

smith, who sweats as he beats his work into shape. The term 'second heat' refers to the phase in metal-working known as *tempering* when, having beaten the metal into its initial form, the smith allows it to cool, then reheats it for further beating. Jonson is comparing these rounds of heating and cooling, a process that strengthens the metal, to the rounds of revision required by good writing, revisions being the 'Art' that 'makes' a writer, even the most innately gifted. Revision over a period of years is a better explanation for the anomalous topical references and alterations in language in some of Shakespeare's plays than the theory that these necessarily reveal the work of a co-author or later reviser, as those who see him as a commercial hack would have it.

Shine forth, thou Star of Poets

But the most important clues offered by Jonson, to Shakespeare's identity and work, may be contained in his final lines: 'Shine forth, thou Star of Poets, and with rage or influence, chide or cheer the drooping stage.' What does he mean by pairing rage and influence, chiding and cheering? Aren't these pairs duplications? That Shakespeare's works, published in their true form in the First Folio, will both condemn what's wrong with the present and encourage a return to something better? Is he speaking only of the Stage, or perhaps in broader terms, of what it represents, the power to change humanity, to change the way it thinks and acts? Isn't 'rage' too strong a word for the pretence of emotion generated by an actor? If we knew that Shakespeare meant, not just to entertain, but to move his audiences to action, what sorts of action would he be advocating? What influence? And what did his pun name manifest: I 'will shake [a] spear!' Surely this is what Jonson—who himself was in trouble more than once for his satires—meant by *rage*, *influence*, and *chide*.

Finally, to return to the introduction and its use of the word 'envy,' we may note that the initials for Ned (Edward) Vere are NV. Can Jonson's opening line be read: 'To draw no NV on your name'? Is this another instance of stating a fact as a denial? Could he have meant instead to be speaking to those who knew the truth?

Are we perhaps reading a little too much into Jonson's rather peculiar Ode? On the other hand, wouldn't the true author's followers be studying his dedication for just such sleights of hand? Wouldn't Jonson know they would be expecting to see their hero acknowledged in the subtle ways he demonstrated so often in his many odes and epigrams, doing a little 'sweating' himself to produce something worthy of the greatest wordsmith of them all?

S.H.H

¹ A comment made in a private notebook published (1640) after his death (1637) as *Timber* or *Discoveries*.

2 There would have been much discussion of who the true author of the Shakespeare canon was during the first two decades of the 17th century. One candidate would certainly have been John Fletcher.

Editor's note:

The foregoing article was submitted to me some time ago, and well before the discussion which is being pursued on Phaeton about the meaning of 'Though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek'. To bring non-Phaetoners up to date, there have been two major suggestions. One is that the small Latin and less Greek refers to the complete lack of scholarly epitaphs on the death of Shakespeare. The other, ingenious, suggestion made by DVS member Jean Holmes, is that it refers to the few lines in Latin on the monument in Stratford church.

Soul of The Age – The Life, Mind and World of William Shakespeare **(Viking 2008) by Jonathan Bate:** **Review by Richard Malim**

Jonathan Bate's 1997 book *The Genius of Shakespeare* contained some of the most detailed attacks on those students who doubt William Shakespeare's claim to authorship: it was therefore with some trepidation that we awaited the publication of this book since the attacks in the earlier book have long since been taken care of.

We need not have worried. *Soul of the Age* starts with the idea that the life can be linked to the seven ages of man speech in *As You Like It* – a pretty conceit, illustrated by a German 14th-century woodcut instead of the more modern pavement tessellated version on the floor of the Cathedral at Siena, opened in 1572. The City was visited by Oxford in January 1575/6, and the link with him is infinitely closer than the alleged much older one, which was probably unknown in England at the time, with William Shakespeare.

...Shakespeare was unique among the dramatists of his age in locating scenes in Warwickshire and Gloucestershire. This little observed fact is something of a problem for those conspiracy theorists who do not believe that the plays were written by a grammar-school boy from Warwickshire.

Are not many of the other fifty counties represented too? I enquire. As for 'conspiracy theorists', we will continue to have to write on every occasion, THERE WAS NO CONSPIRACY, until the allegation is finally dropped. The country bumpkin aspect is played for all it is worth,

notwithstanding the obvious fact that, aristocrats included, 95% of all Tudor children would have had approximately the same rural experiences as William in his youth. Oxford for his part was quite capable as his alter ego Autolycus shows in *The Winter's Tale* of picking the Clown's pocket for local colour.

Bate is determined to convince his readers that Shakespeare received a full education at Stratford Grammar School, that he had access to all the books he needed and even had a library of his own, for which propositions there is nothing that remotely qualifies as evidence. All three depend on the single scene in Act IV of *Merry Wives of Windsor* between William Page the representation of William Shakespeare and the ridiculous Welsh schoolmaster Hugh Evans. I think William Page would have been played by quite a large boy, after all he is the younger brother of the marriageable juvenile lead Anne Page; but even if he is supposed to be quite young, he is shown to be useless. The few of us who started Latin at eight would well remember in the second year of it, or even earlier, chanting in class :

*Hic, haec, hoc; hunc, hanc, hoc; huius, huius, huius;
huic, huic, huic; hoc, hac, hoc :*
(plural) *hi, hae, haec; hos, has, haec; horum, harum,
horum; his, his, his; his, his, his.*

William says 'hinc' for 'hunc', and even the typesetter gets that wrong. William has no clue over *qui, quae, quod* (who, which). Evans praises to him to his mother (who pays his fees?), and the mother's pride ('He is a better scholar than I thought he was') would have greeted with hoots of mirth by the well-birched Elizabethan audience.

On this rickety structure Bate builds some 60 pages outlining William's progress class by class in education, by frequent references to the plays. All of this is evidence of the playwright's education, but not that of William of Stratford - upon - Avon. Even if it were proved that William was a pupil there, there is no evidence that Stratford Grammar School was up to the task: it failed to send any boy to University in the period. Then we run into the stock in trade of every orthodox biographer.

Shakespeare was an opportune (reader) ... As he borrowed words and stories, so he may have borrowed rather than bought some of his books. Schoolfriend Richard Field, two and a half years older, had already walked the road to London ... It was to him, now established in his own business, that Shakespeare turned in 1593-4 for the publication of his poems Venus and

Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece. [From his stock] he could easily have provided in-house copies [of other works] to his fellow Stratfordian on long loan - or indeed offered them as gifts or purchases on loan.

Or not - the whole quotation is pure imagination and totally valueless as biography, and we wade through fifteen pages of it. It finishes with a list of the books that he might have owned back in Stratford at the end of his career, of which poor Dr Wilmot just over 150 years later after covering himself with the dust of every private library for 50 around could find no trace.

Here is another piece of valueless biography, written with one 'perhaps', and no 'mays', or 'mights':

So for instance, while he was writing The Tempest in the year 1611, one of his several acquaintances who were associated with the Virginia Company - the Earl of Pembroke, or a member of the Digges family, perhaps - passed him one or more of the 'Bermuda pamphlets' describing the shipwreck of Sir Thomas Gates in the Caribbean [BERMUDA IS NOT IN THE CARIBBEAN - RM]. He snapped up a few nautical details, began imagining a tempest, an island and a new world of his own, then in all probability [!- RM] gave the pamphlet back or tossed it aside.

The evidence that he wiped his baby granddaughter's buttocks with it is equally compelling.

Shakespeare's knowledge of the law rarely goes beyond 'commonplace jargon ... thin in comparison with that to be found in the dramas of many of his contemporaries' save that 'As a man of property, he knew the intricacies and technical terms of property law'. Other fields 'could easily have been picked up from the street and the tavern, from reading and the experience of litigation'. This summary flies in the face of the opinion of any lawyer who has studied the question.

Again Bate's touch with the evidence is less than sure: we have apparently two lists of non attenders at Church in 1592, the second of which contains the names of Bardolph and Fluellen: suspicious minds immediately think that this list is a Collier forgery (or piece of doctoring) as the first list omits them. Bate omits any reference to the first list.

He quotes John Davies, noting that Davies calls Shakespeare 'our English Terence', but not that some educated Elizabethans would immediately think that, like Terence (as they believed), Shakespeare was a front name for the real author.

Where Bate really comes unstuck is over

his thesis that Shakespeare was in semi-retirement back in Stratford from 1604 onwards, sending his new plays up to London, some for collaborative amendment, without being involved in their production. As one critic has put it, this is a 'strange tree to go barking up ...it betrays a misunderstanding of theatrical practicalities to suggest that a highly experienced playwright would allow new works to be staged without being intimately involved in their production.'

A great deal of space is devoted to the Essex rebellion and why there was no prosecution of the author of *Richard II*, without a final explanation for the latter. No doubt this is of great interest to the Nevillistas, but the obvious answer (which being simple stands the best chance of being right) is that the actors were protected by some great personage. He just happened to be the author as well, so William Shakespeare was not involved anyway.

A similar problem arises with the sources for the later plays which Bate properly attributes in part to Montaigne, as translated by Florio and published in 1603. Oxford could read the original French, and so the plays' dating is not limited to later dates.

There is one useful investigation for which the Professor deserves commendation, his investigation into the status of the Lambarde-Queen Elizabeth conversation after Essex's rebellion. First of all there is some doubt whether Lambarde's book *Pandecta Rotulorum* (which he was presenting to the Queen) was ever written: the whole story seems to be a concoction of some descendant of the family.

'Gathering what we can from his plays and poems: that is how we will write a biography that is true to [William Shakespeare]'. But the process has immense perils .. (another academic writes) 'if his biography is to be found, it has to be here, in the plays and poems, *but never literally, and never provably*' (Bate's italics). Thus Bate introduces his book. The problem for him and his like is that the literal approach (and how do you grade one degree of acceptable literalness from another of unacceptable literalness?) goes to prove the utter irrelevance of William Shakespeare, so of course literalness is an antiseptic that the bugs of orthodoxy must avoid as must the plague.

R.M.

Professor Bate's view of the Lambarde letter has been criticised (lambasted?) by his reviewer and subsequent correspondence in the Times Literary Supplement. R.M.

A plea from your Editor

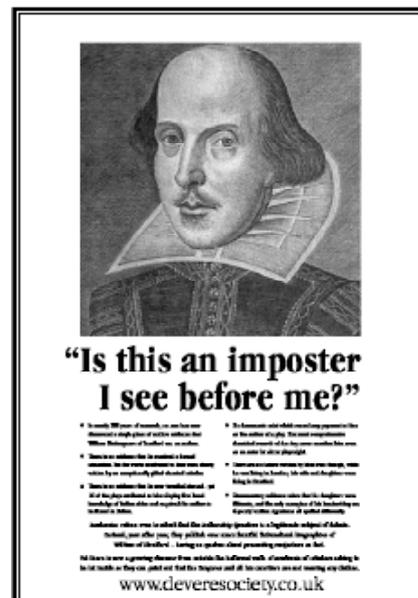
Dear contributors,

I am truly delighted to receive all your brilliant contributions, but you could make my life so much easier by observing a couple of simple rules.

The style of your Word documents, such as italic fonts, and line lengths, will not pass through into a typesetting programme like the one I use, which is InDesign. So please, please do not lay them out beautifully with lots of letter spacings, tabs, and returns at the ends of the lines. They will not come through into the right places, and I will have to remove them all. It can take hours.

The Newsletter house style uses single quotations marks, with double quotes for quotations within quotations, and only one space after full stops, and I would be so grateful if you would do the same. The reason for this is that both practices save an amazing amount of space and therefore paper and money.

Cordially, Elizabeth Imlay.



DVS poster: download it from the website: www.deveresociety.co.uk