

5. *Anomalies in the Data*

In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn describes a ‘psychological experiment that deserves to be far better known outside the trade’ by Bruner and Postman in which subjects were asked to identify a series of playing cards on short controlled exposures (Kuhn, 1996: 62-4, Bruner & Postman, 1949). Many of the cards were normal but some were anomalous: a red six of spades and a black four of hearts, for example. The anomalous cards ‘were almost always identified, without apparent hesitation or puzzlement, as normal’, being ‘fitted to one of the conceptual categories prepared by prior experience.’ On further exposure, subjects began to hesitate and show confusion, and a further increase would lead to most subjects identifying the anomalous cards correctly. A few subjects, however,

‘were never able to make the requisite adjustment of their categories. Even at forty times the average exposure required to recognize normal cards for what they were, more than 10 per cent of the anomalous cards were not correctly identified. And the subjects who then failed often experienced acute personal distress. One of them exclaimed: “I can’t make the suit out, whatever it is. It didn’t even look like a card that time. I don’t know what color it is now or whether it’s a spade or a heart. I’m not even sure what a spade looks like now. My God!” ’

(Kuhn, 1996: 62-4)

In Kuhn’s understanding, a paradigm which adequately explains observable data becomes widely adopted, and the vast majority of academic activity (what he calls ‘normal science’) will then be entirely within that framework. Anomalous data,

according to Kuhn, is often not noticed or collected by those working within the paradigm, simply because experiments are designed within its boundaries.

Fugelsang, Stein, Green and Dunbar, studying scientists at work in their laboratories, discovered that in over half of the scientific experiments they studied, the results were inconsistent with the scientists' predictions; and that scientists were reluctant to consider that data as 'real' (Fugelsang et al., 2004: 86). The surprising finding was classified as a mistake: 'perhaps a machine malfunctioned or an enzyme had gone stale' (Lehrer, 2009). 'The scientists were trying to explain away what they didn't understand,' said Kevin Dunbar, one of the neuroscientists involved. 'It's as if they didn't want to believe it.' Even after scientists had produced the anomaly consistently, they would often choose not to follow it up. The research of Fugelsang, Dunbar and others demonstrates that despite their discipline's reputation for impartiality, scientists are not immune from confirmation bias: the human tendency to seek out and give attention to data consistent with one's initial theory. Researchers from a variety of disciplines including cognitive psychology, scientific thinking, judicial reasoning, medical reasoning and politics have 'noticed the preponderance of confirmatory-based strategies in human reasoning' (Fugelsang et al., 2004: 86).

There is no reason to assume that scholars in the humanities are immune from confirmation bias; it appears to be a function of human neurology, possibly seated in the reticular activation system (RAS). At any given moment, some two million bits of information are available to us, but the human brain can process only 130 bits per second. The RAS acts as a filter, and allows through only what seems relevant. To an orthodox scholar, any information that lies outside the fundamental belief framework Shakespeare-wrote-Shakespeare will not be relevant, and is thus liable to pass unnoticed. If sufficient exposure occurs for it to be noticed, as in the early parts of

Bruner and Postman's anomalous playing card experiment, the tendency is to interpret it to fit. Analogous to 'That's the six of spades but there's something wrong with it', or 'the enzyme must have gone stale', anomalous data relevant to the Shakespeare authorship question (data which reads as 'correct' in an alternative paradigm) is often read by orthodox scholars as some kind of error. This is a useful evolutionary adaptation: our belief frameworks must of necessity be extremely stable if we are to function effectively, so we will be far more inclined to perceive there is something wrong with the data than doubt our paradigm. Examples of orthodox scholars reading data which supports an alternative paradigm as being in error have already been noted in the chapter on *Shakespeare's Sonnets*: some further examples are given in this chapter. But let's begin with the ways in which orthodox scholars have shored up Shakespeare's biography – a biography peculiarly absent of personal testimony that the subject was a writer – by erroneous interpretation of evidence.

5.1 Chettle's Apology to Peele

In 1998, Lukas Erne was the sixth scholar since 1874 to point out that Henry Chettle's apology in *Kind Hart's Dreame* (1592) to one of the playwrights who took offence at the contents of *Greene's Groats-worth of Witte* (1592) cannot have been aimed at Shakespeare (Erne, 1998: 435). The letter prefacing *Groatsworth* was addressed to 'those gentlemen, his quondam acquaintance that spend their wits in making plays' and warned them of the perils of writing for 'those puppets...that speak from our mouths,-- those antics garnished in our colours', and famously among these actors, of an 'upstart crow' generally taken to be Shakespeare. Chettle describes how this 'letter written to diuers play-makers, is offensiue by one or two of them taken', and then apologises to one but not the other. Shakespeare cannot be the subject of his

apology, since he is not among the group of playwrights, but supposedly one of the actors they are being warned about.

Scholars have argued that the two subjects of Chettle's apology must be Marlowe and Shakespeare because neither George Peele nor Thomas Nashe would have reason to take offence at *Groatsworth*. Erne demonstrates this is not so: George Peele was a director of courtly pageants and an established poet with a reputation to defend, and it is unlikely he would have appreciated being called upon to 'despise drunkenness', 'flie lust', and 'abhorre those Epicures, whose loose life hath made religion lothsome to your eares' (Erne, 1998: 437).⁸¹

The second defence of *Kind Harts Dreame* as an apology to Shakespeare relies upon the false premise that the word 'qualitie' in the phrase 'the qualitie he professes' refers specifically to acting. Of the four instances the OED cites in the period 1590-1630 for 'quality' meaning 'profession, occupation or business', only one of them refers to acting; and where Shakespeare uses 'quality' to refer to a profession in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the 'profession' in question is outlawry (IV.i.56).

The commonly held belief (so strong that it is perceived as a 'fact') that Chettle's apology is to William Shakespeare is based on an implausible and illogical reading of the text, yet it continues to persist, despite the best efforts of Erne and others before him, for a reason Erne well understands: Shakespearean biography is so bereft of evidence of Shakespeare's existence on the London literary scene that it cannot afford to abandon *any* apparent allusion to Shakespeare, even one that doesn't bear scrutiny. 'If we authenticate it,' says Erne, 'we have found a crucial milestone on Shakespeare's artistic and social trajectory. If we don't, a biographer writing his chapter on

⁸¹ ERNE, L. (1998) Biography and Mythography: Rereading Chettle's Alleged Apology to Shakespeare. *English Studies*, 79, 430-440.

Shakespeare's first years as an actor and dramatist is deprived of one of his most important narrative supports' (435-6).

5.2 Allusion or Illusion? Unmasking the Upstart Crow

The picture for the orthodox position is worse than Erne can imagine, for Chettle's apology is not the only important narrative support that careful analysis and logical argument threatens to remove. I refer to famous 'upstart crow' passage from *Greene's Groats-worthe of Witte*, which since first being noticed by Thomas Tyrwhitt in 1778, and its subsequent adoption by Malone in 1787, is routinely taken as the 'first certain allusion' to Shakespeare in London.

Before demonstrating why this is wishful thinking, it is first necessary to re-establish that the text is by Greene. Since D. Allen Carroll's edition of the text, scholarly consensus has adopted Warren B. Austin's conclusion that Henry Chettle is the author of *Groatsworth* (Carroll et al., 1994).⁸² But Austin's methods were deeply flawed, as Richard Westley makes clear in his recent reassessment (Westley, 2006: 363), which notes ten categories of error. Key amongst these is missing controls: Austin compares *Groatsworth* with just five of Greene's thirty-two known prose-works, and omits several works that were close to *Groatsworth* in time of composition. Austin also deliberately excludes, on the basis of context, a number of key words that strongly argue for Greene as the author, and fails to take into account Chettle's role as compositor. What Austin refers to as the 'strongest piece of evidence' that Chettle wrote *Groatsworth* is its preference for '-ever' over '-soever': Greene always uses the latter, Chettle the former (Austin, 1969: 23). As Donna Murphy points out, pursuing an

⁸² The British Library record for *Groatsworth* came through with Chettle as author: I have adjusted the reference in this text so that Carroll's name is now listed first.

entirely different thesis, Chettle admits to copying out the text, and could very easily have introduced the change subconsciously (Murphy, 2007: 251). In this light, the adoption of Chettle's authorship by Vickers, Duncan-Jones and others looks mistaken. Westley concludes that 'Austin's findings should... be set aside'.

A better understanding of the context of the letter '*to those Gentlemen his Quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making plaies*' argues for Greene's authorship in any case. The passage that is taken to relate to Shakespeare is a warning from Greene, in his 'miserie', not to trust actors, who he refers to as 'Apes', 'rude grooms', 'those Puppets... that spake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours', and 'painted monsters':

'Yes trust them not: for there is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and beeing an absolute Iohannes fac totum, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey.'

Viewed through the orthodox paradigm, the idea of the upstart actor, jack of all trades, who now believes he can write blank verse as well as any of the university-educated wits, combined with a paraphrase from *Henry VI Part 3*, appears to point to William Shakespeare. The prefix Shake-, for most scholars, seems to seal the identification.

That the subject of Greene's rant might not be Shakespeare was first advanced by A.D. Wraight (1993) and recently developed by Daryl Pinksen (2009). Although it is clear why orthodox scholars would be resistant to such arguments, the alternative theory nevertheless deserves to be given serious consideration. Greene had written against actors before, in his *Francesco's Fortunes* (1590), and in terms very similar to those used in *Groatsworth*: 'Why Roscius, art thou proud with Aesop's crow, being pranked with the glory of others' feathers?' Samuel Schoenbaum and Peter Alexander both

agree that Roscius here stands for the actor Edward Alleyn (Alexander, 1964: 68, Schoenbaum, 1987: 152).

We know that Greene wrote plays for Alleyn; it is accepted, for example, that Alleyn played the lead role in Greene's *Orlando Furioso*. A large portion of the part of *Orlando* is amongst the papers at Dulwich College with additions in Alleyn's hand. In the main text of *Groatsworth*, Greene describes the life of Roberto, whose experience, says Greene, has 'most parts agreeing with mine', inviting it to be read as a thinly-veiled autobiography. Greene describes how Roberto met a wealthy and successful player, who offered him employment writing plays, with the promise he would be 'well-paid'. The Player is a wealthy man; Roberto is surprised to discover his profession: 'I took you rather for a Gentleman of great living, for if by outward habit men should be censured, I tell you, you would be taken for a substantial man.' The Player confirms his wealth, saying he is rich enough 'to build a Windmill' and that his share in playing apparel 'will not be sold for two hundred pounds.' It is clear that the Player is not only a major shareholder but also the leading actor of his troupe, and he claims to be well-known ('I am as famous for Delphrigus, & the King of Fairies, as ever was any of my time').

Greene's Player is a good fit for Edward Alleyn, who seems to have been a sharer in Worcester's Men from the age of sixteen, and by 1592, at the age of twenty-five, after great successes as the lead actor in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and *The Jew of Malta*, had already become manager of Lord Strange's Men. The Player is a poor fit for William Shakespeare, who does not appear in the records as a shareholder in any theatre

company until after Greene's death, and was never, as far as we can tell, cast in a leading role.⁸³

'Men of my profession get by scholars their whole living', Greene has the Player say: a sentiment precisely echoed by Greene in the attached letter just ahead of the 'upstart crow' passage. 'Is it not strange, that I, to whom they all haue beene beholding: is it not like that you, to whome they all haue beene beholding, shall (were yee in that case as I am now) bee both at once of them forsaken? Yes trust them not...'. Greene feels 'forsaken' by the actors who have benefited from his writing skills and in particular by the 'upstart Crow'.

The traditional reading of this passage is that Greene is envious of the up-and-coming Shakespeare, who despite having no university education, is turning his hand to writing plays. Some have taken the phrase 'beautified with our feathers' to suggest plagiarism, but the parallel between this and the phrase used in Francesco's fortunes suggests only that the actors, like Aesop's Crow, are using words supplied for them by the university wits to gain glory, fame – and importantly, wealth. The feathers refer not as Duncan-Jones claims to elaborate head-dresses, but to the writers' quills. In contrasting the playwrights with the upstart Crow, Greene implies that the Crow is an usurer who has failed to provide for him in his sickness: 'I knowe the best husband of you all will neuer proue an Vsurer, and the kindest of them all will neuer proue a kind nurse.' Actors are 'as changeable in minde, as in many attyres' and as a result '*Robert Greene*, whome they haue often so flattered, perishes now for want of comfort.'

⁸³ The first documented connection between William Shakespeare and the Lord Chamberlain's Men relates to a payment to shareholders for a performance in December 1594, recorded March 1595 (N.S.): "To William Kempe, William Shakespeare and Richard Burbage, servants to the Lord Chamberleyne, upon the Councille's warrant dated at Whitehall XVth Marcij 1594 [O.S.], for two severall comedies or enterludes shewed by them before her majestie in Christmas tyme laste part viz St. Stephen's daye and Innocents daye..." (Public Record Office, Pipe Office, Declared Accounts No. 542, f. 207b). As to his being an actor, there is no primary evidence to support the idea he played leading roles, and most scholars concur he is likely to have played only minor characters. Ben Jonson's cast lists, which appeared only after Shakespeare's death in April 1616, I shall deal with separately.

That Greene might have expected Alleyn, his wealthy former employer, to come to his aid when he was ill and without other means of income, is supported by a letter from actor Richard Jones to Edward Alleyn in February of the same year. Alleyn was loaning Jones £3 for new clothes to perform with the Admiral's Men but the letter also reveals that Alleyn had provided financial assistance to him during a recent illness, opening with 'thanks for your great bounty, bestowed upon me in my sickness, when I was in great want' (Greg, 1907: 33). Another way of reading the letter attached to *Groatsworth*, then, and explaining both Greene's bile against the upstart Crow, and his sense of being 'forsaken', is that Greene, following Richard Jones's example, had asked Edward Alleyn for money, but unlike Jones, had been turned down.⁸⁴

The famous paraphrase of a line from *Henry VI Part 3*, long accepted to point towards the writer, Shakespeare, would in fact be much more likely in the reader's mind to be associated with the actor who played the part for the following reasons. Plays during this era were generally associated with the acting companies who brought them to the public, rather than their writers. Greene was a populist writer and would expect his audience to grasp his allusions. Shakespeare was not publicly known as the author of this play in 1592, and from the evidence we have, not for another 27 years: in another three years it would be published (anonymously) as *The True Tragedy*, but only in 1619, as one of the Pavier quartos, was it to be attributed to 'William Shake-speare'. The name 'William Shakespeare' had not yet appeared in print and would not appear on any play until 1598 (when it appeared in hyphenated form).

In any case, then, as now, actors were far more famous than the writers who supplied their lines; this complaint, indeed, is at the heart of Greene's letter, epitomised

⁸⁴ This is not surprising given that, as Pinksen points out, Greene (as 'Roberto') had bragged in *Groatsworth* that 'when I am paid anything aforehand, I break my promise.'

in the observation that the actors are ‘beautified with our feathers’. Just as the line ‘I’ll be back’ from the film *The Terminator* (1984) reminds of us Arnold Schwarzenegger rather than James Cameron and Gale Ann Hurd, the phrase ‘Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde’ would be considerably more likely to invoke for Greene’s audience the actor who had memorably played the part of York, rather than the (unacknowledged and at this point unknown) author. Alleyn is the most likely candidate. ‘Shake-scene’ can simply be read as an insulting synonym for ‘actor’; and since contextual evidence points towards Alleyn as Greene’s target, and there is no evidence to support the idea that William Shakespeare was known in theatrical circles at this time, Alleyn is substantially more likely to be the actor whom Greene accuses of being ‘in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey’.

There is one more point of identification which needs to be addressed. The ‘Johannes fac totum’ in question ‘supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you’. For the Upstart Crow to be Edward Alleyn, we would need evidence that he was writing for the stage. The evidence exists in the form of an entry in Henslowe’s diary, where, in 1602, he notes paying Alleyn forty shillings for ‘his boocke of Tambercam’. The play is not extant, but the title suggests it was an attempt to emulate Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine*, the protagonist of which Alleyn had played with great success. Pinksen notes it was *Tambercam* Parts I and II, rather than the original *Tamburlaine*, that was playing in the repertoire of Lord Strange’s Men in 1592, as Greene was falling ill (Pinksen, 2009: 5, Henslowe and Greg, 1904: 13-15). That Alleyn was not only playing the lead role, but had penned the play, is indicated by Henslowe’s use of the possessive pronoun. Elsewhere he pays Alleyn for ‘a book’ or ‘the book’. Only in the case of *Tambercam* is the book referred to as ‘his’. That *Tambercam* was Edward Alleyn’s imitation of *Tamburlaine* would explain why Greene

would address Marlowe, ‘thou famous Gracer of Tragedians’ primarily (not only addressing him first, but writing more to him than to the other two playwrights, thought to be Nashe and Peele); under these circumstances, Marlowe might be likely to share his grievance against Alleyn. This hypothesis also provides a context for Greene’s plea: ‘let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and neuer more acquaint them with your admired inuentions.’

The case for Alleyn as the upstart Crow, as Pinksen notes, is ‘backed by converging lines of compelling evidence’. Greene knew, as he wrote *Groatsworth*, that he was facing death, without the funds to afford medical care. ‘Yet accepted scholarship,’ says Pinksen, ‘holds that Greene’s final obsession was with being upstaged by another playwright. Considering his circumstances, could anything seem more trivial?’ (Pinksen, 2009: 11). Marlowe, Nashe, and Peele, along with Greene, had all written plays for Edward Alleyn. There is no documented connection between any of these four writers and William Shakespeare. Edmund Malone ratified this ‘possible allusion’ to Shakespeare nearly two and a quarter centuries ago, long before the majority of significant finds of early modern theatrical and literary history. With the accretion of time and authoritative repetition, it has hardened into an accepted ‘fact’ and an essential prop of Shakespearean mythography that cannot safely be removed lest the roof cave in.

Yet the continued reliance on this prop by orthodox scholars, and their unwillingness to question or re-evaluate it, essentially only emphasises the inherent weakness of the orthodox position. The alternative, as described by Erne, sounds very much like the Shakespeare authorship question:

‘Stripping bare our image of Shakespeare of four centuries of (mis-) interpretation is hermeneutically impossible. If it were possible, the results of a biographer might be less than rewarding, both aesthetically and economically. Some of the evidence which generations of Shakespeareans

have hardened into fact would become ambiguous, riddled with difficulties. The figure we seem to know might take on shady contours and the character hidden behind it would become difficult to relate to.'

(Erne, 1998: 439)

I disagree with Erne that stripping away four centuries of (mis-)interpretation is impossible; it is only impossible within the orthodox paradigm because, I contend, that paradigm would begin to collapse. With both the upstart Crow and Chettle's apology excised from William Shakespeare's timeline, the troublesome 'Lost Years' would lengthen by another two. The first mention of Shakespeare in a literary context then becomes the publication of *Venus and Adonis* in June 1593; in a theatrical context, payment as a shareholder in December 1594 (recorded in 1595).

I have demonstrated that there is questionable evidence being taken as fact to support the orthodox paradigm in the consensus readings of both Chettle's apology and Greene's 'upstart Crow' passage. Other evidence, which cannot be explained under this paradigm, is ignored, made little of, explained away, or simply not noticed, because, just like the anomalous playing cards, it doesn't fit the conceptual framework.

5.3 A Suspected Metamorphosis

Gabriel Harvey is not the only contemporary writer who may have attempted to express his doubts about the attribution of *Venus and Adonis*. Nor are his works the only primary sources that it can be argued support the early stirrings of the Shakespeare authorship question. It is worth asking, then, why doubt over Shakespeare's authorship did not take hold in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. It is possible that the answer to this question lies in the Bishops' Ban of 1599.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, prime mover of Marlowe's 1593 prosecution through the High Commission, was also the chief censor of Elizabethan

publications. On 1 June 1599, along with Richard Bancroft, Bishop of London, he issued an edict now known as the Bishops' Ban, which detailed works to 'bee presentlye broughte to the Bishop of London to be burnte.' Harvey and Nashe were marked out for special attention, the entire corpus of each to be destroyed⁸⁵ though Harvey had not published a book since *New Letter* in the year of Marlowe's disappearance.⁸⁶ It is also notable that the general category of 'English histories' is included in this list of works considered dangerous to the authorities – not only because this is a category of drama in which Marlowe and Shakespeare specialised, but because the inclusion of that category acknowledges the power of those who write historical narratives (history as story, rather than empirical 'fact').

Marlowe's translations of Ovid's *Amores*, the source of the *Venus & Adonis* epigram, had been published bound together with John Davies's *Epigrammes*, and was listed on the Bishops' edict as *Davyes Epigrams, with marlowes Elegyes*. (These epigrams include No.7, *In Faustum*, about a young man who can't afford a horse nevertheless riding to the theatre, to the river, and to the bawdy house). Seven months after this book was banned by the bishops, an entry in the Stationers Register shows Eleazar Edgar registering 'A book called *Amours* by J.D. with certen oyr [other] *sonnettes* by WS'. Whether this is an attempt to license the same book under a new guise is an open question: either this volume was not printed or it did not survive. But J.D. was how Sir John Davies identified himself when his epigrams were bound with Marlowe's translations of *Amores*, and *Amours* strongly suggests this is the *Amores* of the original unlicensed publication. The only element that differs is the substitution of the initials 'WS' for those previously given as 'CM'. Though there are other candidates

⁸⁵ Fortunately for scholars, this edict was not subsequently enforced.

⁸⁶ Though some scholars believe he was the author of, or had a hand in, *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe*, which purports to be the work of the Cambridge barber Richard Lichfield.

for the initials 'WS', 1599 had seen the publication of *Passionate Pilgrim*, an anthology of verse whose success was dependent upon readers believing all the poems to be written by William Shakespeare (whereas some were by other authors, one of them Christopher Marlowe) and we can therefore infer that the name had some fame attached to it. Given his clear popularity, it is likely that in 1599 'William Shakespeare' would be the first name that a reader would identify as the author when faced with the initials 'WS'. This entry in the Stationers Register, then, may be described as the first documented example of some confusion – deliberate or otherwise – between Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare.

The first two items on the bishops' list of books to be burnt – Joseph Hall's *Satires* and John Marston's *Pygmalion* – are also, interestingly, books that have subsequently been cited as containing evidence of contemporary doubt about Shakespeare's authorship. Developing an argument first raised by Walter Bagley, Baconian B.G. Theobald demonstrated that Marston and Hall appear to believe that *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* were written under a pseudonym. Nicknaming this author Labeo, Hall writes

*'Long as the craftie Cuttle lieth sure
In the black Cloud of his thick vomiture;
Who list complaine of wronged faith or fame
When he may shift it on to anothers name.'* (Hall et al., 1824: 73)

Though *Venus* and *Lucrece* are not identified by name, references to the stylistic elements of both Shakespeare poems in other passages addressed to 'Labeo' make them strong candidates as Hall's target,⁸⁷ and Marston's passage on 'Labeo' paraphrases lines from *Venus and Adonis*. H.N. Gibson, who argued against a range of authorship

⁸⁷ In Satire 1 of *Satires Book VI*, Hall satirises Labeo for repeatedly beginning his stanzas 'But' and 'O' ('While big *but oh's!* each stanza can begin') and his use of hyphenated words as epithets ('In epithets to join two words in one /Forsooth, for adjectives can't stand alone') (Hall, 1824: 159-60). In *Lucrece* it is noticeable how many stanzas begin with 'But' or 'Oh', and in both *Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis* hyphenated words are employed as epithets.

candidates in his book *The Shakespeare Claimants*, says ‘Theobald is ... probably correct in his identification of the poems concerned’ (Gibson, 1962: 63) and called the argument ‘the one piece of evidence in the whole Baconian case that demands serious consideration.’ When Bagley first put forward the evidence later expanded by Theobald, ‘some Stratfordians accepted it at its face value, but said that Hall and Marston were mistaken’.

What has been missed, however, is that the very existence of sixteenth century doubt about the authorship of works published under the name William Shakespeare is significant, if William Shakespeare is as active and present on the London theatre scene at this time as is generally believed. When *Pygmalion* and the *Satires* were published in 1598, Marston was establishing himself as a playwright (Knowles, 2004) and both Marston and Hall could presumably have confirmed the author’s identity for themselves were Shakespeare – as orthodox scholars assume - physically present and well-known on the London literary scene. What is more, Marston was from Warwickshire, Shakspeare’s home county. Indeed, his father was appointed counsel to the city of Coventry, and was lawyer to Thomas Green, solicitor to the corporation of Stratford-on-Avon (Knowles, 2004), who has been described by orthodox Shakespearean scholar Dave Kathman as ‘one of Shakespeare’s closest friends in Stratford’.⁸⁸ Green, whose 1614 diary refers to ‘cousin Shakespeare’, and who was living at New Place in 1609, was sponsored to enter the Middle Temple by John Marston and his father in 1595.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ <http://shakespeareauthorship.com/friends.html>

⁸⁹ Another orthodox anomaly can be noted with respect to Thomas Greene, a published poet himself, who lived in the house of William Shakspeare in the year *Shake-speare’s Sonnets* were published. His diary shows no awareness whatsoever that his ‘cousin’ was a writer, and nor does he mention Shakspeare’s death in 1616. Stopes commented ‘It has always been a matter of surprise to me that Thomas Greene, who mentioned the death of Mr.Barber, did not mention the death of Shakespeare.’ She offers the explanation ‘Perhaps there was no need for him to make a memorandum of an event so important to the town and himself.’ JIMINEZ, R. L. (2008) *Shakespeare in Stratford and London: Ten Eye-Witnesses Who Saw Nothing. "Report My Cause Aright": The Shakespeare Oxford Society 50th Anniversary Anthology 1957-2007*. New York, The Shakespeare Oxford Society.

John Marston, then, had solid Warwickshire and Stratford-on-Avon connections, and stood surety for ‘one of William Shakespeare’s closest friends’ three years before he published his satirical comment about Labeo. If the talented author of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* was the Stratford man, John Marston would have been well-placed to know. Why then does Marston refer to him by Hall’s nickname of ‘Labeo’, a celebrated lawyer of ancient Rome who lost favour with the Emperor Augustine for opposing the emperor’s views?

*‘So Labeo did complaine his loue was stone,
Obdurate, flinty, so relentlesse none:
Yet Lynceus knowes, that in the end of this,
He wrought as strange a metamorphosis.’*

(Marston, 1598: 25)

The first two lines reference lines 200-1 of *Venus and Adonis*:

*‘Art thou obdurate, flintie, hard as steele?
Nay more then flint, for stone at raine relenteth’*

Commentators on Marston’s poem note that Marston is comparing the metamorphosis of Pygmalion to that of Adonis, but the grammar of the sentence suggests that Labeo is the subject who ‘wrought as strange a metamorphosis’.⁹⁰

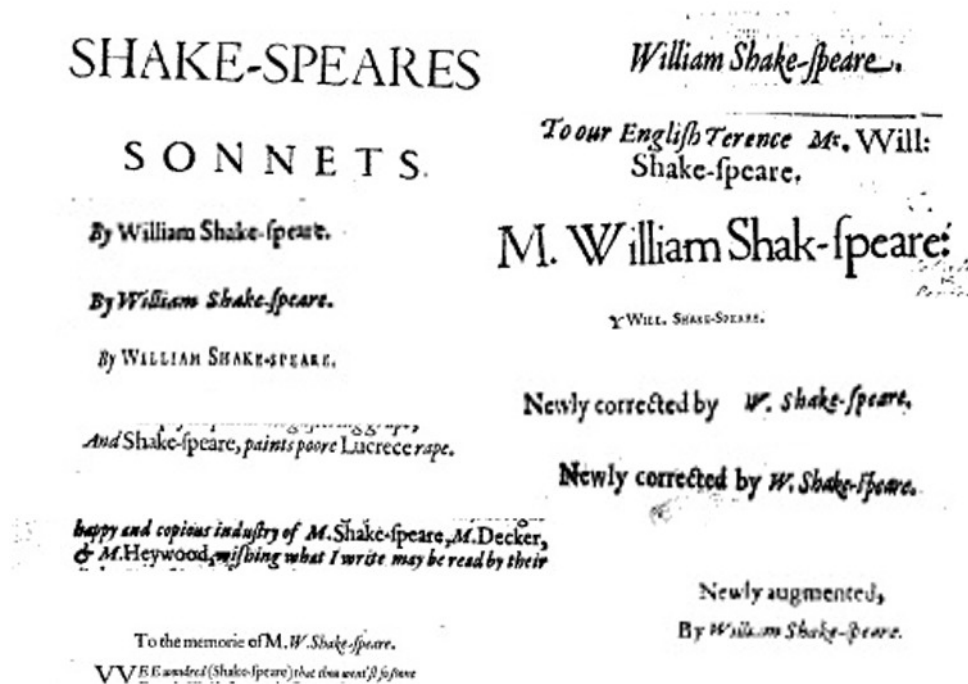
By 1598, when Marston’s *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion’s Image* was published, orthodox scholars assert that William Shakespeare was the leading playwright for the Lord Chamberlain’s men, as well as being a shareholder and (at least occasionally) an actor. Most scholars believe that by this time the three parts of *Henry VI*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Comedy of*

⁹⁰ Lynceus, an argonaut, was the jealous murderer of Castor who participated in the hunt for the Calydonian boar. He was said to have excellent sight and see through trees, walls and underground. It was a boar, of course, that gored Adonis to death after he repeatedly refused the advances of the older and physically repellent Venus. It seems likely in the circumstances that Lynceus is Marston’s nickname for Hall, who has seen through the ‘strange metamorphosis’ of Labeo. If the nickname Labeo suggests that Marston and Hall believe the author is Francis Bacon (which seems likely, as Labeo was a lawyer who fell out of favour) the reason would be Bacon’s falling out of favour with the Queen in 1593. The author of the work is seen as being identified with Adonis and Venus is clearly seen then as standing for the Queen.

Errors, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Love's Labours Lost, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, and The Merry Wives of Windsor had all been written and staged. The primary source evidence for Shakspere's involvement on the London theatre scene to this point is, however, somewhat scanty, consisting of a single payment to him and other share-holders in 1595. The listing of 'William Shakespeare' as 'principle comedian' in the 1598 cast list of Ben Jonson's *Every Man In His Humour* should strictly be considered secondary evidence, since Jonson's *Works*, the only place it appears, was published in 1616 some months after William Shakspere's death. But even if this is accepted as primary evidence, we might consider that the authorship doubts of Marston and Hall rather count against Shakespeare's visibility (at least in a physical sense) on the London literary scene in this year.

If Marston was not certain about the identity of William Shakespeare in 1598, this would certainly change by 1601, when it appears he has entered the 'inner circle' of those associated with Shakespeare, as one of the contributors to Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr*. The other contributors besides Shakespeare and Marston are Ben Jonson (future editor of the *First Folio*), and George Chapman. George Chapman, who as we have seen completed Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* in 1598, was a friend of Matthew Roydon, associate of the Derby and Northumberland literary circle, and was patronised by Marlowe's former patron Thomas Walsingham. Shakespeare's contribution to the collection of 'new compositions of seuerall moderne Writers whose names are subscribed to their seuerall workes' was signed William Shake-speare.

5.4 Hyphenated Shake-speare



The frequent hyphenation of Shakespeare's name in early texts has not been satisfactorily explained. An analysis of texts available on EEBO (Early English Books Online) reveals that of the 58 quartos and octavos of plays published between 1593 and 1630, half of those not published anonymously (a third of the total number of texts) showed the author's name as hyphenated:

Shakespeare	- 19
Shakespere	- 1
Shake-speare	- 18
Shak-speare	- 1
Anonymous	- 19

Inclusion of poetry texts brings down the percentage of hyphenated occurrences, largely because *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* (reprinted numerous times, with 14 and 6 extant editions respectively from this period) have the non-hyphenated form of the name

appended to the dedication. Even so, the hyphenated form Shake-speare appears on 36% of all the poetry and drama texts attributed at the time of their publication to Shakespeare between 1593 and 1630. It appears most notably in the 1609 *Sonnets*, both on the title page ('Shake-speares Sonnets neuer before imprinted') and as a running header on every verso page. There are also four instances of the hyphenated form in the 1623 *First Folio*.

Randall McLeod's suggestion that hyphenation is due to the need to separate the descenders of the long-k and long-s in kerning fonts (McLeod, 1981) does not stand up to scrutiny. In the case of the 1609 *Sonnets*, Shake-speare is printed in capitals throughout, suggesting hyphenation is a choice rather than a necessity. Analysis of the fonts used on the title pages of the plays reveals that twelve of the nineteen quartos authored by 'Shake-speare' do not use kerning forms of s and k, indicating that hyphenation is not for the reason McLeod suggests. In two quarto title-pages, the name is broken over two lines, but in the remaining ten neither font nor layout demand hyphenation. In addition, five quartos by 'Shakespeare' display the non-hyphenated form in a kerning font, without the apparent need to hyphenate. In three of the five, an ascending long form of 's' is used, but on the title pages of the 1603 quarto of *Richard III*, and the 1619 quarto of *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, the descenders of both a long-k and long-s are printed without the separation device of a hyphen. In the majority of cases, then, hyphenation cannot be explained by necessity.

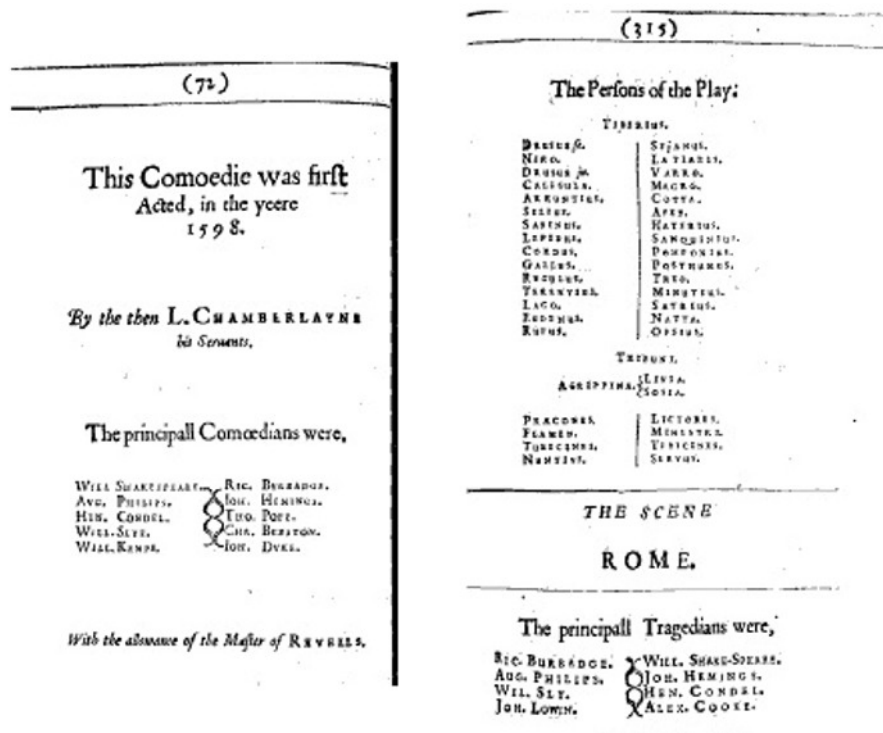
Amongst those of Shakespeare's play quartos advertised on their title pages as 'newly corrected' by the author, the non-hyphenated form of the name appears only once; the author's involvement in the publication of these 'corrected' quartos is speculative, but it nevertheless seems more likely that he would have been involved in

‘corrected’ versions than in the so-called ‘bad quartos’. If so, the hyphenated form of his name appears to have been his preference.

Shakespeare’s poetic contribution to Robert Chester’s *Love’s Martyr* (1601), as one of ‘the best and chiefest of our moderne writers, with their names subscribed to their particular workes’ also suggests a relationship between hyphenation and authorisation. Contribution of poems on the curious theme of ‘the Turtle and the Phoenix’, seems to have required, at least in the sense of answering to a brief, the author’s direct involvement. There is no explanation as to why Shakespeare’s name appear here in the hyphenated form, Shake-speare, when the names of Ben Johnson (as he then styled himself), George Chapman, and John Marston are not. The name is in a kerning font, but, as demonstrated by the title pages of *Richard III* (1603) and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1619), kerning does not necessitate hyphenation. *Love’s Martyr* was printed by Richard Field (authorised printer of *Venus and Adonis* in 1593) and published by Edward Blount (publisher of Shakespeare’s *First Folio* of 1623), giving the volume an authoritative Shakespearean pedigree. In the absence of McLeod’s ‘kerning’ argument, *Love’s Martyr* raises the possibility that the author himself specified his name be printed as ‘William Shake-speare’.

Other texts that hyphenate Shakespeare include the first reference to the author in another text. The anonymous *Willobie his Avis* (1594) informs us that it is ‘Shake-speare, paints poore Lucrece rape.’ At the other end of Shakespeare’s writing career, John Webster, in his *The White Divel, or, The Tragedy of Paulo Giordano Vrsini, Duke of Brachiano* (1612) refers to ‘the copious industry of M.Shake-speare’, hyphenating only this name among the several playwrights he credits as his models. In both *Willobie his Avis* and *The White Divel* the name is in a Roman non-kerning font. Ben Jonson’s *Works* (1616) lists a ‘WILL SHAKESPEARE as ‘Principall Comoedian’ in *Every Man*

In *His Humour* (1598), but a hyphenated 'WILL. SHAKE-SPEARE' as 'Principle Tragoedian' in *Sejanus* (1603).



Given Jonson's reputation for taking meticulous care in the presentation of his texts, and given that hyphenation is not explained by the requirements of font or layout, the two forms of the name might reasonably be regarded as distinct. Shake-speare is hyphenated four times in the prefatory material to the *First Folio* (1623), three times in Leonard Digges's poem and again in the poem by I.M. (usually taken to be James Mabbe, though the initials also work for John Marston). The name's appearance on the following page in unhyphenated form but in kerning font, again disproves McLeod.

John Davies of Hereford uses the hyphenated form when he refers to 'our English Terence, Mr. Will: Shake-speare' (*The Scourge of Folly*, 1611). Though he writes epigrams addressed to dozens of people, including Francis Bacon, Sir John Davies, Fulke Greville, Thomas Campion, Samuel Daniel, Ben Jonson, John Fletcher, John Marston, Francis Beaumont, Michael Drayton, George Chapman and Inego Jones,

Shake-speare is the only one whose surname is hyphenated. The Shake-speare epigram (159) is followed by two others containing hyphenated addressees, but both are pseudonyms: epigram 160 is addressed to ‘No-body’ and epigram 161 to ‘Some-body’. John Davies’s use of hyphens only in made-up names might reasonably suggest that John Davies believes ‘Shake-speare’ to be a pseudonym.

The hyphenated form was not exclusively used to indicate a pseudonym. Irwin Matus notes a small number of examples where real names were hyphenated, the most significant being that of the printer of seditious materials Robert Waldegrave, who after 1582 consistently printed his name as Walde-grave (Matus, 1994: 28-30). However, the man usually taken to be the author of Shakespeare’s works did not, in any of the six signatures that have come down to us, hyphenate his name. Indeed, he did not even spell it the same way across the six signatures, which is highly unusual for a literate Elizabethan, and Jane Cox has postulated that up to four of the six signatures were made by scribes (Thomas and Cox, 1985: 33). Matus’s argument that some of the hyphenation in Shakespeare’s quartos is due to printers repeating title page information from one edition does not withstand scrutiny (Price, 2001: 60). The extensive hyphenation of Shakespeare’s name continues to be both inexplicable under the orthodox narrative, and highly unusual. For non-Stratfordians, use of the hyphenated form might be read as indicating some deliberate division between the author (Shakespeare) and the shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain’s Men (who can be safely identified, from primary sources, as the glover’s son from Stratford) – a division that appears to have been maintained by the author himself.

5.5 'Errors' and Inexplicable Data

The orthodox paradigm is littered with many more 'errors' and items of inexplicable data than there is space to list here; and dozens of them are catalogued in Price's *Unorthodox Biography*, Cockburn's *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, John Michell's *Who Wrote Shakespeare?*, Pinksen's *Marlowe's Ghost* and other non-Stratfordian sources and websites. I have thus confined myself to exploring four items that have not previously been re-interpreted under a Marlovian paradigm.

5.5.1 Marston's Tense

We return to the apparent authorship doubt of John Marston, whose Warwickshire pedigree and friendship with Shakespeare's 'cousin' Thomas Greene should allow us to give some credence to his concerns. It does seem that he believed in 1598 that the author of *Venus and Adonis* might be Francis Bacon, and that three years subsequently he was one of only four writers commissioned to write poems for *Love's Martyr*, another of whom signed his contribution William Shakespeare. Is there any evidence that he changed his mind about the author's identity subsequent to 1598? There may be.

It is generally accepted that John Marston is the author of the manuscript work, *The Newe Metamorphosis*, which refers to 'kynde Kit Marlowe'. This tribute is rarely quoted in its full form, because the full form contains a puzzle; or to orthodox scholars, an error. Marston, writing in 1600 or later, refers, in the present tense, to Marlowe completing Hero's narrative:

*'kynde Kit Marlowe, if death not prevent-him,
shall write her story, love such art hath lent-him'*

(Marston, 1600)

It seems inconceivable that an experienced writer such as Marston should use the present tense erroneously. Even straining to meet the rhyme (lent/prevent) within the metrical requirements does not explain his use of the future tense ‘shall’ at a time when Marlowe is supposed to be at least seven years dead. As we have seen, the anger of the author of Shakespeare’s sonnets towards the Rival Poet would be more than adequately explained if Marlowe’s plan was to complete the unfinished *Hero and Leander* at some future time, when he hoped to be resurrected, and then discovered the task had been handed over to George Chapman. Marston’s use of present tense, which within the orthodox narrative is so inexplicable that the rest of the quote besides ‘kynde Kit Marlowe’ has been routinely ignored, is unproblematic under Marlovian authorship theory.

5.5.2 Covell’s Gaveston

There is an additional Shakespeare allusion which contains what has widely been considered an ‘error’ but which lends weight to the idea that certain writers of the period understood ‘William Shakespeare’ to be Marlowe’s pseudonym. The second earliest allusion to Shakespeare in a printed text is a marginal note in William Covell’s *Polimanteia*. The note reads:

All praise
worthy.
Lucrecia
Sweet **Shak-**
speare.
Eloquent
Gaveston.
Wanton
Adonis.
Watsons
heyre.

Katherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen explain his apparent error thus:

‘Carried away with enthusiasm, Covell appears to have added *Piers Gaveston* (1594?) – strongly influenced by Shakespeare but written by Michael Drayton – to Shakespeare’s authentic poems, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594).’

(Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen, 2007: 5)

It seems odd that Covell would make such a mistake given the prominence of Michael Drayton’s name on the dedicatory epistle accompanying the poem, but an error must necessarily be assumed under the orthodox paradigm. However, it is perfectly possible that Covell was not making a mistake, but rather recognised that *Venus* and *Lucrece* were written by the same author who had eloquently depicted Piers Gaveston in *Edward II*, at least a year before the publication of Drayton’s poem. That Covell believes Shakespeare to be a pseudonym for Marlowe would also be strengthened by his observation that the author is ‘Watson’s heyre’. It is well-documented that Marlowe was a friend of Thomas Watson’s, both from the legal accounts of the Bradley slaying, and from the published dialogue between Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey. There is no evidence whatsoever that Thomas Watson was connected with Shakspere of Stratford. If we allow ourselves to read Covell’s comment from a Marlovian perspective, no error exists – Covell is saying that Marlowe, the man who put eloquence in the mouth of Piers Gaveston and was the natural heir to Thomas Watson, was the author (as ‘Shak-speare’) of *Venus and Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece*.⁹¹ It is worth noting that Covell was a student at Christ’s College, Cambridge, gaining his BA in 1585 (the same year as Marlowe) and his MA in 1588 (the year after Marlowe). Like Gabriel Harvey, therefore, he has a connection to Marlowe’s Cambridge years.

Though Covell is unusual in conflating Marlowe and Shakespeare, he is not unique, and nor has he remained alone, in noting Shakespeare’s debt to Watson. According to *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Watson’s sonnets ‘appear to have been studied by Shakespeare’ (Harvey, 1969: 874). It is clear from the dialogue of

⁹¹ The hyphen here *is* accounted for by the requirements of the text’s layout.

Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe that Nashe and Watson are of the same social circle, and that both are friends of Marlowe. Other friends are mentioned by Harvey, all of them contemporary writers or musicians; Shakespeare is conspicuous by his absence.

In addition to Watson, the influence of Nashe, of whom Moth in *Love's Labour's Lost* is recognised to be a caricature (Nicholl, 2004), has been repeatedly detected by J.J.M. Tobin (2003, 2001, 1999, 1992, 1985, 1984, 1982, 1981, 1980, 1978a, 1978b) and the strongest influence of all is widely acknowledged to be Marlowe.⁹² If the writer behind the works of Shakespeare is in fact Marlowe, the detection of his own style, and the influence of those in whose company he clearly spent his time, is understandable. Under the orthodox paradigm we must put it down to coincidence that Shakespeare's greatest influences were Marlowe and his social circle (primarily Watson and Nashe), despite the lack of corroborating evidence that the orthodox candidate was in any way connected to them. '[T]he greatest of Nashe's literary contemporaries is the one never mentioned by name in his pamphlets' says Nicholl, describing yet another piece in the catalogue of missing evidence for Shakespeare as 'a curious oversight' (Nicholl, 1984: 203). Shakespeare is everywhere absent.

5.5.3 Anne Cornwaleys Her Book

In 1852, esteemed Shakespeare biographer J. O. Halliwell-Phillips published a commentary on an item that was described in an 1844 Sotheby's Auction catalogue as

"SHAKESPEARE. A POETICAL MISCELLANY OF THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH, containing verses by Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford, Sir Edward Dyer, Vavasor, G. M., Sir P. Sidney, and Shakespeare; russia, 4 to."

The item, known as the Cornwallis–Lysons manuscript and now in the Folger Library (Folger MS V.A.89), is identified on its second page, in a large, immature italic hand, 'Anne Cornwaleys her booke'. The poems copied within it are in a different hand, and

⁹² A collection of scholarly quotes to back up this statement can be found in Appendix A.

include two unpublished sonnets that would later be attributed to Shakespeare, and another which would appear under Shakespeare's name in William Jaggard's 1599 anthology *The Passionate Pilgrim*.

The manuscript was exceptional, said Halliwell-Phillips in 'containing the earliest copy of any of Shakespeare's writings known to exist. The writing of the MS. is very early; and I very much doubt if any portion of the volume was written as late as 1590. If I am correct in this supposition, we have here a strong confirmation ... that Shakespeare began to write at an earlier period than has been usually supposed.' An attempted revision of this sort leads to difficulties for the orthodox paradigm: as we have seen, the earliest possible allusion to Shakespeare in London is in 1592 (and is in any case doubtful), and the first published poem was *Venus and Adonis* in 1593. It may be in order to overcome such difficulties that Halliwell-Phillips later revised his estimate of latest date from 1590 to 1595. Subsequent commentators have seen fit to revise the date even later, despite the mismatch between a later date and Miss Cornwallis's adolescence.

Nevertheless this interesting piece of evidence is seemingly never mentioned in biographies, presumably because the absence of any documented or even speculative connection between the orthodox candidate and the Cornwallis family does not allow this piece of evidence to be woven into the biographical narrative. How did Anne Cornwallis, a young girl residing in a mansion just east of Bishopsgate Street Without, come to acquire unpublished poems by Shakespeare?

Oxfordians point out that Anne Cornwallis was the daughter of William Cornwallis, formerly of Brome, in Suffolk, who in the autumn of 1588 had purchased Fisher's Folly from the Earl of Oxford. It is believed that Oxford entertained a coterie of writers at the house, and that the poems (which include poems by Oxford) came from

manuscripts the earl left behind. Scholars initially assumed that Anne had copied the poems herself, but since they were transcribed in ‘an accomplished secretary hand’ it is now thought they were ‘simply chosen to please a romantic adolescent and presented to Anne by a friend or relative’ (Marshall, 2005).

The evidence, inexplicable under the orthodox paradigm, and dangerous because of a documented connection between Anne Cornwallis and a non-Stratfordian authorship candidate, is one of many free-floating dots of evidence that the Marlovian paradigm, also, allows to be joined as part of a larger narrative. Between 1588 and 1592, and falling precisely within the 1588-95 timeframe that Halliwell-Phillips identified, Marlowe’s friend and fellow poet Thomas Watson was a tutor to the Cornwallis children (ostensibly to Anne’s older brother John, but it is clear the daughters were also educated). It is thought likely that he was simultaneously working as a political agent, since the family were Catholic and the father was under surveillance for recusancy from 1587 (Chatterley, 2004).

The first part of the manuscript contains seven poems autographed by John Bentley. Bentley’s association with Marlowe is documented by Thomas Dekker in *A Knight’s Conjuring* (Dekker, 1607: Kf4v). That the Cornwallis copybook contains love poems by poets known to Watson might be considered with interest alongside the fact that the poet was involved in an attempt by his wife’s younger brother, the musician Thomas Swift, to woo another Cornwallis daughter. Legal documents recount that Watson was involved in a scheme whereby Swift (who was a resident in the Cornwallis household), attempted to blackmail Anne Cornwallis’s fourteen-year-old sister, Frances, into marrying him. The document (drawn up by another of Watson’s brothers-in-law, the attorney Hugh Swift) was ‘hurriedly effected before morning lessons in front of witnesses’ and Watson was later accused of being ‘the plot-layer of this matter’.

Thomas Watson died of unknown causes in September 1592 before the case was heard in Star Chamber, and his death was registered at St Bartholomew-the-Less (in the grounds of the hospital) ten days before Hugh Swift's in the same place.

There is no need to ignore the Cornwallis copybook, or to posit abandoned manuscripts, when a person well-versed in the work of contemporary English poets, and personally acquainted with several of them, was working as a tutor to the Cornwallis children. Under the Marlovian paradigm, Thomas Watson provides the means by which a collection of poetry, including unpublished sonnets later identified as Shakespeare's, is gifted to Anne Cornwallis.

5.5.4. Vaughan On Valladolid

In July 1602, a letter (transcribed by Leslie Hotson in *The Death of Christopher Marlowe*) was sent by William Vaughan to 'the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sir Thomas Egerton, Sir Robert Cecil, and the Rest of the Council' reporting the activities of Jesuit priests abroad. A section of the letter concerns a man who had entered the seminary at Valladolid, according to the Colleges's *Liber Alumnorum*, as John Matthew alias Christopher Marler.⁹³ Vaughan writes

'In the said seminary there is . . . one Christopher Marlor (as he will be called), but yet for certainty his name is Christopher, sometime master in arts of Trinity College in Cambridge, of very low stature, well set, of a black round beard, not yet priest, but to come over in the mission of the next year ensuing. . . '

(Hotson, 1925: 60)

Hotson uses this letter to argue that the Christopher Morley for whom the Privy Council intervened just before his commencement to M.A. in 1587 was the poet, not Christopher Morley of Trinity, on the basis they would surely not intervene on behalf of a man who was subversive enough to become a Jesuit priest. What Hotson did not

⁹³ "Joannes Matheus (alias Christopher Marlerus) Cantabrigiensis admissus est in hoc Collegium die 30 Maii an^o 1599". [John Matthew alias Christopher Marler of Cambridge is admitted into this college on 30 May 1599.]

know was that Christopher Morley of Trinity had died in 1596, his will being proved there by the Vice Chancellor's Court after his having been a fellow at Trinity for a decade. In the light of this information some Marlovians have become convinced that the man at Valladolid from 1599 to 1602 is Marlowe himself, although how a man could expect to remain hidden using his own name is difficult to explain.⁹⁴ Peter Farey has argued convincingly against this, and it seems more likely that the Valladolid man is Trinity graduate John Matthew, using as an alias the name of a former tutor he knew to be dead (Farey, 2010).⁹⁵

What remains interesting, and what Hotson describes as an 'odd coincidence', is that the author of the letter is the same William Vaughan who two years earlier in *The Golden Grove* (1600) wrote the only reasonably accurate account of Marlowe's death to be published until Hotson's own book three hundred and twenty-five years later. Vaughan, compared with most of his contemporaries, seems to have been well-informed in the matter of Marlowe's death, probably due to his court connections: his step-mother, Lettice Vaughan, was sister-in-law to Dorothy Vaughan nee Devereux, the sister of the Earl of Essex (Nicholl, 2002: 93). If there were any rumours that Marlowe's death was too convenient, and was suspected of being faked, Vaughan is likely to have heard them. This might explain not only his interest in this man of so similar a name, but also the physical description. There is no reason why Vaughan would know what Marlowe looked like, but he wants to inform the Privy Council (who would have met Marlowe when he responded in person to their warrant on 20 May 1593) that this particular Christopher Marl-, is 'of very low stature, well set, of a black

⁹⁴ Nevertheless, this was successfully achieved over a much smaller geographical distance even in our recent and relatively well-connected times. Johnny Sterling Martin faked his own death in 1979 and lived under his own name for 20 years in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina just 150 miles from his original home, before being spotted by one of his ex-wives <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10924038/from/ET/> Valladolid is 1000 miles from London; a significant distance in 1602.

⁹⁵ FAREY, <http://marlowe-shakespeare.blogspot.com/2010/07/john-matthew-alias-christopher-marlowe.html>. Mathew left Trinity the year Morley died.

round beard.’ We cannot take this as certain proof that Vaughan suspected the Valladolid priest to be the poet, but the ‘odd coincidence’ that the writer of this letter was well-versed in the official version of the Deptford incident, and the otherwise unnecessary physical description, would be neatly explained by that reading of the evidence. The physical description is not detailed enough to apprehend this Jesuit should he find his way to England (especially if he shaved), and is not sufficient to identify any particular man unless that man was already known to the letter’s recipients.

5.6 Jonson’s Ambiguities

Ben Jonson is central to any discussion of the Shakespeare authorship question. Jonson is given in myth to have had a particularly close relationship with Shakespeare, as indicated by the imagined wit battles at the Mermaid Club, and the unverifiable anecdotes about ‘latten spoons’. It is Jonson who in his commendatory poem in the *First Folio* (1623) provides the first documented link between the works of Shakespeare and the man from Stratford-upon-Avon with his reference to ‘sweet swan of Avon’ (the second linking reference being from Leonard Digges in the same volume: ‘thy Stratford monument’). Jonson also confirms a separation between Marlowe and Shakespeare when he effectively maps the lineage of Shakespeare’s plays:

*‘how far thou dost our Lily out-shine,
or sporting Kid or Marlowes mighty line.’*

Jonson’s testimony on Shakespeare, however, is anything but unambiguous. Jonson’s cast lists, headed by ‘Will. Shakespeare’ as ‘Principal Comedian’ in 1598 and ‘Will. Shake-Speare’ as ‘Principal Tragedian’ in 1603, have already been mentioned. These cast lists were published in 1616, just after Shakspeare died; they do not appear on earlier

quarto versions of the plays. As Price notes, this means that ‘during Shakspeare’s lifetime, Jonson wrote nothing about Shakespeare – or Shakspere – by name, a surprising omission for an author who wrote explicitly about most of his literary colleagues’ (Price, 2001: 68).

Having listed Will Shakespeare as a comedian in *Every Man In His Humour* (1598), Jonson may have mercilessly mocked the Stratford shareholder as unintentional clown Sogliardo in *Every Man Out Of His Humour* (1599) the following year. The words ‘Non, sanz droit’ (no, without right) are written on John Shakespeare’s first application for arms (1596), indicating that the application was rejected. The phrase appears again without a comma ‘Non sanz droit’ (not without right) on the second application, which some have taken to be Shakspere’s motto, although it was never used. Jonson’s Sogliardo, who has bribed officials in order to acquire the status of a gentleman through a coat of arms, has the motto ‘Not without mustard’; a joke perhaps at a man who mistook the herald’s refusal as a motto. Sogliardo has been accepted as a satirical hit at Shakspere by scholars including E.K. Chambers and H. Gibson. That Schoenbaum rejected the allusion is not surprising given its context: Sogliardo’s coat of arms, the crest of which most unusually depicts a ‘Boar without a head, rampant’ is described as very fitting: ‘I commend the Herald’s wit, he has deciphered him well: A swine without a head, without brain, wit, anything indeed, ramping to gentility’ (III.iv).

It is hard to reconcile the character of Sogliardo with a man of whom Jonson made the declaration ‘I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry’; but reading Jonson’s references through a non-Stratfordian paradigm removes the problem. The insulting portrait would be aimed at the theatre company shareholder who had recently succeeded in deceiving and bribing the herald into obtaining a coat of

arms, William Shakspere.⁹⁶ The love would be reserved for *the author* William Shakespeare, the man to whom Jonson's poem is pointedly addressed:



To the memory of my beloued,
The AVTHOR
MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE:
AND
what he hath left vs.

Though Jonson declined to say anything about the author in Shakespeare's lifetime, and published no personal recollection of him during his own, the posthumous publication of Jonson's commonplace book, *Timber, or Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter* (1641) contains a small passage that suggests he had personal knowledge of the man behind the works.

'De Shakspeare nostrat. - I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakspeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, "Would he had blotted a thousand," which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this but for their ignorance who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by wherein he most faulted; and to justify mine own candour, for I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any. He was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature, had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped. "Sufflaminandus erat," as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so, too. Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter, as when he said in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him, "Cæsar, thou dost me wrong." He replied, "Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause;" and such like, which were

⁹⁶ That Shakespeare's coat of arms was wrongly awarded is confirmed by it being one of several objected to by the York Herald in 1602. The 'errors, exaggerated claims and misrepresentations' are explored by PRICE (2001: 72-3). A bribe is implied in Sogliardo's exchange with Carlo; the application's many deficiencies, and the subsequent complaint 'lend weight to the suggestion that a bribe compensated for any deficiencies.'

ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned.'

(Jonson and Schelling, 1892: 23)

'In the remarks *de Shakespeare Nostrati* we have, doubtless, Ben's closet-opinion of his friend, opposed as it seems to be to that in his address to Britain [the Folio poem]' says Clement Ingleby (1874: 172). Reading this passage through the Marlovian paradigm, there are several points of particular interest. One is the description of his exchange with the players, who appear to have been proud that Shakespeare 'never blotted out a line' and thought Jonson's retort 'Would he had blotted a thousand' to be malicious. We are reminded of Heminges and Condell in their *Epistle to the Great Variety of Readers* in the *First Folio*, who said 'His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers'.⁹⁷

Jonson's comment that they thought his retort 'a malevolent speech' implies that it was not, so it is worth considering how 'Would he had blotted a thousand' might be interpreted as supportive of the author. The players' comment suggests that it was unusual to receive plays without authorial corrections; Jonson, being a writer himself, would know that corrections are an essential part of the writing process. If the plays being passed to the company by William Shakspere were not his own, but fair copies of the original author's foul papers, it would explain the lack of corrections. Ben Jonson's comment under this reading of the passage would therefore be that he wished the author had been in a position to present the plays as his own: not a malevolent suggestion. If there is another interpretation under which the line 'Would he had blotted a thousand' is not malevolent, it is not immediately apparent; no alternative has yet been offered by

⁹⁷ Heminges and Condell give their own interpretation of what the blotless papers mean; Jonson alludes to a different cause. If the cause were in line with Heminges and Condell's assumption, Jonson's retort could only correctly be interpreted as malevolence.

orthodox scholarship, who seem to accept Jonson's apparently contradictory attitudes to Shakespeare, and indeed this statement's malevolence, on the basis that Jonson's relationship with him was somewhat two-faced.⁹⁸

Another non-Stratfordian point, originally raised by Greenwood, is that unblotted manuscripts do not sit well with the less-than-fluent signatures we have for Shakspeare. 'But let the reader glance at Shakspeare's signatures, and ask himself if it is possible to conceive that the Shakespearean dramas were not only written by the man who so wrote, but written without a blot! No; if the anti-Stratfordian case seems improbable here, surely the "orthodox" case is more improbable still, so improbable indeed, as to be incredible. And of two improbabilities, if such there be, it is wise to choose the less' (Greenwood, 1921: 31).

Jonson compares the author to Haterius, the Roman orator who spoke so freely that he offended his emperor. *Sufflaminandus erat* is translated in the 1892 edition of *Discoveries* as 'He had to be repressed.' That Shakespeare had to be repressed is not a traditional view of the author. 'Sufflaminandus erat' immediately follows Jonson's observation that the writer 'was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature, had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped.' Orthodox scholars must necessarily interpret the passage as referring to verbal fluency which Jonson sometimes halted, but the reference to the repression of Haterius⁹⁹ suggests a more political and public 'stopping' of the kind alluded to by the author of the sonnets, who complained of being 'tongue-tied by authority'. Under a Marlovian interpretation, it would be no coincidence that Jonson's wording echoes the Baines Note, where it was urged that 'all

⁹⁸ A necessary assumption if we are not to begin considering that Jonson is referring to two different people.

⁹⁹ Quintus Haterius, who was alive at the same time as the subject of one of Jonson's plays, Sejanus, was a fluent and popular orator whose 'eloquence while he lived was in the highest celebrity.'

men in christianitei ought to endeavor that the mouth of so dangerous a member may be stopped.'

Jonson's description of the writer as 'honest' might seem difficult to tally with the court records discovered by Mateer, but as discussed, Marlowe was not unusual among writers of the period in being taken to court for unpaid loans. These incidents do not appear to have been public knowledge, and in any case they happened in the late 1580s, before Jonson was involved on the literary scene. Documentary evidence – the evasion of taxes and the hoarding of grain - would not support Shakspere's honesty either. Given the context, it seems more likely that the 'honesty' to which Jonson refers is more to do with speaking of things as he saw them; the very quality that would necessitate his mouth being stopped.

The 'open and free nature' of which Jonson speaks tallies well with what we know of Marlowe, both through his friends' posthumous report, and through the descriptions of his table talk from Richard Baines and Thomas Kyd. It was speaking too freely, Nashe said, that cost him his life, which 'he con[d]emned in comparison of the liberty of speech.' Despite the enthusiasm with which orthodox scholars apply Jonson's comments to their candidate, there is no other evidence which corroborates the idea that Shakspere was of an 'open and free nature' and plenty to contradict it: the complete absence of reported conversation suggests he was taciturn to a fault, rather than 'open', and that he had a 'free nature' is contradicted by the many documents relating to his business activities, which include pursuing debtors and their sureties through the courts, and his very conventional behaviour with respect to his daughters' education.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Shakspere certainly had the money to educate his daughters, but chose not to; the usual course for families of yeoman stock.

If the author William Shakespeare is really Marlowe, and we read the passage in *Timber* as indicating that Jonson knows this, what could he have meant by the reference to ‘Sweet swan of Avon’ in the poem addressed to the author in the First Folio?

Sweet swan of *Avon!* what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appeare,
And make those flights upon the bankes of *Thames*,
That so did take *Eliza*, and our *James!*¹⁰¹

Swans are famously mute. Sogliardo – that possible parody of Shakspeare – has a nephew who is described as ‘kinsman to justice Silence’; a clear reference to Shakespeare’s *Henry IV Part 2*, but one that opens the possibility that Silence and Sogliardo are two names for the same man. There are several non-Stratfordian interpretations of ‘Sweet swan of Avon!’ but one possibility is that this is not a reference to the author but rather a mock oath, a dramatic cry of thanks, to the discreet man who allowed him to continue producing work by ‘fronting’ it for him.¹⁰²

Jonson then continues in his address to ‘The AUTHOR William Shakespeare’, ‘what a sight it were / To see thee in our waters yet appeare.’ The orthodox paradigm cannot account for that small word ‘yet’, and the oddness of this phrase does not appear to have been noticed. This is not surprising, given that it makes no sense under the orthodox paradigm.¹⁰³ One might suggest that Jonson had no other way of making the line metrical, but the choice of ‘yet’ as padding (over other possibilities) would still be curious. Jonson was an accomplished poet, and would have had no problem meeting the metrical demands of the poem without torturing his sense. Substituting for ‘waters’ a

¹⁰¹ Under this interpretation, one might conclude Jonson intended ‘take’ to bear, in addition to ‘enthral or capture’ the secondary meaning of OED 11: **11**. *intr.* Of a plan, operation, etc.: To have the intended result; to succeed, be effective, take effect, ‘come off’; the first documented usage in this context is 1622, the year before the Folio’s publication.

¹⁰² The best exploration of the idea that Shakespeare was a ‘front’, and useful comparison with the Hollywood writers blacklisted under McCarthyism in the 1950s, can be found in PINKSEN, D. (2008) *Marlowe’s Ghost: The Blacklisting of the Man Who Was Shakespeare*, Bloomington, IN, iUniverse.

¹⁰³ It doesn’t make sense under a Baconian or Oxfordian one either, and the same can be said with their application to ‘Sufflaminandus erat’. Marlovian Theory is the only authorship paradigm in which the author was suppressed.

three-syllable word or phrase of the correct stress-pattern would entirely remove the need for the extra syllable:

*'What a sight it were
To see thee in our rivers' flow appear.'*

Or Jonson could have achieved a full rhyme by substituting 'appear' and using the word 'tributaries':

*'What a sight it were
To see thee in our tributaries stir.'*

Indeed, one could argue the gentle pun of 'tributaries' would be even more satisfying than the neutral 'waters', in a poetic tribute to an author who had achieved wide acclaim. There are numerous poetic possibilities besides metrical padding.

But Jonson has written 'yet', and 'yet', combined with 'what a sight it were', suggests a surprising continuance; something that makes sense only under the Marlovian paradigm. Under the orthodox one, Shakespeare was never repressed, his art was not tongue-tied by authority (the sonnets being merely a literary exercise), and Jonson's delight at the sight of the author's continued appearance in literary waters is so inexplicable that it is simply missed.