

Turtles All the Way Down: A Reply to Larry Weiss *et al.*

Michael Egan

This matter began as a public challenge issued some years ago by Prof. Ward Elliott, a stylometrician at Claremont McKenna College, CA. Elliott boasted that no one could show that his conclusions about authorial attribution in the matter of Shakespeare's plays were incorrect. His stylometric methods were infallible and he would pay \$1,000 (later £1,000 sterling) to anyone who could prove otherwise. I had just completed my four-volume study, *The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One: A Newly Authenticated Play by William Shakespeare, with an Introduction and Variorum Notes* (2006), and felt that I could successfully respond, anticipating a spirited debate about an appealing question. The money was of no interest to me—I viewed that simply as decoration. I knew of course that *I Richard II/Woodstock* had already been rejected as Shakespeare's by Elliott and his colleague, Robert J. Valenza, but after a sporadic exchange of emails Elliott and I agreed to set up a three-person panel of scholars to review our competing claims.

Larry Weiss, a former civil litigator, got involved as volunteer convener and began looking for appropriate panelists. Their collective task, as I understood it, was to decide whether Elliott/Valenza or I made the best case for the authorship of the anonymous, untitled and incomplete BL manuscript. If I was right, my case for Shakespeare as the play's author would gain credibility while stylometry, the measurement of style by numbers, would be shown to be inaccurate in at least one instance. So even without the money the wager, as it came to be called, had worthwhile implications.

Text and Panel

It was about this time that things began to sour for me. I was never given an opportunity to suggest candidate panel members, comment on those invited, or indeed contribute anything whatever to this critical matter. Weiss and the two appointees, Dale Johnson and Will Sharpe, turned out to be associates of Elliott's—"Golden Ears," he called them, meaning they knew their Shakespeare, at least to Elliott's unprofessional satisfaction (he is in fact a political scientist).¹ This tribunal simply materialized in an email to me one day, a *fait* apparently *accompli*.

Then Elliott started demanding rules and procedures which I found constricting and impractical. I tried to accommodate him, agreeing to limit my evidence to what I considered its bare minimum: my *General Introduction* in Vol. I and an essay called *A Short History of the Text* in Vol. III. This comparative overview of the manuscript's ten editions 1870-2006, including my own, identifies their textual differences, evolution and semantic ambiguities. The hand-written MS is so difficult to read that transcriptions have varied widely over the years, profoundly affecting an understanding of the play's complexities and its considerable merits. Conjectural emendations—editorial guesses—abound, some of the early ones repeated so often unattributed they are incorrectly assumed to be in the manuscript. This applies especially to the title, *Thomas of Woodstock*, which was invented in the 1920s to replace the original *Richard II, Part One*—part of the effort over the years to separate this play from Shakespeare.

Other emendations, right down to the structuring or unstructuring of iambic pentameters, setting line breaks, altering/inserting punctuation to affect meaning, identifying rhymes and distinguishing between poetry and prose, even the use of particular words, differ drastically from edition to edition. Macdonald P. Jackson, for example, insists on the arbitrary elision of syllables ("slurs," supposedly intended by the author to

create iambic pentameters from lines with 11 and 12 syllables) and “nasal rhymes,” also intentional, though hitherto unsuspected, so that Jackson might find rhymes where none stood before. Rossiter silently updates the writer’s early-style Elizabethan grammar because he personally finds the original “intolerable.” These alterations later helped Jackson to redate the play incorrectly to the 17th century. Elsewhere Rossiter twice substitutes the modern word *Certiorari* for MS. *Surssararis* (I.ii.118, V.vi.27), which Elliott and Jackson again ignorantly accept as authorial. For these reasons alone, Elliott’s confident numbers are suspect, as is Jackson’s attempt to attribute the play to Sam Rowley ca. 1610. Contradictory versions, including my own, can and do produce contradictory analytical results.

When it comes to stylometrics and other numeric data, it thus matters very much which version of the manuscript is consulted and whether its individual readings can be trusted. According to Weiss, Elliott and Valenza used Rossiter’s text and checked its outcomes against mine. This is completely useless for statistical purposes, for as I show in *A Short History of the Text*, Rossiter’s edition is deeply unreliable and mine has been modernized and edited for the contemporary stage. Even the best available edition for Elliott’s objectives, Wilhelmina Frijlinck’s “diplomatic” or literal transcription, contains errors and abundant ambiguities beyond resolution. Among these would be, for example, whether a particular passage should be read as verse or prose or (as we find in early Shakespeare) a mixture, something in between, what I call “prosiform.” If the MS is by Shakespeare, as I contend, then this is an interesting addition to our understanding of the evolution of his style. The options are discussed and exemplified in my comparison of Frijlinck’s text with the actual manuscript. The answers have profound consequences for metrical analyses, yet they are not even addressed by Elliott, Valenza or Weiss.

Inadmissible Evidence

Beyond these difficulties, everything about the MS that tells us something of its history, authorship, date of composition and whether it’s a holograph or not, is contained in evidence specifically excluded by stylometric methods. These include comparative orthography, deletions, additions or edits in other hands (there are several), ink varieties, the inserted names or initials of actors, stage managers’ marginal reminders, property lists, censored passages, stage directions and even the long, ambiguous lines which periodically interrupt the text.²

In some senses therefore this is a non-debate, since Elliot and Valenza are counting the apples while I investigate the orange juice. The difficulty is that the conclusions we draw, based on oranges or apples, are completely contradictory.

As we’ve seen, Weiss *et al.* side with Elliott and Valenza, making no attempt to conceal the fact. “Ward Elliott and Robert Valenza do not need us to confirm their research,” they observe, and take their attack on my evidence from there. By definition I’m wrong and Elliott and Valenza rarely come up again. My data on the other hand, which lead to the “wrong” conclusion, must be as it were deconfirmed and the panelists set about doing so as vigorously as they can. Most of their ammunition is copied from Jackson, with whom I have had a running debate for years, but who was never part of the original wager.

The effort to delegitimize my case at every point extends even to the accusation that I culpably overlook Samuel Schoenbaum’s universally respected *Internal Evidence and Elizabethan Dramatic Authorship: an Essay in Literary History and Method* (Northwestern U.P., 1966). However, I don’t ignore Schoenbaum at all, though Elliott,

Valenza and Jackson do, and in fact my book approvingly quotes him throughout. I note especially his Seventh Principle of Attribution (Schoenbaum's italics)—

*Intuitions, convictions, and subjective judgments generally, carry no weight as evidence. This no matter how learned, respected or confident the authority.*³

—and the following, to which I again append my methodological flag:

The ultimate effect [successful attribution] is a cumulative one in which all the internal evidence—stylistic, bibliographical and linguistic—converges inexorably upon a single possible author-identification, an identification compatible with the known external information.⁴

An identification compatible with the known external information. Exactly. Does Weiss not read his own authorities? All the data must point in the same direction. The difficulty is that Elliott's, Valenza's and Jackson's internal evidence is not compatible with the play's "known external information." This does not bother Weiss *et al.* because, in their ignorance, they think there is none:

External evidence...is not particularly useful in this case as there is no affirmative external evidence.

But in fact there is, and quite a bit of it, all affirmatively useful. Most important is the physical manuscript itself, its deteriorating condition and the way it was trimmed and pasted into BL Egerton 1994. Wolfgang Keller, the play's second editor, deduces an early date from these details, flatly contradicting Jackson's assigning the play to the 17th century. This is a weighty piece of external evidence that deserves to be placed in the balance, comparable to carbon-14 dating in archaeology. Pursuing the analogy, the surrounding artifacts, including the indisputably early *Edmund Ironside*, also confirm a pre-1600 date.⁵

Then there are the numerous emendations, corrections and notes, etc., we referred to earlier, and the steps and phases followed by the copyist (not a professional scribe). These can be traced by observing such clues as the insertion of character names, added after the whole text was copied: in some cases the name is omitted and the speech deleted. This is the case with "pelting farm," which shows that its removal must have been authorial. The text also contains revealing errors, including false scenic starts which seem to refer to an edited original. There are marginal corrections and comments by the playwright, words omitted because the copyist couldn't make them out (subsequently inserted, presumably after conferring with the playwright), modern contractions and abbreviations introduced by the copyist, etc. There is also evidence of authorial rewriting and editing.

Some of the manuscript's usages are of the early 1590s, others suggest ca. 1606. A few are deliberately archaic, like the use of *ye*, which helps set the drama in an historical past. A.C. Partridge, the undisputed authority on the text, describes the MS as a Jacobean copy of an Elizabethan play, made up of orthographic layers or phrasal "stratification."⁶ This hypothesis accounts for the Jacobean features Jackson finds in the text and also accounts for the Elizabethan features Jackson also finds in the text. I challenge him again (and of course Weiss and company) to explain the contradictions in his own published data.⁷

It is also possible to infer, from the implicit staging requirements, something about the conditions under which *I Richard II* was originally played. There's a big battle at the

end requiring almost the entire cast on stage, which the Globe or Theater could never have handled, nor was such an attempt ever made. At another point a man on horseback enters, again almost impossible indoors. These particulars suggest the play was not originally intended for an enclosed theater—the difficulties and logistics involved are too complex. Even modern productions cut the horse scene. But in a field or village marketplace a horse presents no difficulties at all.

The tour hypothesis may also account for some of the play's broader gestures, the sort of thing Weiss *et al.* seem to have in mind when they complain that it is repetitious. In his lectures on Shakespeare at the New School for Social Research in 1946-7, W.H. Auden noted that Elizabethan dramas composed for the outdoors necessarily contained verse that was less delicate than that marked for quieter and not so distracting settings like Blackfriars:

In small villages people often get very excited when they don't see. You can't hear out of doors...It was a good thing Shakespeare had to write for an open-air theater, because his own taste would have inclined him towards more intimate and delicate verse.⁸

The celebrated marginal note, “a bed for Woodstock,” may also confirm that *1 Richard II* was a touring play. Arrangements had to be made at each new stop for the heavy bed on which he is murdered in Act V.

These details also tell us something about the drama's most probable dates of composition. Perhaps not quite external evidence but certainly relevant, is its general resemblance to the “weak king” vogue in Elizabethan drama in the early 1590s, among the points noted by Jackson when he dates the play to those years.

Most of V.vi is missing, probably because, like *2 Richard II*'s banned de-position scene, it portrayed the removal of a monarch: another Elizabethan tell. Imprecations and allusions to the deity have been edited out, confirming the likelihood that the MS is a copy made around 1606.⁹ A deleted reference to the English king as “Superior Lord of Scotland” also suggests a pre-Jacobean original tactfully edited for post-Elizabethan political realities.

Stylometrics

I address the matter of stylometrics at length and in more than one place, but Weiss *et al.* ignore it all. I don't propose to restate the difficulties again—anyone interested will find them reviewed in my book and in the commentaries of others.¹⁰ I note here only that despite Weiss's repeated confidence in the accuracy of the stylometric method, not to mention Elliott and Valenza's questionable claims, professional statisticians without an axe to grind offer rather different assessments.

Dr M.B. Malyutov, for example, a mathematics professor at Northeastern University, concludes a long and detailed review of attributionist stylometry by noting that

The best [stylometric] tests and their power are yet to be estimated both theoretically and by intensive statistical examination of stylometric differences between existing canons.¹¹

Later, quoting the stylometrician Peter Farey, Malyutov perhaps satirically notes that his methods have conclusively proved Marlowe was Shakespeare, against the historical evidence:

Farey also reviews extracts from the sonnets and other works of Shakespeare hinting at their authorship by Marlowe after the Deptford affair. He gives the results of various

stylometric tests, showing that the micro-styles of Marlowe and Shakespeare are either identical, or else the latter's style is a natural development and enrichment of the former. The micro-style fingerprint would give strong evidence for Marlowe's authorship of Shakespearean work, if further comprehensive study confirms that their style patterns are within the natural evolutionary bounds while other contemporary writers deviate significantly in style.¹²

My conclusion is that Elliott and Valenza's data are poisoned at the source. Their unargued and unacceptable assumption is that a writer as varied and complex as Shakespeare can be pinned down by numbers. This may work for some, but Shakespeare stands apart in this respect, as in so many others. Donald Foster proves this: he caught Joel Klein but the bard eluded him. An important secondary objection is that the drama is a literary realm where language, i.e. speech, is consciously altered to meet changed circumstance and character, ironing out authorial idiosyncrasies.

The Wager Continued

My publishers assured me that three sets of volumes I and III had been mailed to the panelists, but increasingly I felt uncomfortable about the way matters were shaping up. Among other things it was becoming clearer how partisan Weiss, Sharpe and Johnson actually were. Worse, Elliott now sought to bolster his position with studies and opinions by Macdonald Jackson. But answering him would require still more words and space, not to mention dealing with a whole new set of issues unconnected with Elliott's stylometrics. In the meantime, crucial pieces of my original data were being excluded, among them all my variorum notes (two volumes with a wealth of supporting research) and a significant catalog of analogous Shakespearean lines and phrases, *Verbal Parallels in the Plays and Poems*, Vol. III, which has some 1,600 entries.

My initial understanding had been that both sides would present written arguments in whatever form and length they found appropriate, and a mutually agreed panel would rule independently. This was particularly appealing to me since I'm aware that my book is unusually long and *vita brevis*. Even a sympathetic scholar might need the pressure of a contest to get through it all. But Elliott was demanding word and page limits to be presented to a panel composed without my input, and whose members were his friends and colleagues.¹³ It was beginning to feel like a set up.

What clinched it for me was when, after a further exchange of emails, the panelists explicitly declined to review my case in full, even if I mailed each of them all four volumes. I found myself wondering about the bizarre academic universe I had wandered into: were these people interested in truth or just winning a silly wager? What was and remains at issue are the prospects of a new Shakespeare play and the credibility of the stylometric method. When I continued to protest, the panelists finally agreed that okay, I could send them all full sets of my books if I wished, but no, they would not commit to actually reading them.

At this point I'd had enough. This wasn't a cordial or even an acrimonious discussion among scholars but a show trial, a bull fight in which I was the sacrificial beast. As I headed for the door, Weiss tartly remarked that even arguments before the Supreme Court are limited to 20 minutes, so why should I expect more? Elliott quickly concurred, observing that he could present all *his* evidence in six pages or fewer (excluding Jackson's books and essays, presumably). Again, why should I need more?

Well, as noted, it took me four volumes, 2000 pages and seven years to prove that Shakespeare authored *1 Richard II*. Nor did I feel, like Mozart, that I had included too many notes. Recovering a lost Shakespeare play in the current Authorship climate re-

quires that every fact, claim and detail be unequivocally nailed down, especially when one has to deal with the prejudiced and closed-minded, eager to pounce on the slightest discrepancy or error or guilt by association.¹⁴ Besides, identifying a new Shakespeare play is a question of literary history and critical analysis, not a matter of constitutional law.

Extraordinary claims, said Carl Sagan, require extraordinary evidence. Some of my evidence is extraordinary—see below—but also cumulative. No single datum clinches the matter but hundreds *en masse* seem unanswerable. Other evidence, such as the quality of the writing, analogous characters, scenes, themes, philosophies and comparable narrative strategies, require detailed illustration.

In a few cases the sheer quantity of my data transforms their quality, as in the play's verbal and phrasal parallels. Because Weiss *et al.* don't review them (they're located in *Verbal Parallels in the Plays and Poems*, Vol. III, specifically excluded), these powerful data are simply dismissed *in absentia* as common and ordinary—mere phrasal coincidence. It must be so, Weiss suggests without bothering to check, because I cite so many. One thousand, six hundred phrase parallels, how likely is that?!

In other words, Weiss *et al.* again embrace their ignorance. This is religion, faith without evidence. But please be kind enough to glance through my telescope. It will readily be seen that the parallels in the following examples are unique, particular and stylistically identical. It's hard to believe they come from two distinct authors, one the world's supreme dramatic genius and the other a deservedly long-forgotten hack. You can't tell who wrote which. First, Shakespeare, then the hack:

Falstaff: What, is the old king dead?

Pistol: As nail in door.

—2 *Henry IV*, V.iii.120-1

Lapoole: What, is he dead?

Second Murderer: As a door-nail, my lord.

—1 *Richard II*, V.i.242-3

The analogies are so obvious I'm embarrassed to point them out, and only do so because Weiss *et al.* claim not to see them. Note first that it's an actual snatch of dialogue, not just an echoed phrase or idiom. It's also far better than the "four-word string" standard established by Vickers. The presentation style is identical—the same question, "What, is [noun] dead?" gets the same reply, "As a door nail/As nail in door," the simile introduced by *as* and not *like*. Narratively, a royal death is announced while the speakers greet the news with crude satisfaction. Note too that in one we're talking about a political assassination, but in the other the natural death of Henry IV. The situations are very different, as are the relationships between the speakers, though their treatments remain significantly the same. Not only the overlaps but the differences paradoxically prove their common origins: this is not slavish imitation but a characteristic way of conveying important information to the audience.

Weiss's handling of this striking example is revealing. First, it's one of the few parallels actually considered, of course only to dismiss it. The report disingenuously claims that in 1592-3 "dead as a doornail" was a "commonplace aphorism," which it was not, adding slyly that, "as Egan admits," it had "a literary history at least as old as *Piers Plowman* (c.1367-70)."

I like that "as Egan admits." I have confessed to my crime—such is scholarly integrity treated in these waters. What I actually note is that despite the fact that Shakespeare

is routinely credited with the expression, the literary honor goes to Langland (“For but ich haue bote of mi bale I am ded as dorenail.”). After him, however, according to *LION* and other sources, there are only a few recorded uses until *2 Henry VI* and *1 Richard II* (1592-3) and, five years later, *2 Henry IV* (1597-8). That is indeed a long history, though not in the sense Weiss insinuates. Shakespeare did not originate the idiom but he certainly revived and popularized it. Its appearance in *1 Richard II* and *2 Henry IV* in almost identical formats thus remains an important indicator of common authorship.

Deposing the Protector

The same applies to the following arresting instances. Note again that we’re dealing with parallel moments employing similar dynamics and language. They plainly have one another in mind.

In *1 Richard II*, II.ii the young king demands that his uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, resign his office of Lord Protector and surrender his council staff:

King Richard: Give up your Council staff, we’ll hear no more.

Woodstock: My staff, King Richard? See, coz, here it is.

—*1 Richard II*, II.ii.156-7

But there’s an almost identical sequence in *2 Henry VI*, a play whose deep connections with *1* and *2 Richard II* are consistently overlooked and characteristically waved aside by Weiss *et al.* Both *2 Henry VI* and *1 Richard II* describe the rise, fall and murder of the king’s Lord Protector, in both plays Duke of Gloucester. Like Richard, young Henry VI forces his Protector to step down so that he may be king in his own right:

King Henry: Give up thy staff. Henry will to himself Protector be...

Gloucester: My staff? Here, noble Henry, is my staff.

—*2 Henry VI*, II.iii.23-4, 32-33

The moments are blood brothers, united not only by their identical content but the author’s characteristic way of building stage directions into language (“My staff? Here...” / “My staff, King Richard?...here it is.”). Again I apologize for laboring the obvious, adding only that the overlaps are neither theft nor chance nor plagiarism. It’s simply Shakespeare writing like himself.

Among the most amazing features of the case against Shakespeare as the author of *1 Richard II* is the claim that its writing “doesn’t sound like Shakespeare.” How much more like Shakespeare than exactly like Shakespeare does the writing have to get?

Weiss *et al.* argue that the parallels above are without significance; they are imposed by history. If the scenes resemble one another, they say, it’s because the two Protectors led similar lives. But this is demonstrably false, even if we limit ourselves to the Elizabethan/Jacobean sources: Holinshed, Hall, Gower, *The Mirror for Magistrates* and the rest. The plot analogies were invented by the author of *1 Richard II*, who unhistorically set Woodstock in the same relation to his king as Gloucester in *2 Henry VI*. Real-life Woodstock was never Richard II’s Protector and never removed from that office. Historically he was a formidable politician who imposed himself as *de facto* monarch for a short spell and ended up getting murdered by Richard, arguably the first casualty of the Wars of the Roses.

Two Authors

In the same unimaginative spirit Weiss *et al.* assert that the many overlaps between *1* and *2 Richard II* are simply the result of two authors independently working the same territory at the same time and place, and can therefore also be dismissed:

There is no reason to jump to the radical conjecture of common authorship when the alleged parallels can be explained more probably by the obvious facts that playwrights working at the same time in the same city could not help but be influenced by each other's work, and that depiction of similar events explains the use of similar language.

The most impressive similarities between *Woodstock* and Shakespeare can be explained by conscious or unconscious parallelism, without having to postulate common authorship.

These, like the vast majority of Egan's perceived patterns, seem to be nothing more than the use by two different authors of the same or similar words to describe the same or similar circumstances.

Narrative parallels, they say, "would seem inevitable when two authors tell the same story," adding that "It can hardly be surprising if two plays about the same reign have similar features...the plot similarities are largely a necessity imposed by history."

Well, first, these claims completely destroy any case for *Woodstock* as a Jacobean work, though Weiss *et al.* like to have it both ways.¹⁵ But in any event the two plays don't tell the same story and have very different features. Weiss *et al.*'s claim that they do is a measure of their commitment to untruth. While both *1* and *2 Richard II* of course deal with the reign of the same monarch their plots are completely different. Shakespeare's canonical history documents Richard's last year, 1399, when he was deposed and murdered by Henry IV. *1 Richard II* deals with all the rest, including his early struggles with his uncles, the role and personality of Woodstock, Richard's marriage to Anne of Bohemia and her sudden death, the matter of the Blank Charters, the rise of contract law, the division of the realm among the minions, the turning of England into a "pelting farm" and its monarch into a "landlord," Woodstock's kidnapping and assassination, the 1387 rebellion, the king's defeat at Radcott Bridge, his first deposition and finally his unexpected restoration.

In this context, Weiss completely misrepresents my account of the relationship between the two plays. My view is that Shakespeare was not planning a sequel to *1 Richard II* when he wrote it in the early 1590s, something Weiss *et al.* concede. But when he decided to complete Richard's story some three or four years later he already had in hand a cast of characters with histories, relationships and dramatically defined personalities. He had also researched the period very thoroughly and trusted his own industry. His conclusions embraced Woodstock's ambivalent nature, the injustice of his fate, the king's indulgence of his favorites, Tresilian's Blank Charters, and the inky blots staining the kingdom, etc. The first play provides a kind of textured frame-work for the second, conferring upon its action the feel of real-life referentiality. *1 Richard II* is thus both prologue and not-prologue to its more famous companion. That play also is both sequel and not-sequel — its dramatic purposes are quite distinct, an exordium to the Wars of the Roses cycle.

I think it's for this reason, and contrary to the claims of commentators like Rossiter and Dover Wilson, that Shakespeare makes no unwarranted assumptions about what his audience might or might not remember from *1 Richard II*. Many may not have seen it at all—as I've argued, the play very likely was intended for the provinces and perhaps never

performed in London. Instead he provides us with a summary of its main features, including the destructive role of the minions, their brutal taxes and the government's unpopularity, the blank charters scam, the king's unforgiving resentments about 1387 ("ancient quarrels"), his yielding of Calais and Guisnes to the French, and the farming of the realm, for which according to Holinshed he was principally deposed:

Northumberland: The King is not himself, but basely led
By flatterers...
Ross: The commons hath he pill'd with grievous taxes,
And quite lost their hearts: the nobles hath he fined
For ancient quarrels, and quite lost their hearts.
Willoughby: And daily new exactions are devised,
As blanks, benevolences, and I wot not what:
But what, o' God's name, doth become of this?
Northumberland: Wars have not wasted it, for warr'd he hath not,
But basely yielded upon compromise
That which his noble ancestors achieved with blows:
More hath he spent in peace than they in wars.
Ross: The Earl of Wiltshire hath the realm in farm.
Willoughby: The King's grown bankrout, like a broken man.
Northumberland: Reproach and dissolution hangeth over him...
most degenerate king!

—2 *Richard II*, II.i.241-62

When it comes to narratives then the two histories have nothing in common. What does pass from the early to the later play are essential context data like the above. Also carried over are a number of striking parallel phrases (over 60 in all, of which "pelting farm" is the most famous), and of course the major characters, their relationships, histories and the back story of their former interactions. These include the murder of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, and the king's part in it.

Weiss *et al.* dismiss all these points: "Those are historical figures," they write, "not made-up characters; it would be impossible to write a play about them without including them in the cast."

To quote Richard Dawkins, that's an outstandingly silly remark. Of course they are made-up characters, just as all Shakespeare's (or any other dramatist's) historical figures are made-up characters, whether it's Richard III or Lady Macbeth or Marlowe's Edward II or Sam Rowley's Henry VIII.

In fact, Bushy, Bagot and Green were not around during Tresilian's time, an unhistorical detail for which the play is often criticized, so even historically they are made up. These three, with their mnemonically vegetative names, only came onto the scene much later, well after the Merciless Parliament of 1388 executed Tresilian and seven of the king's close associates. Likewise, Woodstock is fully imagined from the ground up (historically he was only in his early thirties, barely ten years older than his nephew, and far from the doubletted greybeard he is in the play). The same applies to his brothers Lancaster, York and a series of memorable rustic characters, some of whom reappear in later Shakespeare plays, especially *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Most notably, the king himself strikingly matures through the action, a point Rossiter and others make. Weiss *et al.* dismiss Richard as a petulant brat from start to finish, but that's a typically superficial reading. He quickly becomes much

more than this, especially after Queen Anne's death and later that of Green, his homosexual lover. Richard's sense of guilt about Woodstock's murder increasingly weighs on him, and towards the end he begins to speak in familiarly Shakespearean terms:

KING

Oh, my dear friends, the fearful wrath of heaven
Sits heavy on our heads for Woodstock's death.
Blood cries for blood; and that almighty hand
Permits not murder unreveng'd to stand.

— *1 Richard II*, V.v.49-53

As Rossiter so acutely and revealingly remarks of these lines, looking ahead to the king as he reappears in *2 Richard II*, that is, implicitly recognizing the two plays' common authorship:

[Richard] feels the first twinge of true responsibility at Anne's death...and leaves the play with his first entirely adult sentiment—that grievous wrong has been done to Woodstock, and there is no escaping the final debt.¹⁶

The king's bisexuality, by the way, is a small but significant Shakespearean trade-mark—among other things this is the first English drama to portray homosexual feelings with a degree of sympathy. Despite this, I doubt any Jacobean playwright would attempt such a portrayal, given the notorious court life of Queen James. In the actual play, however, written in the early 1590s, Richard's grief over Green's corpse is inseparable from his slow transformation into the perverse, self-pitying monarch of the later chronicle. Rossiter adds:

Richard is wrong-headed but not Wrong incarnate...[his] main characteristics are vanity and perversity (of *will*, understand); his behavior is that of a thwarted school-boy preparing to break or broken loose: sulky, defiant, fretful, malicious, irresponsible, drunk with vain self-esteem. In all this he is very close to the figure in the first two acts of Shakespeare, and unlike the one who returns from Ireland in the third. There is a vein of malice in nearly all he addresses to his uncles, and at times he carefully prepares the ground for a stab by assuming a conciliatory manner before it is delivered...The unexamined emotional urge of the moment supplies his "part" and he "plays it up" regardless of the state and even his own final advantage. The same short-sightedness and histrionic (or hysterical) instability reappears in Shakespeare ...[he has] all the main lines of Shakespeare's player-king.¹⁷

Chastened at the end and with the dubious fortune of restoration to the throne, the same insecure young man reappears afterwards at the start of *2 Richard II*. It's both eleven years later and immediately following the conclusion of *1 Richard II*—the time dislocation is typical of Shakespeare. Now instead of his uncles, Richard has to face young Bullingbrook's genuine but exaggerated outrage at Woodstock's death. The full arc of Richard's reign, including the evolution of his fascinating, self-destructive personality, may thus be traced from his early years in *1 Richard II* to his murder at the end of *2 Richard II*.

These details help us to date *1 Richard II* more precisely—more external evidence. The second part of *Henry VI*, ca. 1591, must have preceded it because the story of Gloucester's removal comes from the historical accounts of that reign. The episode's re-appearance in *1 Richard II* is an adaptation by Shakespeare of his own earlier work. By

the same token, he conferred upon Henry VI young Richard II's triumph as a 14-year old dealing face-to-face with the leaders of the Peasant's Revolt. In *2 Henry VI* this becomes the Jack Cade episode. Significantly, it's the only incident from Richard's early reign omitted from *1 Richard II*—Shakespeare knew he'd already used it.

2 Richard II

We can confirm the above by observing that the Protector Deposition scenes in *2 Henry VI* and *1 Richard II* are both actually continued in *2 Richard II* and its most famous moment. There is clearly a complicated relationship between these three plays which can be reasonably explained only by the single-author hypothesis. In Shakespeare's canonical history, Richard II's deposition—banned from publication or performance during Elizabeth's reign—contains a vivid instant when the king despairingly flings a hand-mirror to the floor, smashing it:

King Richard: [Dashes the glass against the ground]
For there it is, crack'd in a hundred shivers!

—*2 Richard II*, IV.i.294

But this melodramatic gesture is directly anticipated in *1 Richard II*, II.ii. 156-7, just after the king's demand that Woodstock give up his council staff. Woodstock's angry and humiliated response prefigures Richard's despair:

Woodstock: [Dashes his staff against the ground]
There, let him take it, shiver'd, crack'd and broke!

—*1 Richard II*, II.ii.164

Note how the words “shiver” and “crack” appear in both, but creatively varied: as adjectives in *1 Richard II*, as a verb and a noun in *2 Richard II*.

Also revealing is the typically performative language, the author's verbal stage directions (“There...!” / “For there it is...!”) moving the actor to cast something down hard enough to break it. The writer “sees” both moments in the same theatrical and linguistic way. It's not just a matter of phrasal coincidence, or even verbal influence, but a whole dramatic manner: words, actions, situations, characters, everything. That the two scenes ironically evoke one another may or may not have been in Shakespeare's mind when he finally deposed the king.

Minor Echoes

It is of course possible to dismiss any single instance as coincidental or too commonplace, which Weiss *et al.* repeatedly do, but the fact is *1 Richard II* is loaded with literally hundreds of such parallels. This is what I mean by quantity transforming quality—even relatively minor instances can be revealing. Weiss *et al.* laugh it off, but consider the following unremarkable speeches, whose very ordinariness paradoxically reveals Shakespeare's common presence:

Lancaster: How now, what guard is that? What traitor's there?

—*1 Richard II*, V.vi.15

Woodvile: What noise is this? What traitors have we here?

—*1 Henry VI*, I.iii.15

Weiss's transparent strategy is to disparage the first halves (“How now, what guard is that?” / “What noise is this?”) as run of the mill, so as to mockingly dismiss the whole.

But the unquoted predicates (“What traitor’s there?” / “What traitors have we here?”) are precisely where the confirming echoes lie. They are deliberately suppressing evidence, and we need to ask ourselves why. Also deliberately overlooked is the analogous way both speeches are structured: two short, related questions between similar characters in similar circumstances with the same bearing. Objectively, these instances credibly suggest a common hand. Weiss pretends not to see it.

I could cite many more instances, and urge interested readers to explore my 137-page section, *Verbal Parallels in the Plays and Poems* (Vol. III). Its Introduction sets out my principles of selection together with “touchstone” examples drawn from the work of Jackson and Vickers. The echoes, pre-echoes, parallels and comparable usages are overwhelming and demand explanation.

Jackson’s dusting off of F.S. Boas’ suggestion in *Shakespeare and the Universities* (1923) that *1 Richard II* is a 17th-century play by some forgotten hack plagiarizing his way through Shakespeare, does not survive even superficial scrutiny. This is the chief reason Boas’ proposal was never taken seriously. More than half of Shakespeare’s works were not published until 1623 and many of these went unperformed until the 18th century. Yet deep and subtle echoes resonate from them all in *1 Richard II*. Also echoed are *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (not published until 1609), the long poems, *Venus* and *Lucrece*, and—see below—even some apocrypha.

If *1 Richard II* is plagiarized it’s by Shakespeare’s most dedicated fan, an individual who studied his work from back to front and understood its subtlest functionings long before Coleridge, Bradley and Wilson Knight. He uses the same imagery in the same way and structures his scenes, characters and themes analogously. His world-view is identical and his unusual historical judgments similar.

Even more astonishing, and surely decisive when it comes to matters of authorship, some of the most intriguing parallels are found in plays not attributed to Shakespeare until the 20th century—*Edwlad III*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and the *Sir Thomas More* fragment among them. That these apocrypha, like *Pericles*, another late addition, are echoed or pre-echoed in *1 Richard II*, seems quite remarkable to me, a clinching detail. Weiss *et al.* again pretend to overlook the implications.

But the chief reason they and Jackson are wrong about the play’s date—aside from the fact that the litigious Shakespeare, who otherwise sued over pennies, never protested this apparently outrageous rip-off of his entire *oeuvre*—is that repeated analyses of the actual manuscript of *1 Richard II*, including my own, confirm that it is indeed an early 17th-century transcript of a play written about 1592-3. Not one of the panelists, Jackson, Elliott nor Valenza, has set his eyes on the physical MS, held it in his hands, painstakingly traced out its varying scripts and inks. Yet as we’ve seen, all these orthographic features unequivocally suggest an early date. I have frequently called on Jackson to answer my and Rossiter’s and Frijlinck’s and Gregg’s and Carpenter’s and above all A.C. Partridge’s detailed analyses of the original, all of which confirm the foregoing, but he has never done so. Nor do Elliot and Valenza and Weiss *et al.*, who don’t even mention this crucial matter.

Conventional Phrases

I concede immediately that some of my phrasal citations are indeed conventional and even cliché. Weiss *et al.* are not aware of this unembarrassed concession because the place where I acknowledge the obvious lies in one of the “inadmissible” portions of my evidence. Had they consulted *Verbal Parallels in the Plays and Poems* they would have learned that these minor phrases are included, not because they’re trivial and commonplace, but because Shakespeare tended to favor them. They are his wine-dark

seas and rosy-fingered dawns. That we find them also in *1 Richard II* is authorially significant:

<i>1 Richard II</i> Act/Scene/Line	Line/Phrase Cited	Times in Shakespeare
V.iii.59	The highest God's anointed deputy	22
III.ii.141	Cry ye mercy,	18
IV.ii.162	I fear me	18
III.ii.105	There's no remedy	14
I.iii.16, III.iii.36	By the Mass	12
III.ii.51	Here hard by	11
IV.iii.3	To horse, to horse!	11
IV.ii.212	One word more	11
V.v.9,12	O, that I were [noun, participle]	10
III.i.165	We are like to have,	10
V.i.257	Therefore stand close	10
III.iii.50	What's he that [verb]?	9
V.i.25	The devil himself	9
IV.iii.32	present death	9
I.iii.235	How now, what noise is this?	8
III.iii.197, 199	Lay hold of him	8
V.i.152	If aught thou know	8
III.iii.206	That's all one	8
V.v.27	A thousand marks	8
III.ii.138	For thy pains	7
III.i.109, V.i.250	Within there, ho!	7
II.i.135	In dead of night	6
III.iii.198	Out, alas!	6
IV.ii.210	Stop his mouth	5
IV.ii.75	What think'st thou?	5
V.v.42	Therefore, no more words	5
I.iii.178	In justice of the cause	4
IV.iii.5	Dull and heavy	4
III.ii.92	What need you fear ... ?	3
IV.ii.99	Full of woe.	3

And this is all before we get to the similar characters, scenes, analogous sources and more. The overlaps are so considerable, but the level of plagiarism required (in either direction) so improbable, and never remarked upon at the time, that the only reasonable explanation is that they come from the same source.

Weiss et al.

For all the above reasons, then, but especially because so much of my basic evidence had been ruled inadmissible, I decided finally that if I were not to be allowed to speak in full, I would not speak at all.

Weiss, Johnson and Sharpe determined nevertheless to plow ahead, and their report is now before us. I note immediately that I was right to take myself out of the process. As promised, the panel declined to review some of my most important evidence but readily added Jackson's polemics to their burden. So they had the time but not the inclination to hear me out.

The first part of Weiss *et al.* describes the background to the dispute. It is a partial and erroneous version, like the rest of their document, but I don't propose to argue.¹⁸ The heart of the matter is agreed: at a critical point, while we were still negotiating the ground rules, I withdrew, contrary to my original intent and commitment. The evolving terms did not seem fair or productive to me. A contributing factor was the deteriorating tone of the whole enterprise: legalistic, shot through with *gotchas*, and public posturing. Elliott, who is still at it, has a particularly combative manner when dealing with this question which seems to derive from the fact that his father was an Oxfordian. I saw no point in putting my head into the noose being prepared for it.

The Response

The first thing to be said is that Weiss *et al.* is not an adjudication between Elliott/Valenza and myself, whatever the authors' initial brief. As noted, they state up front that "Ward Elliott and Robert Valenza do not need us to confirm their research," and take everything from there. The report instead is a straightforward attack on my case for Shakespeare as the author of *1 Richard II* and they use whatever comes to hand, including their own golden-eared opinions and the work of MacDonald P. Jackson, not originally a party to the dispute. I don't object, but let's be clear about the report's intent and status.

Weiss *et al.*'s principal resistance to my case for Shakespeare is that *1 Richard II* is an inferior work, unworthy of the Bard. Among their first complaints is that unlike Shakespeare, Anon tediously repeats himself:

The author frequently repeats the same ideas over and over, as if he fears the audience would otherwise forget what was happening, or perhaps because he had nothing else to pad out the play.

Note the gratuitous sneer about the padding—this is a polemic. In fact, *1 Richard II* is a tightly constructed drama with very little fat, as Rossiter, Schell and others have all noted.¹⁹ Its narrative economy is a Shakespearean hallmark. This can be shown by reviewing the eleven examples of so-called repetition Weiss *et al.* catalog: they are in fact not repetitions at all. Weiss and his friends perhaps did not anticipate that anyone would actually check their citations and so simply listed a dozen at random. Here they are with the texts referenced to my edition, which they use. Remember, these are meant to be repetitive:

1. WOODSTOCK

The time's so busy and so dangerous too.

Why, how now, brothers? How fares good John o' Gaunt?

Thou'rt vex'd, I know. Thou griev'st, kind Edmund York. (I.i.132-34)

2. WOODSTOCK

King Richard's wounded with a wanton humor,

Lull'd and secur'd by flattering sycophants; (I.i.148-9)

3. BAGOT

Here's better news for thee: we have so wrought

With kingly Richard, that by his consent

You are already mounted on your footcloth. (I.ii.23-5)

4. DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

Madam, 'tis true. No sooner had he claim'd
The full possession of his government,
But my dear husband and his noble brethren
Were all dismissed from the Council table,
Banish'd the court, and even before their faces
Their offices bestow'd on several grooms. (II.iii.4-9)

5. WOODSTOCK

Come, my good brothers, here at Plashy House
I'll bid you welcome with as true a heart
As Richard with a false, and mind corrupt,
Disgrac'd our names and thrust us from his court. (III.ii.1-4)

6. LANCASTER

We could allow his clothing, brother Woodstock,
But we have four kings more, are equal'd with him:
There's Bagot, Bushy, wanton Green, and Scroop,
In state and fashion without difference. (III.ii.39-42)

7. TRESILIAN

So, seven thousand pounds
From Bedford, Buckingham and Oxford shires,
These Blanks already have return'd the king.
So then there's four for me and three for him;
Our pains in this must needs be satisfied. (IV.i.6-10)

8. BAGOT

All rich and rare: the realm must be divided presently, and we four must farm it. The leases are a-making and for seven thousand pounds a month the kingdom is our own, boys!

BUSHY

'Sfoot, let's differ for no price! And it were seventy thousand pounds a month we'll make somebody pay for't. (IV.i.52-55)

9. WOODSTOCK

I wish his Grace all good, high heaven can tell,
But there's a fault in some, alack the day:
His youth is led by flatterers much astray. (IV.ii.141-43)

10. GHOST OF EDWARD III

Richard of Bordeaux, my accursed grandchild,
Cut off your titles to the kingly state
And now your lives and all would ruinate:
Murders his grandsire's sons—his father's brothers!—
Becomes a landlord to my kingly titles,
Rents out my crown's revenues, racks my subjects (V.i.85-90)

11. [TRESILIAN]

I did suspect no less, and so 'tis fall'n:
The day is lost and dash'd are all our hopes.

One really doesn't know what to make of these so-called repetitions. They're all over the map—where are the tedious restatements designed to pad out the author's empty bag?

It's true that Richard II's treatment of his father's brothers is emphasized, but no more so than, say, Hamlet's delay or Macbeth's psychomachia or Iago's evil machinations, all of which are re-stated. The deteriorating relationship between Richard and his uncles is the plot's axiom, the story's driver. The court's corruption absent the old nobility becomes the basis for the rest of the action: Woodstock's kidnapping, his assassination and the reason the country finally rises in revolt.

Weiss *et al.*'s non-evidence is typical of the claims their report repeatedly makes. I invite serious students of this matter to follow up their references and note for themselves that they do not in fact support or illustrate what is claimed for them. Their whole critique of the play is based on empty assertions supported by nothing. Like the famous Stephen Hawking story, in their case it's turtles all the way down.

The Characters

Another big Weissian objection is that

Characters in *Woodstock* are personifications more than persons. The most interesting of them, Thomas and Tresilian, are little more than stick figures representing, in the former case, humility, kindness and wisdom and, in the latter, unrelieved greed and villainy.

Not so, but unfortunately we're now close to matters of judgment and opinion. In fact, the most interesting character in the play is Richard—the one who moves on to the next drama and whose fate determines the country's history for the next hundred years. Shakespeare twice explored this complex, quasi-masochistic personality, the man who would and would not be king. "Ambiguity, Shakespeare's hallmark, is totally absent," claim Weiss *et al.*, totally overlooking the drama's most complex and ambiguous personality, sometimes taken as Hamlet's prototype. *1 Richard II* includes his portrait as a young man, an Oedipally challenged prince with two terrifying paternal figures: King Edward III, who gave him his throne, and Edward the Black Prince, his spectacularly heroic father who died tragically young but whom Richard, his "counterfeit," is expected to emulate. We watch as the boy evolves into a man through marriage, his wife's sudden passing, his growing sense of moral responsibility for the murder of Woodstock, grief over the death of his homosexual lover Green, and his shocking defeat and deposition in 1387. This is precisely the insecure, capricious monarch we encounter at the start of *2 Richard II*.

Nor is it true that Woodstock is a "stick figure," a mere abstraction representing "humility, kindness and wisdom." Weiss *et al.* neglect not only the subtleties but also what's obvious. Among other things, the supposedly kindly Woodstock is quite capable of violence and flaring anger:

Hence, flatterer, or by my soul I'll kill thee!

—*1 Richard II*, II.ii.148

Come, brother York, we soon shall right all wrong,
And send some headless from the court ere long.

—*1 Richard II*, I.iii.273-4

I will remove those hinderers of his health,
Though't cost my head.

—*1 Richard II*, I.i.193-4

He fully foresees what we might call the Lancastrian project, the seizing of Richard's throne. In fact, he is its mastermind. He advises his brothers, John of Gaunt and Edmund of Langley:

Soft, soft!
Fruit that grows high is not securely pluck'd,
We must use ladders and by steps ascend
Till by degrees we reach the altitude.
You conceit me too? Pray be smooth awhile.
—1 *Richard II*, I.i.177-181

Later he contemplates outright rebellion—

Oh, vulture England, wilt thou eat thine own?
Can they be rebels call'd, that now turn head?
—1 *Richard II*, III.ii.84-5

—and even plots murdering the minions:

WOODSTOCK
...Some vein let blood where the corruption lies
And all shall heal again.

YORK
Then lose no time, lest it grow ulcerous.
The false Tresilian, Green and Bagot
Run naught but poison, brother, spill them all.
—1 *Richard II* I.i.151-155

Woodstock also has an eye for the ladies (I.iii.62-6) and a mischievous sense of humor. In III.ii.170-223, after carrying out a playful and amusing dialogue with a horse, he mercilessly taunts and ridicules its rider, the Spruce Courtier, the king's Osric-like messenger. He also does it at least as wittily as Hamlet, and in similar ways.²⁰ Contrary to Weiss *et al.*, this duke is a character of substance and more than one dimension. His death is tragic and moving, directly recalling Richard II's own final moments. Rossiter among others notes:

Here it may be argued at once...that the author has observed exactly what Shakespeare had done [in 2 *Henry VI*], and has drawn his Duke of Gloster with new lines but on the same principles...Woodstock has far more sides to him. He can unbend more, is more amusing. His brusque, no-nonsense affection towards his Duchess is likelier than Humphrey's grieved forbearance with the impossible Dame Eleanor: he is less unremittingly high-minded.²¹

Corbin and Sedge also show that Woodstock is not a "simple figure of virtue" but an individual

continually at war with himself, attempting to preserve loyalty to the crown in others and yet failing to control his own temper at moments of crisis.²²

And finally, Schell's view is that Woodstock's "tactlessness and moral inflexibility" is instrumental in driving Richard at least part of the way towards disaster.²³ The duke emerges from the play a martyr but no saint.

We may also ponder for a moment the implications of an obscure and forgotten hack who writes better than Shakespeare or, updating the model, of a Samuel Rowley creating anything that compares even remotely with his great contemporary. Put this way, it's clear who we're really dealing with.

Tresilian

Likewise Tresilian, the king's plump counselor and confidant, is a far more profound character than the cut-out villain he becomes in the hands of Weiss *et al.* Like the Sir Thomas More of Hand D, he rises from poor beginnings to be Lord Chief Justice of England, when "what I shall say is law," (*I Richard II*, I.ii.98, 46). Sir Thomas also marvels at the way that

I from such an humble bench of birth
Should step as 'twere up to my country's head
And give the law out there.

—*Sir Thomas More*, Addition III, 6-8

I think this is a quite remarkable coincidence, i.e., no coincidence at all, and wonder at Weiss's capacity to ignore it. The parallels, and there are more, seem among other things to confirm the intuitions of the style critics: Shakespeare's hand appears in both.

Even more interesting, Tresilian reveals unexpected links with, of all figures, Angelo in *Measure for Measure*—surely a stretch for any plagiarist, though a natural thought for an author perhaps aware of the analogies. When he is appointed Lord Chief Justice Tresilian observes aphoristically that

Authority's a dish that feeds men fat,
An excellent delicate...
Wit makes us great, greatness keeps fools in awe.

—*I Richard II*, I.ii.57-59

Angelo's parallel meditation on power is accompanied by an almost identical sneering at the awe of fools:

O place, O form,
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,
Wrench awe from fools and tie the wiser souls
To thy false seeming!

—*Measure for Measure*, II.iv.12-15

The First Machiavillain

Tresilian may also be an early version of Falstaff, though to Weiss *et al.* the suggestion, which they believe to be mine, is simply "risible." The idea is an old one, however. Elson was the first to identify the parallels, followed by Bullough, Hemingway, and Humphreys.²⁴ Helgerson also describes Tresilian as the fat knight's "plump, witty and cowardly counterpart,"²⁵ and even Jackson detects a relationship between "the cowardly rogue Tresilian and Falstaff."²⁶ His side-kick Nimble fills the role of Pistol, as Boughner notices,²⁷ while Elson and Bullough speculate that Nimble's name, in its abbreviated MS. form *Nim*, may have suggested Nym to Shakespeare.²⁸ This of course poses the unanswered question of how Shakespeare ever got to see the MS.

Weiss *et al.* typically overlook the importance of Nimble. According to them

he resembles any number of Shakespeare's insolent wise-cracking servants, but he differs in the crucial respect that, unlike Shakespeare's fools, he is also a villain.

But again not so. Nimble, as his name suggests, is a survivor by his wits, like Thersites and many another quick-tongued low-life in Shakespeare. He is the only character to end the play unscathed. Weiss adds incorrectly,

Falstaff's low thieving companions could be analogs, but their villainy and their humor are both of a different nature than Nimble's.

On the contrary, they are precisely analogous, tending to the same petty thievery, bawdry and cynical humor.

Tresilian too is in many ways the Lord Chief Justice Falstaff would like to become, the office Hal almost promises him in *I Henry IV*, I.ii.62-7. Weiss *et al.* say that unlike Falstaff, Tresilian has "no spark of humanity," but this again is a superficial reading. Rossiter describes his "ogriish tenderness" towards Nimble, and he seems genuinely shocked at the end when he is betrayed and turned over to the Lords. Earlier he gives us glimpses of his hard early life and marriage, and how he struggled to rise. "Plump" Tresilian also shares some of Falstaff's more distinctive qualities, including well-rationalized money greed and battle-field cowardice—he is in fact a notably innovative figure, as Rossiter among others recognizes.²⁹

Sir Robert is of course much less than Sir John, and yet intriguingly also more, perhaps even much more. Falstaff is complete and unrepeatable, as the *Merry Wives* shows, but "that sly machiavel, Tresilian" (*I Richard II*, I.i.66) is the start of an entire process—the exploration and creation of a type. Rossiter even suggests that Tresilian may be the original of all Shakespeare's great Machiavillains, which of course would include Falstaff, placing him among the first stage representatives of "Machiavelli misunderstood...the man of will whose sceptical intellect dismisses all the traditional pieties."³⁰

Showing Not Telling

Weiss and his associates further attack the author of *I Richard II* by claiming that he amateurishly "tells" rather than "shows," unlike the real Shakespeare. Anon, they say,

employs bland choric speeches to introduce characters and describe situations in a far more obvious fashion than ever Shakespeare was guilty of...He bludgeons his audience with repeated reminders that the King is shallow, vain and easily led, his minions are greedy, and Thomas is simple, straightforward and noble. Shakespeare would show us, not tell us; he surely would not have the characters themselves constantly tell each other how virtuous or evil they are.

The pejorative language aside (*bland, obvious, bludgeons*), we have already seen the superficiality of the report's characterization of Woodstock as "simple, straightforward and noble," and Richard as "shallow, vain and easily led." These are complex characters and the statements they make about themselves, or that others make about them, are often deeply ironized. Shakespeare of course is the king of the self-revealing soliloquy—one needs to mention only Iago, Richard III, Edmund and, shall we say, Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, to recognize the emptiness of the contrast.

To this we add the following examples cited by Weiss *et al.* As before, readers will note that they don't actually illustrate what is claimed for them, i.e., these are not "bland

choric statements of personal qualities or motives.” The first cited speech is by Green to Tresilian, after telling him of his pro-motion to Lord Chief Justice:

GREEN

But good your Honor, as ’twill shortly be,
You must observe and fashion to the time
The habit of your laws. The King is young,
Ay, and a little wanton. So perhaps are we:
Your laws must not be beadles then, Tresilian,
To punish your benefactors; look to that.

TRESILIAN

How, sir, to punish you, the minions to the King,
The jewels of his heart, his dearest loves?
’Zounds, I will screw and wind the stubborn law
To any fashion that shall like you best.
It shall be law, what I shall say is law,
And what’s most suitable to all your pleasures.

BAGOT

Thanks to your Lordship, which is yet to come!

— *1 Richard II*, I.ii.36-47.

Nothing bland, nothing choric, though Tresilian’s words bristle with ambiguous sincerities.

Another one of Weiss’s non-examples is Woodstock’s deposition scene, discussed earlier:

WOODSTOCK

My staff, King Richard? See, coz, here it is.
Full ten years’ space within a prince’s hand,
A soldier and a faithful councilor,
This staff hath always been discreetly kept;
Nor shall the world report an upstart groom
Did glory in the honors Woodstock lost.
[*Dashes his staff against the ground*]

— *1 Richard II*, II.ii.155-60.

As we see, the context is full of action and drama when, like Moses before Pharaoh, Woodstock casts his staff to the ground. My reply to Weiss then is that there are no literary charges to answer here, just empty allegations. The comments by Tresilian, Woodstock and Green are appropriate in their places, neither bland nor choric but, as we saw in our discussion earlier, almost exactly as Shakespeare himself presents similar matters.

Weiss and his associates also claim falsely that “the openness with which Richard and his favorites announce their intents to mismanage the state and pillage the people in order to disport themselves in frivolous luxury (e.g., II.ii.76-207), is unlike Shakespeare’s depictions of high politics.” I call their attention in rebuttal to the future Richard III’s self-revelations at the end of *3 Henry VI* and the beginning of *Richard III*, Iago’s menacing soliloquies, and Don John’s plotting in *Much Ado About Nothing*. This is a catalogue of course that could be extended.

Comparing and Contrasting

Weiss *et al.*, however, do raise a good point about the comparative artistry of the two dramatists. Shakespeare in their view is clearly and always the better writer, and who could argue with that? Yet if we contrast a pair of theatrically similar situations, one by Shakespeare, the other by Anon, readers will quickly see that the differences are not as great as the report claims. In the following speech from *2 Henry VI*, for example, to finally compare apples with apples, Margaret of Anjou acknowledges Henry and the English courtiers who have assembled to welcome her as his new bride:

Queen: Great King of England and my gracious lord,
The mutual conference that my mind hath had,
By day, by night, waking and in my dreams,
In courtly company or at my beads,
With you, mine alder-lieffest sovereign
Makes me the bolder to salute my king
With ruder terms, such as my wit affords
And over-joy of heart doth minister.

—*2 Henry VI*, I.i.24-36

Now that's what I call a bland choric speech introducing a new character. The language is stilted and abstract—hard to visualize, as it were—and laced with cold, archaic usages (“mine alder-lieffest sovereign,” “mutual conference,” “ruder terms,” etc.) that keep the listener at a distance. There's nothing attractive about this queen at all, nor any hint of the inner fire that will one day make her leader of the Lancastrian forces, a better man by far than her pious husband.

Compare her speech with the following. This is Anne of Bohemia in *1 Richard II*, also accepting the court's welcome at her wedding:

Queen: My sovereign lord, and you true English peers,
Your all-accomplish'd honors have so tied
My senses by a magical restraint
In the sweet spells of these your fair demeanors,
That I am bound and charm'd from what I was.
My native country I no more remember
But as a tale told in my infancy,
The greatest part forgot; and that which is,
Appears to England's fair Elysium
Like brambles to the cedars, coarse to fine,
Or like the wild grape to the fruitful vine.
And, having left the earth where I was bred,
And English made, let me be Englished.
They best shall please me shall me English call.
My heart, great King, to you; my love to all!

—*1 Richard II*, I.iii.36-50

Anyone, except of course Elliott's vaunted “golden ears,” can hear the Shakespeare in this. Indeed, in an admittedly testy email, Dale Johnson describes

Like brambles to the cedars, coarse to fine,
Or like the wild grape to the fruitful vine

as “clumsy,” something Shakespeare could never have written.

I respectfully disagree and believe most true Shakespeare lovers would too. Anne's graceful iambic pentameters are far from clumsy and their content appropriately framed. Who but Shakespeare, furthermore, would seize the moment to introduce and magically transform a character set at his play's moral center? Not even Marlowe rises to such polished eloquence. One need hardly add that none of the lesser dramatic lights of the Elizabethan/Jacobean era could have done it either, nor did any of them write anything remotely comparable. This applies particularly to third-rate Sam Rowley, Macdonald Jackson's designated candidate. Again I challenge him to produce anything written by Rowley that's even in the same ballpark. Anne's speech alone makes my case and destroys his.

The young princess's grace and dignity aside, we can further observe Shakespeare's dramatic mind at work here, typically opening up themes and images to be developed later. Kermode calls him "a virtuoso of openings," and no other dramatist does it in quite the same way.

In this case it's via the trope introduced by "magical restraint." Anne is at once caught up and transformed by the "sweet spells" spun by England and its true peers, a theme that runs henceforward through the action. Later, not only Woodstock but a string of supporting characters, like the Spruce Courtier, are also bizarrely metamorphosed: "Oh, strange metamorphosis! Is't possible that this fellow that's all made of fashions should be an Englishman?" (*I Richard II*, III.ii.149).

All these possibilities are released into the play by Anne's speech. There is no difficulty recognizing this once we allow Shakespeare to be its author: the technique is familiar. Note also how Anne's hosts "charm" her, a neat ambiguity—winning ways and necromancy—wiping away all memories of her former self and homeland, almost supernaturally transforming this Holy Roman princess into a Holy English queen. Language itself morphs attractively—nouns become verbs (*English* to *Englished* in a single line), while the tales of the princess's childhood evaporate into trance-like oblivion. She grows up before our very eyes to become the moral center of this history. The eloquent sparkle of her speech is not accidental but designed to call attention to her role and presence. She uses it again in later scenes, consistent with Shakespeare. She has her own diction. Anne's unexpected early death signals the beginning of the end for Richard and his absolutist policies—it is said that her royal goodness and generosity alone kept rebellion at bay. At one point she is shown literally giving all she hath to the poor, the image of Christian charity and good governance.

Underpinning everything is the notion of nature's transformation, especially in England, from uncultivated to cultivated—brambles to cedars, wild grape to fruitful vine, etc. Again this is typical of Shakespeare.³¹ Notice too his characteristic diction, "They best shall please me shall me English call," and how the adjective *English* is transformed into the verb *Englishèd*, "let me be Englished." The word, and its grammatical dexterousness, cry out for comparison with (among other instances) Falstaff in *The Merry Wives*, "to be English'd rightly," (I.iii.48). Indeed, there is so much going on in this near-sonnet of 15 lines, including the subtle pre-echo of Macbeth's tale told by an idiot ("as a tale told in my infancy"), that obviously only one English dramatist could have created it.

Imagery

Following Anne's speech, plot and image fluidly interconnect, another significant authorial marker. Everything in the world of the play becomes "topsy-turvy turned." A groom may be a duke and a duke an ostler; healthful drinks are poisoned; noble men are humbled and humble men ennobled; the Lord Chief Justice is the biggest felon in the land; England becomes a "pelting farm," rented for seven thousand pounds a month, and

its king transformed into a landlord; never had English subjects such a landlord, nor English king such subjects! Prizes are bestowed upon the least worthy while the most worthy are scorned and murdered; docile and law-abiding citizens are tried and executed; false history is proclaimed truth, while truth itself goes unproclaimed and unrecorded; the loyal are condemned as traitors while traitors are rewarded; a whistle may be a word and a tune an act of treachery; the government abandons the people who abandon it; inexperienced beard-less boys rule while bearded men of grave experience are removed from office; treason may be put into any man's head; it is a crime to speak ill of nothing; a Black Prince is fair; a husband and wife are the same thing and hermaphrodites both cut and longtail; a widow is a man; things never spoke nor done before are now said and done; can they be rebels called that now turn head? Is it possible that this fellow that's all made of fashions should be an Englishman? It is as good at first as last; a man's deed is and is not his own; innocent verses are little better than libels; so men be rich enough they're good enough; fools make conscience how they get their coin; people's lives and lands and livings are the king's; a friendly masque is a deathly trap; princes may be led like slaves; the king denies his kingliness and as a man his own identity; England's ancient rights are abrogate; "God bless" means "God curse" and is treasonous; assassination looks like natural death; the dead may walk and a nephew kill his grandsire's sons—his father's brothers! Common murderers may destroy a prince and servants betray their masters.

The effortless richness of Anne's poetry and what it introduces into this poetic universe betrays Shakespeare's presence and demands a response from those skeptical of his attribution. Simply ignoring it is not an answer.

Hendiadys, Etc.

Among what I consider to be good evidence is Anon's tendency to write like Shakespeare in general terms. This flatly contradicts Weiss's contention that the verse just doesn't sound like him. I'm referring here not to any specific phrase or even the play's thought analogies, though these abound, but the fact that among other things he likes hendiadys or at least hendiadys-like phrases, economically compounded words and the prefixes *un-* and *re-*. These preferences have long been recognized as Shakespeare markers. That we find all of them and all in one place, an anonymous Elizabethan play with multiple other connections to Shakespeare, should give any serious scholar pause. Weiss *et al.* sweep on.

Hendiadys is a rhetorical form defined by the OED as the "coupling of dissimilar adjectives, verbs or substantives (as opposed to paired synonyms) to achieve a conscious semantic purpose." Its use is characteristically Shakespearean: "sound and fury" is perhaps his most famous coinage but almost as well known are Hamlet's "the book and volume of my brain" and "the abstract and brief chronicles of the times." Readers will note that some of these examples do include synonyms rather than antonyms or complements or a combination: *abstract* and *brief chronicle*, for instance. In some cases it's hard to tell because the sense in which a word is used, e.g., "volume," is ambiguous. These hendiadys-like constructions or hendiadysms, as I like to call them, are nonetheless by Shakespeare and in his characteristic manner. He was of course not constrained by academic conventions four hundred years into the future—he wrote with an eye for sound and meaning.

No other Elizabethan playwright, Anon excepted, resorts so frequently and naturally to hendiadysms. The 37 examples in *I Richard II* include "You must observe and fashion to the time" (I.ii.37), "Of this remiss and inconsiderate dealing," (I. iii.224), "I never saw

you hatch'd and gilded thus" (I.iii.78), "Mount and curvet like strong Bucephalus" (I.iii.91), "The battle full of dread and doubtful fear" (II.i.72), "A victory most strange and admirable" (II.i.84), "Woodstock and Gaunt are stern and troublesome" (II.i.124), "And every hour with rude and bitter taunts" (II.i.130), "The news to all will be most wish'd and welcome" (II.i.154), "A soldier and a faithful councilor," (II.ii.160), "Thou'dst rid mine age of mickle care and woe" (II.ii.199), "And suit themselves in wild and antic habits" (II.iii.91), "In state and fashion without difference" (III.ii.42), "Others there be refuse and murmur strongly" (III.ii.81), "in operation and quality different" (III.ii.205), "All rich and rare" (IV.i.52),³² "We heard the people midst their joy and moan" (IV.ii.113), "So full of dread and lordly majesty," (V.i.20), "rough and stern" (I.ii.33), "screw and wind" (I.ii.44), "tax and pill" (I.iii.113), "slow and melancholy" (I.iii.92), "plain and honest" (I.iii.18), "fortune and success" (II.i.87), "torture and afflict" (II.i.140), "summon and direct" (II.i.161), "strange and wonderful" (II.i.59), "good and perfect" (II.ii.13), "feast and revel" (II.iii.101), "mirth and sport" (IV.ii.135), "fearless, bold" (V.i.4), "stern and terrible" (V.i.25), "haste and fly" (V.i.75), "wake and fly" (V.i.78), "guard and keep" (V.i.134), and "wise and reverend" (V.i.189).

Weiss *et al.* reject all the above as insufficiently Shakespearean: again the golden ears prove to be tin. Shakespeare, they assert, would never conjoin synonyms, forgetting the examples from *Hamlet* above, Macbeth's "bank and shoal of time," Shylock's "due and forfeit of my bond" and multiple other examples. Ironically the definition of hendiadys they prefer, and which they say excludes Anon's practice—

Hendiadys is a species of polysyndeton (a figure containing an unnecessary number of conjunctions) in which a conjunction is used to split a single thing into two or more, frequently by inserting "and" between a noun, adjective or verb and a word which modifies it.³³

—actually describes his work precisely. Almost all Anon's cited instances meet that criterion: "joy and moan," "dread and lordly," "refuse and murmur," etc. Weiss *et al.* seem to be trying to define the evidence out of existence, but fall short even in their own terms.

Finally, the report fails to recognize that one of Anon's most unusual hen-diadys—

Mount and curvet like strong Bucephalus

— *1 Richard II*, I.iii.91

—is actually employed by Shakespeare himself, twice, thus presumably disqualifying him as the writer of his own works:

...the bound and high curvet
Of Mars's fiery steed.

— *All's Well That Ends Well*, II.iii.180

and

Anon he rears upright, curvets and leaps

— *Venus and Adonis*, 297.³⁴

Prefixes

As with hendiadys, so with Anon's preferences for compound words and the prefixes *re-* and *un-*. Since their presence so clearly marks the play as Shakespeare's—they are conventionally taken as trace elements of his work—Weiss *et al.* have to find a way to disqualify their appearance in *1 Richard II*. Their strategy again is to narrow the definition:

The peculiarly Shakespearean tendency, was to add these prefixes to existing words, especially nouns and verbs, to create new and surprising verbs or adjectives, such as “unking’d” (RII, IV.i. 220, RII,V.v.37), “unbar” (Cym, V.iv.8), “unbosom” (LLL,V.ii.141).

But actually these peculiarly Shakespearean tendencies again fit Anon like Cinderella’s slipper, to borrow an image from Elliott and Valenza. They are to his manner born. Among comparative instances strategically unmentioned by Weiss we find “undone,” which appears three times in *1 Richard II* and also in *Macbeth* and *King Lear*. Other examples, all of which are repeated in the *Complete Works*, include *ungracious*, *unsophisticated*, *unhappy*, *undoes*, *unserv’d*, *unlike*, *unsettled*, *unwholesome*, *unmov’d*, *unskillful*, *unheard-of*, *unluckily*, *unwillingness*, *untam’d*, *uncontroll’d*, *unjust*, *uncertain*, *untouch’d*, *unrelenting*, *unreveng’d*, and *unknown*. The most unusual is *uncaput*, a genuine neologism meaning stupid (“no head”).

As for what counts as an *un-* word, I’m aware of the difficulties and discuss them at length in the introduction to my *Verbal Parallels in the Plays and Poems*. Of course Weiss *et al.* have not read it and so condemn me for failing to address the matter. Among other things, I include a detailed statistical table comparing my *un-* counts with Alfred Hart’s oft-cited numbers, and note discrepancies which may be attributable to his including stage directions and words like *unless* and *until*, which I omit for all the reasons Weiss *et al.* gratuitously rehearse.³⁵

The important statistic provided is 27, the number of *un-* instances in *1 Richard II*. It’s important because their extensive usage confirms a preference consistent with Shakespeare’s over 700 counted instances.³⁶ No other Elizabethan or Jacobean writer employs the form so habitually, and—to make the point again—certainly not Sam Rowley.

The Prefix *Re-*

The prefix *re-* also appears in the neologisms *redeliver* (*1 Richard II*, III.ii.174) and *recomfort* (*1 Richard II*, V.i.106), typically Shakespearean coinages and characteristic of his fondness for the form. The plays and sonnets include *repurchas’d* (*3 Henry VI*, V.vii.1), *retell* (*Othello*, I.iii.365), *relume* (*Othello*, V.ii.13), *re-edified* (*Richard III*, III.i.71), *Titus Andronicus*, I.i.51), *re-salute* (*Titus Andronicus*, I.i.75, 325), *re-united* (*Henry V*, I.ii.85), *re-answer* (*Henry V*, III.vi.128), *re-survey* (*Henry V*, V.ii.81, Sonnet 32:3), *re-send* (*All’s Well That Ends Well*, III.vi.115), *re-lives* (*Pericles*, V.iii.63), *re-speaking* (*Hamlet*, I.ii.28), *re-word* (*Hamlet*, III.iv.144), and *re-quicken’d* (*Coriolanus*, II.ii.117).

Redeliver, used by the Spruce Courtier in III.ii.174, occurs again not only in *Measure for Measure*, IV.iv.6, but twice in *Hamlet* (III.i.63, V.ii.179). On the second occasion it is even given to the same character, i.e., Osric, the Courtier’s celebrated descendant. More remarkable still, the word is deployed in the same unusual sense, the recipient’s response to a message (which in both cases is from a king to a prince). Weiss *et al.*, of course have nothing to say about any of this.

Compound Words

Like Shakespeare, Anon was drawn to compound words. But Weiss denies that the examples from *1 Richard II* are true compounds and therefore cannot be by Shakespeare. Not only is this a weak argument, it’s also false. Among Anon’s compounds are *bacon-fed* and *pudding-eaters*, both of which are used in Falstaff’s Gadshill scene.³⁷ Weiss *et al.* dishonestly or ignorantly comment: “None of these bears the mark of a Shakespearean coinage.”

After such a straight-faced assurance—that Shakespeare does not sound like Shakespeare—can we take any of their judgments seriously? These are the best Golden Ears Elliott could find? They fatally condemn themselves when they write, “If the assessors [meaning themselves] are not adept at considering textual issues, little faith can be put in their judgments.” On this point we agree.

Many of Anon’s other inventions are equally representative of the Bard, including *three-score* (used four times), *high-pric’d* (or *high-priz’d*) *under-officer*, *marriage-day*, *Janus-like*, *wild-head*, *English-bred*, *all-accomplish’d*, *twelve-month*, *topsy-turvy*, *white-headed*, *great-bellied*, *all-commanding*, *unheard-of*, *Ox-jaw*, *smooth-fac’d*, *near-adjoining*, *behind-hand*, *non-payment*, *free-born*, *seven-times*, *now-intended*, and *hard-hearted*.

The conclusion seems irresistible: both Anon and Shakespeare go in for verbal compounds, the prefixes *un-* and *re-* and, perhaps most revealingly, hendiadys. These practices can’t be defined out of existence or verbally airbrushed away. The evidence is unequivocal and demands to be accepted for what it is.

The Golden Metamorphosis

“Woodstock’s Golden Metamorphosis,” is the final section of my *General Introduction*, Vol. I. This 70-page discussion demonstrates that *1 Richard II* can sustain intense critical analysis of a Shakespearean kind.³⁸ While this doesn’t prove that he wrote the play, it does show that it was written by someone very like him. Obviously there are not too many candidates.

Topics covered in “Woodstock’s Golden Metamorphosis” include the extraordinary masque-within-the play and its complex audience/actor dynamics, so like “The Mouse Trap.” Weiss notes only that I emphasize the masque’s Elizabethan rather than Jacobean conventions, leaving out the more significant part of my analysis. I invite readers to consider it, along with my discussion of the role of doubles, pairs and twinnings based on the *Commentaries* of the Elizabethan lawyer, Edmund Plowden (1518-85) who is cited in the play. My analysis is of course influenced by the work of medieval historians Ernst H. Kantorowicz and F.W. Maitland, whose discussions of the Tudor legal doctrine of the King’s Two Bodies continue to receive considerable attention and numerous follow-up studies in connection with both Richard II plays.³⁹

Like Shakespeare generally, *1 Richard II* is also extremely interested in legal issues. The play explores the rise of contract law and Tudor inheritance law, especially as applied to royalty, and the constitutional right of monarchs to rule by decree. What limits, if any, may be placed on the king’s power? If he owns England, legally embodying the country, can he give it away? May he farm it out, i.e., rent it? In the end the play advocates what we would now call constitutional monarchy, a sovereign constrained by parliament. Politically, *1 Richard II* is nearly a century ahead of its time, again consistent with Shakespeare.

Weiss repeatedly accuses me of claiming that the above “proves” Shakespeare’s authorship. It doesn’t, nor do I assert it. What these data do show is that the play is a lively and deeply considered statement fully worthy of its proposed author’s genius, a legitimate claim. It is the ultimate rebuttal of Weiss’s premise that *1 Richard II* is a work of dull mediocrity. Perhaps it’s for these reasons that the report declines to review “Woodstock’s Golden Metamorphosis” and instead dismisses it out of hand. All Weiss *et al.* have to say is that my final section

discusses the play in depth and succeeds to some extent in making it seem more interesting than it really is, particularly as a left-wing manifesto.

More interesting than it really is and a left-wing manifesto—neither is true. But so much for careful and restrained analysis! Weiss *et al.* do, however, take time out to add sarcastically that “Egan points out that the author got the history all balled up, and he seems to think that was clever enough to be Shakespearean (*e.g.*, *id.* at 436-39, 483-85).”

The barely concealed ill will aside, this is such absolute nonsense it takes one’s breath away. In “The Dramatist as Historian,” Vol. I, pp. 137-166, I argue precisely the opposite. *1 Richard II* is extremely faithful to its sources, especially John Gower’s eye-witness account in *The Tripartite Chronicle* (1399-1400). Gower’s stern and resonant Latin verse also underpins *2 Richard II*, though this is not generally recognized. It includes one of the few contemporary portraits of Woodstock and a wealth of other details echoed in the play, such as the use of the word “pestiferous.”⁴⁰

My subsections closely analyze Woodstock’s controversial personality, the confession he is supposed to have written and signed while imprisoned in Calais, and the overall historical accuracy of the events presented. Far from having got everything all balled up, Anon got it all mostly correct. This is confirmed by comparing his account with the work of contemporary and modern historians, including May McKisack, Richard H. Jones, Gervase Mathew, James Tait, Lily B. Campbell, John Hardyng, Richard Grafton, Anthony Goodman, Peter Saccio, John Julius Norwich, Paul Gaudet and oth-ers.⁴¹

Welcome Concessions

To be fair, Weiss *et al.* do finally allow that the play may contain

a few passages of superior poetry (*e.g.*, I.iii.36-50), a couple of clever comic turns containing parallels to Osric and Dogberry (III.ii.115ff and III.iii) and one or two arguable hendiadys of questionable Shakespearean quality.⁴²

They also grant that

Egan’s most persuasive objections to Jackson relate to the latter’s conclusion that Rowley authored *Woodstock*... Jackson makes several persuasive points about the date of composition although Egan is able to call into question the force of some of them, and the possibility that it was an early play that was subsequently revised for a revival leaves a nagging doubt.

These are the two chief areas of disagreement between Mac Jackson and myself—the date of the play and the identity of its author. That Weiss *et al.* consider the outcome a draw is more than acceptable, given their blind commitment to Jackson’s side.

Weiss *et al.* also note that

Egan quibbles that Jackson’s analysis is corrupted by his use of Rossiter’s text, which corrected noun/verb disagreements in the manuscript and, in Egan’s view, did not give proper treatment to the MS’s occasional rapid switches between verse and prose (I Egan at 123-25; see, also, *id.* at 66-67). Egan considers it even more questionable that Jackson cites a few passages that contain his own modernized spelling and punctuation (*id.* at 125). These observations appear accurate.

Thank you, gentlemen and lady, but I object to the word “corrected,” which sounds as though Rossiter did the right thing. He did not—it’s an unconscionable interference with the text and falsifies the data. Moreover, the MS does not switch rapidly between verse

and prose. It is just frequently ambiguous. This goes back to the stylometric problem, noted above.

However, Weiss *et al.* have an even greater surprise. They suddenly and astonishingly concede—and it is fifty percent of my entire case—that

It can be argued that [*1 Richard II*] is at least as good as early Shakespeare plays such as *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Henry VI, Part 1* and *Henry VI, Part 2*.

This amazing statement, near the end of their report, bears considering. It implies that in Weiss *et al.*'s golden-eared opinions there was somewhere in England during the 1590s another playwright, now completely forgotten, who was capable of writing at least as well as the author of *Two Gentlemen* and the *Henry VI* plays!

But Marlowe excepted—and *1 Richard II* is certainly not his, something Rossiter demonstrates—there is no credible candidate other than Shakespeare himself. As Corbin and Sedge remark, he is “the one known dramatist in the 1590s whose dramatic style most closely resembles that of *Thomas of Woodstock*.”⁴³

We have seen that the resemblances are often so close, lines and passages are indistinguishable from each other. One simply cannot say whose are Shakespeare's, whose Anon's.

Miscellaneous

Weiss *et al.* make a series of slighting and/or inaccurate comments *passim* which need to be corrected or commented upon. They don't have any direct bearing on the main questions but leave a general impression of my incompetence. The numbered statements below are Weiss unedited, followed by my response.

1. *Thomas of Woodstock*, which Egan calls *Richard II, Part 1*.

Answer: No, Egan doesn't. *Richard II, Part 1* was the play's original name. *Thomas of Woodstock* was imposed in the 1920s by F.S. Boas and others. I describe the issues and their history under the subhead “The Title Fight” in my *General Introduction*.

2. The MS is probably scribal, but it contains a second hand, apparently that of a correcting reviser, who Rossiter thought might have been the author (*id.* at 117-19). Egan does not contend that either the copyist's or reviser's handwriting resembles Shakespeare's.

Answer: The MS is the work of a copyist, not a professional scribe. We can tell this from the unpracticed way it is presented and prepared—for example, the first few pages are written in a script too large, quickly reduced. There are also many more than two hands represented: Rossiter and Frijlinck identify at least seven. And I do in fact contend that one of them may be Shakespeare's.

3. Only about five unique complete editions of the play were published before Egan's, starting with J.O. Halliwell's [*sic*] 1870 edition of only eleven copies. Rossiter's 1946 edition was by far the most significant.

Answer: There have been ten editions published since 1870. Weiss could have learned this from reading my *Text and Variorum Notes*, but they were excluded from consideration. The most significant edition by far is Wilhelmina Frijlinck's 1929 "diplomatic" transcription.

4. [The French critic] Paul Reyher's notions about authorship [“Notes sur le sources de *Richard II*” (*Revue de l'enseignement des langue vivantes*, Paris, January-March, 1924), pp. 1-169] were rejected by subsequent scholars (*id.* at 29).

Answer: No, they were ignored, a much more significant behavior. Dover Wilson and Rossiter nonetheless stole much of Reyher's data while avoiding his conclusions.

5. Egan does not contend that either the copyist's or reviser's handwriting resembles Shakespeare's.

Answer: Laughable. No one knows what Shakespeare's handwriting looked like.

6. Bushy... who is reading a book of English Chronicles, cites historical precedents to encourage aggressive action, including Edward III's hanging of [Roger] Mortimer, who had been Protector during that king's minority, and the Black Prince's bloody victory at Poitiers (the pertinence of which to domestic issues is obscure).

Answer: This comment, perhaps more than any other, shows how superficially Weiss *et al.* reviewed my *General Introduction*. Elsewhere they make it worse by saying

But it wouldn't be fair to Shakespeare to regard the many historical errors in *Woodstock*, which have little if any dramatic function, such as exaggerating the number of French dead at Poitiers (II.i.77-80), to be evidence of his authorship.

I devote several pages to this scene (pp. 140, 426-8), arguing that the errors in Bushy's Chronicle are deliberate (on the part of the author, of course) along with their false claim that Richard is almost two-and-twenty, that is, old enough to have already succeeded to the throne. He is thus pushed by the minions into another confrontation with his uncles which, as it happens, turns out well for him. Weiss *et al.* also get the follow-up scene's dynamics ludicrously wrong when they claim that Woodstock admits “he had not thought that Richard was yet of age.” The duke actually says:

And yet I think I have not wrong'd your birthright,
For if the times were search'd I guess your Grace
Is not so full of years till April next.

— *1 Richard II*, II.ii. 82-4

The historical record shows that Woodstock is right. Richard II was actually born in 1367 and was thus just 20 years old at the time. The inaccuracy of Bushy's chronicle is part of the writer's ongoing commentary about the nature of History, an important theme in the play.

7. *1 Richard II*, II.ii.

Answer: This scene is based on historical fact (see Holinshed, 1389), when young Richard completely outmaneuvered his uncles and secured the throne for himself. At the same

time he got them unwittingly to admit their guilt in keeping it from him. Richard's skill redounded to his general credit. Weiss *et al.* summarize the moment adequately enough but fail to understand its importance.

The scene Anon creates from Holinshed's record is typical of Shakespeare's way of working. It becomes a cat-and-mice game with pussy triumphant. More important, this real-life episode was used as the basis for similar scenes in later Shakespeare, e.g., *Richard III*, III.iv and *Henry V*, V.ii. This has a bearing on the dating question. The *donnée* originates with Holinshed's history of Richard II's early years, so its reappearance in *Richard III* (1593) and *Henry V* (1599) means that these plays must follow rather than precede *1 Richard II*. This again eliminates Sam Rowley or any other Jacobean dramatist.

8. Woodstock plays along, and in an amusing quibble responds to the courtier's question, "The Duke of Gloucester lies here, does he not?" by replying, "Marry, does he, sir." [Cf. *Ham*, V.i.122. 21]...Woodstock diverts him with questions about his dress. [Cf. *Ham*, V. ii.92 *et seq.*]

Answer: I quote this comment about III.ii not because there's anything wrong with it but to note with some amusement that even Weiss *et al.* cannot help playing the parallels-in-Shakespeare game. They do it again at IV.ii.20-7, which they compare to *Julius Caesar*, II.ii.75-90, and later note the "impressive similarities" between *1 Richard II*, I. iii.139 ("No more, good uncles; come, sweet Green, ha' done.") with *2 Henry VI*, III.i. 304 ("No more, good York; sweet Somerset, be still"), and *1 Richard II*, II.i.125 ("But York is gentle, mild and generous') with *2 Henry VI*, III.i.72 ("The Duke is virtuous, mild and too well given"). It's just impossible to work with this play without thinking of Shakespeare.

9. *1 Richard II*, III.iii [is] a low character country scene in prose...Nimble and Ignorance conceal themselves to spy on a number of rich clowns who grumble about the blank charters.

Answer: Another scene Weiss *et al.* completely misunderstand. The black humor, such as it is, dramatizes Richard's tyranny in the countryside. These are not "clowns," nor is there anything funny about their fate, which is to be hanged, drawn and quartered and their property seized by the crown. The scene's star character is Simon Ignorance, town Bailiff, the first in a long line of pompous, half-educated officials like Dogberry, whom he unambiguously resembles. Beyond this, what marks this brilliant scene as unmistakably Shakespeare's is its extraordinary mixture of menace, edgy satire, politics and acute human observation. Ignorance and his brother Ignoramus may be representative toadies but they're also real-life survivors in a police state, unlike the clowns being shuttled off to jail, financial ruin and death.

10. Perhaps the most telling point contradicting Egan's contention that *Woodstock* is "*Richard II, Part I*" is the unquestioned fact that the play which he regards as "Part 2" depicts events which had already occurred in "Part 1." For example, the farming out of the kingdom and Richard's blank charters scheme, which are first proposed in *Richard II* at I.iv.45-51, occupies a main part of the action in *Woodstock*, being shown as completed in IV.i (and as being abandoned by Richard in the ending composed by Egan [V.vi.129-31]). Characters appear in *Richard II* without regard to continuity from *Woodstock*. For example, Sir Thomas Scroop, one of Richard's favorites in *Woodstock*, equal to Bushy, Bagot and Green, isn't even mentioned in *Richard II*. The messenger in RII, III.ii who is called Scroop cannot be the same person; he may be Sir Stephen Scroop mentioned in III.iii.28, who is probably the ghost character at III.iii.62s.d. Even more tellingly, Green, who is not disposed of in *Richard II* until III.i, had already died in *Woodstock* V.iv. It is quite possible that the lost ending of the *Woodstock* MS also dispatched Bushy and Bagot.

Answer: This is another one of the places where Weiss *et al.* seriously misrepresent my view of the connections between *1* and *2 Richard II*. As noted above, and at greater length in my *General Introduction*, I do not maintain, nor ever have, that the earlier play is prequel to the later, though *2 Richard II* was inevitably written with its predecessor in mind. Nevertheless Shakespeare did not assume his audience's knowledge of the king's early reign (plus there were several other versions of Richard II's story current in London ca. 1595), and so provided a convenient summary of it in *2 Richard II*, II.i.241-62, quoted above.

The relationship between *1* and *2 Richard II* is not the same as that between the tetralogy plays, where the expectation is that the audience will be familiar with the previous episode. Even then Shakespeare inserts reminders and makes adjustments—Falstaff was dropped from *Henry V* despite the author's promise in *2 Henry IV* that he'd travel with Hal to France. In *Richard III*, Queen Margaret returns after dying in *3 Henry VI*. The night before Agincourt Henry summarizes his family's entire history, back to Richard's deposition, which he now repents. In *2 Richard II* the fact that Green is resuscitated like Margaret, and Mowbray is correctly substituted for Lapoole, simply confirms that Shakespeare intended these two plays to stand apart. This doesn't mean we can't connect them.

Sir Thomas Scroop, by the way, does appear in *2 Richard II* along with Bushy, Bagot and Green. He is the Earl of Wiltshire, who hath the realm under farm.

11. While it is true that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence—and we do not place undue weight on the negative external evidence—it is also true that a glaring omission, such as the lack of any contemporary reference to the age's most prominent playwright as the author of *Woodstock* (a play which Egan says was popular well into the 17th century [I Egan 94]) needs to be explained.

Answer: Contemporary ascriptions of authorship are notoriously unreliable. Many Shakespeare plays were published anonymously, or were not published at all until 1623. Some didn't make it into the canon until the 19th and 20th centuries. Among contemporary works carrying W.S.'s initials or name are *The First Part of Sir John Oldcastle* (1600), *The London Prodigal* (1605), *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608), and *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (1611, 1622), all of which declare themselves to have been "Written by William Shakespeare," by "W. Sh." or "W.S." *1 Richard II* was never published in its author's lifetime and perhaps was omitted from the First Folio because it was incomplete, that is, censored.

12. Egan tries to support his early date by arguing that the masque in *Woodstock* more closely resembles an Elizabethan sort of masque rather than the more ornate masques popular at the Jacobean court (*id.* at 97-100). But, in terms of similarity to dramatic depictions of masques (which we regard as more pertinent for this purpose than actual masques), it has more in common with the masque in *Henry VIII*, I.iv (a scene attributed to Fletcher), in which, as in *Woodstock*, the king appears in disguise. *Henry VIII* is dated 1612-13.

Answer: I devote several pages to analyzing *1 Richard II*'s unusual and technically innovative masque sequence (*General Introduction*, pp. 103-7, 289-93, 406-11). The key element, and the one that separates Elizabethan from Jacobean court masques, is the direct involvement of the audience. I cite several Elizabethan schema in which the onlookers are worked into the action. *Woodstock* is literally drawn to his fate, forcibly dressed as one of the mummers and kidnapped. It is true that in some respects this masque resembles that in *Henry VIII*. Actually it resembles many of Shakespeare's inset dramas,

just as they all share a family likeness, including those in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Hamlet*.

13. Jackson observes that *Woodstock* contains numerous instances of colloquialisms and contractions which were not in general use until after 1600; frequent use of “has” and “does” rather than “hath” and “doth,” which was also more common after 1600; and a number of oaths (especially □ 'Sfoot”) which did not come into stage use until about that time (Jackson 2002 at 17-19; Jackson 2007 at 76).

Answer: The MS is an early Jacobean copy of a play written 1592-3. Based on the pioneering scholarship of Halliwell, Keller, Carpenter, Frijlinck, Gregg and Rossiter, in 1964 A.C. Partridge demonstrated this beyond argument. His analysis also showed how the copyist introduced his own shorthand and other small changes when it came to contractions and colloquialisms. Jackson has consistently declined to answer the manuscript-based evidence of these scholars, relying instead on his own imagination.

It also seems likely that the playwright introduced revisions during the copying process, though it's difficult to say how extensively. Examination of the actual MS., including features that are generally omitted from the published text (deletions, corrections, additions by non-authorial hands, actors' names, marginal comments and so on), shows that Jackson's proposal, while superficially plausible, does not sustain close scrutiny. Recently he has developed increasingly far-fetched claims for the text and its non-Shakespearean author, among them previously unsuspected rhythmic elisions (so that non-iam-bic pentameters with too many feet may be redefined and counted as iam-bics for stylometrical purposes) and “nasal rhymes” (forcing what does not rhyme to rhyme. For example, if you hold your nose and say “king” and “Green” they almost sound the same!). These absurdities are supported only by Jackson's polished style and his vast authority in this field, which I unhesitatingly concede. It's just that in this case he's wrong. What Jackson does not observe is that such extraordinary authorial skill, care and subtlety completely undercut his simultaneous claim that Anon was little more than a third-rate hack who copied hand over fist from Shakespeare. Jackson's author is completely uninventive, a plagiarist and a hack, and yet super subtle in his rhymes and rhythms. As we have seen (*Welcome Concessions*, above), in the end not even Weiss *et al.* are convinced by Jackson.

14. Some parallel elements in *Woodstock* and *Richard II*—such as references to Richard as “landlord” of England, the “pelting farm” metaphor, and Gaunt's description of the dead Thomas of Woodstock as a “plain well-meaning soul” (RII, II.i.128)—suggest that the author of which-ever was the later play was familiar with the earlier one. However, the parallels do not compel the conclusion that the plays are by the same author.

Answer: Weiss *et al.* keep arguing like this. Every time I make a point they quickly note that it does not prove common authorship. Another instance: “But, if, as Egan insists, the play was written in the early 1590s and revised c. 1605, that does not mean that Shakespeare was the playwright,” etc. Please: I agree, and never claim that any one piece of evidence, such as the “pelting farm” metaphor or the thematic clothing imagery, confirms my hypothesis. But neither do these details invalidate it. My point is that cumulatively everything adds up and like iron filings around a magnet all point in the same direction. This is exactly as Schoenbaum recommends.

15. Notwithstanding his strongly-put objections to Jackson's scholarship, Egan seems to have been influenced by it. While he insists that *Woodstock* was composed in the early 1590s, he acknowledges that it was revised "some time after 1603 when a new copy was being prepared for a revival" (*id.* at 142)...Egan's theory requires us to suppose that the author wrote the play in the early 1590s, completely rewrote it years later and had a scribe copy out that product to use as a prompt book for the revival (Jackson 2007 at 95).

Answer: Where does Weiss get this stuff? Nowhere do I even hint that I think the play was "completely rewritten" in the early 1600s. It was edited, that's certain, though it's hard to be exact about the extent. Some changes were made by the author, others by the copyist with his assistance or at his insistence or with his agreement. The idea that the manuscript is a Jacobean transcript of an Elizabethan play is not mine but Partridge's, supported by the accumulated scholarship of Halliwell, Keller, Carpenter, Frijlinck, Gregg and Rossiter. To this judgment I add my own support, for what it's worth. Even a quick examination of the original MS in the British Library—and I believe I am the only party to this debate to have actually done this—shows that it was repeatedly revised with edits large and small, many of them obviously corrections to an earlier version, now lost. I provide all the documentation in my *Text and Variorum Notes*, which of course Weiss and his scrupulous friends declined to consult.

16. Egan quibbles that Jackson's analysis is corrupted by his use of Rossiter's text, which corrected noun/verb disagreements in the manuscript and, in Egan's view, did not give proper treatment to the MS's occasional rapid switches between verse and prose (I Egan at 123-25; see, also, *id.* at 66-67). Egan considers it even more questionable that Jackson cites a few passages that contain his own modernized spelling and punctuation (*id.* at 125). These observations appear accurate.

Answer: Insisting that Elliott, Valenza and Jackson use an accurate text is no quibble. If their facts aren't right their conclusions will be wrong, and they are. Moreover, Rossiter did not "correct" the MS's noun-verb disagreements, he modernized them according to his personal taste. He also substantially re-organized the text and substituted language he considered more appropriate, e.g. *Certiorari* for *Surssararis*. In other words, he scrubbed out many of the MS's Elizabethan usages so that later scholars like Jackson came to believe the original was Jacobean. In the same spirit, Jackson doctors the text to agree with his Rowleyan hypothesis.

"These observations appear accurate," Weiss *et al.* say of the above objections but then refuse to follow the implications.

17. Egan gives equal weight to collaborations and questionable portions of Shakespeare plays, and even *Edward III* (I Egan 375 *et seq.*). This has sometimes caused him to fall into error. Thus, he argues that Shakespeare seems to have unconsciously had *Woodstock* in mind when Mortimer in *1 Henry VI* refers to Richard as his deposer's "nephew" (1HVI, II.v.64), when in fact Bullingbrook was his cousin, his uncle's son. Egan regards this as a possible "Freudian slip" because *Woodstock* shows Gaunt, Richard's uncle, as the "principal deposer" (I Egan 221-22). Egan's mistake is to attribute the slip to Shakespeare, who is not regarded as the author of that part of *1 Henry VI* (e.g., *Textual Companion* at 217).

Answer: Is he not, indeed. This is very much a matter of hotly debated opinion and by no means generally accepted, certainly not by me. I am fully aware that Shakespeare's authorship is questioned in numerous cases and that a new "disintegrationist" school, led by

the formidable Sir Brian Vickers, is emerging. In each case I have investigated the scholarship and drawn my own conclusions. Other readers will do the same.

Thanks to the scholarly work of Eric Sams, Giorgio Melchiori and others, *Edward III* is now correctly accepted as Shakespeare's and properly restored to the canon. My analysis of that play, including nine pages of parallel lines and even snatches of dialogue, reveals extensive connections with *1 Richard II*. One conclusion is inescapable: the authors of *Edward III* and *1 Richard II* were the same man. If it wasn't Shakespeare we have an even larger problem: who was this genius who wrote in tandem with the great master, stole his lines and scenes (Shakespeare of course returned the favor) but who died unknown, unheralded and unlamented?

More broadly, Weiss's problem is the deification of Shakespeare and the associated reluctance to believe he was capable of anything as human as a Freudian slip or writing a bad scene or line.

18. We also feel that Egan stretches the legal allusions in the play too far. Thus, he extrapolates from the last line in the MS, "have plodded in [Plowden] and have found no law ..." (V.vi.33), to argue that the author must have been Shakespeare because *Hamlet* V.i.22 seems to refer to a decision reported in Plowden's reports. However, it is not certain that the MS refers to Plowden, it actually says 'ploydin' or 'playden'; 'Plowden' is a conjectural emendation, albeit one adopted by most editors, but not all (II Egan 1140-41). In any event, it cannot be assumed that Shakespeare was the author of *Woodstock* because he seems to have known the decision in a case reported by Plowden and *Woodstock* appears to contain a reference to Plowden.

Answer: Well, obviously. Again, I never make such superficial and simple-minded deductions, though both references to Plowden are correct—I can confirm that the hard-to-read word in the MS's last line, when magnified and degraigned, is indeed *Plo[]den*, for which *Plowden* is the only reasonable emendation. Weiss *et al.* overlook the context, which is Nimble reflecting on his legal education.

Conclusion

1 Richard II is a complex work conceived, architected and executed by a master playwright with a strong sense of history, politics and legal issues. He saw and understood Richard II's tragedy in strongly Shakespearean terms and expressed that vision using images, doublings, characters, themes and ideas often indistinguishable from Shakespeare's practice. He deployed literally hundreds of expressions found nowhere else but in Shakespeare.

Yet he was no plagiarizing hack and must have written his play decades before Shakespeare composed many of the histories, tragedies and comedies with which it has been paired and compared. The significant ones are *2 Henry VI*, *2 Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Julius Caesar*, *Edward III*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, the two *Henry IV* plays and *Hamlet*, nine in all, though perhaps the most stunning result is that we find echoes throughout the *Collected Works*, including the sonnets and long poems.

Even more remarkable are the correspondences between our play and two apocryphal works, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Sir Thomas More*. The plagiarizing-hack hypothesis breaks down at this point. In the words of Sherlock Holmes, "When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

We have a new Shakespeare play.

Notes

¹ In an unanticipated email exchange that took place after this was written, Ms Dale Johnson pointed out that she is not an associate of Ward Elliott's, a characterization she deems to be "trash-talk" and "casting aspersions" upon her. I unreservedly withdraw the term and apologize to Ms Johnson and, if he is offended, Mr Elliott.

² My analysis is based on a digitized copy of the original manuscript in the BL. Photoshop and other softwares allowed me to magnify the text and de grain obscured lines and pages, thus resolving many long-standing textual debates. All these are recorded in my excluded *Variorum Notes*, together with an explanation of those long, interrupting lines. But even with these corrections, the original MS remains sufficiently ambiguous to call into question the value of any stylometric measurements based upon it. The fact that it is a Jacobean copy of an Elizabethan original complicates the issue still further, since the copyist and perhaps the author at his elbow introduced changes of their own. That at least is Rossiter's and Frijlinck's view, and I tend to agree. We may have rare examples of Shakespeare's handwriting in the MS's margins.

³ S. Schoenbaum: *Internal Evidence and Elizabethan Dramatic Authorship: An Essay in Literary History and Method* (Northwestern U.P., 1966), p. 178.

⁴ Schoenbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

⁵ Wolfgang Keller: "Richard the Second, Part One: A drama from Shakespeare's time," translated by from the German by Michael Egan, Vol. III, pp. 212-241.

⁶ A.C. Partridge: *Orthography in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama: A Study of Colloquial Contractions, Elisions, Prosody and Punctuation* (University of Nebraska Press, 1964).

⁷ Jackson claims simultaneously in different places (a) that *1 Richard II* is typical of the early 1590s and (b) that it is typical of the 1610s. The truth is that it's both, but Jackson is locked into his Jacobean hypothesis. In *Defining Shakespeare: Pericles as Test Case* (2003) p. 46, he approvingly cites Eliot Slater, M.W.A. Smith and Hugh Calvert, whose work on "vocab-ulary relationships" confirms that *1 Richard II* was written around 1592-3. But two years earlier, in a 2001 essay, Jackson argued that the play's orthographic features proved that it was composed ca. 1608. (MacD. P. Jackson: 'Shakespeare's *Richard II* and the Anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock*,' in John Pitcher, *et. al* (eds): *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, Volume 14 (Cranbury, CT: Associated University Presses and Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp. 2001).) More recently Jackson half-heartedly assigns the play's composition date to either the Elizabethan or Jacobean eras: "But I should perhaps have been content to settle on my broader limits of the period 1598-1609." (Jackson, 'The Date and Authorship of *Thomas of Woodstock*,' p. 95.) This is a 12-year span covering almost the whole of Shakespeare's known writing career. It's useless for dating purposes.

⁸ Arthur Kirsch (ed.): *W.H. Auden: Lectures on Shakespeare* (Princeton U.P., 2000) p. 334.

⁹ Plays written before 1606 were full of colloquial blasphemies, "'sblood!" etc. The 1606 "Act to Restrain Abuses of Players" prohibited language that "jestingly or profanely" invoked "the holy Name of God or of Christ Jesus, or of the Holy Ghost or of the Trinity." The fact that these imprecations were first transcribed in and then edited out of the copy we have suggests a date

close to 1606. The copyist didn't know enough to omit them, but the author did when editing the script.

¹⁰ See for example Ramon Jimenez: "Stylometrics: How Reliable Is it Really" in John M Shahan and Alexander Waugh (Eds.): *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* (Llumina Press, 2013) pp. 228-236).

¹¹ M.B. Malyutov: "Authorship Attribution of Texts: a Review" (*Electronic Notes in Discrete Mathematics* 21, August 2005, 353-357).

¹² *Ibid.*, 349

¹³ This may be an overstatement. See fn. 1 above.

¹⁴ Weiss *et al.* bizarrely end their report by noting darkly that I edit *The Oxfordian*, annual journal of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, which maintains that Edward de Vere, 17th earl of Oxford, was the true author of Shakespeare's plays. According to Weiss, Oxfordianism is "a heresy...a cult of conspiracy theorists," and I am guilty by association, despite my repeated agnosticism. Since Oxfordians are wrong about Shakespeare, my attributionist arguments concerning *1 Richard II* must be wrong also—that's how the logic goes. Later they add: "The date of a play's composition is a special type of external evidence. While it does not identify the author directly, it limits who may or may not be included in the universe of possible authors. For this reason, the proponents of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, as author of Shakespeare's plays, go through involved contortions to try to show that *The Tempest* and other late canonical plays were composed earlier than the dates commonly given for them, as Oxford died in 1604, long before he could have written the late plays according to the usual chronology." I am thus likewise compromised. In the same spirit, Hardy Cook, owner/moderator of the Shaksper online discussion group, warned that discussants of my thesis would not be allowed to raise the authorship matter in general. Fortunately it's irrelevant, but I note with some sadness what passes for academic freedom in official Shake-speare circles these days.

¹⁵ Later in their critique, however, when it suits them to affirm the opposite, they write: "the broad features of the play are vastly dissimilar from Shakespeare's undoubted plays, even the early ones."

¹⁶ Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 45.

¹⁷ Rossiter, *Woodstock*, pp. 26, 43-5, 46.

¹⁸ Before Lawrence N. ('Larry') Weiss, convenor, Dale Johnson and Will Sharpe, Assessors, Michael Egan, proponent, against Ward Elliott and Robert J. Valenza. (<http://shaksper.net/archive/2011/304-august/28082-thomas-of-woodstock>).

¹⁹ Rossiter, *op. cit.*; Edgar Schell: *Strangers and Pilgrims: From The Castle of Perseverance to King Lear* (The University of Chicago Press, 1983).

²⁰ There is some debate about which character descends from which. Jackson, for example, contends that Osric is the original. But we can show that this is not true from *1 Richard II*'s literary and historical sources, which include the contemporary poems, "There is a Busch that is Foregrow" and "On the Times," satirizing the bizarre clothing worn by Richard II's "new men" (l. 133) who "strut ridiculously" (l. 126). Their shoulders are puffed out so they seem broader than they really are (ll. 130-1); their slippers have long pointed toes, and their shins bear chains (ll. 141, 146). This absurd gear makes it impossible for them to kneel in church, upsetting others (ll. 145-155). Christ curses them, and their necks are ready for the sword. (ll. 159, 138). The

poem, some 236 lines, is written in alternating English and Latin (“macaronic”). It is discussed and reproduced in *Text and Variorum Notes*, I, pp. 421-22, excluded as evidence by Weiss *et al.*

²¹ Rossiter, *Woodstock, a Moral History* (1946), p. 66.

²² Corbin and Sedge, *Thomas of Woodstock*, p. 35

²³ Edgar Schell: *Strangers and Pilgrims: From The Castle of Perseverance to King Lear* (The University of Chicago Press, 1983) pp. 110-11.

²⁴ John James Elson, ‘The Non-Shakespearian *Richard II* and Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*, Part I.’ (*Studies in Philology*, 1935) pp. 177-88; Daniel Boughner: *The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy: A Study in Comparative Drama from Aristophanes to Shakespeare* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954) p. 175; Geoffrey Bullough (ed.): *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Vol. IV (Routledge and Columbia U.P., 1966) pp. 177-8, 264; Samuel Burdett Hemingway: *Henry the Fourth, Part I*, p. 52; A.R. Humphreys (ed.): *The First Part of King Henry IV*, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.

²⁵ Helgerson, *op. cit.*, p. 154. Tresilian notes: “I am swell’d more plump than erst I was” (I.ii.56).

²⁶ Jackson, ‘Shakespeare’s *Richard II* and the Anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock*, p. 62, n. 47.

²⁷ Boughner, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

²⁸ Elson, *op. cit.*, p. 181n.; Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Vol. III, p. 465n. Robert Boies Sharpe notes that *to nym* was Elizabethan slang for *to filch*, a quality more conspicuous in Nimble than his successor. (*The Real War of the Theaters; Shakespeare’s Fellows in Rivalry with the Admiral’s Men, 1594-1603* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1935) p. 94.).

²⁹ Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 15.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Cf. John F Danby: *Shakespeare’s Doctrine of Nature* (Faber, 1948).

³² “Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;” (*King Lear*, I.i.57).

³³ A. Quinn, *Figures of Speech*, 16-17. Weiss’s reference.

³⁴ *Curvet* also appears on its own in *As You Like It*, III.ii.1343.

³⁵ Alfred Hart: *Shakespeare and the Homilies and Other Pieces of Research into the Elizabethan Drama* (Melbourne and Oxford U. PP., 1934), p. 253ff.

³⁶ The count of 27 must be approximate because the last pages of the MS are missing. According to figures provided by Gerald E. Downs, The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 14.1107 Friday, 6 June 2003, Shakespeare uses 724 different ‘un-’ words, including all those in *1 Richard II*, except *uncaput*, distributed thus: *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, 18; *Much Ado About Nothing*, 20; *The Tempest*, 21; *Merry Wives of Windsor*, 23; *Venus and Adonis*, 23; *Julius Caesar*, 23; *Love’s Labor’s Lost*, 26; *1 Henry VI*, 29; *Taming of the Shrew*, 30; *Titus Andronicus*, 30; *As You Like It*, 3; *Henry V*, 33; *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, 33; *Twelfth Night*, 34; *Timon of Athens*, 34; *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 34; *2 Henry VI*, 34; *All’s Well That Ends Well*, 37; *3 Henry VI*, 37; *1 Henry IV*, 40; *Macbeth*, 41; *Cymbeline*, 41; *Troilus and Cressida*, 43; *Romeo and Juliet*, 46; *King John*, 47; *The Winter’s Tale*, 48; *Coriolanus*, 49; *Rape of Lucrece*, 49; *Othello* 50; *Richard II*, 50; *Measure for Measure*, 50; *King Lear*, 55; *Richard III*, 57; *Hamlet*, 68. The numbers seem to increase over time, so *1 Richard II*’s 27 again date it around the time of *1 Henry VI* with 29.

³⁷ *1 Henry IV*, II.ii.81-92.

³⁸ A.P. Rossiter: *Woodstock, a Moral History* (London: (Chatto & Windus, London, 1946), passim; Edgar Schell: *Strangers and Pilgrims: From The Castle of Perseverance*

to *King Lear* (The University of Chicago Press, 1983) pp. 77-112; Charles R. Forker (ed.): *King Richard II* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2002), pp. 144-152; Janet C. Stavropoulos: ‘“A masque is treason’s license”: the Design of *Woodstock*,’ *The Journal of the South Central Modern Language Association* (Summer, 1988) pp. 1-12; Alzada J. Tipton: ‘“The Meanest Man...shall be permitted freely to accuse”: The Commoners in *Woodstock*,’ (*Comparative Drama*, Vol. 32, 1998), pp. 117-145), Marie Axton: *The Queen’s Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), passim.

³⁹ *Les Commentaries, ou les Reports de Edmund Plowden* (London: Richard Tottel, 1578). For an English translation, see [F. Hargrave]: *The Commentaries or Reports of Edmund Plowden* [etc.] (London, 1779, 1816). Ernst H. Kantorowicz: *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton U.P., 1957), with a well-known chapter on 2 *Richard II*; F. W. Maitland: ‘The Crown as Corporation,’ in *Selected Essays*, ed. H.D. Hazeltine *et al.* (Cambridge U.P., 1936) pp. 104-127. For positive discussions see Marie Axton: *The Queen’s Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), the same author’s ‘The Influence of Edmund Plowden’s Succession Treatise,’ *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 37 (1973-4) pp. 209-26, and Lorna Hutson: ‘“Our Old Storehouse”: Plowden’s *Commentaries* and Political Consciousness in Shakespeare,’ in *Shakespeare and Hungary*, ed. Holgar Klein and Péter Dávidházi (Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), pp. 249-73. Critical assessments may be found in David Norbrook: ‘The Emperor’s New Body? *Richard II*, Ernst Kantorowicz, and the Politics of Shakespeare Criticism,’ *Textual Practice* 10 (1996) pp. 329-58, and S. Schoenbaum; ‘*Richard II* and the Realities of Power,’ *Shakespeare Survey* 28 (1975) pp. 1-13, reprinted in Farrell, ed., *Critical Essays on Shakespeare’s Richard II*, pp. 41-57.

⁴⁰ Eric W. Stockton: *The Major Latin Works of John Gower ‘The Voice of One Crying’ and ‘The Tripartite Chronicle’: An Annotated Translation into English With an Introductory Essay on the Author’s Non-English Works* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962), *Passus secunda*, 36. Charles R. Forker (ed.): *King Richard II* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2002) has nothing to say about Gower, though it claims *1 Richard II* ‘stands third in importance’ as a source for Shakespeare after Holinshed and Daniel.

⁴¹ May McKisack: *The Fourteenth Century 1307-1399* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959), Richard H. Jones: *The Royal Policy of Richard II: Absolutism in the Middle Ages* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), Gervase Mathew: *The Court of Richard II* (London: John Murray, 1968), James Tait: ‘Did Richard II Murder the Duke of Gloucester?’ (*Historical Essays by Members of Owens College, Manchester*; London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1902), Lily B. Campbell (ed.): *The Mirror for Magistrates* (Cambridge U.P., 1938), John Hardyng: *The Chronicle of Jhon [sic] Hardyng, from the Firste Begynnyng of Englande, vnto the Reigne of Kyng Edward the Fourth* (London, 1543; STC 12767), Richard Grafton: *Chronicles of England* ([1590], London: J. Johnson, 1809) Vol. I, Goodman, ‘The Character of Thomas of Woodstock’ in Anthony Goodman: *The Loyal Conspiracy: The Lords Appellant Under Richard II* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (1971) p. 91, Peter Saccio: *Shakespeare’s English Kings: History, Chronicle and Drama* (Oxford U.P., 2nd. ed., 2000), pp. 18-24; John Julius Norwich: *Shakespeare’s Kings: The Great Plays and the History of England in the Middle Ages 1337-1485* (New York: Scribner, 1999), pp. 69-107; Paul Gaudet: ‘The “Parasitical”

Counselors in Shakespeare's *Richard II*: A Problem in Dramatic Interpretation,' *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Summer, 1982), pp. 142-154.

⁴² Readers will recall that elsewhere Dale Johnson calls this sequence "clumsy." So apparently we have clumsy superior poetry.

⁴³ Peter Corbin & Douglas Sedge (eds.): *Thomas of Woodstock: or King Richard the Second, Part One* (Manchester U.P., 2002). p. 4.