlier play of his own making. As R. L. Smallwood observed, ". . . Shakespeare seems to have worked more closely with this play than with any other source he used . . ." (155). One type of modification that Shakespeare made was to compress his original play and give it a more concrete form. He reduced the period of the play's action from ten days, with intervals, in *Troublesome Raigne* to seven days, with intervals, in *King John* (Furnivall and Munro, App. II, 162ff). He also reduced the number of dramatic incidents, and shortened the play by about three hundred lines. Besides pruning the cast list, he reduced the speaking parts from forty-odd to twenty-five.

One particular character deletion is noteworthy. In *Troublesome Raigne*, Geoffrey Fitzpeter, Earl of Essex, appears as one of the nobles who are close to John, but then revolt against him after the death of Arthur, only to join him again near the end of his life. He is in the first group of characters on stage and appears in four additional scenes, speaking a total of over 120 lines. When John leaves England to fight in France, he places Essex in charge of the kingdom. Later in the play, Essex is the spokesman for the three nobles who discover the dead Arthur, and the first to call for John's deposition. But in *King John*, Shakespeare excised him nearly entirely, giving him a mere three lines in the first scene, and dividing his role thereafter between the Earls of Pembroke and Salisbury. No other character of his importance has been deleted. This specific and deliberate revision may have been Shakespeare's response, political or personal, to the controversial Robert Devereux, the second Earl of Essex (second creation) during the mid-1590s, when *King John* is thought to have been written. Although the various Earls of Pembroke and Salisbury

appeared in several other Shakespeare histories, no Earl of Essex has a part or is even mentioned in any other Shakespeare play.

Of the several scenes and episodes that Shakespeare deleted, three are caustic anti-Catholic depictions of the clergy. In the first, Philip the Bastard ransacks a monastery where friars and nuns are revealed to be sexually promiscuous liars and fools. Besides being crude and offensive, this scene is radically different from all others in the play in its satirical Skeltonic lines, akin to doggerel, nearly all rhymed, and many including forced rhymes. Another deleted scene contains a discussion between two monks about poisoning King John, and a third dramatizes his actual poisoning by a monk at Swinstead Abbey. Another deletion is the long discussion at St. Edmonds Bury among a group of English nobles conspiring to unseat John and place the French Dauphin on the throne of England. In *King John* Shakespeare alludes to all these events, but does not dramatize them.

Some further revisions and excisions made by Shakespeare:

- In the first scene, Lady Falconbridge is not present when both her sons accuse her of infidelity, as she is in *Troublesome Raigne*.
- An entire incident is deleted in which Philip the Bastard chases Limoges, the Duke of Austria, takes King Richard's lion skin from him, and then delivers a bombastic speech.
- The role of Peter the Prophet is reduced from thirty-four to a single line, and the description of his miracles is deleted.
- The ceremony of the second coronation and the appearance of the five moons, which are dramatized in *Troublesome Raigne*, are only briefly reported in *King John*.

In another category of revision are Shakespeare's slightly different view of the characters, and the depth and dimension he adds to them:

- Shakespeare's John is more decisive; he is less confused and less bombastic. But his character is less sympathetic and more ambiguous. His right to the crown is less clear.
- Pandulph's role is expanded. He is less aggressive and abrupt, but more treacherous, and his machinations are subtler and more effective.
- The role of Arthur's mother Constance is expanded, and she is transformed from a single-minded scold into an articulate, even eloquent, figure of much sympathy.
- Philip the Bastard is less peevish and confrontational, and more given to humor. He becomes a nobler figure and a more substantial character. His patriotism is more mature.
- Although Shakespeare retained the basic dynamic of the Hubert/Arthur confrontation, he converts Arthur from, in Bullough's words, "a moralizing young man" to "a small boy crying out in his innocence" (IV, 15). Arthur's plea to Hubert, his would-be assassin, is no longer legalistic and theological, as it is in *Troublesome Raigne*, but simple and eloquent, based on human compassion. Similarly, Hubert responds out of compassion rather than his fear of damnation.

As is evident, none of these revisions adds or deletes a major character; nor does it change any character's fundamental nature. Some motivations are modified, but the characters relate to each other in the same way. Certain dramatic details are deleted, and the few that are added tend to expand and sharpen the characters' roles. This detailed and comprehensive revision suggests that

in writing *King John*, Shakespeare worked from a copy of *Troublesome Raigne*—rewriting the dialogue as he deleted and rearranged scenes, speeches, and dramatic details.

However, some of Shakespeare’s revisions cause confusion rather than add clarity. Braunmuller remarked that “The narrative organization of *The Troublesome Reign* is arguably clearer, certainly simpler, than *King John* . . .” (9). Bullough pointed out that numerous passages in *King John* “become clearer by reference to *The Raigne*—e.g. the reasons for the second coronation, the nobles’ pilgrimage to St. Edmundsbury, the reasons for, and the method of, John’s poisoning” (IV, 22). This is one of Shakespeare’s chief omissions in *King John*. In the penultimate scene, after the French supply fleet has been lost at sea and the English barons have returned to John, Hubert suddenly announces that John has been poisoned by a monk. There has been no preparation or reason given for this incident. J. D. Wilson observed, “In *The Troublesome Reign*, on the other hand, the poisoning . . . occurs as the natural outcome of that harrying of the monasteries which is so prominent a feature of the old play, but which Shakespeare almost entirely suppressed” (*King John* xxi-xxii).

Another blunder in Shakespeare’s play is the confusion about what King John wants Hubert to do with Arthur, whose claim to the throne is a decided threat to him. In III.iii John plainly indicates he wants him dead, but two scenes later Hubert confronts Arthur with hot irons and a warrant, presumably from the King, to burn out his eyes. This discrepancy is never mentioned, explained, or accounted for. But the issue is made clear in *Troublesome Raigne*, where John admits

Shakespeare not only treated Troublesome Raigne exactly as if it was his own intellectual property to exploit as he pleased, but also shared idiosyncratic features and expressions with its author. —Eric Sams

that it is too dangerous to kill Arthur. Hubert’s subsequent appearance with the warrant to blind Arthur, rather than kill him, is John’s concession to po-

litical reality, but one that effectively ends Arthur’s threat.

Other matters left unexplained in Shakespeare’s play, but fully accounted for in *Troublesome Raigne*, are the Bastard’s hostility to the Duke of Austria (he thought he had killed his father, Richard I) and his annoyance at the betrothal of Blanche to the Dauphin (he thought that he would marry her himself).¹² Honigmann calls these lapses “inconsistencies” and cites similar ones in other Shakespeare plays, and in *Troublesome Raigne* itself, to support his view that *King John* preceded *Troublesome Raigne*. But the hypothesis that best explains the motivations and explanations that were omitted from *King John* is that they were already in the play as Shakespeare originally conceived it, and in his wholesale rewriting of the entire dialogue, he neglected to include them. In the words of Samuel Johnson, “The omission of this incident, in the second draught, was natural. Shakespeare, having familiarised the story to his own imagination, forgot that it was obscure to his audience” (Bronson 150). This confusion worked in both directions: Beaurline remarked that both plays “contain their share of inconsistencies and puzzling contradictions that are clearer in the other” (195).

In his analysis of the garbled speech headings in both *Troublesome Raigne* and *King John*, J. D. Wilson pointed out that in the Folio text of II.i in *King John* Shakespeare twice mistakenly identified the French King as “Lewis” (errors corrected by later editors). Wilson surmised that Shakespeare was revising a scene in *Troublesome Raigne* from memory or from a manuscript, rather than the printed copy, which identified the King correctly as Philip (*King John* xlv-xlv). Although Wilson did not draw the conclusion, this possible access to a manuscript carries an implication that Shakespeare possessed it because he wrote it.

Eric Sams commented, “Shakespeare . . . not only treated *Troublesome Raigne* exactly as if it was his own intellectual property to exploit as he pleased, but also shared idiosyncratic features and expressions with its author” (“*Troublesome Wrangle*” 43). Indeed, as some critics have observed, Shakespeare’s re-use of the characters and plot of his old play seems to have caused him to write a poorer play than if he had started afresh.¹³ Robert A. Law pointed to important structural differences between Shakespeare’s early history plays and *King John*, suggesting that the play suffered because of its reliance on *Troublesome Raigne*. For instance, the opening scenes of *1 Henry VI*, *Richard III*, *Richard II*, and *1 Henry IV* clearly establish the dominant theme of the play and present the conflicts that will inform the plot. But in the first scene of *King John*, after less than fifty lines that introduce the theme and plot of the play, the action shifts abruptly to the issue of the Bastard’s paternity, where it remains until the end of the scene more than two hundred lines later. This dispute within the Falconbridge family has no bearing on subsequent events and is irrelevant to the play, except as it vaguely reflects the question of John’s legitimacy as king.

Another difference between Shakespeare’s early history plays and *King John* is the scope of events that the author attempts to depict. In his early history plays Shakespeare compressed the action so as to focus on only one or two years in the king’s reign, thus simplifying the story and maintaining a unity of

action and motivation. But in *King John* he attempted to encompass the whole of John’s seventeen-year reign from his accession to his death, with the result

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that the play’s dominant theme is, if not obscured, open to varying interpretations. *Troublesome Raigne* suffers from the same fault—a loose, episodic structure encompassing the entire reign that weakens the play and muddies its message. This feature of *Troublesome Raigne* marks a difference in compositional technique from Shakespeare’s other early history plays—a difference probably due to its place in the earliest stratum of his dramatic work. It is obvious that his ability to select and compress the events of an entire reign improved over the years, and the best explanation for his departure in *King John* from his usual custom is that in rewriting the story of John he took over the existing structure of *Troublesome Raigne*, just as he took over its characters.

Plagiarism or Revision?

To deny that Shakespeare wrote *Troublesome Raigne* is to accuse him of a blatant act of plagiarism, a practice that was severely condemned by Tudor and Jacobean authors. He is well-known for using other men’s plots, usually classical or foreign authors, but in no case did he appropriate the precise plot and structure, as well as all the characters, from another writer’s play. Moreover, no contemporary of Shakespeare, except possibly Robert Greene, ever accused him of plagiarism, not even the alleged author of *Troublesome Raigne*.

For many decades until the mid-1980s, the prevailing view was that once Shakespeare “brought a play to a finished state, he did no more to it” (Wells 309). But in recent years scholars have accepted the fact that Shakespeare was a persistent and meticulous reviser of his own work, especially his history plays. In her study *Revising Shakespeare*, Grace Ioppolo noted that “Shakespeare’s revising hand, exercised over a period of several years, appears clearly and brilliantly in the English history plays . . .” (124). There is patent evidence of revision in all the plays of the two

tetralogies, which Ioppolo describes as “substantial, painstaking . . . practiced some years after composition . . .” (130).

Although there is as yet no example in the accepted canon of the wholesale revision that Shakespeare undertook in turning *Troublesome Raigne* into *King John*, the two versions of *King Lear* and of *Hamlet* provide further instances of major revisions. The revised *King Lear* that appeared in the Folio is nearly three hundred lines shorter than the quarto version, and contains hundreds of changes of words, phrases, speech headings, stage directions, punctuation, etc. Because these revisions affect characterization, structure, thematic emphasis, and to a lesser extent, plot, most scholars agree that they are authorial and not made merely to shorten the play. Of the three texts of *Hamlet*, only two are considered complete, and they differ from each other in the same ways as do the two texts of *King Lear*.

Also weighing against the charge of plagiarism is the body of evidence linking Shakespeare to the Queen’s Men, the company that is named on the 1591 and 1611 quartos as having performed *Troublesome Raigne*. There is no record of Shakespeare’s association with any theatrical company before 1594, but there is a record of the Queen’s Men visiting Stratford several times before 1592. This has led several scholars to speculate that he was associated with the company before he took up with the Chamberlain’s Men in 1594 (Pollard 13-21; McMillin and Maclean 160-1).

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But the internal evidence for this association—from the Queen’s Men’s plays themselves—is much stronger. Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean have shown that of

the nine plays that can be confirmed as belonging to the Queen’s Men’s repertory, four, including *Troublesome Raigne*, have Shakespearean counterparts, that is, plays in the Shakespeare canon that resemble them in terms of plot, characters, and verbal details. Thus, the Queen’s Men’s repertory is “the largest theatrical source of Shakespeare’s plots . . .”¹⁴ This suggests that Shakespeare’s use of *Troublesome Raigne* as a source was not a theft, but part of a pattern he had established with the company.

The relationship of *Troublesome Raigne* and *King John* to the historical sources also supports the view that Shakespeare first wrote the former, and then the latter. It is well known that Shakespeare customarily studied several relevant chronicles before writing a history play. This was precisely the method employed by the author of *Troublesome Raigne*, who took some trouble to consult several chronicles and other prose works, such as Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* (1563). But it appears that Shakespeare, contrary his usual practice, wrote *King John* without recourse to any historical chronicle, and relied exclusively or nearly so on the research done by the author of *Troublesome Raigne*. Aside from a minor detail or two, all the historical material in *King John* can be found in *Troublesome Raigne*.¹⁵ This is further evidence that Shakespeare considered *Troublesome Raigne* and his research for it his own property.

Lastly, of the thirty-seven quarto editions of Shakespeare’s plays issued during his lifetime, twelve bear on their title pages such words as “Newly corrected,” “Newly augmented,” “amended,” or “enlarged,” and on ten of them the reviser is identified as William Shakespeare.

Similarities between *Troublesome Raigne* and other works of Shakespeare

Words and Phrases

Editors and critics have also found numerous parallels of vocabulary and phrasing between

Troublesome Raigne and canonical Shakespeare plays. Almost invariably they charge the anonymous author with the borrowing, even though *Troublesome Raigne* was printed before anything by Shakespeare, and its crude style and simple dramaturgy seem to antedate the entire canon.

As part of his argument that the play as a “loose piracy” of *King John*, A. S. Cairncross called attention to this passage in *Troublesome Raigne* in which the Bastard reports the flight of John’s army from the French (Cairncross’s emphasis):

Another moane *to make the measure full*.
 The bravest bowman had not yet sent forth
 Two arrowes from the quiver at his side,
 But that a rumor went throughout our Campe,
 That John was fled, the King had left the field.
 At last the rumor scald these eares of mine,
 Who rather chose as sacrifice for Mars,
 Than ignominious *scandall by retyre*.
 I cheered the troups as did the Prince of Troy
 His weery followers gainst the Mirmidons,
 Crying alowde, *St. George, the day is ours*.
 But *feare* had *captivated* courage quite,
 And like the Lamb before the greedie Wolfe,
 So heartlesse *fled* our warmen from the feeld.
Short tale to make, my selfe amongst the rest,
 Was faine to flie before the eager foe.
 By this time night had shadowed all the earth,
 With sable curteines of the blackest hue,
 And fenst us from the fury of the French,
 As Io from the jealous Junos eye,
 When in the morning our troupes did *gather head*...

2 TR 811-31

Citing the following lines from II.i of *3 Henry VI*, Cairncross claimed that the passage from *Troublesome Raigne* “echoes unmistakably the similar account related by Warwick of the defeat of St. Alban’s” (*Hamlet* 138-9):

And now, to add *more measure* to your woes,
 I come to tell you things sith then befall’n

3 Henry VI II.i.105-6

Short tale to make, we at Saint Albons met,

120

Or more than common *fear* of Clifford’s rigor
 Who thunders to his *captives* blood and death,

126-7¹⁶

So that we *fled*: the King unto the Queen;

137

For in the marches here we heard you were,
Making another head to fight again.

140-1

‘Twas odds, belike, when valiant Warwick fled:
 Oft have I heard his praises in pursuit,
 But ne’er till now *his scandal of retire*

148-50

Then strike up drums. God and *Saint George for us!* 204

Cairncross identified another line from *Troublesome Raigne*:

Are marching hetherward in good aray 2 TR 643

as a borrowing from 2 *Henry VI*:

Is marching hitherward in proud array IV.ix.27

The similarity of words and phrases in these passages is clear enough, and Cairncross concluded that they had been copied from the *Henry VI* plays by the author of *Troublesome Raigne*. However, these particular words, phrases, and ideas (and several others from the same passage) were clearly part of Shakespeare's linguistic stock, and he used them all repeatedly in every period of his career.

As regards the first phrase in the passage (not noted by Cairncross), Shakespeare frequently juxtaposed the words *moan* and *make*:

Now come I to my sister; mark the *moan* she *makes*. *Two Gentlemen of Verona* II.iii.29-30

Nor do I now *make moan* to be abridged *The Merchant of Venice* I.i.126

He also used *full* to modify *measure*:

Carouse *full measure* to her maidenhead *The Taming of the Shrew* III.ii.225

the wedding, mannerly-modest, as a *measure*, *full* of
state and ancientry; *Much Ado About Nothing* II.i.76-7

The juxtaposition of *rumour* and *ear* (not noted by Cairncross) is also common in Shakespeare:

That pitiful *rumour* may report my flight,
To console thine *ear*. Come, night; end, day! *All's Well That Ends Well* III.ii.127-8

That fill his *ears* with such dissentious *rumours*. *Richard III* I.iii.46

So also is the use of *retire* as a noun, accompanied by a pejorative noun or adjective:

Our trumpets sound dishonor and *retire* *Edward III* IV.vii.14

we are come off
Like Romans, neither foolish in our stands
Nor cowardly in *retire*: believe me, sirs, *Coriolanus* I.vi.1-3

Shakespeare twice mentioned the Prince of Troy (Hector) in connection with Achilles' Myrmidons in *Troilus and Cressida*:

Together with his mangled *Myrmidons*,
That noseless, handless, hack'd and chipp'd, come to him,
Crying on *Hector*. V.v.33-5

On, *Myrmidons*, and cry you all amain,
 “Achilles hath the mighty *Hector* slain!” V.viii.13-14

At least half-a-dozen of Shakespeare’s characters (Edward IV, John Talbot, Richard III, Richard II, Henry V, and Petruchio) invoked St. George in one form or another, usually at the start of a battle.

In *Hamlet* Polonius uses the same formulaic expression that appeared in *Troublesome Raigne*:

And he, repulsed—a *short tale to make*—
 Fell into a sadness, then into a fast, II.ii.146-7

The words and imagery in this couplet in *Troublesome Raigne*:

By this time *night* had *shadowed* all the *earth*,
 With *sable curteines* of the *blackest* hue, 2 TR 827-8

are replicated in both *Hamlet* and *Lucrece*:

‘The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose *sable arms*,
Black as his purpose, did the *night* resemble *Hamlet* 2.ii.452-3

Till *sable Night*, mother of dread and fear, Upon the *world*
 dim *darkness* doth display, *Lucrece* 117-18

Shakespeare referred to the goddess Juno more than twenty times throughout his plays, several times in connection with her jealousy and anger over Jove’s attentions to Io:

You made great *Juno* angry. *Cymbeline* III.iv.165

In anger, *Juno*-like. Come, come, come. *Coriolanus* IV.ii.53

He also used the phrase *gather head* in the same way as did the author of *Troublesome Raigne*:

The Goths have *gathered head*, and with a power
 Of high-resolved men, bent to the spoil. *Titus Andronicus* IV.iv.63-4

Although Shakespeare never repeated the precise phrase *marching hitherward in proud array* after using it in *2 Henry VI*, he used its constituent phrases again in one of his last plays:

The British pow’rs are *marching hitherward*. *King Lear* IV.iv.21

set not thy sweet heart
 On *proud array*. *King Lear* III.iv.82-3

Thus, every word and phrase claimed by Cairncross to have been copied from *2* and *3 Henry VI*, and several additional ones, was used in the same way and in the same context by Shakespeare in later plays. Either the unknown author of *Troublesome Raigne* anticipated these dozen

phrases and ideas that Shakespeare used throughout his career, or that author was Shakespeare, and they were early formulations of his own that he retained in his vocabulary.

In his 1939 edition of *King Richard II*, J. D. Wilson noted several passages of “fatuous lines” and “jog-trot” couplets in Act V that to him represented “the very bankruptcy of rhyme-tagging” (lxx-lxxi). He also identified “fossil rhymes” in passages in Acts I and III. These anomalies suggested to him that portions of the play had been originally written in couplets, and that Shakespeare’s *Richard II* was his adaptation of an older, crudely-written play by an anonymous playwright. He then observed that “couplets of an exactly similar stamp” could be found throughout *Troublesome Raigne*. Quoting an exchange between Hubert and Arthur containing ten rhymed couplets, he noted its “clumsy manoeuvring for rhyme” and its “frequent sacrifice of sense and clarity to metrical considerations” (*King Richard II* lxxiii). To explain these similarities, he suggested that a single author, a “learned historian, but a very indifferent poet,” wrote both *Troublesome Raigne* and the original *Richard II*.

In a 1940 article, William Wells asserted that Thomas Kyd was the author of *Edward III* and “with slight reservations” of *Troublesome Raigne* (218-24). One reason he gave for rejecting Robert Greene’s and George Peele’s authorship of either play was that “Neither author paid serious attention to the verities of history” (218). On the other hand, “the author (or authors) of ‘Edward III’ and the ‘Troublesome Raigne’ treated the facts of history with more respect. If strict accuracy was not always held in mind, nothing unhistorical in either play flouted probability or the laws of nature.”¹⁷ Wells also found words and phrases in *Troublesome Raigne* that are echoed in Shakespeare’s plays:

I trouble now the fountaine of thy youth, And make it moodie with my doles discourse	<i>1 TR</i> 899-900
A woman mov’d is like a fountain troubled, Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty;	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> V.ii.142-3
I beg some instance whence I am extraught.	<i>1 TR</i> 341
And when thou knowest from whence thou art extraught,	<i>1 TR</i> 394
Sham’st thou not, knowing whence thou art extraught,	<i>3 Henry VI</i> , II.ii.142
. . . yet wil I abide all wrongs, before I once open my mouth to unrippe the shamefull slaunder of my parents,	<i>1 TR</i> 86-8
Unrip’st the bowels of thy sov’ reign’s son.	<i>Richard III</i> I.iv.207
Arthur, although thou troublest Englands peace,	<i>1 TR</i> 849
On thee, the troubler of the poor world’s peace!	<i>Richard III</i> I.iii.220
Set downe, set downe the load not worth your pain,	<i>2 TR</i> 787
Set down, set down your honourable load,	<i>Richard III</i> I.ii.1

In his 1961 Arden edition of *Titus Andronicus*, J. C. Maxwell quoted the following lines from *Troublesome Raigne*:

How, what, when, and where, have I bestowd a day
That tended not to some notorious ill? 2 TR 1060-1

He remarked that this passage “can hardly be independent of Aaron’s speech” (xxi):

Even now I curse the day—and yet, I think,
Few come within the compass of my curse,
Wherein I did not some notorious ill: *Titus Andronicus* V.i.125-7

He also noticed a connection between the following passages, spoken over the bodies of Arthur in *Troublesome Raigne* and Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, respectively:

But who is this? lo, Lords, the withered flowre,
Who in his life shinde like the Mornings blush,
Cast out a doore, denide his buriall right,
A pray for birds and beasts to gorge upon 2 TR 33-6

No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weed,
No mournful bell shall ring her burial,
But throw her forth to beasts and birds to prey *Titus Andronicus* V.iii.196-8

Another parallel with *Titus Andronicus*:

Me thinks the Devill whispers in mine eares 2 TR 1049

Some devil whisper curses in my ear *Titus Andronicus* V.iii.11

In his 1964 Arden edition of *3 Henry VI* (137), A. S. Cairncross found additional words and phrases in it that were similar to those in *Troublesome Raigne*:

The impartiall tyde deadly and inexorable,
Came raging in with billowes threatning death,
And swallowed up the most of all our men 2 TR 833-6

The sun that sear’d the wings of my sweet boy,
Thy brother Edward; and thyself the sea
Whose envious gulf did swallow up his life. *3 Henry VI* V.vi.23-5

Despite these obvious parallels, and other indications of his authorship, none of these four editors—Cairncross, Wilson, Wells, and Maxwell—was willing to accept the idea that *Troublesome Raigne* was the work of Shakespeare.

There are numerous further examples of distinctive words and phrases in *Troublesome Raigne* that reappear in the Shakespeare canon. While writing a scene in *2 Henry VI* in which Duke Humphrey rebukes his wife Eleanor, Shakespeare seems to have recalled language from *Troublesome Raigne* that Constance and Queen Eleanor used against each other. After she is captured by the French, Queen Eleanor rages at Constance:

Contemptuous dame unreverent Dutches thou, 1 TR 1063

In the scene in 2 *Henry VI*, Duke Humphrey and his wife are alone on stage:

Nay, Eleanor, then must I chide outright.
Presumptuous dame, ill-nurtur'd Eleanor,

2 *Henry VI* I.ii.41-2

In *Troublesome Raigne*, Constance accuses Eleanor of blocking her son's claim to the throne:

theres the grieffe, confusion catch the braine,
That hammers shifts to stop a Princes raigne.

1 *TR* 540-1

Duke Humphrey uses similar imagery to chide his wife:

And wilt thou still be hammering treachery,
To tumble down thy husband and thyself

2 *Henry VI* I.ii.47-8

In both quotations the verb *hammer* is used in the same sense: "to devise or contrive."

One passage in particular from the second scene of *Troublesome Raigne* yields several words that are found in similar association with each other later in the Shakespeare canon:

What words are these? how doo my sinews shake?
My Fathers foe clad in my Fathers spoyle,
A thousand *furies* kindle with *revendge*,
This hart that *choller* keepes a consistorie,
Searing my *inwards* with a brand of hate:
How doth *Alecto* whisper in mine eares?
Delay not Philip, kill the *villaine* straight,
Disrobe him of the matchles moniment,
Thy Fathers triumph ore the Savages.
Base heardgroom, coward, *peasant*, worse than a threshing *slave*,
What makst thou with the Trophie of a King?
Shamst thou not coystrell, loathsome *dunghill* swad,
To grace thy carkasse with an ornament
Too precious for a Monarch's coverture?

1 *TR* 556-69

Alexander, God knows, and you know, in his rages,
and his *furies*, and his wraths, and his *cholers* . . .

Henry V IV.vii.34-5

Wrath-kindled gentlemen, be rul'd by me,
Let's purge this *choler* without letting blood

Richard II I.i.152-3

But partly led to diet my *revenge*
For that I suspect the lusty Moor
Hath leap'd into my seat; the thought whereof
Doth (like a poisonous mineral) gnaw my *inwards*;

Othello II.i. 294-7

Rouse up *revenge* from ebon den with fell *Alecto*'s snake

2 *Henry IV* V.v.37

Base *dunghill villain* and mechanical

2 *Henry VI* I.iii.193

O, what a rogue and *peasant slave* am I!

Hamlet II.ii.550

Shall *dunhill* curs confront the Helicons?
 And shall good news be baffled?
 Then Pistol, lay thy head in *Furies'* lap.

2 *Henry IV* V.iii.104-6

This catalog of parallels of words and phrases between *Troublesome Raigne* and plays in the subsequent Shakespeare canon, especially the early history plays, does not exhaust the examples. But it amply demonstrates that Shakespeare and the author of *Troublesome Raigne* used many of the same words and phrases to convey similar ideas, often in an identical context.

Imagery

The types of images used by a writer have long been recognized as keys to his particular experiences, thoughts, and circumstances. Generally speaking, the patterns of an author's use of particular images remain with him throughout his life, and are thus useful in determining authorship. Shakespeare's use of imagery—pre-eminent among Elizabethan dramatists—has been the subject of numerous investigations. In her comprehensive study of Shakespeare's imagery, Caroline Spurgeon counted the images in each of the Folio plays, plus *Pericles*—arriving at an average of about 180. The lowest number was sixty (*Comedy of Errors*) and the highest 340 (*Troilus and Cressida*). Among the early history plays (*1, 2, and 3 Henry VI, Richard II, Richard III*), the average was about two hundred (361-2). As regards frequency, *Troublesome Raigne*, with well over two hundred images, fits easily into this group.

Spurgeon identified the most prevalent images in the Shakespeare canon as coming from “nature (especially the weather, plants and gardening), animals (especially birds), and what we may call everyday and domestic, the body in health and sickness, indoor life, fire, light, food and cooking . . .” (13, 43, 112ff). The imagery in *Troublesome Raigne* is in large part identical:

- Images from the weather and the seasons—about twenty.
- Imagery from plants and gardening—about fifteen.
- Images using animals and birds—about thirty.
- Imagery from the body and bodily functions—more than 110.
- Images from domestic and indoor life—about thirty. There are only a few of food and cooking.

Spurgeon also mentioned Shakespeare's preference for images of the sun, stars, and planets moving in their spheres (21). *Troublesome Raigne* contains about a dozen images of this type, and an equal number referring to “heaven” or “heavens.”

Among Shakespeare's five early history plays, Spurgeon noted many images expressing the idea of the nobility, especially the royal house, as a tree or plant, often one that suffers untimely cropping or cutting (216-22). Most of the plant and tree imagery in *Troublesome Raigne* reflects the identical idea—with the words *root, plant, flower, crop, stock, branch*, etc. repeatedly used in reference to the extended royal family. Among the images in King John's last lines is this prediction that a descendant will successfully defy the Pope (as did Henry VIII in the 1530s):

From out these loynes shall spring a Kingly branch
 Whose armes shall reach unto the gates of Rome,
 And with his feete treade downe the Strumpets pride,

That sits upon the chaire of Babylon.

2 TR 1084-7

In *3 Henry VI*, Gloucester evokes the same image of King Edward in the same language:

Ay, Edward will use women honourably.
 Would he were wasted, marrow, bones, and all,
 That from his loins no hopeful branch may spring,
 To cross me from the golden time I look for!

III.ii.124-7

On the other hand, Spurgeon noted that in the imagery of the twelve dramatists she examined, she could find “not a trace of love or care for the plant, so characteristic of [Shakespeare].” Of first-hand gardening knowledge and observation, she could “find practically no sign . . .”¹⁸

The image of a cold wind or other malevolent force that “nips” a person’s life or well-being is expressed twice in *Troublesome Raigne*:

This bitter winde must nip some bodies spring
 Only two crosses of contrary change

1 TR 487

Do nip my heart, and vexe me with unrest.

2 TR 934-5

This image is found several times in the Shakespeare canon:

These tidings nip me, and I hang the head
 As flowers with frost, or grass beat down with storms.

Titus Andronicus IV.iv.70-1

If frosts and fasts, hard lodging and thin weeds
 Nip not the gaudy blossoms of your love

Love’s Labour’s Lost V.ii.801-2

The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
 And when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
 His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,

Henry VIII III.ii.355-7

Although this was a well-known proverbial sentiment, Spurgeon remarked, “. . . I do not find in all my search of other dramatists, any single image of frosts and sharp winds nipping buds, which is so common with Shakespeare” (91).

E. K. Chambers also observed Shakespeare’s “numerous similes and metaphors from natural history and country life,” especially in the early plays and narrative poems (*Shakespeare* I, 287). He added that he did not find this same characteristic in the other dramatists of the time—Marlowe, Kyd, Peele, Greene, Lodge, Nashe, and Drayton.

In his study of Shakespeare’s imagery, W. H. Clemen noted that a main feature of Shakespeare’s early style was “amplification,” and “the endeavour to weave into the tissue of the play at every opportunity some sort of decorative device” (41). This tendency to amplify and decorate is obvious throughout *Troublesome Raigne*, especially in the author’s use of classical images:

This Madame, this, hath drove me from myselfe:
 And here by heavens eternall lampes I sweare,
 As cursed Nero with his mother did,
 So I with you, if you resolve me not.

1 TR 368-71

O John, these troubles tyre thy wearyed soule,
 And like to Luna in a sad Eclipse,
 So are thy thoughts and passions for this newes 2 TR 336-8

The reaction of Essex to the death of Arthur is another example:

If waterfloods could fetch his life againe,
 My eyes should conduit foorth a sea of teares,
 If sobbs would helpe, or sorrowes serve the turne,
 My heart should volie out deepe piercing plaints.
 But bootless were't to breathe as many sighes
 As might eclipse the brightest Sommers sunne, 2 TR 40-5

In another passage, the playwright decorates and amplifies a patriotic speech by the dying Frenchman Melun, who has come over to the English side. Melun exhorts the rebellious English barons not to be taken in by the French King's promises:

Lift up your swords, turne face against the French,
 Expell the yoke thats framed for your necks.
 Back warmen, back, imbowell not the clyme,
 Your seate, your nurse, your birthdayes breathing place,
 That bred you, beares you, brought you up in armes.
 Ah! be not so ingrate to digge your Mothers grave,
 Preserve your lambes and beate away the Wolfe. 2 TR 756-62

Bullough drew attention to a corresponding passage in *King John* in which Philip the Bastard admonishes the same barons, whom he calls "revolts," with similar words:

And you degenerate, you ingrate revolts,
 You bloody Neroes, ripping up the womb
 Of your dear mother England, blush for shame; *King John* 5.2.151-3

Clemen also observed that "in the presence of death Shakespeare's characters always use metaphorical language" (43). This is certainly true in all three of the scenes in *Troublesome Raigne* where a character is faced with death or serious injury. When Hubert comes to put out Arthur's eyes at the behest of King John, Arthur remonstrates with him using metaphors of hell and damnation:

Ah Hubert, makes he thee his instrument
 To sound the tromp that causeth hell triumph? 1 TR 1373-4

This seale, the warrant of the bodies blisse,
 Ensureth Satan chieftaine of thy soule 1 TR 1381-2

In his dying speech to the English barons, Lord Melun invokes the Romans' god of war and goddess of the earth to metaphorically describe his wounds and his coming death:

Behold these scarres, the dole of bloudie Mars
 Are harbingers from natures common foe,

Cyting this trunke to Tellus prison house?

2 TR 726-8

As he succumbs to poison, King John unleashes the grandly jumbled image of the destruction of the Church (already quoted above):

From out these loynes shall spring a Kingly braunch
Whose armes shall reach unto the gates of Rome,
And with his feete treade downe the Strumpets pride,
That sits upon the chaire of Babylon

2 TR 1084-7

The absence of certain types of images from the Shakespeare canon is not without significance. Spurgeon noted the paucity of images from “town life and scenes—taverns, shops, streets, marts, pageants and crowds.” Literary references other than classical or Biblical are also comparatively infrequent (45). The absence of this same range of images from town life and scenes is apparent in *Troublesome Raigne*. Moreover, all but one of the two dozen literary references in the play are to classical or Biblical personages, and all but two (Mors and Morpheus) are repeated in later Shakespeare plays. All the saints mentioned in *Troublesome Raigne* are also mentioned in later Shakespeare plays.

As to the literary sources to which Shakespeare turned for his images, references, and quotations from classical mythology, it is well known that the overwhelming majority of them are from the works of Ovid, and nearly all the remainder from Virgil (Root 3). The author of *Troublesome Raigne* was similarly inclined: of the twenty such allusions and quotations, all but one (Luna) appear in the works of Ovid or Virgil.

This accumulation of parallel imagery between *Troublesome Raigne* and Shakespeare plays that were printed after it is further evidence that he and Shakespeare were the same person, and that in this early play he used many of the images he would return to throughout his life.

Ideas and Conceits

Closely related to imagery are the ideas and conceits that a dramatist employs to illustrate and animate his dialogue. Here again, many of those found several times in the Shakespeare canon appeared first in *Troublesome Raigne*. One such idea is the bold face-to-face defiance of a king. In the first scene of *Troublesome Raigne*, after the French King Philip challenges him to a “set battle,” King John replies:

I accept the challenge, and turne the defiance to thy
throate. ITR 654

Shakespeare returned to this idea in three early history plays:

Arm, gentlemen, to arms! For I have thrown
A brave defiance in King Henry's teeth

1 Henry IV V.ii.41-2

Yea, for my sake, even to the eyes of Richard
Gave him defiance.

2 Henry IV III.i.64-5

In *Edward III*, the Duke of Lorraine and Edward, the Black Prince, address each other in the same way:

Lorraine : Then, Edward, here, in spite of all thy Lords,

I do pronounce defiance to thy face.
Prince: Defiance, Frenchman! we rebound it back
 Even to the bottom of thy master's throat, *Edward III* I.i.87-90

Later in the play, the Black Prince's message to the French King is the same:

Return him my defiance in his face *Edward III* IV.iv.86

The idea of the blood of the wounded or the dead spilling into a personified earth, found in Greek and Roman tragedy, as well as in Genesis, appears in *Troublesome Raigne*. Constance uses it to complain about a wedding that has ended a war that might have brought her son Arthur to the throne:

Is all the bloud yspilt on either part,
 Closing the cranies of the thirstie earth,
 Growne to a lovegame and a Bridall feast? *I TR* 890-2

Shakespeare was sufficiently drawn to the idea to elaborate on it in several subsequent plays:

Thy brother's blood the thirsty earth hath drunk, *3 Henry VI* II.iii.15

Then let the earth be drunken with our blood! *3 Henry VI* II.iii.23

Let my tears staunch the earth's dry appetite,
 My sons' sweet blood will make it shame and blush *Titus Andronicus* III.i.14-15

O earth! which this blood drink'st, revenge his death! *Richard III* I.ii.63

No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
 Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood, *I Henry IV* I.i.5-6

The figurative use of the contrast between *shadow* and *substance* is one of Shakespeare's favorite formulations. In *Troublesome Raigne*, Constance used the two words to contrast her son Arthur's legitimate claim to the throne with John's illegal possession:

Arthur my Sonne, heire to thy elder Brother,
 Without ambiguous shadow of discent,
 Is Sovereigne to the substance thou withholdst *I TR* 512-14

Of the more than a dozen instances of this idea in the Shakespeare canon, two occur in early plays:

Alas, poor man, grief has so wrought on him,
 He takes false shadows for true substances *Titus Andronicus* III.ii.79-80

Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows,
 Which shows like grief itself, but is not so; *Richard II* II.ii.14-15

In another early play, Shakespeare also used the word *shadow* in connection with a king's legitimacy. As Warwick removes the captured King Edward's crown in *3 Henry VI*, he declares:

But Henry now shall wear the English crown,
And be true king indeed, thou but the shadow IV.iii.49-50

Another distinctive idea in *Troublesome Raigne* is a request made to a dying man that he raise his hand as a signal of agreement. As King John is dying, Cardinal Pandulph asks him to raise his hand if he forgives the assembled barons for their revolt against him:

Then good my Lord, if you forgive them all,
Lift up your hand in token you forgive 2 TR 1115-16

The idea is repeated in a similar scene in *2 Henry VI* in which the King addresses the dying Cardinal Beaufort:

Lord Card'nal, if thou think'st on heaven's bliss,
Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope. 2 Henry VI III.iii.27-8

The author of *Troublesome Raigne* also demonstrated an acute interest in language and how it is communicated, another trait that is evident throughout the entire canon. Jane Donawerth made a count of the words Shakespeare used relating to "ideas about language"—words such as *speak, speech, language, name, voice, tongue, mouth, throat, ear, breath, pen, paper, ink, and parchment*. The frequent use of these words is characteristically Shakespearean, and every play is replete with them. Donawerth found that in the early plays these words are used at the rate of once in every twenty-four lines, and for the entire canon, once in twenty-six (141, 161; also Sams, *Ironsides* 334). The frequency of these words in *Troublesome Raigne* is higher still—127, once in every twenty-three lines.

The idea of the *multitude* as a vulgar mob is common in Shakespeare. In his two dozen uses of the word, he attached such adjectives to it as *barbarous, rude, giddy, ragged, fool, distracted, and bisson* (purblind). One particular variation of this idea—that a multitude is *many-headed*—is first presented in *Troublesome Raigne*:

The multitude (a beast of many heads)
Doo wish confusion to their Sovereigne; 2 TR 233-4

Shakespeare returned to the idea in *2 Henry IV*:

Rumour is a pipe
Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures,
And of so easy and so plain a stop
That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,
The still-discordant wav'ring multitude,
Can play upon it. 2 Henry IV Ind. 15-20

And again in his last Roman play:

for once we stood up about the corn,
he himself stuck not to call us the many-headed

multitude.

Coriolanus II.iii.15-17

These examples are far from exhaustive, and are further evidence that Shakespeare and the author of *Troublesome Raigne* shared many similar ideas and conceits, as well as a similar interest in language and communication.

Vocabulary and Style

Perhaps the most well-known and well-established feature of Shakespeare's poetry is his verbal inventiveness. Several scholars have demonstrated that all his works contain a high proportion of new or rare words.¹⁹ He is credited by the Oxford English Dictionary with the introduction to the language of slightly over two thousand new words, an average of about fifty per play, far more than any other writer (Schäfer, 83; Crystal, 321-22). The author of *Troublesome Raigne* was also unusually inventive, the OED having cited the play as containing the first use of more than twenty-five distinct words. He used more than one hundred additional words in senses or meanings that are described by the OED as first used in *Troublesome Raigne* in 1591 or subsequently by another writer. For most of these additional words, that writer was Shakespeare. Several hundred more unusual words and meanings in *Troublesome Raigne* also appear in later Shakespeare plays. At least a dozen usages in the play have not yet been defined by the OED.

Shakespeare also excelled in another aspect of verbal facility—the number of different words he used in each play. In 1943 Alfred Hart published his count of the number of different words in each of the plays in the First Folio, adding *Pericles*. Although the individual play word-count ranged from 2037 different words in *Comedy of Errors* to 3882 in *Hamlet*, most fell within the 2500-3100-word range, the average being 2800 different words per play.²⁰ Using Hart's methodology, a count of the different words in *Troublesome Raigne* yields a total of 2952. In *King John* Shakespeare used 2901 different words. By comparison, Hart's count of different words in Marlowe's plays showed that in no play did he use more than about 2500 different words, and his average, excluding the short *The Massacre at Paris*, was 2280 ("Vocabularies" 138). A more refined measure of lexical variety is the ratio of different words to total lines. Among Shakespeare's ten English history plays the ratio is one different word per line (Hart, "Vocabularies" 132, Table I). The author of *Troublesome Raigne* used different words at the same rate—one per line.

In the course of compiling his *Complete Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare*, Marvin Spevack extracted a group of 335 words that occurred in each of the thirty-six plays of the Folio, plus *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. With the exception of two, all 335 words appear in *Troublesome Raigne* (108-13). In 2005 Ben Crystal and David Crystal compiled a list of one hundred content-carrying words that are frequently encountered in the Shakespeare canon (xxi-xxvii). More than half of these words can be found in *Troublesome Raigne*.

Troublesome Raigne is also strikingly similar to Shakespeare's plays in another aspect of vocabulary usage—the incidence of words beginning with certain prefixes. Hart examined six of Shakespeare's history plays and counted the number of different words beginning with seventeen prefixes: *ad-*, *be-*, *con-*, *de-*, *dis-*, *en-*, *ex-*, *for-*, *in-*, *out-*, *over-*, *per-*, *pre-*, *pro-*, *re-*, *sub-*, and *un-*. The number of such prefixes in the six plays averaged 516 (*Homilies* 227). The number of different words with these same prefixes in *Troublesome Raigne* is 494. By contrast, Hart found an average of only 382 such prefixes in three plays of Marlowe (*Homilies* 227). Shakespeare was so fond of the prefix *un-* that he used it to coin about 170 new words or meanings (Schäfer 130-4). Hart could find only four such coinages using the prefix *un-* in seven plays of Marlowe, and three

each for Robert Greene and George Peele in their plays and poems (*Homilies* 229). The author of *Troublesome Raigne* used more than forty words with an *un-* prefix, and is credited by the OED with coining two new words prefixed by *un-*, *unfitted* and *unhallowed*. Both of these coinages subsequently appeared in the Shakespeare canon.

Troublesome Raigne also comports with Shakespeare's early history plays in its liberal use of the words *thou*, *thee*, *thy*, and *thine*. In his study, *The Authorship of Shakespeare's Plays*, Jonathan Hope counted the incidence of these four words in the plays of Shakespeare, and calculated an index of their frequency per line in each play (61-3). The index ranged from a low of seven for *Hamlet* and *Coriolanus* to a high of nineteen for *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*. For six early histories, the average index was just above fourteen. A similar calculation for *Troublesome Raigne* produces an index of just above seventeen.

Another notable feature of Shakespeare's plays is their unusual length. Of the principal Elizabethan playwrights, only Jonson and Dekker exceeded Shakespeare's average play length of about 2750 lines (Hart, "Length" 149). At 2936 lines, *Troublesome Raigne* is near the average of Shakespeare's history plays (3080), somewhat longer than *King John* (2570), and hundreds of lines longer than the average play by Peele, Greene, Kyd, or Marlowe (Hart, "Length" 149).

It has been observed by various scholars that Shakespeare preferred certain spellings and usages over others. For instance, in his study of Thomas Middleton and Shakespeare, David Lake wrote: "Through all his work, Shakespeare prefers *them* to *'em* and *hath* to *has*; he makes very little use of *I'm* (only five authentic instances outside *Timon*) or of *'Has* for *he has* (fourteen authentic instances outside *Timon*)" (281). The author of *Troublesome Raigne* used *them* sixty times, *'em* never. He used *hath* fifty-six times, *hast* fifteen times, and *has* never. Neither *I'm* nor *'Has* for *he has* appears in the play at all. In addition to preferring *hath* to *has*, Shakespeare, at least in his first twenty plays or so, preferred *doth* to *does*, rarely using the latter (Jackson 56). Similarly, the author of *Troublesome Raigne* used *doth* thirty-four times, *does* never. Another of Shakespeare's noted spelling preferences is *O* instead of *Oh* (Jackson 215). In *Troublesome Raigne*, *O* appears twenty-three times, *Oh* five times.

Thus, the verbal creativity and diversity, and the verbal habits and preferences, of the author of *Troublesome Raigne* comport almost exactly with those of Shakespeare, especially in his early plays.

Dramatic Devices

"Shakespeare's habit of recycling his favorite dramatic devices is generally recognized." This is the opening sentence of a recent article by E. A. J. Honigmann in which he described a collection of ten "self-repetitions" in *King John* that appeared in both previous and subsequent Shakespeare plays ("Self-Repetitions" 175-83). He suggested that "such self-repetitions, when of sufficient quality and quantity, can serve as an authorial finger-print . . ." (175). The most notable of these is the cluster of "character stereotypes" that appeared in both *King John* and *Troublesome Raigne*. These include "scolding, aggressive and bitter women" who "revile their enemies and/or utter long-winded lamentations." Both Queen Eleanor and Constance in *Troublesome Raigne* fit this description, as do Joan of Arc in *1 Henry VI*; the Duchesses of Gloucester and York, and Queen Elizabeth in 2 and 3 *Henry VI*; Lady Macbeth; Cleopatra; Volumnia in *Coriolanus*; and Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*.

The childlike Arthur of Brittany—a "prattling" and "pathetic" boy who is threatened with death—is the person around whom the plot of *Troublesome Raigne* revolves. This character type reappears as the Earl of Rutland in 3 *Henry VI*, the princes in the Tower in *Richard III*, and Macduff's son in *Macbeth*.

Cardinal Pandulph, a Machiavellian churchman in *Troublesome Raigne* who is preoccupied with temporal rather than spiritual affairs, is recreated in Cardinal Beaufort in *1 and 2 Henry VI*, Cardinal Bouchier in *Richard III*, the Archbishop of Canterbury in *Henry V*, and Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*.

Blanche of Castile, a princess who “becomes a pawn in the dynastic power-game” in *Troublesome Raigne*, may be compared to Princess Bona in *3 Henry VI*, Lady Anne in *Richard III*, and Katherine in *Henry V*.

The Bastard Falconbridge in *King John*, whom Honigmann calls “one of Shakespeare’s undisputed successes,” is a paler and less-substantial character in *Troublesome Raigne*, but he is plainly one of a group of “high-spirited men, mostly youthful, who may be either villains (Aaron, Richard III, Iago, Edmund) or boisterous but not evil (Petruccio, Mercutio, Graziano, Hotspur)” (177). The comparison with Richard III is arresting. Both he and Falconbridge are humorous and impudent; they mock conventional lovers and taunt their enemies; each displays a sadistic streak and ridicules “the simplicity of others.” “Each is a keen analyst of motives, including his own,” and neither has much “respect for his

superiors” and offers them unrequested advice. Each admires his father, vows to revenge his death, casts doubt on his mother’s chastity, and is rebuked by her. “Who, except Shakespeare,” Honigmann asked,

The comparison with Richard III is arresting. Both he and Falconbridge are humorous and impudent; they mock conventional lovers and taunt their enemies; each displays a sadistic streak and ridicules “the simplicity of others.”

“could have *imagined* the Bastard, the crowning glory of the play, so closely related as he is to Richard III . . . “²¹

In addition to his resemblance to Richard III, the Bastard Philip Falconbridge in *Troublesome Raigne* introduces a major theme that flourished in the Shakespeare canon—bastards and bastardy. The Falconbridge of *Troublesome Raigne* and *King John* is the clear predecessor of such notable bastards as Edmund in *King Lear* and Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida*. In her study of bastards in Renaissance drama, Alison Findlay reported that during the two decades between 1590 and 1610, of the thirty-three plays with parts for bastards or characters threatened with bastardy, nine are by Shakespeare.²²

Another of Shakespeare’s “self-repetitions” cited by Honigmann is the “heroic or idealized figure from the immediate past” who both overshadows and serves as a yardstick for the next generation. This describes the recently-deceased Richard I in both *Troublesome Raigne* and *King John*, as well as Henry V in *1, 2 and 3 Henry VI*, Hamlet’s father, Julius Caesar in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and the dead fathers in *All’s Well that Ends Well*.

Another repeated dramatic device identified by Honigmann is a plot “structured around a voluntary abdication or a deposition.” In this category, with *Troublesome Raigne* and *King John*, are *3 Henry VI*, *Richard II*, *King Lear* and, “in modified form,” *Titus Andronicus* 1.1.187ff, *Measure for Measure* 1.1.13ff, *Pericles*, *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest*.

Additional examples include the instance of an ambiguous prophecy being understood too late (repeated in *2 Henry VI* and *Richard III*), and the siege of a city serving as a “focal point for a sequence of scenes,” found also in *1 Henry VI*, *Henry V*, and *Coriolanus* (176). What is significant about the ten “self-repetitions” in *King John* that Honigmann found repeated in other Shakespeare plays is that nine of them appeared earlier in *Troublesome Raigne*.

Two dramatic devices common to *Troublesome Raigne* and other Shakespeare plays that Honigmann failed to mention have been pointed out by other critics. In her study of bit parts in

Shakespeare's plays, M. M. Mahood wrote: "The most notable feature of Shakespeare's pairs or trios of hired assassins is that almost invariably one man among them shows reluctance before or remorse after the deed" (49). She cited two well-known examples—the Second Murderer of Duke Humphrey in *2 Henry VI*:

O that it were to do! What have we done?
Didst ever hear a man so penitent? II.ii.3-4

and the two assassins in *Richard III*:

2. Mur. The urging of that word 'judgment', hath bred a kind of remorse in me.
1. Mur. What? art thou afraid?
2. Mur. Not to kill him, having a warrant, but to be damned for killing him, from which no warrant can defend me. I.iv.107-112

In *Troublesome Raigne*, King John orders Hubert de Burgh to put out the eyes of Prince Arthur. (In *King John*, the order is to kill him.) Three men accompany Hubert who instructs them to wait outside, remarking "I would the King had made choice of some other executioner." They are also reluctant, and reply "We go, though loath" (*I TR* 1317, 1325). Hubert and Arthur then engage in a lengthy dialogue about the morality of the act, and Hubert confesses to the same fear as the Second Murderer in *Richard III*, even using the same word—*warrant*:

I faint, I feare, my conscience bids desist:
Faint did I say, feare was it that I named?
My King commaunds, that warrant sets me free:
But God forbids, and he commaundeth Kings. 1 TR 1433-6

Another example from the same two plays is the exchange between the victims, Arthur and Clarence, and those who come to harm them. Both Hubert in *Troublesome Raigne* and the murderers in *Richard III* assert that they have been commanded by royal authority to commit their acts:

Hubert. My Lord, a subject dwelling in the land
Is tyed to execute the King's commaund. 1 TR, 1391-2

1. *Mur.* What we will do, we do upon command.
2. *Mur.* And he that hath commaunded is our King *Richard III* I.iv.192-3

Both Arthur and Clarence respond sharply with the same argument:

Arthur. Yet God commands, whose power reacheth further,
That no commaund should stand in force to murder. 1 TR 1393-4

Clar. Erroneous vassals, the great King of Kings
Hath in the table of his law commaunded
That thou shalt do no murder. Will you then
Spurn at his edict, and fulfill a man's? *Richard III* I.iv.195-8

The murderers in *Richard III* carry out their mission, but Hubert doesn't—thus introducing a recurring Shakespearean character, the faithful servant who is virtuously disobedient. This type appears again as Pisanio in *Cymbeline*, Antony's servant Eros in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and the servant in *King Lear* who resists Cornwall's assault on Gloucester.

Another Shakespearean dramatic device is the frequent use of messengers to move the plot along, especially in the history plays. Several scholars have pointed out that both formal and informal messengers appear more often in Shakespeare's plays than in those of other playwrights. For instance, Bernard Beckerman, who called the messenger "a unique figure peculiar to Shakespeare," calculated that an average of five messengers appeared in each of Shakespeare's fifteen Globe plays, but an average of only one in each of the non-Shakespearean Globe plays (205; also Mahood 52-3). In five of Shakespeare's early history plays, the average number of formal messengers alone is also five. Here again, Shakespeare's practice, at the beginning of his career and at the end, was prefigured by the author of *Troublesome Raigne*, who used nine formal messengers and half-a-dozen informal ones in his play.

Although Honigmann acknowledged the unusual number of identical dramatic devices used in *Troublesome Raigne* and in later Shakespeare plays, he rejected the idea that a single author was responsible. He offered the explanation that the author of *Troublesome Raigne* had acted in *King John*, and that the language, characters, and dramatic devices common to both plays, as well as the many other echoes from plays by Marlowe, Peele, Kyd, and Shakespeare that appeared in *Troublesome Raigne*, were the result of its author recollecting material from these playwrights' works in which he had acted ("Self-Repetitions" 180). But the sheer volume and consistency of these similarities and echoes weighs against this explanation. Indeed, Honigmann himself asks if this author "anticipated so many of Shakespeare's dramaturgic characteristics and felicities that we have to see him as, to all intents, another Shakespeare?" (177-8).

But it is not necessary to imagine another Shakespeare (an actor/playwright who is otherwise absent from Elizabethan drama) to account for this phenomenon. The external evidence of the publication and ascription of *Troublesome Raigne* agrees with the substantial internal evidence that the play preceded Shakespeare's *King John*, as well as the numerous other plays by Shakespeare and other dramatists that echoed its material. The close relationship of the two *King John* plays, and the very obvious similarities between their authors' habits of dramaturgy, style, and vocabulary, their use of the same character types, and their reliance on similar dramatic devices, all indicate that they were the same person.

Conclusion

From the evidence presented above, it is a fair conclusion that Shakespeare himself wrote *Troublesome Raigne*, and did so very early in his career. If not Shakespeare, the author was an unknown dramatist who shared his linguistic habits, his fondness for new and unusual words, and his ability to organize and present the events of a lengthy reign in a coherent dramatic narrative. No other dramatist of the time shared these characteristics.

As Shakespeare is the Elizabethan dramatist with the largest number of surviving plays, it is surprising that none of his juvenilia has been securely identified. Even his earliest accepted plays reveal, at the least, a journeyman's skill at creating believable characters and compelling stories. The early histories also reveal an unpolished but powerful poet with a taste for image and metaphor, and an ear for declamatory language. It stands to reason that the prolific Shakespeare, before he wrote *Comedy of Errors* or *Titus Andronicus*, or whatever was the earliest canonical play, must have written a bad play, or at least a play with the defects of *Troublesome Raigne*.

Although *Troublesome Raigne*'s most recent editor could not accept Shakespeare as the author, he could not help speculating that it might have been his apprentice work: "Yet what he did with his first play makes fascinating conjecture; unless he sprang to poetic life almost full-grown, the *Raigne* might reflect his development about 1587" (Sider liii). *Troublesome Raigne* is a rightful example of Shakespearean juvenilia, and almost certainly his earliest published play. It antedates *Titus Andronicus* (1594) by three years and also by two years his first printed work—*Venus and Adonis* (1593).

This conclusion resolves a longstanding authorship puzzle and adds another powerful English history play to the Shakespeare canon. The text of *Troublesome Raigne* provides three thousand lines of early Shakespearean verse that is now available for analysis and comparison with the accepted works. In addition, the wholesale transformation of *Troublesome Raigne* into *King John* supplies another critical example of Shakespeare's methods of revision, and the only example, so far, of his rewriting of an entire play that was one of his earliest attempts at composition for the stage.

Notes

- ¹ The three extant copies are in the Edward Capell Collection at Trinity College, Cambridge University; the Folger Shakespeare Library; and the Huntington Library in San Marino, Calif.
- ² The three are *Richard II*, Q1 (1597); *Richard III*, Q1 (1597); and *Hamlet*, Q1 (1603). E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: Facts and Problems* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1930), I, 348, 294, 408.
- ³ Chambers, *Shakespeare I*, 338-40. The printers and publishers associated with these three editions were John Danter (1597), Thomas Creede (1599), Cuthbert Burby (1599), and John Smethwick (1609). Burby published Shakespeare's *Edward III* anonymously in 1596 and 1599, and *Love's Labour's Lost* in 1598 as "Newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespeare." He was also one of the publishers of Meres' *Palladis Tamia* in 1598.
- ⁴ They are *Richard II* (1597), *Richard III* (1597), and *Henry IV Part 1* (1598).
- ⁵ See also Sams, *The Real Shakespeare*, (New Haven, MA: Yale University Press, 1995), 148.
- ⁶ For instance, C. F. Tucker Brooke, *The Shakespeare Apocrypha* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1908); Baldwin Maxwell, *Studies in the Shakespeare Apocrypha* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1956); William Kozlenko, *Disputed Plays of William Shakespeare* (New York: Hawthorne Books 1974).
- ⁷ Ephraim B. Everitt, "The Young Shakespeare: Studies in Documentary Evidence," *Anglistica II*, (1954); Eric Sams, "The Troublesome Wrangle over *King John*" *Notes and Queries* 233 (March, 1988): 41-4; and *The Real Shakespeare*, 146-55.
- ⁸ Quotations from *Troublesome Raigne* (abbreviated *1 and 2 TR*, followed by line numbers) are from Bullough, IV.
- ⁹ Quotations from Shakespeare are from *The Riverside Shakespeare* ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).
- ¹⁰ Several other historical bastards who may have contributed to Philip's character and circumstances are listed by Wilson at xxxviii-xli.
- ¹¹ These are listed in Sams, *The Real Shakespeare*, 151.
- ¹² In this connection, it is noteworthy that all the versions of *King John* brought to the stage up to the retirement of John Kemble in 1817 included passages from *Troublesome Raigne* as a way of clarifying the action. Arthur C. Sprague, *Shakespeare's Histories: Plays for the Stage* (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1964), 25. Also Harold Child in Wilson, ed. *King John* lxviii.
- ¹³ Robert Ornstein made a similar point in *A Kingdom for a Stage* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 88-89.
- ¹⁴ McMillin and MacLean, xv, 160-1. The three others are *King Leir*, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, and *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*.
- ¹⁵ Wilson, *King John* xxxiv; Allardyce and Josephine Nicoll, *Holinshed's Chronicle as Used in Shake-*

- speare's Plays* (London: J. M. Dent, 1927), 1; R. A. Law, 125; Mincoff 52-3.
- ¹⁶ These two lines do not replicate the meaning of the line in *Troublesome Raigne*.
- ¹⁷ Wells, 218-19. *Edward III* was included in the 2nd edition of *The Riverside Shakespeare* in 1997 and in the New Cambridge series in 1998.
- ¹⁸ Spurgeon 90-1; In her study of imagery, Spurgeon examined the works of the following twelve dramatists: Marlowe, Kyd, Lyly, Greene, Peele, Dekker, Jonson, Heywood, Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger (361-2).
- ¹⁹ Hart, "Vocabularies of Shakespeare's Plays," and "The Growth of Shakespeare's Vocabulary," 128-40 and 242-54.
- ²⁰ Hart, "Growth," 249. Hart also reported counting 2976 different words in *Edward III* in *Shakespeare and the Homilies* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1934), 220.
- ²¹ Honigmann, "Self-Repetitions" 183. The emphasis is Honigmann's.
- ²² Alison Findlay, *Illegitimate power: bastards in Renaissance drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), Appendix, 253-5. Findlay excluded from her analysis plays dealing with "bastard baby situations."

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