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VOLUME 12

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

EDITED BY JOHN DOVER WILSON



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## INTRODUCTION

### TO *HENRY VI*, PARTS II AND III

#### I. THEATRICAL ORIGINS

In the Introduction to *1 Henry VI* I attempted to prove, what has long been suspected, that that play was first performed several months or more after the production of its historical sequel.<sup>1</sup> It follows that the *Second* and *Third Parts of Henry VI*, as they are called in the Folio of 1623, which furnished the earliest authentic texts of all three plays, must originally have passed under other names. What these names were may be gathered from the title-pages of two editions, published in 1594 and 1595, almost a generation before Jaggard printed the folio versions. They are 'bad' texts, that is to say they represent what Professor Alexander<sup>2</sup> has shown to be memorial reconstructions of the genuine plays, almost certainly set down by members of a company which had performed the latter. But since such 'pirates' would be anxious to pass their fakes off as the real article we can feel confident that they made use of the names already familiar to the theatre-going public. Here then are the title-pages, which I fancy may have been taken directly from the playbills exhibited in the streets of London:<sup>3</sup>

THE | First part of the Con- | tention betwixt the two  
famous Houses of Yorke | and Lancafter, with the death of

<sup>1</sup> See Introduction to *1 Henry VI*, pp. xi-xiii.

<sup>2</sup> P. Alexander, *Shakespeare's 'Henry VI' and 'Richard III'*, 1929.

<sup>3</sup> The 1595 title, for instance, with its odd reference to 'the *whole* contention' might have been taken from a bill advertising performances of both parts together, and

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the good | Duke Humphrey: | And the banishment and  
 death of the Duke of | *Suffolke*, and the Tragical end of  
 the proud Cardinall | of *Winchester*, with the notable Rebel-  
 lion | of *Iacke Cade*: | *And the Duke of Yorke's first claime*  
 vnto the | Crowne. | [device] | LONDON | Printed by  
 Thomas Creed for Thomas Millington, | and are to be  
 fold at his shop vnder Saint Peters | Church in Cornwall. |  
 1594.

The true Tragedie of Richard | *Duke of Yorke*, and the  
*death of* | good King Henrie the Sixt, | *with the whole*  
*contention betweene* | the two Houses Lancafter | and Yorke,  
 as it was fundrie times | acted by the Right Honourable  
 the Earle of Pem- | brooke his seruants. | [device] | Printed  
 at London by P. S. for Thomas Milling- | ton, and are to  
 be sold at his shoppe vnder | Saint Peters Church in | Cornwall.  
 1595.

Our *Second* and *Third Parts of Henry VI* were,  
 therefore, once called the *First and Second Parts of the*  
*Contention*. But three or four years lie between their  
 first productions and the publications which give us  
 this information.

Shortly before his death on 3 September 1592,  
 Robert Greene alluded in print to a line from  
 3 *Henry VI* in his well-known attack upon Shakespeare  
 discussed below. Thus a Shakespearian 2 and 3 *Henry VI*  
 were in existence at that date; and, inasmuch as all the  
 London theatres had been closed since 22 June, they  
 must actually have been seen on the stage before mid-  
 summer. Indeed, one can be even more definite.  
 Greene does not quote the line, he adapts or parodies  
 it; nor does he mention *Henry VI* or give any indication  
 where the line comes from. In other words, the allusion  
 would have been quite unintelligible except to readers

---

emphasizing as attractive novelties to members of the public  
 who had so far seen the first part only, the two chief  
 'tragical' scenes of its successor. But if this supposition be  
 correct, the bill must date from the spring of 1592.

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who had the play fresh in memory. While *3 Henry VI* must then have been acted before 23 June, frequent performances of it were in all probability being seen not long before that. In short we may surmise that it was originally produced early in 1592, if not towards the end of 1591, and that it had figured prominently in some company's repertory during the spring. And though, no doubt, once *2 Contention* appeared on the stage, *1 Contention* was played along with it, the production of this earlier part probably dates from some time in the first half of 1591. These deductions are, moreover, strengthened and supplemented by what we know for certain of the circumstances attending the production of *1 Henry VI*. This, the last written of the three, was, we are informed by Henslowe's *Diary*, given its first performance at his theatre, the Rose, on 3 March 1592, a date which fits in very well with the dates just proposed for the other two. On the other hand, while Henslowe records fourteen performances of *1 Henry VI* at the Rose between 19 February and 22 June, the other two Henry VI plays find no mention at all in the *Diary*, although this is the very period, as we have just inferred from Greene's allusion, when Londoners must have been flocking to see them. And even if we set that inference aside and allow ourselves to imagine all three Parts in the possession of the company at the Rose, can we conceive of them excluding Parts II and III from their repertory when they were making large profits out of Part I? Clearly, while they played *1 Henry VI* another company was playing *2* and *3 Henry VI* at another theatre.

As a matter of fact we know the names of both companies. For Henslowe, once again, tells us his was the Lord Strange's men, led by Edward Alleyn, a Lord Admiral's man, while the title-page of the 1595 text claims the Earl of Pembroke's servants as the former

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possessors of *The Whole Contention* which includes, I take it, both plays. Yet this does not carry us far, since unfortunately we know very little about the Pembroke company. In the summer of 1592 a plague of quite unusual severity set in and continued to rage during most of 1593. All the London theatres, originally closed on 23 June on account of some disorder, remained in consequence closed for sixteen months, though a brief season of some five weeks was allowed round about January. Thus the companies, forced to travel, were often reduced to extreme shifts, while changes in personnel, disintegration and re-shaping were frequent. The year 1594, indeed, which saw the formation of the Lord Chamberlain's men with Shakespeare, Richard Burbage and Kempe as their leaders, was virtually a fresh starting-point for the acting profession. Little wonder then that the stage-history of this period is difficult to follow. Of the Pembroke men in particular nothing is recorded before the period begins, and only three facts while it lasts: that they were playing at Leicester late in 1592, that they gave two plays at Court during the following Christmas festivities, and that in August 1593 they returned from another tour in a bankrupt condition. This catastrophe, no doubt, explains the appearance of their name on the title-pages of four plays published soon afterwards: two good texts, *Titus Andronicus* and Marlowe's *Edward II*, and two bad ones, the 2 *Contention* of 1595 and *The Taming of a Shrew*. Beyond these meagre details and a few later references, which suggest that the company may have survived the crisis of 1593, we have one important inference, drawn by scholars from the names of actors who can be traced as Pembroke men, namely that the company was related to two other companies, Strange's and the Admiral's, those in fact which were, as it seems, playing together at the Rose.

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The problem this raises as regards *Henry VI* has not, I think, been squarely faced hitherto. Sir Edward Chambers, for example, while admitting as a 'tenable theory' that Part I 'was put together in 1592, to exploit an earlier theme which had been successful' in Parts II and III,<sup>1</sup> propounds another and I think inconsistent theory, which still holds the field, to account for the origin of the Pembroke men.<sup>2</sup> They were, he conjectures, a section of a combination of the Strange's and Admiral's companies just mentioned, which split off for touring purposes in the summer or autumn of 1592, since the double company would be far too large for the provinces, where only troupes strictly limited in size could hope to subsist. One objection to the theory is that the formation of a fresh company was unnecessary, since it was always open to the combination to divide into its original parts, one using the Admiral's and the other the Lord Strange's licence, and that this in point of fact is what actually took place, as Sir Edmund elsewhere shows.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the date he proposes for the formation of the Pembroke company cannot possibly be fitted in with those we have worked out for the early performances of 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, inasmuch as it would involve the absurdity of supposing plays produced before 3 March by a company which did not come into existence until some six months later. Yet by going back

<sup>1</sup> *William Shakespeare*, i. 292-3.

<sup>2</sup> Chambers's hypothesis and the details about the Pembroke men may be found in his *Elizabethan Stage*, ii. 128-31, while for the facts of the amalgamation between Strange's and the Admiral's see *ibid.* ii. 119-26.

<sup>3</sup> I owe this point to Sir Walter Greg, who has been good enough to read through this section and give me the benefit of his criticism, without necessarily subscribing to my conclusions.

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a little we may find a way round these difficulties. The alliance between the Strange's and Admiral's men was no new thing in 1592. Its story begins towards the end of 1590 or before, when Alleyn, the chief tragedian of the day was probably principal player in the Admiral's company, and Will Kempe, the chief comedian of the day, may already have become a player in Strange's company, though this is less certain. The purpose of the merger was, one may surmise, to dominate the London stage by beating all rivals out of the field. Anyhow, the scheme probably involved the possession of two theatres, since the combine engaged the Theatre in Shoreditch, built and owned by James Burbage, and Chambers is almost certainly right in his conjecture that with the Theatre went its 'easer' the Curtain, also controlled by Burbage. The scheme lasted, however, little over twelve months, for in May 1591 a violent quarrel broke out between Alleyn and the Burbages,<sup>1</sup> with the result that Alleyn went off to the opposition playhouse, the Rose on Bankside, built and owned by Philip Henslowe, with whom he entered into close association, marrying his stepdaughter and heiress in October 1592. And there his company continued to act down to the end of the century.

It was this quarrel in May 1591 and not the plague sixteen months later which led, I suggest, to the formation of Pembroke's men. That Alleyn induced all the players in the double company to cross the Thames with him seems unlikely. Chambers himself admits that Richard Burbage, who had been a member of it, almost certainly remained behind.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Alleyn took out a licence from the Privy Council in January 1593 to help him with local authorities while on tour, and this licence names six sharers belonging to the

<sup>1</sup> *Elizabethan Stage*, ii. 392, 394.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 125, 307.

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company at the Rose including Kempe and four other Strange's men, but of the Admiral's one only, Alleyn himself.<sup>1</sup> Where were the rest of the Admiral's? Had Alleyn monopolized all the shares in his own person? Or were the other sharers left at the Theatre? The Burbages were not men to be put down easily.<sup>2</sup> Is it not possible, even probable, that Richard, at this date about 24 years old and already, no doubt, aspiring to Alleyn's crown, persuaded a number of players to stay with him? If so, it would be necessary for him to find a fresh patron. For, as the records make clear, Alleyn had carried off the warrants both of Lord Strange and the Admiral.<sup>3</sup> I suggest that the second earl of Pembroke consented to lend his name and badge to the newly formed company, and that this was perhaps the beginning of a friendship between Burbage and the family at Wilton which lasted until the third earl was mourning 'the loss of his old acquaintance' in 1619,<sup>4</sup> and is perhaps still reflected in the dedication of the Shakespeare Folio in 1623 to the 'incomparable pair of brethren'. Guesswork, of course, but then so is the explanation given by Sir Edmund Chambers, and I think this guess covers more of the facts and possibilities. In particular it offers a plausible solution of the problem before us. For Shakespeare's 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, I conclude, originated at Burbage's Theatre, and were being played in 1591-2 by a company calling itself Lord Pembroke's men and including Richard Burbage. The summons to Court at the end of 1592 is a sufficient testimony to their success, while

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 391-2 gives a vivid picture of the family in action.

<sup>3</sup> Between 1592 and 1594 the Admiral's and Strange's appear in provincial documents as playing not only in combination but also separately. Cf. *ibid.* ii. 120.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 308.

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we may note that Marlowe appears to have written for them as well as Shakespeare, since *Edward II* was certainly theirs, and Sir Walter Greg has recently suggested that a recorded, though undated, performance of *Dr Faustus* at the Theatre was theirs also.<sup>1</sup>

## II. THE LITERARY ORIGINS

(a) *Back to Malone*

One thing is certain, that some way or other Shakespeare had a hand in all three Parts. His fellows, Heminge and Condell, attest this by including them in the Folio. Yet the degree of his responsibility has long been and still remains in doubt. As against the testimony of Heminge and Condell Francis Meres does not mention *Henry VI* in his list of Shakespeare's plays published in 1598, which suggests that the trilogy was not thought of as his at that date. And the style seems as contradictory as the external evidence; for, while 'many traits of Shakespeare are clearly discernible in' all three plays, 'the inferior parts are not merely unequal to the rest. . . but of quite a different complexion from the inferior parts of our author's undoubted performances'.<sup>2</sup> The words are taken from the opening paragraph of *A Dissertation on the Three Parts of 'Henry VI'*, 1790,<sup>3</sup> by Edmond Malone, who accounted for the incongruity by conjecturing that the plays were first composed by Greene and Peele<sup>4</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Marlowe's *'Dr Faustus'*, 1604-1616 (1950), pp. 61-2; which assumes that the Pembroke men date from 1592.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'I am...aware of jolts, of a kind of geological "fault" in the strata, that make it hard for me to suppose that the whole play was written by one writer' (M. R. Ridley, *3 Henry VI*, p. x, 'New Temple Shakespeare', 1936).

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted in *Malone's Shakespeare*, ed. by James Boswell, 1821, vol. xviii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 571.



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then touched up, in places indeed completely rewritten, by Shakespeare. But Malone knew that impressions of style, which he confessed first led him to this conclusion, afforded a very insecure basis for the persuasion of others. He therefore felt himself fortunate in being able to bring forward two pieces of external evidence; and by these he secured a favourable verdict from his contemporaries which was not seriously challenged until our own day.

The first of these was the passage already alluded to in which the dying Greene warned three 'fellow scholars about the city', two of them being certainly Peele and Marlowe, and the third in all probability Nashe, not to put their trust in the players:

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 being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is in his  
owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a Country.<sup>1</sup>

No one doubts that Greene meant Shakespeare by 'Shake-scene', or that he was not merely alluding to, or parodying, the line,

O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide,

which the dying York addresses to his tormentor Margaret at 3 *Henry VI*, 1. 4. 137,<sup>2</sup> but was pointing to that play as in some way connected with the said Shake-scene. But Malone went further: he took the taunt 'upstart crow beautified with our feathers' as a charge of plagiarism, and supposed 3 *Henry VI* cited as an instance of the theft. And the second piece of external evidence he brought forward seemed to

<sup>1</sup> *Groatsworth of Wit*, ed. G. B. Harrison, pp. 45-6; *Greene's Works*, ed. Grosart, xii. 144.      <sup>2</sup> v. note.

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supplement and corroborate the first in a very striking manner. For he convinced himself that in the texts of 1594 and 1595 we have the very originals by Greene and Peele which through Shakespeare's transforming genius became the 2 and 3 *Henry VI* of the Folio. Moreover, as this last contention lent itself to detailed illustration by way of parallel passages, much of his *Dissertation* and of his notes on the plays themselves were taken up with it. But we must not call this the 'foundation of his argument'.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, it was Greene's attack upon Shake-scene which he expressly described as 'the chief hinge' of the theory and declared 'first suggested' it to him.<sup>2</sup> Thus Professor Alexander's brilliant demonstration that the texts of 1594 and 1595, so far from being the originals of 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, are merely very imperfect memories of them, though it makes rubbish of a good many of Malone's notes, does not touch his main position at all. And what Alexander has to say upon that head is the weakest part of his reply.

A full defence of Malone would ask too much space in the course of a general introduction. But Professor Allardyce Nicoll was good enough to find room for one in his *Shakespeare Survey*, 1951, so that I need not do more here than briefly recapitulate its principal points. The crucial question is, of course, what Greene meant by 'an upstart Crow beautified with our feathers'. Alexander shows that allusions to 'Aesop's crow' are frequent in Greene; quotes examples in which he contemptuously applies the fable to actors; and contends that so far from imputing plagiarism in the passage before us Greene is merely railing at the actor Shakespeare who, 'not content to masquerade in the

<sup>1</sup> Alexander, *Shakespeare's Life and Art*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Malone's Shakespeare*, xviii. 570.

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borrowed plumage which all his kind enjoy', has had the impudence 'to imitate the very voice of his betters' and to compete with them in the writing of plays.<sup>1</sup> As against this I argue:

(i) That all Greene's contemporaries whose opinions on the matter are either on record or can be inferred from the testimony of others appear to have interpreted the Upstart Crow passage as a charge of plagiarism; the most striking instance being a certain apologist for Greene, calling himself R.B., who asserted two years after his death:

Greene gave the ground to all that wrote upon him;  
Nay more, the men that so eclipsed his fame  
Purloyned his plumes, can they deny the same?—<sup>2</sup>

lines which are a patent echo of Greene's own words, as Sir Edmund Chambers himself observed before Professor Alexander bewitched him;<sup>3</sup>

(ii) that all renaissance writers, even those who themselves published versions of 'Aesop', identified the crow of the fable with the 'cornicula' decked out 'furtivis coloribus' in the *Third Epistle* of Horace, who instances it as a warning to his friend Celsus not to pilfer from other poets;

(iii) that Greene undoubtedly intended to recall Horace's lines, inasmuch as not only do his words, 'beautified with our feathers', echo 'furtivis coloribus', but what he writes about bombasting out blank verse in the tragic scene of York's death echoes no less clearly Horace's inquiry, a few lines earlier, whether Titius, another poetaster, 'is still

<sup>1</sup> Alexander, *op. cit.* pp. 43-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Greene's Newes and Greene's Funeralls*, ed. R. B. McKerrow, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> *Elizabethan Stage*, iii. 326.

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storming and swelling in the bombastic style of tragedy'—

An tragica desaevit et ampullatur in arte.<sup>1</sup>

Greene, in short, is sneering at Shakespeare as a Celsus and a Titius in one;

(iv) that the crow fable *always* suggests dishonest appropriation in Greene, and when related to actors, implies that they flourish on the wits of the poets whom they starve; or, as he put it in so many words (after being himself convicted of selling the same play twice over to different companies!), actors were 'men that measure honesty by profit, and that regard their authors not by desert but by necessity of time'.<sup>2</sup>

But the clearest instance of what 'Aesop's crow' meant to Greene is a passage I only hit upon recently. In the following passage from his dedication to *A Myrroure for Modestie*, 1584, he apologises to his patroness for re-telling the story of Susanna in the Apocrypha, and at the same time forestalls a charge of plagiarism against himself:

But your honor may thinke I play like Ezops Crowe, which deckt hir selfe with others feathers, or like the proud Poet Batyllus, which subscribed his name to Virgils verses, and yet presented them to Augustus. In the behalfe therefore of this my offence, I excuse my selfe with the answere that Varro made, when he offered Ennius workes to the Emperour: I giue, quoth he, another mans picture, but freshlie flourished with mine owne colours.<sup>3</sup>

The parallel is close: though Aesop is named, it is Horace's bird Greene is thinking of, while, be it noted, the question is not one of stealing a line or two, which

<sup>1</sup> 'Ampullari', a coinage of Horace's, is glossed, 'to make use of a bombastic style of discourse' by Lewis and Short (ed. 1933). <sup>2</sup> See *Elizabethan Stage*, iii. 325.

<sup>3</sup> Greene's *Works*, ed. Grosart, iii. 7–8.

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'feathers' might suggest, but of rewriting a whole literary work, as he accuses Shakespeare of doing. That Shakespeare's perfectly legitimate work on *Henry VI* was not plagiarism, and that Greene knew this well enough, is beside the point. He was an angry and desperate man, determined to do as much harm as he could to the players, who (because of *his* dishonest dealing) had refused to employ him, and he realized that the accusation would be accepted without question by readers ignorant of what went on inside the theatre.

*(b) The hand of Shakespeare*

I believe, then, that Malone's 'chief hinge' holds; that his interpretation of the Upstart Crow passage is correct after all; and that in *Henry VI*, Parts II and III, Shakespeare without any question took 'another man's picture' and 'freshly flourished' it with his 'own colours'. But whose picture was it? Greene 'gave the ground' to those 'that wrote upon him' said R.B. in 1594, and in 1790 Malone suggested Greene and Peele.<sup>1</sup> But Malone made no attempt to prove this theory; not did he long entertain it, for he presently came round to Farmer's belief in Marlowe's authorship.<sup>2</sup> If I now endeavour to reach a more positive conclusion I am not blind to the risks I run. Yet I take courage from two considerations. First of all, it seems legitimate to look for the supposed injured party or parties among the three 'fellow scholars' Greene was addressing, always remembering that he is himself likely, one might even say most likely, to be the party himself. And the second is that, though the evidence upon which I must perforce rely consists in the main of parallels in diction, sentence-structure, allusion, and

<sup>1</sup> *Malone's Shakespeare*, xviii. 571. Malone is writing of the 1594-5 texts, which were to him 'the ground'.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 311-14.

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so forth, there survives a sufficient body of the authentic writings of each of the four possible originators to bring the matter to a fairly comprehensive test. Thus, I am not without hope of being able to persuade some, at least, of my readers to accept the candidates I now put forward. On the other hand to go further still and attempt to distinguish between what is and what is not Shakespeare's in each scene of the two Parts, as I also propose to do, is an undertaking from which only tentative results can be expected, if any at all. Yet this experiment too is, I think, worth trying out, if only because it may lead to a reconsideration of those notions about Shakespeare's early style which under the influence of the fundamentalists have become generally accepted among modern scholars.

I have already said something on this last head in the previous Introduction, and shall add more in the one that follows. Here then I need only set down a brief statement of those features which I confidently look for in Shakespeare's style, whether late, middle, or early. These are: a prose lively with humour, especially in dialogue between persons unlearned or of humble birth; a verse that, even when end-stopped, sweeps forward on a pulsing tide, both of thought and rhythm; a diction easy, rich, and varied; and, above all, imagery, vividly conceived, consistently carried through, and often, especially in early plays, embroidered with word-play, quibble or other forms of conceit. On the other hand, prose dialogue devoid of humour, especially in situations themselves ludicrous or comic; verse that is empty, prosaic, monotonous; imagery confused, incongruous, or tawdry, are to me indications of a non-Shakespearian hand. All I ask is that my readers assume this for the time being, and watch how it works out in the notes that follow, especially in those labelled 'Authorship' at the head of each scene. If in the end

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there be any who find themselves on the whole agreeing with the conclusions, they will perhaps also be ready to receive for truth the assumptions just noted from which the conclusions flow.

By way of preliminary, one or two scenes in the play below may here be glanced at. Put to the tests proposed, Acts 1 and 2 reveal little enough of the genuine Shakespeare, though there are brief passages now and then in the verse, particularly in Salisbury's speech and York's soliloquy at the end of scene 1, which suggest that he read the acts through pen in hand. As for the prose, in which five episodes are composed, except for a rather crude jest at 1. 3. 19 and some of the speeches of Simcox's wife (a character, I suspect, added during revision),<sup>1</sup> there is not a spark of humour from beginning to end of this section. Where else in his plays does Shakespeare ever bring simple folk upon the stage without giving them life or without engaging our smiles, our indulgent smiles? He excelled, too, in the representation of drunken men, as he did in that of poltroons reluctantly forced to fight. What an opportunity then did Grafton or Hall offer him in the trial by battle in Act 2, scene 3, between the cowardly prentice and the tipsy armourer! The players no doubt managed to get a laugh out of the stage-situation, but the dramatist afforded them no help whatever. Shakespeare! I find it almost unbelievable that anyone can credit him with it. And to those who cry: But he was only a timid apprentice himself, learning his job, feeling his way,<sup>2</sup> I reply: This tyro of 27 years must have matured very rapidly, considering what he was already capable of in the prose of Act 4. For, though Shakespearian verse had far to travel on the road between *Henry VI* and *The Tempest*,

<sup>1</sup> See notes on 2. 1. 58 S.D., 84-94, 104-6, 129-31.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's Historical Plays*, p. 161.

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in comic prose there are few scenes in the canon to better those which exhibit Jack Cade in all his entrancing self-importance, to say nothing of the political wisdom behind the fun, astonishing from a man under thirty.<sup>1</sup> That Shakespeare did not compose them for some later revival is proved by the full reports of them in the 1594 text. Yet, even these scenes, we shall find, were probably only his by adoption.

Jack Cade shows us what Shakespeare could do in prose in 1591. His full strength as a dramatic poet at this date first appears in Act 3. After the simpering, creaking puppets which have been boring us for some 1500 lines we suddenly find ourselves in a world of living people. Scene 3. 1 is crucial; for it depicts the Parliament at Bury St Edmunds to which Gloucester, all unconscious of doom, has been summoned, that he may be arrested and afterwards sent to his death. Take as a specimen the opening twenty lines, and note the power and the pulse of them as compared with anything in the play hitherto. Though the verse is end-stopped, so close-knit is it in sense and syntax and so strong a current bears us onwards that we are barely conscious of the metrical limits that bank it in. Mind and hand move swiftly together; an artist's hand guided by a master-mind. Who but Shakespeare could *think* verse so vigorous and so forthright in 1591? I say 'think'; but this verse clearly wells freely from some apparently inexhaustible source. Even Marlowe's seems mannered and over-deliberated beside it, while most of that in the preceding acts is manifestly hammered out. Furthermore, though the lines are without ornament, they are full of life. What brilliant pictures they give us, for instance, of the meetings between Gloucester and the Queen; first, when she catches sight of him in the

<sup>1</sup> See for this *Julius Caesar*, Introduction, pp. xxix-xxx.



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distance, and next when he passes by one morning without seeing her because plunged in thought—the melancholy (as we know) of a man who has just watched a beloved wife condemned for witchcraft, and carried off to banishment. Both pictures, too, by the Queen's malicious misinterpretation, reveal as much about the speaker as about the man she speaks of. The whole relationship between them is there; and we are already, in 1591, face to face with our supreme dramatic poet, and glimpsing those unfathomed and unfathomable depths which it is his special art to convey.

Margaret's speech, save for a touch of euphuism here and there, is, I say, bare of imagery, as becomes the utterance of a ruthless, practical nature in a mood of cold contempt. But Shakespeare would not be Shakespeare had he not imagery at command, and there is plenty of it a little further on, e.g. in Gloucester's address to the King immediately after his arrest. It is elementary, no doubt, when compared with that in *Hamlet* and the tragedies, consisting as it does, for the most part, of personification, and simple metaphor. Yet how fresh and masterly! and, once again, what pictures it calls up! Beaufort, Suffolk, Buckingham, and York—they all stand out clear-cut in the pellucid air of Shakespeare's vision.

Now this quality of clarity is, I have hinted, our surest test in any attempt at analysing the style of these early revised plays. At line 81 in the scene before us, for example, Somerset enters to report that all is lost in France, upon which Henry exclaims, 'Cold news, Lord Somerset: but God's will be done', and York mutters aside:

Cold news for me; for I had hope of France  
As firmly as I hope for fertile England.  
Thus are my blossoms blasted in the bud,  
And caterpillars eat my leaves away.

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Apart from the fact that the first two lines are virtually identical with lines already spoken by York at 1. 1. 235–6, the image in the two that follow, of a human tree crawling with larvae, is enough to convince me at least that we have here a link-passage, which Shakespeare did not trouble to revise, between two sections of the scene.

Or consider the speech of the young King overcome with grief as Gloucester goes out under guard to prison and death. It concludes with a picture of the dam lowing after the calf borne away to the slaughter-house, a picture in which the mind and hand of the man of Stratford are both visible; if you like, the hand of the butcher-boy who, ‘when he kill’d a calfe, he would doe it in a *high style*’,<sup>1</sup> and the mind of the poet who like Burns would weep as he slew—the poet who wrote tenderly of ‘poor Wat’ and of the stricken deer in the forest of Arden. But if the last part of the speech is very Shakespeare, what of this opening:

Ay, Margaret; my heart is drowned with grief,  
Whose flood begins to flow within mine eyes;  
My body round engirt with misery:  
For what’s more miserable than discontent?

As Laertes might say, ‘Too much of water hast thou, poor King Henry!’ For one has only to try and *see* that ridiculous and blurred image, of a grief first drowning the heart, then rising to the eyes, and last encircling the whole body, to realize that it is not Shakespeare’s. Indeed, I am pretty sure that the butcher-passage is all we owe to his pen in this speech.<sup>2</sup> Thus, as in the best of the prose-scenes, so here in the finest of the verse-

<sup>1</sup> See Aubrey, cited in Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, ii. 253. Hart (cf. my note on Part III, 1. 1. 71) observes the frequency of ‘butcher metaphors’ in the early plays.

<sup>2</sup> See note on ll. 197–208.

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scenes we have, I claim, to envisage a Shakespeare who 'wrote upon' the work of others. Let us then turn and inquire who these others may have been.

(c) *The four candidates*

The 'fellow scholars' whom Greene addressed in his attack upon the players were Marlowe, Peele, and Nashe;<sup>1</sup> so that, counting Greene himself, we have four to choose from. Marlowe has been favoured by many as part-author, and that the style in places recalls him is undeniable. But such passages are either good enough for Shakespeare, whose presence nobody disputes, or unworthy of Marlowe himself and therefore best explained as written by another member of the group, aping him as they all three did. Yet a number of parallels with *Edward II* are to be found in *Henry VI* which cannot be so accounted for, and must therefore, if Marlowe had no share in the latter, be either echoes of him or passages echoed by him. Long the subject of speculation, they were indeed what induced Farmer, and after him Malone, to regard Marlowe as the originator of Parts II and III. Once, however, the parallels are studied in relation to the sources of *Henry VI*, Marlowe is revealed as unquestionably the borrower, since, in three cases, the passages in *Edward II* are neither guaranteed by history nor required by the dramatic context, while those in *Henry VI* are obviously taken from the chronicles.<sup>2</sup> It follows that Parts II and

<sup>1</sup> I do not hesitate to identify Nashe with Greene's 'young Juvenal, that biting satirist, that lastly with me together writ a comedy', though some have doubts; see my article in *Shakespeare Survey*, 4 (1951).

<sup>2</sup> See notes Pt. II, 1. 3. 44-5; 1. 3. 48-9; 2. 3. 28-9; Pt. III, 1. 1. 239; and (for other parallels with Marlowe's plays) Pt. II, 3. 2. 82, 351; Pt. III, 2. 1. 68-9; 2. 5. 114; 5. 2. 11-15; 5. 3. 2; 5. 6. 61-2; 5. 7. 14.

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III, in which most of these parallels occur, were written before *Edward II*, a conclusion in line with the suggestion of Sir Edward Chambers that the latter was first produced at court by the Pembroke men during the Christmas festival, 1592-3. There are also, however, one or two parallels between Part I and *Edward II*, and the following in particular is so close that one must derive from the other:

1 *Henry VI*, 1. 1. 35-6:

None do you like but an effeminate prince,  
Whom, like a school-boy, you may over-awe

*Edward II*, 3. 2. 30-1:

As though your highness were a school-boy still,  
And must be awed and governed like a child.

Yet these are themselves paralleled in passages of Part II (1. 3. 44-5; 2. 3. 28-9) which clearly go back to the chronicles as my notes below indicate.<sup>1</sup> If then Part I is here merely echoing Part II, as it does immediately after,<sup>2</sup> *Edward II* must have been written after Part I, in which case the date Chambers conjectures for it would be too early. On the other hand, if *Edward II* is echoing Part II as in the other parallels noted above, then Part I would in this instance be imitating *Edward II*, i.e. Nashe would be imitating Marlowe, which is likely enough.<sup>3</sup>

Anyhow, Marlowe is out of the running for the *Contention* plays, as I believe most would agree. We are left therefore with Peele, Greene and Nashe. In the Introduction to Part I, I argued for Greene as the drafter and principal author of that play, with Nashe

<sup>1</sup> v. Grafton, cited on pp. 144-5.      <sup>2</sup> v. Pt. I, 1. 1. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Edward II*, ed. by H. B. Charlton, Introduction, p. 15, n., *2 Henry VI*, 1. 3. 44-5, n., and *Woodstock*, ed. by A. P. Rossiter, pp. 54-5.

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and possibly Peele as collaborators. But I did so in the belief that the evidence for a similar verdict as regards Parts II and III was strong enough to stand on its own base, and to lend support to the other. Yet it is not, of course, without its special dangers and perplexities. Previous investigators, including Hart himself, have for example leaned too heavily upon merely verbal parallels, which are now admitted to be of small value by themselves.<sup>1</sup> The dramatic diction of the early 1590's was indeed more or less a common stock, mostly traceable to one or other of two sources: the first three books of *The Faery Queene* and the two parts of *Tamburlaine*; both these masterpieces being published in 1590. Moreover, since it would be difficult to say whether Peele or Greene imitated or stole from Spenser and Marlowe the more slavishly, the diction of these two dramatists is often indistinguishable, the more so that Greene never hesitates to borrow from Peele. Now Hart,<sup>2</sup> who speaks with authority, is all for Peele as the dramatist chiefly responsible for the original of Parts II and III, and at first (fresh, be it noted, from editing *Titus Andronicus*, where I found Peele in almost every scene) I was inclined to agree with him. But once I came to give the same attention to Greene's plays and prose writings as I had given two years earlier to the works of Peele, the evidence in favour of Greene's authorship seemed to me far stronger, and I believe will seem so also to most readers of the parallels here collected. Verbal parallels will not be excluded from my notes, since as *supplementary* evidence they are not without significance. But most of the parallels that immediately follow are of a different kind: syntactical

<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. St Clare Byrne in *The Library* (4th ser.), xiii, 21-48.

<sup>2</sup> See his Introductions to the three texts in the 'Arden Shakespeare'.

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peculiarities, little mannerisms and tricks of style, proverbial phrases (sometimes used incorrectly or with a special twist), classical or other allusions, and clichés of various types. Nor was Greene, I became convinced as I went deeper, the sole originator. As in *1 Henry VI*, I found his 'sweet boy' and 'young Juvenal', Thomas Nashe, collaborating with him in certain scenes, while once again I could not entirely rid myself of the impression that Peele may also be involved to some extent, in Part III at any rate.

*(d) The hand of Greene*

Parts II and III contain a number of constructions and mannerisms commonly found in Greene but not for the most part in Peele, and found either not at all or very rarely elsewhere in the Shakespearian canon. Thoroughly characteristic of him, for instance, is the slovenly sequence of 'as' the conjunction and 'as' the adverb, both initial, two lines from each other at the opening of Part II.<sup>1</sup> Here too, the conjunctive 'as' is followed in line 5 by a correlative 'so', again initial, which is another construction to which Greene is very prone, as he and Peele are to 'such' without a correlative (found for example at 2. 1. 25, 26 and 4. 1. 52 of Part II, but hardly ever, I think, in Shakespeare's undisputed plays), and to 'such a' or 'such' followed by 'as' with a verb (found at Part I, 3. 1. 14-16; 5. 5. 84-6; Part II, 2. 4. 44-5; Part III, 1. 1. 99-100, and six times in *Alphonsus, King of Arragon*). Or turn back to the opening scene of Part II. This, I argued above on negative grounds, can hardly be Shakespeare's, though he seems to have put some stuffing into York's soliloquy with which it closes. Yet in so doing he was far, I think,

<sup>1</sup> E.g. initial 'as' occurs three times in five consecutive lines in *James IV*, 2422-6.