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A Touch of Greene, Much Nashe, and All Shakespeare

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1 Henry VI is a special text for the nerve endings of Shakespearean enthusiasts, providing as it does possible grounds for arguing for multiple authorship as well as evidence for Shakespeare's single responsibility for the play as it now exists. The more than thirty years that elapsed between the Folio of 1623 and the play's likely first performance allow for an interpretation of a Shakespearean revisionary effort which does not perfectly conceal traces of possible original contributions by other dramatists. This last view of the case has a touch of having one's cake and eating it too, but the following discussions of a canonical symmetry and of the indirect role of Thomas Nashe may lead the reader towards an integrationist view.

The final three scenes of *1 Henry VI* are among those which several editors (and critics), including the Oxford editors, have deemed non-Shakespearean. Dover Wilson, for example, thought that 5.3.1–44 was possibly by Nashe but that the rest of the scene was Greene's, 5.4 was Greene's but revised by Shakespeare, and 5.5 was Greene's but the second half was a revision by Shakespeare. Taylor recently argues that 5.1 through 5.5, like 3.1.–3.4 (and possibly other sections) is the work of an unknown author "Y," whose work "has particular links with *Locrine* . . . [with] strong similarities to the dramatic writings of Robert Greene and George Peele" (Wells and Taylor, *Textual Companion* 217).[1] It is possible that we accept too easily the idea that these last scenes are non-Shakespearean, for there is a shapeliness in the arc of Shakespeare's career to be seen if we recognize that *The Tempest* echoes aspects of these passages from this early history. Of course, if one wishes to suggest that in Shakespeare's beginning was his end, whenever these last scenes were written/added to or not, *1 Henry VI* has to be considered the earliest of Shakespeare's work.

The similarities between this part of the history and those in the

romance include two pairs of lovers (Suffolk and Margaret, Ferdinand and Miranda) in each of which one is the offspring of the King of Naples; both women are "wonderful," with Margaret as "nature's miracle" (5.3.54) who has Suffolk's "*wondrous* praise" (5.3.190) and will herself bereave Henry's "wits with *wonder*" (5.3.195). Miranda's name indicates her wondrous nature, and she is addressed when first seen by Ferdinand, "O you *wonder*" (1.2.426).Other similarities are the temporary impotence of each of the male lovers, Suffolk's "I have no power to let her pass" (5.3.60) and Ferdinand's "My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up" (1.2.485); the issue of love's trial in Suffolk's "How canst thou tell she will deny thy suit,/ Before thou make *a trial of* her love" (5.3.75–76) and Miranda's "O dear father,/ Make not too rash *a trial of* him" (1.2.466–467), as well as her father's "All thy vexations/ Were but my *trials of thy love*" (4.1.5–6). Both male lovers talk of wood and servitude, albeit the bondage is of Margaret in the first case and Ferdinand himself in the second: "Why for my king: tush, that's a *wooden* thing," and "would you not suppose/ Your *bondage* happy, to be made a queen" (5.3.89, 110–111), and Ferdinand, the patient log man, saying that but for his love of Miranda he would not "endure/ This *wooden* slavery" (3.2.61-62). Indeed, Margaret, like Ferdinand, of royal descent through Naples, shows a similar instinct for independence: "To be a queen in *bondage* is more vile/ Than is a slave in base servility" (5.3.112–113). Both male lovers, Suffolk as surrogate, Ferdinand in his own person, offer to make the women queens (5.3.111, as just noted), and in Ferdinand's "I'll make you/ The queen of Naples," (1.2.448–449). It will also be remembered that Ferdinand, in the midst of his comparison and contrast of Miranda with other women, speaks of their tongues having "into *bondage*/ Brought my too diligent ear" (3.2.41–42), and that after Miranda expresses her desire to have him as her husband, Ferdinand replies: "Ay, with a heart as willing/ As *bondage* e'er of freedom" (3.2.88–89). Both suitors use the adjective "*precious*" in dialogue with the lovers. Suffolk speaks of the "*precious* crown" which Margaret will receive if she should marry Henry, even as the earl confuses the pronouns "his" and "my," while Ferdinand directly addresses Miranda as "*precious* creature" (3.2.25). Both women express their unworthiness; Margaret says "I am *unworthy* to be Henry's wife" (5.3.122), while Miranda tells Ferdinand that she weeps at her "*unworthiness*" (3.2.77). Both women describe themselves as maidens and willing servants; Margaret sends Henry "Such commendations as becomes a *maid*,/ A virgin and his *servant*" (5.3.177–178), while Miranda tells Ferdinand, "If not, I'll die your *maid*. To be your fellow/ You may deny me; but I'll be your *servant*/ Whether you will or no" (3.2.84–86). Of course, both marriages are to be "*solemnized*," as Suffolk says at 5.3.168 and Prospero at 5.1.309.

Now, the tone of the remarks of Margaret differs from that of Miranda, and the duplicity of Suffolk contrasts with the innocence of Ferdinand, but

the circumstances of love and status as well as diction are analogous in the first case and often identical in the second. Shakespeare may indeed have in an autoplagiaristic manner returned to his earlier work—*1 Henry VI*—with the lovers and a Neapolitan king, or he many have surrendered his resistance to using Greene, held to since the time of the attack in *A Groatsworth of Wit*, until the composition of *The Winter's Tale*, with its dependence upon *Pandosto*, and continued the relaxation in the writing of *The Tempest* by returning to the Greene-written section, Act V of *1 Henry VI*, perhaps even Greene-written originally but revised by Shakespeare himself.

Whichever or whatever the case, Shakespeare may have linked the writing of *The Tempest* with his recollection of *1 Henry VI* because of the fact that both plays have a dominant figure connected with magical powers—the white magician Prospero and the black magician Joan of Arc. Magic in and of itself is likely enough to draw upon a vocabulary naturally shared in *1 Henry VI* and *The Tempest*. La Pucelle appeals to "*ye charming spells*" (5.3.2), York cites her "*spelling* charms" (5.3.31), refers to her as a "*witch*" and speaks of her "*dainty* eye" (5.3.38) and calls her a "*hag*" (42). She replies with "*a plaguing mischief light* on Charles and thee!" and asks for "leave to *curse* a while" (43).

In *The Tempest* it is Caliban (whose "mother was a *witch*" [5.1.269]), "The damn'd *witch* Sycorax" (1.2.263), guilty of "*mischiefs* manifold" (264), "blue-eyed *hag*" (269), whose profit from having learned language is to "know how to *curse*" (1.2.364). He urges "All the *charms* of Sycorax *light*" (339–340) on Prospero, and the "the red-*plague*" (365) destroy him. Prospero promises to "*plague*" all his enemies (4.1.192), is told that his "*charm*" (5.1.17) has worked well on them, and calls upon his spirits "Ye elves" and so on in his speech of abjuration (5.1.33ff). And in his reference to "airy *charm*" (5.1.54), he sees the charmed enemy "*spell*-stopp'd" (61) and praises his "*dainty* Ariel" (95). Joan had also addressed her "*fiends*," while Sebastian speaks of fighting "one *fiend* at a time" (3.3.102).

All these terms, as I have said, could be merely the result of a common theme, the discussion of which necessitates similar vocabularies. However, there is a most unusual aspect which is shared by *1 Henry VI* and *The Tempest*, and that is the theme of escape from punishment of crimes by death because of the culprit's pregnant/"pregnant" condition. It will be recalled that both Sycorax and Joan are connected with this theme. Joan herself announces (falsely) "I am with child, ye bloody homicides;/ Murder not then the fruit of my womb" (5.4.62–63). Prospero reminds Ariel: "this blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child,/ And here was left by the sailors" (1.2.269–270), this was the "one thing she did/ [for which] They would not take her life" (266–267). An unusual topic, to say the least. One final point: Prospero destroys his art, returning to nature when he breaks his staff. At the end of the wooing scene Suffolk speaks of Margaret's "nat-

ural graces that extinguish art" (5.3.192). All together these parallels are suggestive and provide an elegant touch of artistic completeness to the career of one who may have died on the fifty-second anniversary of his own birth. The suggested circularity may appeal especially to those who see *1 Henry VI* as completely Shakespearean or at least a play completely revised by Shakespeare.

Some current scholars, led by Gary Taylor, building upon the work of John Dover Wilson and adding supportive material, argue on the basis of parallel passages, together with other unique features, that most of Act I of *1 Henry VI* is the work of Thomas Nashe. I believe that this reliance on the apparent presence of Nashean material in Act I—material that is indeed there—to determine Nashean authorship of this part of the play is a mistake and, indeed, that the material is more easily explained as yet another instance of Shakespeare's habitual incorporating of Nashe's prose into his own expressions, whether of prose or verse. The following examples of multiple uses by Shakespeare of several Nashean works, beginning with the most celebrated of the indictments of Gabriel Harvey, *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, illustrate the fact that Nashean presence is a sign of Shakespeare's borrowing.

Dover Wilson, citing George Steevens before him, finds in the Dauphin's opening remarks about the impossibility of predetermining a war's outcome, "Mars his true moving, even as in the heavens /So in the earth, to this day is not known" (1.12.1–2), a reflection of Nashe's phrasing in *Have with you to Saffron Walden* (1596), itself an echo of Nashe's source in Cornelius Agrippa's *De Incertitudine et Vanitate Scientiarnum*, "Neither hathe the true movings of Mars bene knowen untill this daie."[2]

Now, *Have with you to Saffron Walden* is a text Shakespeare borrowed from a number of times in the course of his career. As early as *Romeo and Juliet*, he incorporated a number of terms, from the very opening of the play with the taking-of-the-wall issue, but especially in 2.4, where Mercutio is at the height of his clever commentary as well as in his subsequent fateful collision with Tybalt, not to mention the description of the apothecary.[3] Then, in the composition of *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare returned to Nashe's lampoon of Harvey:

> The number of parallel phrases, some unique in the canon, the general theme of revenge imaged in the letting of blood and cutting of flesh, the reference to the incubation of *Saffron-Walden* since "the hanging of Lopus" (18), an action of 1594 thought to be alluded to by Gratiano at IV.i.133ff., immediately following the mention of "Pythagoras," together suggest that although Shakespeare had his plot outline from *Il Pecorone* or some version of it, he made use of ideas and images from *Saffron-Walden* in the development of the texture of his play, finding less in Harvey that was like Shylock, but much that was like Shylock in the attitude of Nashe and the Master Barber as they set about to phlebotomize the luckless Cambridge don.[4]

Even as the dramatist was working on Shylock, he had begun the creation of Falstaff in *1 Henry IV*, where Dover Wilson himself was among the first to see that Shakespeare had made use of this most successful and certainly the fullest of Nashe's attacks on Harvey. I suggest that the variety of elements in the play that are derived from *Saffron Walden* are the products of the following central fictional image of Harvey, so unlike the real Cambridge academic and so close to the *miles gloriosus* of *1 Henry IV* (and not unlike the Sir John Falstaff of *1 Henry VI*, 1.1.136, who "Cowardly fled, not having struck one stroke"). "Gabriel Harvey, of the age of fortie eight or upwards, (Turpe senex miles, tis time for such an olde foole to leave playing the swash-buckler") (55).[5]

It is perhaps enough to make the point that Shakespeare habitually borrowed from this particular text of Nashe, so that Nashean elements in *1 Henry VI* are more likely to be instances of Shakespeare's incorporation of these materials rather than signs of Nashe's own direct hand. This habitual manipulation of Nashean elements is quite clear even if we pass over other instances and cite simply *Saffron Walden* elements in *Hamlet.*

In the dialogue sections of *Saffron Walden* Nashe develops the theme of the Harvey family's humble origins in rope-making. With affected seriousness he has one of his interlocutors, Domino Bentivole, point out that although the ropes made by the Harveys are sometimes used in the course of criminal acts, the Harveys are not therefore guilty of any crimes themselves. Then Pierce Penilesse, the Respondent in this dialogue, makes some astute observations on the differences between cause and effect. In its rhythm and subject of logical tautology, with the added issue of insanity, this passage makes up the rhythm of Polonius's analysis of Hamlet's lunacy:

> As though the cause and the effect (more than the superficies and the substance) can bee seperated, when in manie things *causa sine qua non* is both the cause and the effect, the common distinction of *potentia non actu* approving it selfe verie crazed and impotent herein since the premisses necessarily beget the conclusion, and so contradictorily the conclusion the premisses: a halter including desperation, and so desperation concluding in a halter; without which fatall conclusion and privation it cannot truly bee termed desperation, since nothing is said to bee till it is borne, and despaire is never fully borne till it ceaseth to bee, and hath depriv'd him of beeing that first bare it and brought it forth. So that herein it is hard to distinguish which is most to be blamed, of *the cause or the effect*; *the Cause* without the *effect*

beeing of no effect, and *the effect* without *the cause* never able to have been. (59–60)[6]

Carneades, another of the interlocutors, urges the Respondent to connue with the live story of Gabriel Harvey and hopes that there will be no nterruption:

> Better or worse fortune, I pray thee let us heare how thou goest forward with describing the Doctor and his life and fortunes: and you, my fellow Auditors, I beseech you, trouble him not (anie more) with these impertinent Parentheses. (60)

Polonius is eager to describe the crazed desperation of Hamlet, interupting and delaying his narrative by parenthetical pieces of self-criticism. His most comical lines are those devoted to premises which necessarily eget tautological conclusions ("for to define madness, /What is it but to e nothing else but mad") and to much play on the relationship of cause nd effect:

> Mad let us grant him then, and now remains
> That we find out *the cause* of the *effect*,
> Or rather say, *the cause* of this defect,
> For this *effect* defective comes by *cause*. (2.2.100–103)

No one has suggested that Nashe wrote parts of *Romeo and Juliet* or *The Merchant of Venice* or *1 Henry IV* or *Hamlet*, yet the presence of the ame kind of Nashean source material has been too confidently used as evidence that Nashe was the direct author of a whole scene in *1 Henry VI*.

For example, Dover Wilson pointed to the conclusion of the Dauphin's peech as also clearly Nashean, albeit from yet another Nashean work, *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*:

> Otherwhiles the famished English, like pale ghosts
> Faintly besiege us one hour in a month. (1.2.7–8)

He cites Nashe's "pale rawbone ghosts" (II. 69.23) in *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* (1593) and points out that "otherwhile" is used nine times by Nashe and only this once in works attributed to Shakespeare. He is careful to admit that "rawbone" also occurs in *The Faerie Queene*, and we know that Spenser and his lengthy romance are frequent sources for Shakespeare.

This particular passage belongs to a set of pages in *Christ's Tears* which concern themselves with the bloodshed and famine in Jerusalem at the time of the siege of the city by the Romans under Titus and Vespasian, a set which captured the attention of Shakespeare in at least three tragedies,

Titus Andronicus (1594), *Julius Caesar* (1599), and *Macbeth* (1606):

> In *Christ's Tears* Nashe as moralist admonishes London for its sinfulness, likening its future to Jerusalem's past, particularly its divinely ordained siege, fall, and destruction in AD 70 at the hands of the Roman general Titus, the son of the newly crowned emperor Vespasian. As his chief illustrations of the terrors of such a fate Nashe tells the story of Miriam, a wealthy matron reduced by hunger and the imminent ignominy of Roman slavery to kill, roast, and serve up as dinner her only son. This is a Jerusalem from which "*Titus* ledde Prisoners to Rome" (78), a city ignorant of the danger represented by Vespasian, a mere general when he arrived in Judea but "by his own souldiers (against his wil) was there consecrated Emperour . . . leaving his sonne *Titus* behind to sack thee" (79), and a city in which a mother who is reduced to eating her son must explain to the child, "ratified it is (bad fated *Saturnine* boy) that thou must be Anthropophagiz'd by thyne owne Mother" (73). It is also a city whose ambition leads Nashe to reflect on the downfall of other ambitious figures of scripture and history: ". . . the truest image of thys kind of ambition was Absolom. Julius Caesar among the Ethnicks surmounted . . . and upon his returne to Rome was crowned Emperour . . . sent men skild in Geometry to measure the whole world a task not finished until . . . the Consulshyp of *Saturninus*. . . ." (82).
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> In the play the Roman general *Titus* is unwilling to accept his popular election as Emperor, and the Emperor *Saturninus*, sixteen times called "*Saturnine*" (a name, like *Saturninus*, unique in the canon to *Titus Andronicus*) is not the victim of maternal cannibalism, but is the appalled spectator to it. Historically, Saturninus, consul in 19 BC, was later Governor of Syria, in which capacity he presided over the trial of two of Herod's alledgedly treasonous sons, the victims of their father's wrath, although, as Flavius Josephus, one of Nashe's sources, tells us, "none supposed that Herod would carry his cruelty to the length of murdering his children."
>
> Shakespeare in writing for the stage seldom scrupled about consistency in the naming of his characters, but Nashe in writing about a known historical event, the siege of Jerusalem in AD 70 was dependent upon the names which history and his historical sources gave him and they gave him a "*Titus*" and a "*Saturninus*" in a context of the choice of a reluctant emperor and the killing and eating of a child by its mother.[7]

In terms of Shakespeare's use of this section of *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* in *Julius Caesar*, it is enough to note how much of Antony's

forum speech and related scenes derive from Christ's oration over ungrateful Jerusalem.

Apart from *Hamlet,* no play has more evidence of manipulated Nashean material than does *Julius Caesar.* Elements from *The Terrors of the Night* and *Lenten Stuffe* are clearly incorporated into the soothsayer's prophecy and the thrice-offered crown, respectively, while *Christ's Tears* is particularly influential in the diction, syntax, and ironic tone of Marc Antony's oration in the Roman forum, a speech for which North/Plutarch notoriously provides no specific details. Dover Wilson in his Cambridge edition of *Julius Caesar* had pointed out that there are parallels of expression between Nashe's words on page 82 (McKerrow's edition) and a pair of remarks by Antony at 3.1.150–151 and 3.2.119–120. Dover Wilson does not argue for any causal link between the Nashean expression and those of Antony, but further scrutiny of this very page in *Christ's Tears* reveals Nashe's discussion of the nature of ambition, the theme of false honor (with the use of "*honorable*"), the explicit citing of "*Julius Caesar,*" the syntactical unit of proper name, copulative verb, and the adjective "*ambitious,*" as in "*David was ambitious,*" and "*Herod was ambitious*" (a structure followed at 3.2.78, "*Caesar was ambitious*"), together with "*fawning*" which anticipates the description of the behavior of Metellus Cimber in the previous scene of the assassination itself, "base spaniel *fawning,*" and also the reference to Caesar's triumphant return to Rome. Further, Nashe's work is, in its nature, an oration with Christ speaking in the first person, and it is explicitly called an "*oration*" on pages 21 and 60, and an oration which makes use of frequent apostrophes, a characteristic of the rhetoric of the tragedy, a prediction of violence to come to the city, as well as a number of words and phrases either absolutely unique in the Shakespearean canon or unique in their juxtaposition. Consider, for example, "*put to silence,*" "*lendest stonie eares,*" and "*prepare . . . I came not to shedde Teares but. . . .*" Even the rhetorical pausing by Antony is anticipated by that of Christ on page 54, the same page where there is a concatenation of bathing in blood, a "*burst*" vein, a "*heart,*" "*a hair,*" and a "*plucking,*" terms and actions which have become part of both Brutus's and Cassius's stooping, bathing, and washing in the blood of Caesar (3.1.106ff), Antony's description of the seeking of a hair of Caesar as a relic, Brutus's withdrawing, actually *plucking,* of his weapon from Caesar's body, and the bursting of Caesar's heart when the tyrant recognized Brutus as one of the assassins. There is in *Christ's Tears* on subsequent pages a reference to "*brutish beasts*" and honorable Romans who are the reverse of honorable, as well as a sequence of expressions "*So let it be,*" "*I fear,*" and "*shotte . . .* beyond" which have contributed to Antony's lines about the good oft being interred with the bones and his mock anxiety that he fears he has gone too far in telling the crowd of their share in Caesar's will. It is particularly important in terms of noting the very great number of Nashean

elements absorbed into Antony's oration that this interring of the bones of Caesar is a violation of Roman funeral practices which, as Plutarch tells us, involved the burning of the corpse. Nashe it is who speaks of "*praises,*" "*bury,*" and "*inter.*" And it is Nashe who has Christ indict the citizens of Jerusalem for their "*ingratitude,*" in spite of the fact that Christ had "*loved them,*" even as Brutus is indicted by Antony for his especial "*ingratitude,*" given "how dearly Caesar *loved him*" (3.2.185, 182). There is even Christ's preterition, "yet wil I not say . . . there may be ambition," even as he goes on to analyze extensively the ambition of Jerusalem, which has stimulated Antony's instances of the same device at 3.2.125, 131.

There is a good deal more in *Christ's Tears* that has affected the texture of *Julius Caesar,* but it is enough perhaps to conclude with the essential point that Shakespeare's plays, and this play particularly, are full of borrowings from *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem,* borrowings which cannot be instances of Nashe's authorship of the dramas in which they appear.[8]

There is yet another moment in the Scottish tragedy—the response to the discovery of the murdered Duncan—which shows the detailed influence of the passage in *Christ's Tears* descriptive of the combined offences of treason, murder, rape, and sacrilege.

When Nashe has Christ tell how the outlaw army not only slew the high priest, but murdered children brought "to the *Temple* . . . and . . . most *sacrilegiously* ravisht theyr mothers" (66), he provided Macduff with diction for his horrified announcement "*Most sacrilegious* murther hath broke ope/ The Lord's anointed *temple.* . . ." (2.3.67–68). These outlaws are "dreggy *lees* of Libertines" (65) and have reduced the Temple to "a pudlie *Vault* of *dead*-mens bones" (67), the description of which has affected Macbeth's artificial but ontologically true lament, "renown and grace is *dead,*/ The wine of life is drawn, and the mere *lees*/ Is left this *vault* to brag of" (2.3.94–96). Nashe's description of the polluted Temple with its "Lake of *blood* . . . *silver* gates . . . jellied *gore*"(66) has become part of Macbeth's description of the murder scene, "His *silver* skin lac'd with his golden *blood* . . . breech'd with *gore*" (2.3.112, 116).

The image of moral and physical corruption is yet another in the series of images of famine, murder, barnyard violence, carcase-swollen rivers with their shoals and banks, croaking ravens, and tongue-tied inarticulateness which derive from *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem,* and still one more element of Shakespeare's career-long manipulation of Nashean material, not of Nashe's writing parts of *Macbeth.*

Even the sonnets show the poet's use of *Christ's Tears,* as in sonnets 29, 55, 116, 144. Each of these poems builds upon words and images from the pamphlet. Especially suggestive in 29 are the themes of mistaken ambition and reluctant exchange and the words "*exchange my state,*" "*kings,*" "*scope,*" "*heaven's gate,*" and "*scorn to.*" For 55, in the midst of the theme of the vanity behind the building of transitory sculptured memorials, there

is the juxtaposition not present in the other contributing sources of Ovid, Horace, and Propertius of "*marble*" and "*monuments*." In 116, along with the tactic of negative definition, the theme of unchanging integrity, and the closely related terms "*admit*," "*time*," and "*sickle*," there is the syntax of the personal guarantee of what has been said, "*I write*, as *no man* . . ." which expression has become part of Shakespeare's "*I* never *writ*, nor *no man*. . . ." Finally in 144, the themes of betrayal and isolation, the first-person point of view, the competition for an unfaithful loved one, as well as the diction of "*devil*," "*pride*," "*Hell*," "*ill*," and "*good angel out*" derive from the image and diction of the competition between Christ and the devil for the affections of that "gorgious strumpet" Jerusalem as presented in the pamphlet.[9] But this is sufficient for our purposes of denying the presence of Nashean material in a Shakespearean work as evidence of Nashe's direct involvement in the composition of the play or poem.

Others of Nashe's works, beyond *Saffron Walden* and *Christ's Tears*, show the same evidence of Shakespearean borrowing, borrowing often mistakenly interpreted as proof of Nashe's hand in a Shakespearean play. Dover Wilson, in order to bolster his argument that the Nashean elements are not accidentally present in 1.2, argues that Alençon's response to the Dauphin has still more extensive parallelism between *1 Henry VI* and Nashean texts, this time with *Four Letters Confuted* (1592) and *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592, published 1600). Dover Wilson cites both:

> They want their porridge and their fat bull-beaves:
> Either they must be dieted like mules
> And have their provender tied to their mouths,
> Or piteous they will look, like drown'd mice.(1.2.9–12)

And:

> pumpe over mutton and porridge into Fraunce? This colde weather our souldiors, I can tell you, have need of it, and, poore fielde mise, they have almost got the coliche and stone with eating of provant. (I, 331. 28–33)

He infers that "the similarity of diction evoked similarity of diction," but he does not infer that the similarity was evoked in the mind of Shakespeare as he was reading Nashe. Yet this very text of *Four Letters Confuted* fascinated the author of *The Comedy of Errors*, to the point where Act IV, scene iv, and elements of other scenes show Nashean theme and diction. And no one has yet suggested that Nashe wrote *The Comedy of Errors*, 4.4 or any other part of that early comedy.

It is customary to see arguments that say parallels in phrasing are the result of a common source for both the Nashean and Shakespearean texts

or that the finite limitations of a culture's language together with the fact of similar themes naturally enough have led to similarities of expression, or indeed even that Nashe is the borrower from Shakespeare. Against these responses is the existence of very many instances of rare or unique terms not found in any known sources but belonging to both Nashe and Shakespeare, and of the clear and frequent evidence of Shakespeare's borrowing from Nashe, as we have indicated above, sometimes in plays composed not only after the publication of Nashe's works, but after his actual demise (1600 or 1601).

In the case of *The Comedy of Errors*, the editors of the play have sometimes made general observations of its Nashean quality, as in Stanley Wells's remark in his New Penguin edition of the play:

> The prose, too, is constructed with controlled artistry, rising in the description of the kitchen wench (III.2.92–154) to a virtuosic—and splendidly actable—piece of fantasy reminiscent of the best work of Shakespeare's contemporary, Thomas Nashe. (13)

And R. A. Foakes in his New Arden edition of the play, drawing upon the work of Dover Wilson in the New Cambridge edition and commenting on two unusual expressions, both in Act IV, scene iv, and both found in Nashe's *Four Letters Confuted* (1592) (also referred to as *Strange News)*, remarks: "In *Four Letters Confuted*, Nashe was attacking Gabriel Harvey, and it is odd that two of his jests against Harvey should turn up in this scene"(83). Foakes here is referring to Dromio of Ephesus's response to Adriana's statement that she had sent the money to redeem her husband—"*Heart and good will* you might, /But surely, master not *a rag of money*"(4.4.85–86)—which is paralleled in Nashe's words attributed to the deceased brother of Gabriel Harvey, a man who has left Gabriel and his other brother Richard "his old gowns" and his "notable sayings," among which was this one: "Vale Galene, mine owne deare Gabriell: Valete humanae artes, *heart and good will*, but never *a ragge of money*" (I, 301). Foakes had earlier noted, as had Quiller Couch, that Dromio of Ephesus's response to the arrival of Adriana in the company of Doctor Pinch, "Mistress, respice finem, respect your end, or rather, the prophecy like the parrot, 'beware the rope's end'" (4.4.41–42) was "alluding to two jokes of the time; one was the substitution of *respice funem* (a rope, i.e. hanging) for the common tag *respice finem* (think on your end, cf. Nashe's attack on Harvey in *Four Letters Confuted* (1592; McKerrow, I.268), "to bee . . . bid *Respice funem*, looke backe to his Fathers house" (Harvey's father was a ropemaker). . . ."(81). None of these editors notes that on this very same page of *Four Letters* there are references to a "Doctor," to Nashe's pamphlet *An Almond for a Parrot*, to another Harvey "brother," and to the issue of not being believed—"there's none will beleeve him"(268).

These references follow the expressions on the previous page, "ropes in Saffron Walden" (Harvey's hometown) and "the *surreverence* of his [Harvey's] works" (267); It is Dr. Pinch who has a "*saffron* face" (IV.iv.61) "*saffron*" is a rare term in the canon, unique in the sixteenth-century part of the Shakespearean canon. Dromio of Syracuse it is who uses "*Sir-reverence*" in his attempt to describe Nell the kitchen wench (3.2.91). On the page following the joke about the rope's end there is an expression, one of several from this pamphlet, that Shakespeare would later use in *Hamlet*. Nashe writes of how he can describe Harvey—"from the foote to the head I can tell how thou art fashioned"—who, in keeping his brother, "hast *cracked* thy credit *through the ring*, made thy infamy *currant* as far as the Queenes coyne goes" (269). Hamlet, in measuring the increased height of the boy actor who plays female parts, is concerned that "Pray God your voice, like a piece of un*current* gold, be not crack'd *within the ring*" (2.2.427-28). Of course, before *Hamlet*, Shakespeare used *Four Letters/Strange News* for *The Comedy of Errors*. G. H. Hibbard in his study of Nashe noted common elements, as had Dover Wilson before him, between *Strange News* and *1 Henry IV*:

> It is no accident that Shakespeare remembered *Strange News* when he was writing *Henry IV*. In some measure at least the disputation and slanging matches that the Prince and Falstaff engage in derive from the way Nashe goes to work here. Words such as "*therefore*" and "*ergo*," the small change of the logic schools abound. The whole thing is conceived in terms that recall either those used in a learned disputation or those used in a court of law. (*Thomas Nashe* 200–201)

The Comedy of Errors, an anticipation of that other Nashean-influenced comedy with a known law-school audience, *Twelfth Night*, delighted the law students at Gray's Inn in 1594. Without suggesting that Dr. Pinch, with his saffron face, was designed to evoke Gabriel Harvey, Doctor of Civil Law, in the eyes of that original law-school audience, no more than the Harveian elements in Malvolio were designed to evoke Harvey in his primping and self-congratulating but rather afforded material for generic laughter, I do want to point out that there are a good many other Nashean elements to be found in *The Comedy of Errors*. No one believes that Nashe had a hand in the composition of the play, but the logic of those who argue that the presence of Nashean material in Act I of *1 Henry VI* is direct evidence of Nashe's composition of that Act should lead the reader to accept Nashe's hand in this play and a good many other in the canon, some even as posthumous efforts.

Among the parallels between *Strange News* and *The Comedy of Errors* not already cited are "the *Doctor*," "a *Rope-maker*," and "*I conjure thee*" in the "Epistle Dedicatorie" (257–258). Comparing Adriana's "Good

Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer" (4.4.47) and Dromio of Ephesus's "God and the *rope-maker* bear me witness (4.4.90) ("*rope-maker*" is a term unique in the Shakespearean canon), as well as Doctor Pinch's "*I conjure thee*" (4.4.57). Throughout the pamphlet Nashe refers to Harvey as "*the Doctor*," even as he calls him "*a mountebancke* of strange wordes, *a meere* merchant of babies and conny-skins" (261), even as Antipholus of Ephesus refers to Pinch as "*A meer* anatomy, *a mountebank*" (5.1.239). "*Mountebank*" is used only here in *Errors* in Shakespeare's sixteenth-century works. Between the Nashean references to "*rope-maker*" and "*mountebancke*" there is a reference to the animal, the "porcupine," spelled "*Porpentine*" (259). In *Errors* there are five references to the "Porpentine" as the name of the Courtesan's house. There is even a stimulating match for the egregious Nell of the play in the woman Harvey has slandered and who will revenge herself upon him—"a bigge fat lusty wench it is, that hath an arme like an Amazon, and will bang thee abhominationly, if ever she catch thee in her quarters" (289). One notes also that the pre-water-closet humor of the description of Nell—"where stood Belgia, the Netherlands? O, sir, I did not look so *low* . . . told me what *privy* marks I had about me. . . ."(3.2.138–139, 141) is precisely that of Nashe in general, as is indicated on the title page itself, "Of the Intercepting certaine letters, and a convoy of Verses as they were going *Privilie* to victuall the *Low* Countries"(253). Even the chief characteristic of the schoolmaster/conjurer from which he gains his name is paralleled in *Strange News* just after the reference to "heart and good will, but never a ragge of money" (301). Nashe refers to Harvey's description of Nashe as "Greene's inwardest companion *pinched* with want . . . in a raving and *frantike* moode, most desperately exhibiteth a Supplication to the Devill." Nashe then denies that he was "*pincht* with any ungentleman-like want when I invented *Pierce Pennilesse*" (303). From this passage Shakespeare has given Dr. Pinch the key term for his victim: "Go bind this man, for he is *frantic* too" (4.4.113). And this pamphlet, with brothers, skepticism, debts, insanity, conjuring, a fat wench, bathroom humor, legal diction, "ergo" and "therefore," specific jokes about ropes and ends, and with a "Doctor," concludes with a figurative use of a term which is literally operative in the plot of *Errors*, as Nashe describes Harvey as lately "*shipwrackt*," the very word used by Egeon to explain to the Duke the origins of his difficulties (1.1.114). Some or all of these elements might have prompted Shakespeare to use this particular pamphlet by Nashe in the composition of *The Comedy of Errors*. The borrowing from and manipulating of Nashe's works were career-long tactics of Shakespeare.

Dover Wilson adds that "the mules with their provender tied to their mouths" finds an echo in the typical pair of lines from *Summer's Last Will and Testament*:

Except the Cammell have his provender
Hung at his mouth, he will not travell on'. (III.270, 1152–1153)

But *Summer's Last Will and Testament* is an especially malleable source for Shakespeare in the composition of several of his plays, beginning as early as *Richard III,* where the villain protagonist's opening lines, as well as subsequent imagery-related verses, derive from Nashe's pageant play.

It is in *Richard III* that we have a sufficiently large Nashean presence in an early Shakespearean work that appears to be Shakespeare's borrowing from Nashe. *Richard III* was written shortly after Thomas Nashe's folk play, *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592, but published first in 1600) and its villain protagonist has some of the self-satisfied mocking attitude found in Nashe's play. Richard begins the drama with one of Shakespeare's most famous soliloquies;

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this son of York:
And all the clouds that lowered upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried. (1.1.1–4)

And later in the soliloquy he contrasts himself with his amorous brother, Edward:

He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute. . . .
I, that am rudely stamped, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph.

These references to the seasons *winter* and *summer*, the *son* which is a pun on *sun*, the adjective *glorious*, the *ocean*, the *lascivious* and *lute*, the *wanton*, and even the *nymph* owe much to the debate over succession and usurpation amongst Summer, Winter, and Autumne on the one hand and Sol on the other in Nashe's play. Summer tells Sol (called Hypocrisy and base pride by Summer, fitting terms for Richard) with marked preterition:

How I have rais'd thee, Sol, I list not tell,
Out of the Ocean of adversitie,
To sit in height of honors glorious heaven. (450–453)

Autumne adds, "Lascivious and intemperate he is./ The wrong of Daphne" (a nymph) "is a well-known tale" (487–488), and after many other indictments, "He setteth wanton songs unto the Lute" (496–497). Winter then speaks:

Autumne had previously indicted Sol for arrogance:
this sawcie upstart Jacke
That now doth rule the chariot of the Sunne. . . .
The sonne of parsimony and disdaine,
One that will shine on friends and foes alike,
That under brightest smiles hideth blacke showers. (472–473, 476–478)

When Richard asks for an almanac to determine the weather on the day of the battle of Bosworth Field, he reflects:

Then he disdains to shine, for by the book
He should have brav'd the east an hour ago,
A blacke day will it be to somebody. (5.3.278–280)

The sun will not be seen today. . . .
Not shine today? Why what is that to me
More than to Richmond? For the self-same heaven
That frowns on me looks sadly upon him. (5.3.282, 285–287)

The theme of indifference, the shining upon friend and foe alike, and the diction of *disdains*, *shine*, *sun*, and *black* together suggest that Shakespeare kept in mind this passage from *Summer's Last Will and Testament* both when he introduced the hypocritical Richard, sunlike in his ascendancy, and also when he sent him into eclipse. Interestingly enough, he had also available to him between the *lascivious* of line 487 and the *wanton* and *lute* of line 497 the attractive image of the oriental richness of the rising sun:

Then doubled is the swelling of his looks;
He overloades his carre with Orient gemmes
And reynes his fiery horses with rich pearle. (493–495)

Richard is given some of the diction of these lines not in his early and late associations with the shining and obscured sun but in his debate with Elizabeth on the issue of his marrying her daughter, his niece:

Repair'd with double riches of content.
What? We have many goodly days to see:
The liquid drops of tears that you have shed
Shall come again, transformed to orient pearl,
Advantaging their love with interest.
Of ten times double gain of happiness. (4.4.319–324)

Summer concludes the sixty-line section of the pageant of the seasons with the indictment, "Usurping Sol, the hate of heaven and earth" (502).

Shakespeare, impressed with this description of the sun and seeing the advantages of the association with the house of York and Richard in particular, gave to usurping Richard words which Nashe had written at about the same time.

C. L. Barber, long ago building on some observations of Dover Wilson himself, demonstrated how Bacchus in *Summer's Last Will and Testament* has become part of the nature of Falstaff in *1 Henry IV* and Kenneth Muir has shown further instances of borrowing from this part of the pageant in *2 Henry IV*.

It would be easy to cite further parallels that are indications of Shakespeare's borrowing from Nashe in still other plays, including *Richard II*, where Autumne of the pageant plays the role of Bolingbroke and Summer is in the identical role of the hesitant and ambivalent King Richard:

> Autumne be thou successor of my seat:
> Hold take my crowne—look how he grasps for it!
> Thou shalt no have it yet:—but hold it too,
> Why should I keep that needs I must forgo? (1240–1243)

Compare *Richard II*, 4.1.181ff, and note that these Nashean lines are only three pages later than those cited with the camel and the provender.

And not only is *Richard II* affected by *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, but *Troilus and Cressida* and *King Lear*, also. In the former is Ulysses' speech to Achilles regarding the inevitable transitoriness of power and glory, derived from Autumne's lecture to inhospitable Christmas, where the themes found in this passage in *Troilus* (3.3.145ff) of hospitality, transitoriness, and ingratitude, together with the diction of "*wallets*," "*backes*," "*ghests*," "*almes*," "*out of fashion*," and even the unique Ajaxian "*Milo*" are intertwined. In the case of *King Lear*, the old king's game of who loves me the most and his anger at Cordelia's "nothing" have been affected by the same section of Nashe's folk play.

The play involves the imminent passing of Summer, who must transfer his power to the other seasons, as is the nature of things. Summer calls his officers to account, querying especially Ver and Solstitium:

> Come neer, my friends, for I am neere my end.
> In presence of this Honourable trayne,
> Who *love* me (for I patronize their sports),
> Meane I to make my finall Testament:
> But first Ile call my officers to count,
> And of the wealth I gave them to dispose,
> Known what is left, I may know what to give.

> First, Ver, the spring, unto whose custody
> I have committed more than to the rest.
> The choyse of all my fragrant *meades* and flowers,
> And what delights soe're nature affords. (146–158)

> Presumptuous Ver, uncivill nurturde boy,
> Think'st I will be derided thus of thee?
> Is this th' account and reckoning that thou mak'st? (222–224)

> But say, Solstitium, hadst though nought besides?
> Nought but dayes eyes and faire looks gave I thee?
> *Nothing*, my Lord, nor ought more did I aske. (404–406)

Here, from a work often mined by Shakespeare, is an analogously structured dialogue revolving around the transference of kingly power, an ungrateful reply from a more highly favored youngest child (Ver/Cordelia), royal anger, and the keyword "Nothing." And this *Lear*-influencing passage follows immediately upon Summer's "Presumptuous Ver, uncivill nurturde boy," a line that has clearly shaped Gloucester's line to Eleanor in *2 Henry VI*, 1.2.42: "Presumptuous dame, ill-nurtur'd Eleanor."

Shakespeare frequently used several works of Nashe in the course of the composition of one play, so that the presence of several parallels in *1 Henry VI* from several works of Nashe is not only *not* proof that these parallels are evidence that Nashe wrote *1 Henry VI*, Act 1, but is in keeping with the career-long practice of Shakespeare of fusing several Nashean elements in the same text. Of course Taylor and others offer several different arguments, not merely Nashean parallels, in order to argue for Nashe's authorship of this part of *1 Henry VI*. Nevertheless the use of the Nashean argument seems less effective, indeed mistaken, if one accepts the contrary instances I have been adducing, and its would-be "proof" of Nashe's role seems a bit like the dubious case made by a conscious user of incorrectly interpreted evidence: "And this may help to thicken other proofs /That do demonstrate thinly."

The debate about the integrity of *1 Henry VI* is likely to continue for some time, but as it does, the sense one has of Nashe's indirect role should increase and his direct role diminish.