Thomas North’s Writings in the Shakespeare Canon: An Introduction

by
Dennis McCarthy
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The last two examples, involving Julius Caesar and Coriolanus, indicate that the playwright would even intertwine passages from multiple translations of North. For example, even while he closely follows North’s Plutarch’s Lives, the dramatist still augments the Plutarchan passages with material from North’s The Dial of Princes and The Moral Philosophy of Doni.

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Part II: The Smoking Guns: Borrowings from North’s Personal Papers and Unpublished Writings.

Shakespeare’s plays also include a significant amount of material taken from North’s personal writings. This includes his travel journal, excerpts of which would not be published until the late eighteenth century, and Nepos’ Lives (1602), which North published after using it for various plays adapted by Shakespeare (e.g., Richard II, which was printed in 1597). In 1591-92, North marked up his own translation of The Dial of Princes, writing comments in the margins and often highlighting the source passages he used in “Shakespearean” plays. North especially relied on this particular copy to help him update The Taming of the Shrew and Arden of Feversham, which would be published the same year (1592).

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Chapter 6: North’s Marginalia (1591-92).
Incredibly, in 1591, North purchased a used copy of his own Dial of Princes and then used it as a kind of workbook when he revised or wrote various plays. He would underline or demarcate certain passages or write out quotations in the margins that he would then reuse in his revisions of Arden of Feversham, The Taming of the Shrew, Richard II, and other plays. He also used it for his original of Macbeth. Indeed, the extent of the connections between North’s scribblings and the plays that Shakespeare would later adapt is so great that a full treatment will require another book. Still, this chapter provides enough to prove that North was using this personal copy of his translation when working on these plays.

Chapter 7: Seven Quotations from Literary Insiders Confirming That Shakespeare Adapted Someone Else’s Plays.

The quotations begin in 1592 and continue to 1837. All allude to the tradition that Shakespeare adapted an earlier playwright’s works and was getting too much credit for them.
Introduction
Thomas North and William Shakespeare

In November 2014, Cambridge’s *Shakespeare Survey 67* became the first journal to publish an article crediting an early version of a Shakespeare play to Thomas North. The essay, “The Shakespeare/North Collaboration: *Titus Andronicus* and *Titus and Vespasian,*” reveals numerous independent lines of evidence indicating that North wrote the bloody and lurid Roman revenge tragedy *Titus and Vespasian* in 1560-61, at the age of 25 or 26, three years before Shakespeare was born.¹ North invested the play with commentary on the main political concern of that time, the question of young Queen Elizabeth’s possible marriage to Erik XIV, the mercurial King of the Swedes and Goths. Nearly 30 years later, in the late 1580s or early 1590s, Shakespeare adapted North’s old play *Titus and Vespasian* for the public theater in a work we know today as *Titus Andronicus.* The results of the analysis suggest that many of North’s original passages and phrases still remain in Shakespeare’s tragedy.

It is not particularly revelatory that Shakespeare adapted an earlier play. Scholars have long recognized that many of Shakespeare’s best-known plays were not original but revisions of older, now-lost dramas. We know this from both internal and external evidence: first, researchers have discovered a number of impossibly early allusions to seemingly “Shakespearean” plays from the 1560s, 1570s, and 1580s—far too early for Shakespeare, who was born in 1564, to have written them. These references appear in Revels accounts of plays performed before the Queen or in comments about recent productions in anti-theater pamphlets or in allusions in late Elizabethan or early Jacobean satires.

In 1579, for example, when Shakespeare was 15, the young and priggish Stephen Gosson wrote an anti-theater essay in which he mentioned a few exceptional plays that did rise above reproach. His brief description of both the plot and subplot of one such play, which he called *The Jew,* matches the dual storylines of *The Merchant of Venice,* which was also known at the time as *The Jew of Venice.*² Since the early nineteenth century, many conventional scholars have agreed that Shakespeare likely revised this 1570s play and turned it into the familiar Venetian tale of the usurer who wants his pound of flesh.

In the early 1590s, two different historical dramas evoke the assassination scene in *Julius Caesar,* becoming the first plays to quote the famous lines “Et tu, Brute” and “Caesar shall go forth.”³ These lines are not part of the historical record and appear nowhere other than in the familiar Roman tragedy, confirming that a play much like Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* existed at least seven years before scholars contend Shakespeare wrote the work.
In 1589, the young, wise-cracking satirist Thomas Nashe alluded to a Senecan-styled *Hamlet* that “yields many good sentences” and brims with “tragical speeches.” Since most scholars agree that Shakespeare could not have penned such a mature tragedy by that time, he must have used this first *Hamlet* as the source for his own Danish tragedy, which, according to the standard chronology, he would write some 11 years later.

In other cases, Shakespeare editors find fossils of the now-lost older drama in the play itself. They come across allusions to scenes that have been excised or passages that refer back to an event that never happened. Sometimes, we find “ghost characters,” which are characters who appear in stage directions as entering the scene but then have no lines and do nothing. The editors reasonably conclude that these are by-products of Shakespeare’s effort to rework an older play, especially removing certain scenes, characters, or dialogue that appeared in the original.

Similar allusions and other lines of evidence—related to *The Tempest*, *Timon of Athens*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry VIII*, *Pericles*, *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *King John*, *King Lear*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Romeo and Juliet*—have made it uncontroversial that Shakespeare frequently adapted someone else’s plays. Shakespeare scholar C. A. Greer, for example, refers to “the possibility, if not probability, that Shakespeare had a source play for most if not all of his plays.” New Cambridge editor Giorgio Melchiori not only acknowledges such early versions but pronounces Shakespeare “an expert at remakes of old plays for the Chamberlain’s/King’s Men.” Perhaps most aptly, Shakespeare scholar James L. Marino writes: “How many old plays he revised is an argument for another chapter, but in some cases Shakespeare was clearly collaborating diachronically with an earlier playwright, building upon elements of the older work to create a new whole.”

But while scholars have long known that these older source plays existed, they have never been able to determine who wrote them. Indeed, if we exclude a handful of guesses on the authorship of the original *Hamlet* and the *Shakespeare Survey* article on North’s penning of the original *Titus Andronicus*, few scholars have even tried to suggest the identity of the earlier playwright. This is likely because any efforts to establish authorship had previously seemed hopeless. Thomas North, like most playwrights of the early Elizabethan era, never sent his plays to printers, and all of them are assumed—incorrectly as we shall see—to be lost. This was not the result of a conspiracy or a desire to avoid attention but a predictable consequence of the lack of interest in publishing plays at the time and the natural perishability of manuscripts.

Another obstacle to discovery was that even when contemporaries would mention one of the early source plays—whether some writer described it or some theater manager listed it—they never referred to an author by name. The mystery of original authorship had seemed insoluble, but a series of recent discoveries of obscure historical documents and little-known texts has helped shed new light on the matter. These new-found records even include unpublished manuscripts kept at the North family library and, astonishingly, a travel journal of young North’s trip to Italy. All these findings have not only repeatedly confirmed North’s authorship of Shakespeare’s source plays; they have also helped expose the date and circumstances of their penning.
Although early Tudor publishers were not in the habit of printing plays, they would frequently print scholarly translations. At the time, the powerful patrons of authors, like Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester, often welcomed the mass production of books that had educated princes, especially classical works that had never appeared in English and would, they believed, help mold a more enlightened and peaceful citizenry. The prominent sponsors of these works ensured their publication, and this includes the four large, highbrow translations that Thomas North published over the course of his life: *The Dial of Princes* (1557), *The Moral Philosophy of Doni* (1570), *Plutarch’s Lives* (1580), and *Nepos’ Lives* (1602).

Although North’s first love was playwriting, his extensive travels on the continent naturally led to his work as a translator. During his various trips and embassies, North would study the most acclaimed foreign authors who were particularly influential in Spanish, French, and Italian courts. He especially focused on foreign translators who themselves had studied eminent collectors of the past: Plutarch, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Cornelius Nepos. The scope of North’s compilations even extends as far east as India with his translation from the Italian of the dark and politically astute beast fables of the ancient Panchatantra. These translations establish North as a particularly discerning scholar; a choosy and observant collector of collections; a hunter and gatherer of prized histories, biographies, legends, fables, and speeches.

While the purpose of North’s prose works was instructive, he did not translate dreary essays. His books include vivid descriptions of sprawling battles and royal opulence, the sadism of cruel tyrants and the inspired heroics of noble warriors. He wrote about the mass stabbing of Julius Caesar, the deathbed speech of Marcus Aurelius, the torturous, forced suicides of Seneca and his wife, Pompeia Paulina. North’s translations package the immortal insights of Europe’s keenest philosopher-historians in memorable and lustrous vessels. Smooth talking traitors, glory seeking generals, tempestuous and legendary lovers, cunning and capable women who managed to thrive and even dominate in a man’s world—this is who peopled North’s chapters. And this, in turn, would become the intellectual foundation for the plays he would write and that Shakespeare would later adapt.

Once North had carefully selected his foreign projects, he then reworked the classical stories in his own masterful style, punching up speeches, embellishing the images, and electrifying the narrative. He frequently inserted his own language whenever he felt the foreign text needed it, especially when writing dialogue or speeches. *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature* describes North’s version of *Plutarch’s Lives* as a bold and original tour-de-force: “It is not Plutarch. In many respects, it is Plutarch’s antithesis. North composed a new masterpiece upon Plutarch’s theme.”

R. H. Carr, an editor of an early twentieth-century edition of *Plutarch’s Lives*, agreed about the originality and tenor of North’s prose: “But isolated quotations can give no adequate idea of the fluent splendour of North’s language. The whole temper of the Elizabethan age, with all its poetry, its enthusiasm, its love of adventure, its eager hero-worship, is incarnate in his pages.” George Wyndham, another editor of *Plutarch’s Lives*, expressed even more flattering
praise for North’s translation, marking it as one of the three greatest works of prose in English literature: “Of good English prose there is much, but of the world’s greatest books in great English prose there are not many. Here is one, worthy to stand with Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur* on either side of the English Bible.”

North then transferred many of the stories, images, ideas, speeches, and characters from his translations directly into his own plays, and many of them still remain in Shakespeare’s adaptations. The result is that literally hundreds of passages in the Shakespeare canon can be traced back to North’s prose texts. Scholars are already aware of a small fraction of these borrowings. At least since the eighteenth century, researchers have contended that when Shakespeare wrote his three Roman tragedies—*Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* and, to a lesser extent, the Greek tragedy *Timon of Athens*—he had North’s *Plutarch’s Lives* open beside him, closely following the relevant source chapters and subsuming many of North’s passages with little change. “Shakespeare, the first poet of all time, borrowed three plays almost wholly from North,” wrote Wyndham about the Roman plays. “Shakespeare’s obligation is apparent in almost all he has written. To measure it you must quote the bulk of the three plays.”

In reality, as we shall see, it was North who had originally made plays out of his own chapters from *Plutarch’s Lives* and reused his own passages. Shakespeare then adapted these dramas. But the upshot in either case is the same: it is currently conventional that the storylines, characters, scenes, and even many of the speeches of Shakespeare’s Roman tragedies all first came from the pen of Thomas North.

C. F. Tucker Brooke also agreed with Wyndham’s estimate of the translator’s genius and Shakespeare’s debt. He noted that a study of North’s chapters on Mark Antony and the warrior-general Coriolanus “shows that the dramatist was satisfied in no small number of cases to incorporate whole speeches from North with the least change consistent with the production of blank verse.” One of Tucker Brooke’s examples appears in the climax of *Coriolanus*, in which Volumnia begs her son Coriolanus not to lead his army into a vengeful attack on their home city of Rome. It is an historical moment in the early years of the Roman republic, and her successful appeal preserves the city-state, allowing it to evolve into an empire. In a recent film version of *Coriolanus* (2011), starring Ralph Fiennes as the Roman general, Vanessa Redgrave plays Volumnia, and her power and gravitas help intensify the speech. But as shown in the table below, Redgrave was really delivering a monologue from North’s *Plutarch’s Lives* (1580), which Shakespeare closely followed when adapting North’s dramatic *Coriolanus* (~1607) some 27 years later. Words in bold are shared by both passages:
### North’s *Plutarch’s Lives* vs. Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus* (1607-1608)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s <em>Plutarch’s Lives</em></th>
<th>Shakespeare’s <em>Coriolanus</em> (1607-1608)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Volumnia:] If we … [were] <strong>not to speak</strong>, the state of our poor bodies, and … our raiment would easily <strong>bewray</strong> to thee what life we have led at home, <strong>since thy exile</strong> … think now with thyself how much more unfortunately than all the women living we are come hither …</td>
<td>Volumnia: Should we be silent and <strong>not speak</strong>, our raiment And state of bodies would bewray what life We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself How more unfortunate than all living women Are we come hither …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

> If I cannot persuade thee, rather to do good unto both parties, than to overthrow and destroy the one … trust unto it, thou shalt no sooner march forward to assault thy country, but thy foot shall tread upon thy mother’s womb that brought thee first into this world.  

--256-57

> … If I cannot persuade thee  

Rather to show a noble grace to both parts  

Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner March to assault thy country than to tread—  

Trust to’t, thou shalt not—on thy mother’s womb  

That brought thee to this world.  

--5.3.94-98, 120-25

After listing five such examples, Tucker Brooke concluded with a significant remark:

… these passages, all of which rank among the special treasures of Shakespearean poetry, come straight and essentially unaltered out of North. …

In the passages I have cited there is little evidence of any attempt at improvement; indeed, it may be held in regard to several of them that the palm belongs rather to North’s prose than to Shakespeare’s poetry. That this should be so is a fact worthy of all wonder and attention, for the like can be said of no other of Shakespeare’s rivals or assistants.¹³

This is an astonishing fact that has gotten too little attention. The passages that Shakespeare borrows from North, as numerous scholars point out, also seem peculiarly “Shakespearean” and do not differ in quality from the rest of the play. In fact, many of the borrowings are, in the words of Tucker Brooke, “among the special treasures of Shakespearean poetry.”

This, in and of itself, establishes a unique literary relationship between North and Shakespeare. After all, we do not find Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Émile Zola, Charlotte Brontë, or other renowned authors routinely appropriating paragraphs from another writer—let alone one of their contemporaries. Nor do we find such extensive pilfering in the works of Shakespeare’s most talented contemporaries—such as Philip Sidney, Ben Jonson, or Christopher...
Marlowe. What is more, prior scholars have uncovered only a small fraction of Shakespeare’s debt to North’s translations. For when North wrote his plays, he did not confine his attention to three or four relevant chapters from his *Plutarch’s Lives*; he mined every part of it. He also borrowed extensively from his three other translations, allowing us to trace the influence of North’s prose works throughout the Shakespeare canon, starting with the first play and continuing to the last. Plagiarism software—the same kind of software that is the bane of cheating students—has been indispensable in helping establish the pervasiveness of these borrowings. Hundreds of speeches, exchanges, storylines and descriptions in the Shakespeare plays—including many of the most famous soliloquies—derive from parallel passages found in North’s translations.

Some might suggest that Shakespeare may have had a lifelong and all-consuming obsession with North’s publications and so would compulsively regurgitate the translator’s passages. But there is considerable evidence, both internal and external, indicating that Shakespeare was simply adapting North’s plays—not recalling passages from North’s translations. First, documents have come to light confirming that Thomas North was a playwright for the Leicester Men—the Elizabethan theater company that produced a number of Shakespeare’s source plays. And it is not particularly parsimonious to suppose that Shakespeare was adapting the plays of some other unknown Leicester Men’s playwright—all the while filling them with obscure material from Thomas North. Even more importantly, evidence from newly examined North family texts falsifies this possibility.

For example, in 1592, North wrote comments in the margins of his own personal edition of his translation of *The Dial of Princes*—a work now kept in the archives of the Cambridge University Library. North’s marks, underlines, and marginal commentary often highlight the lines and passages that he would later use when re-editing his plays.

In 1576, George North, a likely cousin of Thomas, wrote an essay on rebellions and rebels while staying at North’s family estates of Kirtling Hall. In the foreword, George compliments Thomas’s writing abilities and dedicates the treatise to Thomas’s older brother Roger, 2nd Lord North. In 2018, June Schlueter and I published a book confirming that this previously unpublished and little-known essay—a handwritten document signed by the author himself and having no known copies—was an important source for the Shakespeare canon. News of this discovery made the front page of *The New York Times* as well as other major news outlets around the world. It was Thomas, not Shakespeare, who made use of his cousin’s essay, kept in the North family library.

Far more significantly, the plays also include a significant amount of material taken from North’s travel journal of his 1555 trip to Rome—a work that North never published. Likewise, *Richard II*, first printed in 1597, contains unmistakable borrowings from North’s manuscript translation of *Nepos’ Lives*, which North would not publish until 1602. In other words, North published the translated source material after it had already been used for a play. It was North, of course, who would have had access to his own personal papers, not Shakespeare, and it was North who was constantly recalling his prior writings and transforming them into memorable soliloquies and scenes.
While these 200 examples (and hundreds more that will be explored in later works) confirm that North frequently mined his prose works for dramatic material, his plays were not simply, or even mainly, the by-product of what he had studied and translated; they were also a glorious consequence of what he had lived. Like many great works of literature, these magnificent dramas were not penned by someone disassociated from its characters and events; rather, each play was reflective of the life of the author. Indeed, the life and writings of North so persistently dovetail with the works later adapted by William Shakespeare that to follow North’s life in detail is to reconstruct the entire history of the Shakespeare canon, play by play and subplot by subplot. And this does not refer to the occasional coincidence linking some minor life incident and some trivial detail in a play. Every major aspect of North’s life and every shift in his experiences, whether traumatic or joyous, is reflected in the vicissitudes of his oeuvre. Individual plays are like temporary snapshots, capturing myriad peculiarities of his life circumstances, his friends, family, travels, and his involvement in Marian and Elizabethan politics at the time of its penning—while more significant life changes can be traced through more expansive literary periods. Numerous references and allusions heretofore deemed mysterious have now found explanation in North’s life history.

Biographical treatments of North will soon start to appear—including in the forewords to new editions of the plays as well as Michael Blanding’s North by Shakespeare: A Rogue Scholar’s Quest for the Truth Behind the Bard’s Work. These will help show how North first lived the plays before he wrote them. But in this paper, we will focus on North’s writings, revealing, for the first time, the origins of hundreds of passages in Shakespeare’s plays.
A Note on Texts


Quotations from early modern texts follow editions in the Early English Books Online (EEBO) database. When quoting from early modern texts, I have modernized spelling and punctuation.

Chapter 1

20 Shakespearean Borrowings from North

The foreign works that North picked up on his travels and then translated provided a well-spring of plots, characters, ideas, and scenes for his plays. Sometimes, North would borrow a story outright, basing an entire play on one of his prose chapters—as with *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Other times, when he came to a situation in one of his plays that reminded him of something he had written about earlier, he would then echo, paraphrase, or even quote the prior passage. The following contains detailed descriptions of fifteen such examples. In each case, the analysis provides background information, often discussing context, which, in turn, helps illustrate how the resemblances of the circumstances motivated North’s use or recollection of passages he had written before.

Iago’s Speech on the Thief of Reputation (*Othello*)

One of the reasons Shakespeare scholars have remained innocent of the significance of North’s *Dial of Princes* (1557), *The Moral Philosophy of Doni* (1570), and *Nepos’ Lives* (1602) to the Shakespeare canon is that they have not read them, or at least have not done so while consciously searching for source material. This should not seem strange as, excepting *Plutarch’s Lives*, North’s prose works are not well known, typically finding only brief mention in academic texts, if they are mentioned at all. So Shakespeare enthusiasts would have little reason to try to hunt down North’s translations while looking for insights into Shakespeare’s plays. This likely explains why even North’s source passages for the more famous speeches of the canon have previously escaped detection.
As an illustration, we do not even complete the first page of North’s first translation, *The Dial*, before we find an interesting borrowing—a passage that reads suspiciously like Iago’s speech on reputation in *Othello*. The speech is important not only for what it says but for what it reveals about Shakespeare’s most famous villain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s <em>Dial of Princes</em></th>
<th>Shakespeare’s <em>Othello</em></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oh, would to God there were no greater thieves in the world than those which rob the temporal goods of the rich, and that we did not wink continually at them which take away the good renown as well of the rich as of the poor. But we chastise the one, and dissemble with the other, which is evidently seen, how the thief that stealeth my neighbour’s gown is hanged forthwith, but he that robbeth me of my good name walketh still before my door. --General Prologue</td>
<td><strong>Good name</strong> in man and woman, dear my lord, Is the immediate jewel of their souls. <strong>Who steals my</strong> purse steals trash; ’tis something, nothing; ’Twas mine, ’tis his, and has been slave to thousands; <strong>But he that filches from me my good name</strong> Robs me of that which not enriches him And makes me poor indeed. --3.3.168-74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The similarities between the passages are pronounced. Both are emphasizing the differences between a thief of property and a thief of reputation, noting the latter does much more harm. Both begin analogously: North claims that good renown is more valuable than what is taken by those which rob the temporal goods; likewise, Iago emphasizes that Good name is more valuable than what is taken by one who steals my purse. North stresses that the material wealth is temporal, and Iago follows suit: ’tis something, nothing; / ’Twas mine, ’tis his. Both then group the phrases who

Figure 1: Othello (1995)
steals my (that stealeth me), robs me of (robbeth me of), and the antithetical pairing, (en)rich-poor. The clincher is the similar nine-word line:

The Dial: But he that robbeth me of my good name  
Othello: But he that filches from me my good name / Robs me of

While Iago substitutes filches from me for robbeth me of, he still says robs me of in the next three words. Thus, both passages juxtapose but he that, robs me of, and my good name.

A search for a juxtaposition of these phrases in Early English Books Online (EEBO), the gold-standard of databases for early modern English literature, confirms that the borrowing is unique. That language appears in no other searchable sixteenth- or seventeenth-century texts except for North’s Dial and this passage in Othello.

Wolsey’s Denial He Is a Gossiper (Henry VIII)

In Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey’s defensive claim that he has never slandered the Queen comes from a similar passage in North’s Dial of Princes. Both are referring to elderly, malicious gossippers, especially stressing their spleen, heart, and tongue/mouth. Both also include the same unique eight-word word-string:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s Dial of Princes</th>
<th>Shakespeare’s Henry VIII</th>
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<tr>
<td>his breath stink, his spleen stopped, and his body faint and feeble with age, and all the parts thereof consumed save only the heart and tongue … What evil the wretched heart thinketh in that crooked and miserable age that doth that accursed tongue with all celerity utter…Truly sir … I never uttered or devised word that might be to the prejudice of any.</td>
<td>Katherine: … You’re meek and humble-mouthed;/ … but your heart is crammed with arrogancy, spleen, and pride… Wolsey: Most gracious sir, In humblest manner I require Your Highness … to declare … / whether ever I… spake one the least word that might Be to the prejudice of her present state --2.4.105-108, 141-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--714</td>
<td></td>
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The following two shared strings confirm that the passages are connected:

The Dial: Truly sir … I never uttered or devised word that might be to the prejudice of any
Henry VIII: gracious sir … ever I … spake … word that might/ Be to the prejudice of her
If you search for “word that might be to the prejudice of” in the 130 trillion webpages of Google and the 25 million-plus texts of Google Books, you find no results other than *Henry VIII* or works quoting *Henry VIII*. North’s *Dial* does not appear as there is no searchable edition on Google with modernized spelling. If you look for that same line in EEBO, the only results are North’s *Dial* and the history play. As we write in *Thomas North’s 1555 Travel Journal: From Italy to Shakespeare*:

> It is important to be clear here: it is very probable that no one else in the history of the English language has ever used the eight-word line “word that might be to the prejudice of” without quoting *Henry VIII* or *The Dial of Princes*. It occurs nowhere else in EEBO, Google, or Google Books, and indeed Grammarly plagiarism software will red-flag shared word-strings of eight words or longer. It is at about this length where most word-strings represent a unique utterance, originating only once in history. And then any recurrence of that same word-string descends from that original line. Someone has read or heard it before and is using it again.

**Gremio’s List of Riches** (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

*The Taming of the Shrew* mainly shares language with North’s *Doni*, but it also contains passages that were inspired by *Plutarch’s Lives*. For example, Gremio’s description of all his luxuries clearly derives the list of riches of Timagoras, an Athenian ambassador from North’s *Plutarch’s Lives*. The only difference is that while Timagoras’s bedroom reveals Persian interactions, Gremio’s bedroom flaunts Turkish ones. Both also have a farm with many cows and oxen.
North’s *Plutarch’s Lives* | Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*
---|---
For he took not only **gold** & silver enough, as much as they would give him: but received a very **rich** bed also, & **Persian** chamberlains to make and dress it up, as if no Grecian servants of his could have served that turn. Moreover he received four **score milch kine to the pail** & neat herds to keep them (325-26) | First, as you know, my house within the city Is **richly** furnishèd with plate and **gold**, Basins and ewers to lave her dainty hands; My hangings all of **Tyrian tapestry**; In ivory coffers I have stuffed my crowns; In **cypress** chests my arras counterpoints, Costly apparel, tents, and canopies, Fine linen, **Turkey** cushions bosseid with pearl, Valance of Venice **gold** in needlework, Pewter and brass, and all things that belongs To house or housekeeping. Then at my farm I have a **hundred milch kine to the pail**. Six **score** fat **oxen** standing in my stalls --2.1.344-56

**gold**, **rich**, **Persian**, four **score milch kine to the pail**, neat | **gold**, **richly**, Tyrian-Turkey, Six **score**, **milch kine to the pail**, oxen

As the Greek Timagoras has a **rich** bedroom decorated by **Persian chamberlains**, the Italian Gremio has **Tyrian tapestry** and a rich bedroom with **Turkey cushions**. He also has chests of **cypress**, originally spelled **cypros** in the First Folio, which underscores the wood’s Turkish origination.¹⁶ Not coincidentally, Turkey was a mortal enemy to Italy in the sixteenth century just as Persia was to Greece in the fourth century BCE. In other words, both Gremio and Timagoras had bedrooms that indicated suspicious and possibly treasonous foreign dealings. Both lists also end in an eerily similar way. Both Gremio and Timagoras have between 80 and 100 **milch kine to the pail**, and both count their cows or oxen in **scores**.

A search of Early English Books Online (EEBO) for **milch kine to the pail**, including spelling variations like **milche**, **pale**, and **paile**, yields no results other than Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew* and North’s *Plutarch’s Lives*. The same is true for a search of the many trillions of webpages in the Google and Google Books search index.¹⁷ As far as one can determine, no one else has used that specific phrase at any time in the history of English literature—except North and then Shakespeare (or those quoting North or Shakespeare).
King Lear’s Speech on Poor Naked Wretches and Their Borrowings from Beasts (King Lear)

In one chapter in *The Dial* that deals with poverty, North writes that “the author … compareth the misery of men with the liberty of beasts.” The point was that, in contrast to human beings, animals possess a number of natural gifts that help them survive: “to birds she [Nature] hath given wings … to the lions teeth … to the foxes subtilty” (471). This is unlike poor, miserable man, who is born naked and defenseless.

The chapter especially stresses that people naturally have nothing that can help defend them from extremities of the seasons. So they have to borrow their clothes from the beasts:

… to brute **beasts** nature hath given clothing, wherewith they may keep themselves from the heat of summer and **defend themselves from** the cold of winter: which is manifest, for that to lambs and **sheep she hath given wool**, to birds feathers, to **hogs** bristles…

Finally, I say, there is **no beast**, which hath need with his hands to make any garment, **nor yet to borrow it** of another. Of all this the miserable **man** is deprived, who is born all **naked**, and dieth all **naked**, not carrying with him one only garment: and if in the time of his life he will use any garment, he must **demand of the beasts**, both leather and **wool**. …

We must also think and **consider**, that for so much as nature hath provided the **beasts** of garments, she **hath** also **taken** from them the **care of** what they ought to eat (470)

North repeats these ideas again, stressing once more that while these beasts are endowed with various abilities to do us harm, we still must beg help from them, especially for our clothing:

For the **lions do fear** [frighten] us, the **wolves devour our sheep**, the **dogs do bite us**, the **cats** scratch us …

**Oh, poor** and miserable **man**, who for to sustain this **wretched** life, is enforced to **beg** all things that he needeth of the **beasts**. For the **beasts** do give him **wool**, the beasts do draw him water, the beasts do carry him from place to place (472)

This is the origin of the exchange in *King Lear*, describing the poverty of natural man, whose nakedness leaves them defenseless to the elements and requires him to beg the animals for clothes.

First, Lear laments the idea of impoverished and naked people who have nothing to defend themselves from the elements:
Figure 2: Poor Tom and King Lear: Royal Shakespeare Company Production, 2007
Poor naked wretches, wheresoe’er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads …

... defend you

From seasons such as these? Oh, I have ta’en
Too little care of this! (3.4.28-33)

In the hovel, Lear then encounters one of those “poor naked wretches”—Poor Tom, who compares his past life to those of beasts: “hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey” (3.4.92-93). This litany of beast qualities anticipates Lear’s response in which he notes that Poor Tom is the perfect example of the natural state of the human race, stressing that the seeming unfortunate drifter has not begged the beasts for his clothing.

Lear: Thou wert better in a grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou ow’st

the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume.

Ha! Here’s three on’s are sophisticated; thou art the thing itself. Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings! Come, unbutton here. (3.4.100-108)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isolated Correspondences</th>
<th>Shakespeare’s King Lear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>North’s Dial</strong></td>
<td><strong>Poor naked wretches, wheresoe’er you are,</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh, poor and miserable man, who for to sustain this wretched life …</td>
<td>That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who is born all naked, and dieth all naked … defend themselves from the cold of winter</td>
<td>How shall your houseless heads … defend you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--472, 470</td>
<td>From seasons such as these?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--3.4.28-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she hath also taken … care of [animals’ need to eat]</td>
<td>Oh, I have ta’en / Too little care of [people’s poverty]!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--470</td>
<td>--3.4.32-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the lions do fear us, the wolves devour our sheep, the dogs do bite us, the cats scratch us …</td>
<td>hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the beast … the sheep … the cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--3.4.92-93, 103-104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to lambs and sheep … to hogs bristles … the beasts
--472, 470

sheep she hath given wool … Oh, poor and miserable man … naked … must demand of the beasts, both leather [i.e., their hide] and wool
--470

Is man no more than this? …Thou ow’st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool … Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal
--3.4.101-106

The Gardener, Commonwealths, Youth, Gardens, and Fruit Trees (Richard II)

Dozens of botanical analogies throughout the Shakespeare canon all have a Northern origin. This includes what is likely the most famous and extended botanical metaphor in the canon: the garden scene in Richard II (3.4.29-66). In the relevant exchange, a gardener and a servant have a political discussion in which they compare the upkeep of commonwealths with the tending of orchards and gardens. Some nations are like land with fertile soil: they nurture both noisome weeds and wholesome herbs. They must be weeded like gardens, or like fruit trees, their superfluous branches must be cut off so the other boughs may thrive.

As shown below, this necessarily derives from related botanical commentary in two different works by North, The Dial and Plutarch’s Lives.
North’s *Dial* and Plutarch’s *Lives*

Alcibiades … was not altogether so corrupt, neither simply evil: but as they say of the land of Egypt, that for the fatness and lustiness of the soil, it bringeth forth both wholesome herbs and also noisome weeds.

--Plutarch’s *Lives* 584

[Chapter title:] Tutors of … children ought to [ensure they] do not accustom themselves in vices while they are young…

Tutors and Master of Princes and great Lords … ought to know from what evils or wicked customs they ought to withdraw them: For when the trees are tender and young, it is more necessary to bow them and cut off the superfluous branches with knives than to gather their fruits with baskets.

--The *Dial* 343-44

O, what pity is it…

--The *Dial* 650

Shakespeare’s *Richard II*

Gardener: Go bind thou up young dangling apricots.

Which, like unruly children, make their sire Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight.

Give some supportance to the bending twigs.

Go thou, and like an executioner Cut off the heads of too-fast-growing sprays… I will go root away

The noisome weeds which without profit suck

The soil’s fertility from wholesome flowers.

Man: … the whole land,

Is full of weeds, her fairest flowers choked up,

Her fruit trees all unpruned, her hedges ruined,

Her knots disordered, and her wholesome herbs

Swarming with caterpillars? …

Gardener: O, what pity is it

That he had not so trimmed and dressed his land

As we this garden! …

Had he done so to great and growing men,

They might have lived to bear and he to taste

Their fruits of duty. Superfluous branches

We lop away, that bearing boughs may live

--3.4.29-39, 43-47, 55-57, 61-64

Isolated Correspondences

fatness of the soil, land;
noisome weeds, wholesome herbs,
children-in vices, young, trees, cut off,
superfluous branches, their fruits
O, what pity is it

the soil’s fertility, land;
noisome weeds, wholesome herbs,
unruly children, young, trees, cut off,
superfluous branches, their fruits
O, what pity is it
Two of the closely related lines juxtapose several rare terms within 15 words:

*Plutarch’s Lives:* and *lustiness of the soil*, it bringeth forth both *wholesome herbs* and also *noisome weeds* (584)

*Richard II:* The *noisome weeds* which without profit suck

*The soil’s fertility* from *wholesome flowers./ … her wholesome herbs*

Swarming with caterpillars? (3.4.38-47)

EEBO confirms Shakespeare’s debt for both passages. Notice also that North uses a peculiar expression for fertility, describing it as the *fatness of the soil* that helps bring forth *weeds*. Henry IV also uses a similar statement in another extended horticultural analogy: “Most subject is *the fattest soil to weeds*,” the King says about his son. And, as shown in the following example, it is again clear that the dramatist has borrowed from yet two other Northern passages:

**Henry IV’s Worries about Prince Hal (2 Henry IV)**

We find the playwright again conflating passages from both *Plutarch’s Lives* and *The Dial* in a similar passage in 2 Henry IV, one of the sequels from the same tetralogy as Richard II. In the previous example, we have seen North’s *fatness … of the soil* refers to its *fertility*—and, as with Shakespeare’s gardener, the translator uses *fat* or fertile soil as a symbol for the commonwealth. In another chapter from *Plutarch’s Lives*, North repeats the same *fat-soil* metaphor, this time to describe Coriolanus—and so too does Henry IV when referring to young Prince Henry.

The context is identical: both Coriolanus and Prince Hal, later Henry V, would mature into fearless commanders in the field, with a peculiar knack for violence and a stirring ability to motivate troops. Both would furiously conquer armies and besiege and destroy enemy cities no matter the strength and advantage of the foe. And in the analogous passages, both young Coriolanus and young Henry V are described as wild youths who need more guidance. Each has a good heart and an inherent capacity for nobility, but a lack of tutoring has allowed each to grow headstrong, rash, and quick to anger. Their natural qualities, which have filled them with potential, have also made them susceptible to ignoble traits as *a fat soil bringeth forth herbs and weeds*. Moreover, Henry IV, in describing his grief at his son’s uncertain future, also reproduces a uniquely striking image of grief from *The Dial*:
## North’s Plutarch’s Lives and Dial

A rare and excellent wit *untaught* doth bring forth many good and evil things together like as a **fat soil** bringeth forth herbs and **weeds** that lieth unmanured. For this *Martius* natural **wit** and great **heart** did marvelously stir up his courage to do and attempt notable acts. But on the other side for lack of education, he was so **choleric** and impatient that he would yield to no living creature.

---

**Plutarch’s Lives** 237

They in one day and one **hour** end their lives, and I each minute do feel the pangs of **death** … I **weep** daily tears of **blood** from my heart for that I live. This is the difference, their torments **spreadeth** abroad through all their **body**, and I keep mine together, in my heart.

---

**The Dial** 760

## Shakespeare’s 2 Henry IV

King: For he is gracious, if he be observed. He hath a tear for pity and a hand open as day for melting charity. Yet notwithstanding, being incensed, he is flint. As humorous as winter …

Most subject is the **fattest soil** to **weeds**, and he, the noble image of my youth, is **overspread** with them. Therefore my grief stretches itself beyond the **hour of death**. The **blood weeps from my heart** when I do shape

In forms imaginary, th’unguided days And rotten times that you shall look upon When I am sleeping with my ancestors.

For when his headstrong riot hath no curb, When rage and hot blood are his counselors

---

**4.4.30-34, 54-63**

---

### Isolated Correspondences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s expressions</th>
<th>Shakespeare’s expressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fat soil-weeds, heart, untaught, choleric-impatient, weep … blood from my heart, hour … of death, spreadeth abroad</td>
<td>fat(test) soil-weeds, heart, unguided, headstrong-rage, blood weeps from my hearth, Hour of death, overspread</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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EEBO confirms this last

### Sebastian’s Unicorns and Phoenix in Arabia (*The Tempest*)

Sebastian’s list of legendary creatures including a **unicorn(s)** and one **Phoenix** perched in **one tree in Arabia** derives from North’s description of a painted tablet in *The Dial*. 
EEBO confirms that the mixture of an image of a **unicorn** with just **one phoenix** in **one tree in Arabia** is unique and derives from the painted table described in *The Dial*. Even ignoring the unicorn, the verbal echoes about the phoenix are exclusive:19 Juxtaposing this description with a reference to a **unicorn** ends all doubt.

**Guildenstern Tries to Play Hamlet Like A Pipe (Hamlet)**

In his chapter on “The Life of Pericles” in *Plutarch’s Lives*, North associates the ruler’s gifts as an orator with his musical talents, observing that Pericles could *play upon* people as he could a pipe, that he could move the *stops and sounds of the soul* as a master, and that, with his *fine fingered hand*, he could play upon an instrument. Using much of the same distinctive language, Hamlet accuses Guildenstern of exactly that: of trying to play upon Hamlet as he would *play upon* a pipe.
North’s *Plutarch’s Lives* | Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*
---|---
and the ancienitest men of the city also were much afeared of his soft **voice**, his **eloquent** tongue, and ready **utterance**  
---170

Wherein he manifestly proved, that **rhetoric** and **eloquence** (as *Plato* sayeth) is an art which quickeneth men’s spirits at her pleasure, and her chiepest **skill** is to know how to **move** passions and affections thoroughly, which are as **stops and sounds** of the soul, that **would be played upon** with a fine **fingered** hand of a cunning master. All which, not the force of his **eloquence** only brought to pass, as *Thucydides* witnesseth: but the reputation of his life  
---177

Hamlet: Will you **play upon** this pipe?  
Guildenstern: My lord, I cannot.  

Hamlet: It is as easy as lying. Govern these ventages with your **fingers** and **thumb**, give it breath with your mouth, and it will **discourse** most **eloquent** music. Look you, these are the **stops**.  

Guildenstern: But these cannot I command to any **utterance** of harmony. I have not the **skill**.  

Hamlet: Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would **play upon** me, you would seem to know my **stops**, you would pluck out the heart of my **mystery**, you **would sound** me from my lowest note to the top of my compass, and there is much music, excellent **voice**, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. ’Sblood, do you think I am easier to be **played on** than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot **play upon** me.  
---3.2.349-70

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isolated Correspondences</th>
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</table>
| **Eloquent, utterance, voice**  
**stops** and **sounds** of the soul  
**played upon**, **fingered** hand, **skill** | **Eloquent, utterance, voice**  
**my stops**, **sound** me, heart-mystery  
**play upon**, **fingers** and **thumbs**, **skill** |

Both passages include the image of the musician’s **fingers** moving deftly upon the pipe, the playing of the **stops** and **sounds** of the **soul** (or **heart**), and various terms related to the gifts of oratory: **voice**, **utterance**, **eloquent**, **discourse** (or **rhetoric**).
Morocco’s Story of Hercules Playing Dice for a Woman (*The Merchant of Venice*)

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Morocco paraphrases a story from *Plutarch’s Lives* about Hercules playing dice to win a woman. The prose passage appears in “The Life of Romulus,” not in one of the chapters used for the Roman plays. Scholars for a long time were confused about the origin of Morocco’s story, till E. A. J. Honigmann pointed it out in 1959.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s <em>Plutarch’s Lives</em></th>
<th>Shakespeare’s <em>Merchant of Venice</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To these two children lying there in this sort, they write, there came a she-wolf &amp; gave them suck … The clerk or sexton of Hercules’ temple … did desire the god Hercules to play at dice with him with condition that if he did win, Hercules should be bound to send him some good fortune: and if it were his luck to lose, then he promised Hercules he would provide him a very good supper and would besides bring him a fair gentlewoman --22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear. Yea, mock the lion when ’a roars for prey, To win thee, lady. But alas the while! If Hercules and Lichas play at dice Which is the better man, the greater throw May turn by fortune from the weaker hand… Good fortune then! To make me blest or cursed’st among men. --2.1.29-34, 45-46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Isolated Correspondences

| she-wolf … suck, | Sucking … she-bear, |
| Hercules to play at dice | Hercules … play at dice |
| good fortune, win-gentlewoman | Good fortune, win-lady |

Quoting Honigmann: “Though the last editor of *The Merchant of Venice* tells us that ‘no story of a game at dice is known,’ Plutarch’s charming anecdote makes the quaint association of Hercules and dice.” What is more, Honigmann points out that “On the same page in Plutarch (‘Romulus’, I, 52) we read of the ‘she woulfe’ which ‘gave them [Romulus and Remus] sucke.’”20 This would explain why Morocco also juxtaposed the image of Hercules playing dice to win a woman with an image of “young sucking cubs from the she-bear.”

There is little doubt about the connection. Searches of both EEBO and Google confirm that the only two works to juxtapose Hercules with “play at dice” are *The Merchant of Venice* and North’s *Plutarch’s Lives*. 
Richard III’s Ability to Change Colors Like the Chameleon (3 Henry VI)

In “The Life of Alcibiades” in Plutarch’s Lives, North notes that the subject of the chapter could frame himself after the fashions and manners of anyone at all—from any country. He could, as North wrote, put on more colors than the chameleon—and even be taken for an Achilles while in Sparta. This chameleon-like ability to deceive, which helped him inspire trust during his travels, was clearly the source for Richard III’s claim to the same talents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s Plutarch’s Lives</th>
<th>Shakespeare’s 3 Henry VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Margin: Alcibiades more changeable than the chameleon)</td>
<td>And frame my face to all occasions. …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he could frame … himself more easily to all manner of shapes than the chameleon. For it is reported, that the chameleon cannot take white color; but Alcibiades could put upon him any manners, customs, or fashions, of what nation soever and could follow, exercise, and counterfeit them when he would … As he that had seen him when he was at Sparta … would have said… “It is not the son of Achilles but Achilles self”</td>
<td>I’ll play the orator as well as Nestor, Deceive more sily than Ulysses could, And, like a Sinon, take another Troy. I can add colors to the chameleon, Change shapes with Proteus for advantages --3.2.185, 188-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--224</td>
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</table>

Isolated Correspondences

| More changeable than the chameleon, frame … to all manner colour, shapes Achilles [i.e., Greek at Troy] | More-than, change-chameleon, frame … to all occasions, colors, shapes Ulysses, Nestor, Sinon [i.e., Greeks at Troy] |

Not only can Richard III and Alcibiades both put on more colors than the chameleon; they can also imitate certain Greeks who fought at Troy. Alcibiades could be taken as another Achilles; Richard III has the qualities of Nestor, Ulysses, and Sinon. (Notice also North’s use of the word counterfeit as a synonym for acting a part, and see the next example.)
Buckingham’s Trembling at the Wagging of a Straw (Richard III)

Later, in Richard III (the sequel to 3 Henry VI), the titular king would ask his wicked assistant Buckingham whether he has these same duplicitous and theatrical gifts, and it is clear the playwright is still remembering North’s language:

Richard: Come, cousin, canst thou quake and change thy color. 
Murder thy breath in middle of a word …?
Buckingham: Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,
Speak and look back, and pry on every side,
Tremble and start at wagging of a straw:
Intending deep suspicion, ghastly looks
Are at my service, like enforced smiles;
And both are ready in their offices,
At any time, to grace my stratagems. (3.5.1-2, 5-11)

Alcibiades’s fashions and colors are changeable and he can “counterfeit them when he would,” that is, take on “any manners” and do so at any time (i.e., “when he would”). Likewise, Buckingham, when asked if he can “change thy color,” responds that he “can counterfeit the deep tragedian” and modify his behavior “at any time.” Buckingham also brags that he can appear fearful of everything, “pry on every side, / Tremble and start at wagging of a straw; / Intending deep suspicion.” This too comes from North, who refers to those who are “fearful of every wagging of a straw,” leading to a man being “much suspected” (871).21

Hamlet’s Guilty Creatures and the Tragedy of Hecuba (Hamlet)

After Hamlet watches an actor perform a tragic description of the miseries of Hecuba caused by the “tyrant Pyrrhus,” he expresses astonishment at the actor’s abilities to fake such deep sorrow: “For Hecuba! / What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, / That he should weep for her?” (2.2.558-60). In this same speech, the Prince then happens upon a plan that will help determine whether his uncle Claudius is indeed guilty of Hamlet’s father. He will write a scene for the theater troupe to perform before Claudius which recreates the murder, hoping it will jolt his uncle into an incriminating reaction.

But what gave him this idea? Hamlet here is clearly recalling a story in Plutarch’s Lives about Alexander, the tyrant of Pherae, who was so overcome by grief at a reenactment of “the miseries of Hecuba” that he interrupted the play and rushed out of the theater as he wept. North then refers to the “guilty conscience … of this cruel and heathen tyrant.” 22
Thomas North’s Writings in the Shakespeare Canon—30

In other words, in *Hamlet*, the actor’s description of Hecuba’s woes is not random. It was meant to evoke the classical roots of the scheme that Hamlet was about to set into action. The prince knows the Plutarchan tale of Alexander of Pherae, and he is going to refashion a similar situation for Claudius—and the plan works. Claudius

In a theater, where the tragedy of *Troades* of Euripides was played, he went out of the Theater, and sent word to the players notwithstanding, that they should go on with their play, as if he had been still among them, saying, that he came not away for any misliking he had of them or of the play, but because he was ashamed his people should see him weep to see the miseries of *Hecuba*… The guilty conscience therefore of this cruel and heathen tyrant did make him tremble…

---325

**North’s Plutarch’s Lives**

**Shakespeare’s Hamlet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>play, players, weep, Hecuba, tyrant, guilty conscience</th>
</tr>
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</table>

| Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I! |
| Is it not monstrous that this player here, |
| But in a fiction, in a dream of passion, |
| Could force his soul so to his own conceit … |
| For *Hecuba*! |
| What’s *Hecuba* to him, or he to *Hecuba*, |
| That he should weep for her? |

… I have heard

That guilty creatures sitting at a play

Have by the very cunning of the scene

Been struck so to the soul that presently

They have proclaimed their malefactions.

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak

With most miraculous organ. I’ll have these players

**Play** something like the murder of my father

Before mine uncle. …

… The play’s the thing

Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King.

---2.2.550-53, 558-60, 589-98, 605-606

**Play, players, weep, Hecuba, tyrant, guilty, conscience**
The Boy’s Comical Derision of Cowardice in Battle \textit{(Henry V)}

In North’s \textit{Dial of Princes}, the long-term mistress of Marcus Aurelius, Boemia, writes an angry letter to the famous emperor-philosopher, who has just returned from battle. She is furious with him for refusing to see her, so Boemia begins the letter by launching into a hilarious series of insults, deriding him as a braggart coward, whose presence is never felt on the battlefield:

\begin{quote}
It is a common thing … for fools to treat of books and for cowards to blaze of arms*… For thou wert not the first that fought, nor the last that fled. I never saw thee go to the war in thy youth that ever I was fearful of thy life. For knowing thy cowardliness, I never took care for thy absence; I always judged thy person safe. Then tell me, Mark, what dost thou now in thy age? I think thou carriest thy lance not to serve thy turn in thy war but to lean on when the gout taketh thee. The head-piece, I judge, thou hast not to defend thee from the strokes of swords, but to drink withal in taverns. I never saw thee strike any man with thy sword, but I have seen thee kill a thousand women with thy tongue. (755-56)
\end{quote}

*“blaze of arms”: to brag about abilities with weapons

This should certainly sound familiar to Shakespeare scholars. This barrage of comically creative insults, coming one after the other, is a typically canonical device and especially sounds like the witty and sharp-tongued Beatrice of \textit{Much Ado About Nothing}, who similarly mocks her future husband, Benedick, when he returns from the war.

Others may notice that, in a more serious moment, the Boy in \textit{Henry V} also borrows these exact same insults when discussing the cowardly Bardolf, Pistol, and Nym:

\begin{quote}
For Bardolf, he is white-livered and red-faced, by the means whereof ’a faces it out, but \textbf{fights not}. For Pistol, he hath a killing tongue and a quiet sword … For Nym … ’a should be thought a \textbf{coward} … for ’a \textbf{never} broke any man’s head but his own, and that was against a post when he was \textbf{drunk}. (3.2.31-40)
\end{quote}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Isolated Correspondences} & \\
\hline
\textbf{North’s Dial: Extended accusation of cowardice in battle} & \textbf{Shakespeare’s Henry V: Extended accusation of cowardice in battle} \\
\hline
\textbf{For cowards} to blaze of arms … & \textbf{For Bardolf} … ’a faces it out, but \textbf{fights not} … \textbf{coward} \\
For thou wert \textbf{not} the first that \textbf{fought} & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I never saw thee strike any man … but</th>
<th>’a never broke any man’s head but</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never … with thy sword, but I have seen thee kill a thousand women with thy tongue</td>
<td>he hath a killing tongue and a quiet sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The head-piece, I judge, thou hast not to defend thee from the strokes of swords, but to drink withal in taverns</td>
<td>’a never broke any man’s head but his own, and that was against a post when he was drunk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of Boemia’s three main insults are repeated by the boy. The first is that Bardolf “faces it out,” which is to say, he is blustery “but fights not.” Likewise, Boemia claims Aurelius also fakes bravado, “but wert not the first that fought.” Both describe the cowards as someone who will kill with the tongue but not with the sword. Finally, whereas Marcus never needs his head protection except for drinking in taverns, Nym never did break any head but his own—and that was when he was drinking in a tavern. This is, of course, unique.

**Medicine Must be Ministered To a Troubled Country** (*King John*)

Both *Plutarch’s Lives* and *King John* describe a time when *medicine must be ministered* to a troubled and angry commonwealth, especially regarding the selection of a ruler. The words *sovereign, authority, hand(s)* and *people* are also echoed in both passages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s <em>Plutarch’s Lives</em></th>
<th>Shakespeare’s <em>King John</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insomuch, as men of deep judgment and discretion, seeing such fury and madness of the people, thought themselves happy if the commonwealth were no worse troubled than with the absolute state of a monarchy and sovereign Lord to govern them. Furthermore, there were many that were not afraid to speak it openly, that there was no other help to remedy the troubles of the commonwealth, but by the authority of one man only that should command them all: and that this medicine must be ministered by the hands of him that was the gentlest physician, meaning covertly Pompey.</td>
<td>Pandulph: Take again From this my hand, as holding of the Pope Your sovereign greatness and authority. … King John: Our people quarrel with obedience, Swearing allegiance and the love of soul To stranger blood, to foreign royalty. This inundation of mistempered humor Rests by you only to be qualified. Then pause not, for the present time’s so sick That present med’cine must be ministered, Or overthrow incurable ensues. --5.1.2-16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EEBO indicates that medicine must be ministered is a rare phase, occurring only four other times in the entire database. Three of these other instances are from medical books, including in the only two other examples that precede King John. None of these other four instances uses medicine metaphorically but refers to treatments of physical diseases and wounds. The context, the verbal echoes, and the rarity of the phrase confirm that the dramatist had North’s passage in mind.

The Nurse’s Lament and Edgar’s Complaint about the world (Romeo and Juliet and King Lear)

The nurse's agonizing exclamations over the seemingly dead Juliet flaunts exclusive verbal parallels to two different Northern quotes, "Alas the day that ever I was born" from Plutarch’s Lives—and the repetition of "O woeful world” (or “O woeful day”) –with the substitution of similar adjectives for woeful. Edgar’s complaint about the world in King Lear also seems to echo the latter passage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s Plutarch and Doni</th>
<th>Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet and King Lear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Alas the day that ever I was born!**
-- Plutarch 525                     | **Alas, alas! Help, help! my lady's dead!**
| **O woeful world! O miserable world!**
O subtle world! O world unstable and unconstant! --Dial 493-4 | **O, well a day, that ever I was born!**
**O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day!**
Most lamentable day, most woeful day,
That ever, ever, I did yet behold!
**O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!**
Never was seen so black a day as this:
**O woeful day, O woeful day!**
--Romeo and Juliet 4.5.14-21       |
| **O world unstable and unconstant!** | **World, world, O world!**
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee
--King Lear 4.1.10-11              |

Belarius’s Fable of The Eagle and The Beetle and His Warnings about the Art of the Court (Cymbeline)

In 3.3. of Cymbeline, Belarius has been unjustly banished by the King, and, in an act of revenge, kidnapped the King’s two sons and raised them as his own in the safety of a remote mountain cave. The playwright has clearly designed the scene on a fable in The Moral Philosophy of Doni of the eagle and the sharded beetle—a story that closely approximates Belarius’s situation.
In North’s beast tale, an eagle that nests on “the cliffs of mount Olympus” devours a poor hare that was a friend of the beetle, despite the latter’s warnings and protests. The beetle, to avenge the wrong, waited till the eagle flew out of sight, crawled up to her high nest and, being a dung-beetle, was able to roll all her eggs “out of the nest” and off the side of the cliff. The eagle then returns to find all her “young” chicks, which “were almost ready to be hatched,” at “the foot of the rock, broken and quashed all to pieces.” As the eagle cried and wailed, the beetle yelled: “Thou are even well served!” Then, he crawled deep “into his hole that the devil himself could not find him out” (47-47v). The moral of the tale was that even lowly people, like Belarius in his mountain cave, can avenge themselves on the most powerful.

In the parallel scene in Cymbeline (3.3.8-28), Belarius tells the Princes, “We house i’th’ rock,” before he asks them to join him in “our mountain sport,” which is a kind of ritual Belarius has taught the three to enact in the vicinity of their cave. “Your legs are young,” he says, so he tells them to climb higher and “perceive me like a crow.” And from that height, as they survey the surrounding landscape, he asks them to consider all his stories about the dangers and double-dealings that occur in Princes’ courts. And from this high and distant perspective, they should realize they are much safer there, in their mountain cave, than even the King. Or, as Belarius puts it:

And often, to our comfort, shall we find
The sharded beetle in a safer hold
Than is the full-winged eagle. (3.3.19-21)

The Princes understand Belarius’s point, yet they yearn for new experiences. They want to roam: “We poor unfledged,” complains one Prince, referring to young chicks who still do not have feathers: “Have never winged from view o’th’ nest” (3.3.27-28).

Belarius was using North’s tale to compare himself to the less powerful beetle who has still managed to avenge himself on the eagle (i.e., the King), and the discussion includes many verbal echoes of the Doni tale: eagle, beetle, mount(ain), young, poor, hole/hold, of the nest, and the rock as a synonym for cliff. The exchange also reproduces many of the same images: the high mountain cave, a high flying bird of prey peering downward, young chicks unfledged, a flight out of view of the nest, and, of course, the dung beetle hiding in a hole that provides him more safety than the exposed and vulnerable eagle.
In the cliffs of Mount Olympus, there haunted a young Leveret, and an eagle spying her, marked her from where she sat and ... came down to seize her.

The beetle fiercely turning to the eagle... "time will come when I will be even with thee"... dogging her to her nest... found eggs ... (the eagle being abroad) and rolled them quite out of the nest ... with the fall they lay at the foot of the rock broken and quashed all to pieces ... “Thou art even will served: thou wouldst not let my leveret alone,” and with that, he shrunk into his hole that the devil himself could not find him out.

---46r-v

Belarius: We house i’th’ rock ...
Now for our mountain sport. ...
When you above perceive me like a crow ...

And often, to our comfort, shall we find The sharded beetle in a safer hold
Than is the full-winged eagle.

Guiderius: ... We poor unfledged Have never winged from view o’th’ nest

---3.3.8-28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isolated Correspondences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the cliffs of Mount Olympus ... at the foot of the rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the eagle being abroad ... of the nest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beetle ... shrunk into his hole that the devil himself could not find him out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remarkably, Belarius uses two more Northern metaphors in the same opening to this same scene. First, Belarius compares rising in court to climbing to a high top, which is then accompanied by the threat and fear of falling. That is, the more successful you are in a Prince’s court, the greater the fears and dangers. In the last set of parallels, Belarius compares himself to a weather-beaten fruit tree, which once overflowed with fruit and leaves, with branches hanging downward, but now wind, storm, and gatherers have left the tree bare, taking all its fruit and leaves. Still the tree, though bare to weather, will persevere. These also derive from North:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s <em>Doni</em> and <em>The Dial</em></th>
<th>Shakespeare’s <em>Cymbeline</em> and <em>3 Henry VI</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mule: to know to behave themselves in **court** is another **art**… But to me that must remain in **Princes’** Court, I…must use every one with **art** Ass: …be wise go not to the **Court**… **a little axe** overthroweth a great **oak**… and he that **climbeth up to the tops** of trees, **falling** hath the greater bruise…  
--*Doni* 28r-v, 30  
I never met or spake with man that was contented with the **court**: For if he be crept in favour, he **feareth** every hour to **fall**  
--*The Dial* 591  
**to climb** up on high for **fear of falling**  
--*The Dial* 710  
if we **be high**, we weep always for **fear of falling**  
--*The Dial* 507  
And to such a **tree**, though evil fortune do cleave, … the **leaves** of their favours dry, they gather the **fruits** of his travels, they cut the **bough** of his offices, they bow the highest of his branches downwards; yet in the end though of the winds he be beaten, he shall never be overcome.  
--*The Dial* 541  
| … the **art o’ the court**,  
As hard to leave as keep, whose **top to climb**  
Is certain **falling**, or so slipp’ry that  
The **fear’s** as bad as **falling**  
--*Cymbeline* 3.3.46-49  
**a little axe** hews down and fells the hardest timber'd **oak**  
--*3 Henry VI* 2.1.54-5  
|  
| …Then was I as a **tree**  
Whose **boughs did bend** with **fruit**. But in one night,  
A storm, or robbery, call it what you will,  
Shook down my mellow hangings, nay, my **leaves**,  
And left me **bare to weather**.  
-- *Cymbeline* 3.3.60-64  
| Isolated Correspondences |
It goes without saying that the use of the eagle and the beetle fable is unique. This necessarily derives from the fables of Bidpai, which were the Indian beast tales that North was translating in his _Moral Philosophy of Doni_. There is no other analogous story in sixteenth century of the eagle and the beetle that had been translated into English. The other two analogies were also rare—although it is difficult to determine how rare.

**Theseus’s Ravishings, Marriages, and the Mysterious God Who Secretly Loved Him (A Midsummer Night’s Dream)**

_Plutarch’s Lives_ begins with a chapter on “the Life of Theseus,” the fabled King of Athens, describing the various legends associated with him, including his vicious habit of raping and then wedding women. Theseus also famously escaped the minotaur’s labyrinth when the Princess of Crete, _Ariadne_, had fallen in love with him watching him wrestle and brought him a long thread in the maze that helped him escape. Theseus’s various exploits, especially those involving women, seemed so touched by good fortune that Plutarch argued that some unknown god must have secretly favored him: “Surely methinks the philosophers did not ill-define love when they said she was a servitor of the gods…. For the love of Ariadne was in mine opinion the work of some god and a mean purposely prepared for Theseus’s safety” (41). In _A Midsummer Night’s Dream_, North provides a winking response to Plutarch’s supposition, identifying Titania, Queen of the Fairies, as this god who secretly loved and helped him.
And the other…was **ravished** and carried away by Theseus (11)
For this Historiographer calleth the Amazon which **Theseus** married, **Hippolyta**, and not **Antiopa**… (15)
…for that he so lightly forsook his wife, **Ariadne**, for the love of **Aegles**…(16)

From **Perigouna**, whom he **ravished**?
And make him with fair **Aegle** break **his faith**
With **Ariadne** and **Antiopa**? (2.1.74-80)

### Antigonus, the Storm, the Bear, and Banishment to Sicily (*The Winter’s Tale*)

As noted in *Thomas North’s 1555 Travel Journal: From Italy to Shakespeare*, the name, language, and elements of the storyline of Antigonus, the banished nobleman of *The Winter’s Tale* who must travel to Sicily (later switched by Shakespeare to Bohemia) with Perdita, derive from North’s *Dial of Princes*.24 Quoting *Thomas North’s 1555 Travel Journal: From Italy to Shakespeare*:

These elements of the story of Antigonus are reflected in the Antigonus subplot of *The Winter’s Tale*. That subplot also includes fear and stress leading to a premature delivery; the furious judgment against Antigonus and baby Perdita; the banishment to the coast of Sicily; a focus on the ominous darkening of the skies; the fear that this was punishment by angry gods; the loud and riotous storm that killed all the Mariners; and the raging and roaring of the bear, which eats Antigonus alive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antigonus’s Story in <em>The Dial of Princes</em></th>
<th>Antigonus’s Story in <em>The Winter’s Tale</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And all the people … with <strong>doleful clamors</strong> and <strong>cries</strong>, making their importunate prayers.</td>
<td><strong>Antigonus</strong>: Thou art perfect then, our ship hath touched upon The deserts of <strong>Bohemia</strong>-[i.e., <strong>Sicily</strong>]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Lions with terrible voices <strong>roaring, the bears</strong> with no less <strong>fearful cries raging</strong> …</td>
<td><strong>Mariner</strong>: Ay, my lord, and <strong>fear</strong> We have landed in ill time: the skies look <strong>grimly</strong> And threaten present blusters. In my conscience, The heavens with that we have in hand are angry And frown upon ’s. Besides, this place is famous for the creatures Of prey that keep upon’t.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there appeared in the <strong>Element</strong> a marvelous <strong>dark cloud</strong>, which seemed to darken the whole earth, and therewith it began to <strong>thunder</strong> and lightning so terrible …</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in the same City called Antigonus, a man of a noble blood, and well stricken in age, who with his wife and daughter were banished two years before from Rome.…
The Censors … banished him unto the Isle of Sicily …
Antigonus was not only deprived of his Honor, goods, and country, but also by an Earth-quake, his house fell down to the ground, and slew his dearly beloved daughter. --728-30

Antigonus: The storm begins …
The day frowns more and more. Thou’rt like to have
A lullaby too rough. I never saw
The heavens so dim by day. A savage clamor!

Clown: I would you did but see how it chafes, how it rages … Oh, the most piteous cry of the poor souls!

… how he cried to me for help and said his name was Antigonus, a nobleman. But to make an end of the ship: to see how the sea flapdragoned it! But first, how the poor souls roared and the sea mocked them, and how the poor gentleman roared and the bear mocked him, both roaring louder than the sea or weather.
--3.3.106, 1-7, 11-12, 48, 53-55, 86-88, 93-99

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isolated Correspondences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Element … dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>called Antigonus, a man of a noble blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roaring, the bears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clamors, doleful-cries, raging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Isle of Sicily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is of course unique. North got this story from The Dial of Princes, and he even highlighted the story in his marginalia.

Caesar’s Full Speech on Coward’s Dying Before Their Deaths Really Comes From North’s Dial, not Plutarch (Julius Caesar)

As is well known, Caesar’s speech that “Cowards die many times before their deaths” was hinted at in North’s Plutarch’s Lives. But it was believed that Shakespeare took that hint and then refashioned it himself with many new details. Yet, as we see below, the specific words and notions
of the dramatist’s seemingly original speech actually derive from similar ideas expressed in North’s *Dial*. In other words, the playwright, reading a suggestion about Caesar’s brash refusal to fear death in *Plutarch*, was able to recall a fuller treatment of the subject in North’s *Dial* and so added the latter to his play.

It should also be noted that the playwright repeatedly turns to these same pages of *The Dial* (which comprise a death-bed exchange between the dying Marcus Aurelius and his secretary Panutius) when relating other famous passages on mortality—including Hamlet’s in *Hamlet*, Prospero’s in *The Tempest*, and the Vincent-Claudio exchange in *Measure from Measure*. Finally, the same passage in *The Dial* is clearly responsible for a line in *1 Henry IV*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s <em>Dial</em></th>
<th>Shakespeare’s <em>Julius Caesar</em> and <em>1 Henry IV</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The cowardly heart falleth before he is beaten down: but the stout and valiant stomach, in greatest peril, recovereth most strength. Thou art one man, and not two, thou owest one death to the gods [533]. Men … ought to die but once … [Yet] thinking to lead a sure life, we taste a new death. I know not why men fear so much to die … (why) fly the voyage of death which is necessary [526]. Come that that may come [559]. | Caesar:  
Cowards die many times before their deaths;  
The valiant never taste of death but once.  
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,  
It seems to me most strange that men should fear,  
Seeing that death, a necessary end,  
Will come when it will come.  
--*Julius Caesar* 2.2.32-37 |

**Isolated Correspondences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>coward(ly)-before-valiant</th>
<th>coward-before-valiant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>die but once …taste a new death</td>
<td>taste of death but once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know not why men fear</td>
<td>It seems to me most strange that men should fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>death which is necessary</td>
<td>death a necessary end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come that that may come</td>
<td>Will come when it will come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thou owest one death to the gods</td>
<td>thou owest God a death* (<em>1 Henry IV</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EEBO confirms this is the inspiration for the speech. Yet when writing *Julius Caesar*, the playwright did not have North’s *Dial* open in front of him but his *Plutarch’s Lives*, and it is the latter work that indicated Caesar did indeed make a comment about facing death: “[Caesar] said it was better to die once than always to be afraid of death.” But that is all Plutarch mentions about the matter. Evidently, when the playwright read this, it reminded him of the fuller treatment of the “die
but once” passages in North’s *Dial*. The following table reveals the extensive reliance on North in *Julius Caesar* 2.2, and it includes a conflation of his passages that appeared in two different texts. The passage shaded in tan, orange, and yellow was based on North’s *Dial*; the rest comes from his *Plutarch*:
Calpurnia Has Scary Dreams; And Cowards Die Many Times While the Valiant Die But Once

When he heard his wife Calpurnia, being fast a sleep, weep and sigh, and put forth many fumbling lamentable speeches. For she dreamed that Caesar was slain, and that she had him in her arms… Insomuch that Caesar rising in the morning, she prayed him if it were possible, not to go out of the doors that day…And if that he made no reckoning of her dream, yet that he would search further of the Soothsayers by their sacrifices (793) …

Again, of signs in the element, the great comet which seven nights together was seen very bright after Caesar’s death (796)

[Caesar] said it was better to die once, than always to be afraid of death. (790)

The cowardly heart falleth before he is beaten down: but the stout and valiant stomach, in greatest peril, recovereth most strength. Thou art one man, and not two, thou owest one death to the gods. Men… ought to die but once … [Yet] thinking to lead a sure life, we taste a new death. I know not why men fear so much to die … (why) fly the voyage of death which is necessary. Come that that may come (Dial 533, 526, 559)

Caesar [him]self also doing sacrifice unto the gods found that one of the beasts which was sacrificed had no heart; and that was a strange thing: …how a beast could live without a heart … Decius Brutus… laughed the Soothsayers to scorn, and reproved Caesar, saying that…the Senate… might think he mocked them…And furthermore, that if any man should tell them from him, “they should depart for that present time, and return again when Calpurnia should have better dreams” what would his enemies and ill-willers say? (793)
Coriolanus’s Fable of the Belly Conflates Three Belly-Fables of North From Three Different Texts

In an earlier example, we noted that the playwright of Julius Caesar was able to recall passages from North’s Dial while copying passages from North’s Plutarch. In this example, he intertwines passages from three of North’s translations.

As is well known, in Shakespeare’s Coriolanus, Menenius’s fable, in which “all the body’s members / Rebelled against the belly” (1.1.94-95), derives from the chapter on the titular Roman warrior in North’s Plutarch’s Lives in which Menenius tells a fable, “That on a time all the members of man’s body did rebel against the belly.” This is the same chapter that also provided the plot, characters, and many of the speeches for the Roman tragedy. But in 1928, editor Horace Howard Furness Jr. became the first to notice that North also wrote about this fable in his Moral Philosophy of Doni—and that, remarkably, its retelling in the play echoes this latter work too:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s Doni</th>
<th>Shakespeare’s Coriolanus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>that noble Roman that sought and laboured to bring the people and commonalty to love</td>
<td>All: he's a very dog to the commonalty…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their magistrates and superiors told them a pretty tale... how the hands were angry with the body and thus at variance would not for malice give meat to the mouth: as those that thought themselves inferior to no other member... refraining to do their office in giving meat to the belly...</td>
<td>1st Citizen: Soft! who comes here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--22r</td>
<td>2nd Citizen. Worthy Menenius Agrippa; one that hath always loved the people…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That noble Roman…told them a pretty tale</td>
<td>Menenius Agrippa: I shall tell you/A pretty tale…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring the people and commonalty to love</td>
<td>There was a time when all the body’s members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the body, the belly, member, laboured, inferior, office</td>
<td>Rebelled against the belly, thus accused it…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like labour with the rest…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>through the cranks and offices of man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The strongest nerves and small inferior veins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From me receive that natural competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--1.26, 45-6, 84-5, 91-2, 95-6, 132-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furness, was particularly struck by the shared description of the fable as a pretty tale, observing that repeating of the phrase in this same context in the play “would seem to indicate at least a recollection of this translation by North.” EEBO confirms the validity of Furness’s claim; the parallel is unique. But perhaps even more astoundingly, in his Dial, North described another related metaphor comparing the members of the body to different parts of the commonwealth—with the head as the
**prince, the heart as counsellor, the hands and arms as soldiers, etc., referring also to “the heart, which with the brain, is the seat of the soul.” And remarkably the playwright also borrows from this description as well:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s Plutarch’s Lives and Dial</th>
<th>Shakespeare’s Coriolanus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Menenius Agrippa...</strong></td>
<td><strong>Menenius Agrippa:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That on a time all the members of man’s body did rebel against the belly, complaining of it, that it only remained in the midst of the body, without doing any thing, neither did bear any labor to the maintenance of the rest: whereas all other parts and members did labor painfully, &amp; was very careful to satisfy the appetites and desires of the body. And so the belly, all this notwithstanding, laughed at their folly, and said: ‘It is true, I first receive all meats that nourish man’s body: but afterwards I send it again to the nourishment of other parts of the same. Even so’ quoth he, ‘O you, my masters, and citizens of Rome: the reason is alike between the Senate and you. For matters being well digested and their counsels thoroughly examined, touching the benefit of the common wealth: the Senators are cause of the common commodity that cometh unto ... you.” --Plutarch 240</td>
<td>There was a time when all the body’s members Rebell’d against the belly, thus accused it: That only like a gulf it did remain I' the midd’st o' the body, idle and unactive, Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing Like labour with the rest, where the other instruments Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel, And, mutually participate, did minister Unto the appetite and affection common Of the whole body. The belly answered... with a kind of smile... First Citizen. Your belly's answer? What! The kingly-crowned head, the vigilant eye, The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier, Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter... ‘True is it, my incorporate friends,' quoth he, 'That I receive the general food at first, Which you do live upon; and fit it is, Because I am the store-house and the shop Of the whole body: but, if you do remember, I send it through the rivers of your blood, Even to the court, the heart, to the seat o' the brain... The senators of Rome are this good belly, And you the mutinous members; for examine Their counsels and their cares, digest things rightly Touching the weal o’th’ common, you shall find</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the mystical body, which is the empire in the form and shape of a natural man, you shall understand that the head which is above all is the prince which commanded all; the eyes whereby we see...: the tongue</td>
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wherewith we speak… The hands and arms are the knights, which resist the enemies, the feet which sustaineth the members…
the hearts, which we see not outwardly, are the privy counselors…
the heart, which with the brain, is the seat of the soul (108-9)
--Dial 108-9

No public benefit which you receive
But it proceeds or comes from them to you (1.1.88-151)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isolated Correspondences involving The Dial</th>
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<tr>
<td>the head which is above all is the Prince</td>
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<tr>
<td>body, members, tongue</td>
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This is yet another example of the North’s intertwining of a variety of mental threads that he had gathered over the course of his life to create an important scene in a Shakespeare play.
Chapter 2
100 Rare or Unique Verbal Parallels

On September 19, 1995, The Washington Post published a 35,000-word manifesto written by the Unabomber. This was the name that the media had assigned to the notorious technophobic terrorist who had been targeting people across the United States, mostly with mail bombs, for 17 years.

In April of the following year, the FBI obtained a search warrant and raided the desolate and dilapidated Montana cabin of Ted Kaczynski, a former math professor. In the interim, FBI profiler James Fitzgerald had managed to connect the anonymous manifesto with many of Ted Kaczynski’s prior writings, and, in so doing, he helped establish the foundations of a then-fledgling criminal science known as forensic linguistics, especially introducing it as an important new tool in American law enforcement.

The question Fitzgerald faced was whether an author of an anonymous text could be identified by comparing his text with a candidate-author’s known writings. Do writers have linguistic fingerprints? Will they at times echo their own prior writings in a distinctive and telling fashion? And when were passages or lines from two different works so similar that their resemblances could not have happened by chance?

Kaczynski’s writings first came to the attention of the FBI through his younger brother, David, and David’s wife, Linda Patrik. Linda was the first to notice that the published manifesto read much like the anti-technology letters that her brother-in-law Ted had sent her husband. She convinced David to read the Unabomber’s article, and David agreed that the terrorist did not just share the same outlook as his paranoid sibling; he sounded like him too. The essay included peculiar phrases like “cool-headed logician” that David had only ever heard his brother say.

David supplied one of Ted Kaczynski’s letters to the FBI, a 23-page document written in the 1970s. Terry Turchie, head of the Unabomber task force, then sent the letter to Fitzgerald, providing no background information other than its date of origin. Turchie simply asked the profiler to assess the letter. Fitzgerald immediately noticed numerous similarities to the manifesto, both in the ideas and the language. Fitzgerald soon called back telling Turchie that if the letter was not a hoax, “you’ve got your man.”

Soon Fitzgerald had access to other letters of Ted Kaczynski, supplied both by David Kaczynski and Ted’s mother, Wanda. Fitzgerald listed all the similarities between the known writings of Ted and the manifesto, and it was clear to him that they exposed the identity of the terrorist:
Kaczynski: **propaganda and** image-making **techniques**
Unabomber: **propaganda and** other psychological **techniques**

Kaczynski: **computers** with superhuman intellectual capacities
Unabomber: **super-intelligent computers**

Kaczynski: the **modern obsession with** physical security and **longevity**
Unabomber: **modern man’s obsession with longevity**

Kaczynski: It is commonly assumed that **scientists are motivated** mainly **by a desire to benefit humanity**.
Unabomber: Some **scientists** claim that they **are motivated** by “curiosity” or **by a desire to benefit humanity.”

The following parallel especially caught the attention of Fitzgerald, and he considered it a “smoking gun”:

Kaczynski: We will be **sacrificing** some of the materialistic benefits of technology, but there just isn’t any other way. We **can’t eat your cake and have it too**.
Unabomber: As for the negative consequences of eliminating industrial society—well, you **can’t eat your cake and have it too**. To gain one thing you have to **sacrifice** another.30

As Fitzgerald stressed, that word-string in bold was not a typical rendering of that proverb. Most people who use that expression say have before eat—“you can’t have your cake and eat it too.” But even more significantly, both Kaczynski and the Unabomber recited this peculiar take on a proverb in the same unusual context and while making the same distinctive point. Not only did both Kaczynski and the Unabomber favor the elimination of technology; they also admitted that this would have a downside. Still, each noted, this sacrifice (or sacrificing) must be made as you can’t eat your cake and have it too. A judge agreed on the compelling nature of this linguistic evidence and granted a warrant to search Ted Kaczynski’s Montana cabin home.

In early 1996, at about the same time that Fitzgerald was building his forensic linguistic case against Ted Kaczynski, Don Foster was studying the language of *Primary Colors* by “Anonymous.” *Primary Colors* was a roman-à-clef—a supposedly fictional narrative about a southern governor that was a thinly-disguised tell-all about Bill Clinton’s 1992 primary campaign. Using similar techniques, Foster correctly identified Joe Klein as the author.

Since then, forensic linguistics has grown into a full-fledged science, developing myriad techniques to help link anonymous texts to certain suspects. Typically, criminals are not also prolific writers, so experts in the field have had to create methods that might squeeze telling
information out of subtler clues. But when experts have a lot of writing material from a possible candidate, as with Ted Kaczynski, they can search for distinctive or, hopefully, even unique phrasing shared between two texts. Of course, one does not need many examples of two works that share extremely rare and unique phrasing—certain word-strings that occur in no other known works except for the two relevant texts—to confirm that the texts are related.

In the list below, we provide 100 such examples: unique or extremely rare lines, phrases, and word-strings that, in most cases, appear only in North’s translations and Shakespeare’s plays (or in later quotations of Shakespeare). Typically, these reiterations of North’s prior language appear in the same peculiar context. Unlike the examples of the plagiarism of *Plutarch’s Lives* (1579/80) (shown in the next chapter), these borrowings derive from still other sections of *Plutarch’s Lives* or from North’s three other translations—*The Dial of Princes* (1557), *The Moral Philosophy of Doni* (1570), and *Nepos’ Lives* (1602). Also, unlike the plagiary in the Roman tragedies, in most of these examples that follow, the playwright is not closely following some storyline of North’s and so would not have had his translation open in front of him. Instead, the playwright has clearly recalled North’s wording, frequently because something in the play has jogged his memory, leading the playwright to quote or echo North. In many cases, the quoted parallels are snippets from a longer, analogous pair of passages in which we find still more telling correspondences.

In each comparison, the line from North’s translation appears first, and below it comes a quote from a Shakespeare play. As North’s first three publications (*The Dial, Doni, Plutarch’s Lives*) were all published by 1580, the year Shakespeare turned 16, there is no doubt that these works came first.

*Plutarch’s Lives*: perplexed and could not tell what to say (338)
*King John*: perplexed and know not what to say. (3.1.221)

*The Dial*: We see men refuse to go by water for fear of drowning, not to come too near the fire for fear of burning (710)
*Two Gentlemen*: Thus have I shunned the fire for fear of burning
And drenched me in the sea, where I am drowned. (1.3.78-79)

*Plutarch’s Lives*: reputed the chiefest man of all the Graecians, and the which had filled the world with report of his fame and glory (674-75)
*1 Henry VI*: That she may boast she hath beheld the man
Whose glory fills the world with loud report. (2.2.42-43)

*The Dial*: a noble and worthy woman, A delicate woman, a sweet woman … she will maintain herself with the needle (483-84)
*Othello*: A fine woman! A fair woman! A sweet woman! … So delicate with her
needle! (4.1.181-82, 190-91)

Plutarch’s Lives: hair will sooner grow in the palm of my hand, Crassus, than you will come to Seleucia. (611)
2 Henry IV: I will sooner have a beard grow in the palm of my hand than he shall get one of his cheek (1.2.20-21)

Plutarch’s Lives: alas the day that ever I was born (522)
Romeo and Juliet: Alas, alas! … / Oh, welladay, that ever I was born! (4.5.14-15)

The Dial: O woeful world, O miserable world, O subtle world, O world unstable, and unconstant! (493-94)
Romeo and Juliet: Most miserable hour that e’er time saw …
O woeful, woeful, woeful day!
Most lamentable day, most woeful day …
O woeful day, O woeful day! (4.5.44, 49-50, 54)

The Dial: it is but reason that I be (328)
3 Henry VI: ’tis but reason that I be (3.3.147)

The Dial: there is nothing in the world but plain deceit. (493)
Doni: they lie in their throats (110)
Love’s Labor’s Lost: Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and lie in my throat. (4.3.10-11)

The Dial: observe and retain with you these few precepts and counsels: My Lord, never tell to any all that you think. (572)
Hamlet: And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue (1.3.58-59)

Nepos’ Lives: made a sally out of the town, and rashly went to give a charge (6)
1 Henry VI: Too rashly plotted. All our general force
Might with a sally of the very town (4.4.3-4)

Plutarch’s Lives: his father left him heir of all his lands and goods (309)
Shrew: You knew my father well, and in him me,
Left solely heir to all his lands and goods (2.1.116-17)
Doni: that this is true, said she, behold my face (45)
3 Henry VI: That this is true, father, behold his blood. (1.1.13)

Plutarch’s Lives: he was a fond, light-headed fellow that cared for nothing (1015)
Twelfth Night: I warrant thou art a merry fellow and car’st for nothing (3.1.26-27)

Doni: he will set thee where thou shalt see no sun nor moon a good while (79)
Arden: I’ll lay thee up so close a twelve month’s day
As thou shalt neither see the sun nor moon (13.24-25)

The Dial: God forbid that I should be so bold to (General Prologue)
Titus Andronicus: God forbid I should be so bold to (4.3.90)

Plutarch’s Lives: Let the die be cast (meaning hereby to put all in hazard, and according to our proverb, to see all on six and seven) (708)
Richard III: I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die. (5.4.9-10)
Richard II: All is uneven,
And everything is left at six and seven. (2.2.120-21)

The Dial: as from the duty of the subject to the prince (633)
Shrew: Such duty as the subject owes the prince (5.2.159)

Plutarch’s Lives: the dark night did sever them, but the next morning (440)
Much Ado: the dark night, which did deceive them, but … next morning (3.3.154, 157-58)

The Dial: thou owest one death to the gods (533)
1 Henry IV: thou owest God a death. (5.1.126)

Doni: This worldly life … is then but a shadow, dust, and smoke … It is but a fire kindled on the coals (13)
Macbeth: The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow …
It is a tale/ Told by an idiot (5.5.23-27)

Plutarch’s Lives: He was very gentle and familiar with his friends … And that was the cause why he did very unpatiently take the death of Aeropus, not so much for his death
... as for that he was angry with himself (430)

*Romeo and Juliet*: Feeling so the loss,
Cannot choose but ever weep the friend.
Well, girl, thou weep’st not so much for his death
As that the villain lives (3.5.76-79)

*Nepos’ Lives*: resolved, as he told me, to *die a thousand deaths* rather than to promise anything (93)

*I Henry IV*: And I will *die a hundred thousand deaths*
Ere break the smallest parcel of this vow. (3.2.158-59)

*Doni*: For the thing *that shineth so is* not fire, in *God’s name*, but *it is* a certain worm (79)

*Shrew*: Come on, i’*God’s name* … it is the *moon that shines so* bright. (4.5.1, 4)

*The Dial*: till the *hour of death* … thou with *sorrows* art so replenished, and *my heart* with *care so oppressed* … I earnestly desire thee to *leave the lamentation* (491)

*Arden*: *My heart’s grief* rends my other powers
Worse than the conflict at the *hour of death.*

[Franklin:] Gentle Arden, *leave this* sad *lament* …
Now will he shake his *care-oppressed* head …
*Pouring fresh sorrow* on his weary limbs (4.19-21, 43, 52)

*The Dial*: that corruption is *mingled with the* *pure blood* (255)

*Comedy of Errors*: an adulterate blot;
*My blood is mingled with the* crime of lust. (2.2.139-40)

*Doni*: *trembled every joint* of him, and quaked *like an aspen leaf*, and a beastly fever took him (103v)

*Titus Andronicus*: A chilling sweat o’erruns *my trembling joints*;
*My heart* suspects … *Tremble like aspen leaves* (2.3.212-13, 2.4.45)

*Nepos’ Lives*: as if he had looked in a *glass*, and seeking to *reform* his life in some sort, and to *form* it in *the mould of* the virtues of these great men, taking this *fashion* of searching their manners and writing the lives of these *noble* men. (90)

*Plutarch’s Lives*: as if I looked into a *glass*, to frame and *fashion* my life to *the mould* and pattern of these virtuous noble men. (263)

*Hamlet*: The *glass of fashion* and *the mold of form* (3.1.156)

*2 Henry IV*: He was indeed the *glass*
Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves …
He was the mark and glass, copy and book,
That fashioned others. (2.3.21-22, 31-32)

*The Dial:* knew that which I would not have known, and have heard that which I would not have heard (486)
*TWO GENTLEMEN:* To plead for that which I would not obtain,
To carry that which I would have refused (4.4.99-100)

*DONI:* out of my sight, thou and thy wicked counsel, vile stinking beast that thou art, that dost nothing else but pluck out eyes (69)
*RICHARD III:* a fouler toad
Out of my sight! Thou dost infect my eyes. (1.2.150-51)

*THE DIAL:* What a woeful case am I in, that am (12)
*AS YOU LIKE IT:* What a case am I in then, that am (Epilogue 7)

*THE DIAL:* daily we vanish away. … Now green, now ripe, now rotten (452)
not only … change from day to day, but from hour to hour, and minute to minute. (682)
*AS YOU LIKE IT:* And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
And then from hour to hour we rot and rot (2.7.26-27)

*DONI:* a little axe overthroweth a great oak. (30)
*THE DIAL:* timber hewed down (734)
*3 Henry VI:* A little axe, hews down and fells the hardest-timbered oak. (2.1.54-55)

*THE DIAL:* there never was nor never shall be greater friendship than that (182)
*RICHARD III:* You have no cause to hold my friendship doubtful.
I never was nor never will be false. (4.4.492-93)

*Plutarch’s Lives:* to delay time, and to draw it out in length (1073)
*MERCHANT OF VENICE:* to peise the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length (3.2.22-23)

*DONI:* I will none of them, because they are ours. (35)
*TWO GENTLEMEN:* I will none of them. They are for you. (2.1.122)
The Dial: that they have greater compassion of our life than we others have of their death. …Yet we ought to be comforted to see our friends die if it were for no other, but to see them delivered from the thralldom of this world. (487)

Richard III: And I will send you to my brother Gloucester, Who shall reward you better for my life Than Edward will for tidings of my death. … Why, so he doth, when he delivers you From this earth’s thralldom (1.4.228-30, 250-51)

Nepos’ Lives: Within this earthly vale (30)

2 Henry VI: In this earthly vale (2.1.68)

The Dial: if I were Menodorus as he is, that never knew what truth meant, I would have followed his advice (721)

Henry VIII: Yet I am richer than my base accusers, That never knew what truth meant. I now seal it (2.1.104-105)

The Dial: it hath pleased the gods to take my child from me that I loved so well (740)

Timon of Athens: It hath pleased the gods to remember my father’s age And call him to long peace. (1.2.2-3)

Nepos’ Lives: for the kingdom after my death, endeavour thyself to be an honest man that thou mayest come to the crown not so much through me, being mine heir, as through thyself, for that thou art worthy. (29)

3 Henry VI: Confirm the crown to me and to mine heirs … I am content. Richard Plantagenet, Enjoy the kingdom after my decease. (1.1.172-75)

The Dial: now-a-days, the more is the pity. (650)

Midsummer: nowadays—the more the pity (3.1.139-40)

The Dial: damnation, the wrath of God lighted upon him (35)

Arden: Hell-fire and wrathful vengeance light on me (1.336)

The Dial: [the] new-come Courtier, whose youth can better away with an ill-nights lodging than the gray hairs of the old Courtier. (596)

Titus Andronicus: My youth can better spare my blood than you (3.1.165)
**The Dial**: to make the poor man **desperate** and **weary of his life**. (637)

**1 Henry VI**: Salisbury is a **desperate** homicide;
He fighteth as one **weary of his life**. (1.2.25-26)

**The Dial**: **to nourish and bring up** (177)

**Titus Andronicus**: **to nourish and bring** him **up** (5.1.84) [See also next example]

**The Dial**: Pyrrhus was born in Greece, **nourished** in Arcadia, **and brought up** with **tiger’s milk** … for to have **sucked Tiger’s milk**, he was very proud and cruel. (258)

**Titus Andronicus**: When did the **tiger’s** young ones teach the dam?
Oh, do not learn her wrath; she taught it thee!
The **milk** thou **suck’st** from her did turn to marble (2.3.142-44)

**Doni**: And this is only grown, O Noble Prince, of the **great love** I bear your Grace, because it toucheth … the whole state of your **princely** monarchy. (54v)

**Richard III**: **The tender love** I bear Your Grace, my lord, Makes me most forward in this **princely** presence (3.4.63-64)

**The Dial**: given thee possession of **my** person: I have **made** thee **lord of me and mine**
(759)

**Comedy of Errors**: **my** husband,
Who **I made lord of me and** all I had (5.1.136-37)

**The Dial**: his gown **all to-torn**, his shoes out … his coat **rent**, his hat old, his **hose seam rent**, his cap greasy, and his shirt lousy. (445)

**Arden**: A watchet satin doublet **all to-torn** …
A pair of threadbare velvet **hose, seam rent**,
A worsted stocking **rent** above the shoe,
A livery cloak, but all the lace was off (2.53-57)

**The Dial**: jetting in his velvets and silks … the stewards of the house murmur at them (620)

**Arden**: Is now become the steward of his house,
And bravely **jets it in his silken gown** (1.29-30)

**Doni**: That noble Roman … **told** them a **pretty tale** … how the hands were angry with the **body** … refraining to do their office in giving meat to the **belly** (22)

**Coriolanus**: I shall **tell** you
A pretty tale …
There was a time when all the body’s members
Rebelled against the belly (1.1.87-88, 94-95)

North’s Journal: [re Roman emperor’s palace] would not have given for one million of gold
_Titus Andronicus:_ [re Roman emperor’s palace] I would not for a million of gold (2.1.49)

_The Dial:_ thou hast … [been] banished from Rome, and thy goods confiscate (501)
_Merchant of Venice:_ Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate. (4.1.330)

_The Dial:_ [it is untrue that an ill deed] can be kept secret and that it cannot come to light (648)
_Doni:_ yet in the end truth I know will take place … all mischief and malice in the end cometh out (62, 88)
_Merchant of Venice:_ Truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man’s son may, but in the end truth will out. (2.2.76-77)

_Doni:_ Get thee hence out of my sight, thou and thy wicked counsel … Dispatch, get thee hence, I say (69, 79)
_Two Gentlemen:_ Go, get thee hence, and find my dog again,
Or ne’er return again into my sight.
Away, I say! (4.4.57-59)

_The Dial:_ that which I owe to the law of friendship (449)
_Two Gentlemen:_ that which I would discover
_The law of friendship_ (3.1.4-5)

_Plutarch’s Lives:_ Some other also that take upon them to know (153)
_Cymbeline:_ some that take upon them to know (5.4.180)

_Doni:_ dispatch; and about thy business. (85v)
_Richard III:_ About your business straight.
Go, go, dispatch. (1.3.354-55)

_The Dial:_ he had in him the strength of Hercules, the hardiness of Hector (41)
_Plutarch’s Lives:_ and well proportioned of all his limbs and strong (55)
_I Henry VI:_ I thought I should have seen some Hercules,
A second Hector, for his grim aspect
And large proportion of his strong-knit limbs. (2.3.19-21)

The Dial: they … praise her for her virtues, as they did set forth her husband for his victories. (238)
As You Like It: the people praise her for her virtues
And pity her for her good father’s sake (1.2.271-72)

The Dial: that he hath good cause to complain of (668)
Measure for Measure: that he hath cause to complain of (2.1.118-19)

Plutarch’s Lives: the one is won with money, and the other with civility (862)
2 Henry IV: The one you may do with sterling money, and the other with current repentance. (2.1.118-19)

Plutarch’s Lives: Now Pompey, returning into the city, married Cornelia … Her father also was a noble man, both in blood and life. (706) (not from chapter on “Life of Antonius”)
Antony and Cleopatra: Pompey the Great … who—high in name and power, Higher than both in blood and life—(1.2.195-97)

The Dial: This cannot be called “life,” but a long death … since a thousand times we hate life. (534)
Measure for Measure: What’s yet in this/ That bears the name of life? Yet in this life Lie hid more thousand deaths (3.1.38-40)

The Dial: she long before her time was delivered (206)
Winter’s Tale: She is something before her time delivered. (2.2.25)

The Dial: if he will laugh, they will weep … If he be sorrowful, they will be merry…
If he would sleep, they will watch: and if he will watch, they will sleep. (225)
As You Like It: I will weep … when you are disposed to be merry;
I will laugh like a hyena, and that when thou are inclined to sleep. (4.1.146-49)

The Dial: he may not forget sometime to send home cates to his host, and … he must accept it in very good part (598)
Comedy of Errors: Ay, to a niggardly host and more sparing guest.
But though my cates be mean, take them in good part (3.1.27-28)
Doni: (introductory exchange) we have ill news abroad. I pray you, what are they …? (49)

King Lear: (introductory exchange) You have heard of the news abroad …?

Not I. Pray you, what are they? (2.1.6-9)

The Dial: for babbling, vain words, and telling shameful lies, he should be counted a man of an excellent tongue? (514)

Twelfth Night: I hate ingratitude more in a man than lying, vainness, babbling (3.4.355-56)

The Dial: man is so very a fool (500)

Shrew: man is so very a fool (1.1.125)

Plutarch’s Lives: it was a foul thing for a gentleman or noble man to fall out with his servants (386)

Two Gentlemen of Verona: When a man’s servant shall play the cur with him … Oh, ’tis a foul thing (4.4.1-2, 10)

Plutarch’s Lives: [would] overtake them also if they [the soldiers] fled. And further, that they had such kind of arrows as would fly swifter than a man’s eye could discern them … and their armors on th’other side made of such a temper and metal as no force of anything could pierce them through … Margian tempered steel (611, 614)

2 Henry IV: From the best-tempered courage in his troops;

For from his metal was his party steeled …

That arrows fled not swifter toward their aim

Than did our soldiers, aiming at their safety,

Fly from the field. (1.1.115-16, 123-25)

The Dial: my heart was as full of sorrow as thy spirit was full of pain. (461)

Twice Gentlemen of Verona: from a heart/ As full of sorrows as the sea of sands (4.3.34-35)

The Dial: he might freely & without any danger of law put her to death (255)

Arden: that murder would grow to an occupation that a man might [follow] without danger of law (2.103-104)

The Dial: Lady Lavinia, and art a wise and virtuous woman (490)

Romeo and Juliet: a good lady, and a wise and virtuous. (1.5.115)
Plutarch's Lives: History is the very treasury of man's life … which by examples past teacheth us to judge of things present & to foresee things to come (Amyot to the Readers)

2 Henry IV: There is a history in all men's lives,
Figuring the nature of the times deceased,
The which observed, a man may prophesy,
With a near aim, of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life (3.1.80-84)

The Dial: doubt not but that your majesty (General Prologue)

2 Henry IV: doubt not but Your Majesty (4.4.11)

The Dial: No citizen … be so bold or hardy to (6)

Richard II: no person be so bold
or daring-hardy as to (1.3.42-43)

Plutarch's Lives: that little patch of ground and dwell in so poor and small a farm. (374)

Hamlet: to gain a little patch of ground…
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it (4.4.19, 21)

Plutarch’s Lives: did not stick to say to his face (46)

2 Henry IV: will not stick to say his face (1.2.22-23)

The Dial: When Alexander the Great was born, his father, King Philip (576)
When The great King Alexander was born, his father, Philip king of Macedonia (171)

Henry V: Alexander the Great was born in Macedon. His father was called Philip of Macedon (4.7.19-20)

Doni: and so left this camel behind them to the mercy of the wild beasts. (64v)

Midsummer: And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts. (2.1.228)

Doni: my proceedings … were openly known to the world (98v)

2 Henry IV: my case so openly known to the world (2.1.29)

Plutarch’s Lives: taking that murder in very evil part, as a foul blot to his life and doings (1053)

King Lear: It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness (1.1.231)

The Dial: willingly to wet the earth with the blood of innocents … [as] one that hath been brought up among the infernal furies of hell (99)
I Henry VI: Stained with the guiltless blood of innocents …
To compass wonders but by help of devils (5.4.44, 48)

The Dial: Woe to that realm where the poor are suffered to be proud (393)
Richard III: Woe to that land that’s governed by a child! (2.3.12)
Twelfth Night: Oh, world, how apt the poor are to be proud! (3.1.127)

The Dial: men when they come to the point of death … that if they prorogue their death … (558)
Romeo and Juliet: Than death proroguèd (2.2.78)
when men are at the point of death (5.3.88)

The Dial: the lions with terrible voices roaring, the bears with no less fearful cries raging … a Roman in the same city called Antigonus, a man of a noble blood (728-29)
Winter’s Tale: how he cried to me for help and said his name was Antigonus, a nobleman … and how the poor gentleman roared and the bear mocked him, both roaring louder than the sea (3.3.93-95, 97-99)

The Dial: O bright Dian … / In place of Hymen’s high unfiled bed,
They lay thee up in closure of thy grave (191, 192)
Timon of Athens: Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave, …
Thou bright defiler/ Of Hymen’s purest bed! …
Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow
That lies on Dian’s lap! (4.3.382, 387-88, 390-91)

The Dial: this wicked emperor … brought with him many bishops, which were heretics, by the which the kings and princes of the Goths were Aryans for the space of two hundred years. (74)
Titus Andronicus: This wicked emperor may have shipp’d her hence (4.3.23)
Bid him repair to me and bring with him/ Some of the chiepest princes of the Goths. (5.2.124-25)

Doni: snow which with the first beams of the sun dissolveth (13)
2 Henry VI: cold snow melts with the sun’s hot beams. (3.1.223)

Plutarch’s Lives: if it be thy chance to conquer [us] (257)
Twelfth Night: if it be thy chance to kill me—(3.4.162)
Plutarch’s Lives: when the king made much of him, and giving him good countenance said unto him: “what wilt thou have me give thee of my things, Philippides?” “Even what it shall please thee, O king, so it be [none of thy secrets].” (947)32

Pericles: being bid to ask what he would of the King, desired he might know none of his secrets. (1.3.4-6)

The Dial: is to have an office of the gods (341)

Cymbeline: It is an office of the gods (1.6.92)

The Dial: Of the revenge a woman of Greece took of him that had killed her husband … Sinatus and Sinorus which were by blood cousins (189)

Romeo and Juliet: Will you speak well of him that killed your cousin? Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband? (3.2.96-97)

Doni: [The bull] whose lowing echo rebounding back … This wild Boar running through thickets, thorns, briers, and hedges (24v-25).

Tempest: That calf-like they my lowing followed through Toothed briers, sharp furzes, pricking gorse, and thorns (4.1.179-80)

Plutarch’s Lives: tell truly whether he had not offered him good round sums of money, many a time and oft (370)

Merchant of Venice: Three thousand ducats. ’Tis a good round sum … Signor Antonio, many a time and oft/ In the Rialto you have rated me About my moneys and my usances. (1.3.101, 104-106)

Plutarch’s Lives: twitting him with his cowardliness … safe in a good city compassed about with walls (842)

1 Henry VI: Encompassed with thy lustful paramours! … And twit with cowardice a man half dead? … Like peasant footboys do they keep the walls (3.2.53, 55, 69)

Doni: All is well that endeth well (96v)

All’s Well: All’s Well That Ends Well (title)

This represents a mere fraction of the literary correspondences. This website will soon reveal hundreds more examples, including the Northern source passages for all the monologues on death. But even given what has so far been established, it is certainly obvious that this persistent pilfering of North’s material and echoing of his language represents a unique situation in the history
of literature. No other well-known author has borrowed more from an earlier writer than Shakespeare has from North, and it is not even close. Check various lists of the greatest writers of all time—lists that include Mark Twain, Emily Dickinson, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Charlotte Brontë, Ernest Hemingway, Fyodor Dostoevsky, etc. It is unlikely any one of them has blatantly borrowed even a single passage from an earlier author let alone reproduced so many hundreds of lines, speeches, scenes, characters, images, and storylines.

What is more, these verbal parallels far exceed, both in terms of quality and quantity, all such linguistic correspondences that have been used to establish the identities of anonymous authors. This includes the well accepted use of verbal parallels to confirm Shakespeare’s authorship of Arden of Feversham, to uncover John Fletcher’s hand in Henry VIII or Thomas Nashe’s in 1 Henry VI, or to link Ted Kaczynski to the Unabomber’s Manifesto. This is not to suggest that these other linguistic arguments for authorship are weak. Indeed, they are so compelling that they have helped confirm the identity of the anonymous author beyond all reasonable doubt. It is just that the literary case for North’s original authorship of the source plays that Shakespeare adapted is even stronger. In fact, these examples of North’s idiolect throughout the Shakespeare canon represent the most substantial collection of unique verbal fingerprints ever gathered in support of author identification.
Chapter 3
80 Examples of Plagiarizing North

The following consists of a series of tables comparing roughly 80 passages from North’s *Plutarch’s Lives* (1579/1580) with Shakespeare’s derivative passages. This section focuses mostly on Shakespeare’s three Roman Plays—*Julius Caesar* (1599), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606), and *Coriolanus* (1608)—and the Greek tragedy *Timon of Athens* (1605). The appropriated material consists of hundreds of lines and thousands of words in which the playwright closely follows North, frequently verbatim.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s <em>Plutarch’s Lives</em></th>
<th>Shakespeare’s <em>Coriolanus</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The house of the Marcians at Rome ... sprung many noble personages: whereof Ancus Marcius was one, king Numa’s daughter’s son, who was king of Rome after Tullus Hostilius. Of the same house were Publius and Quintus, who brought ... their best water ... by conduits. Censorinus also came of that family, that was so surnamed, because the people had chosen him Censor twice. --237</td>
<td>... what stock he springs of, The noble house o’th’ Marcians, from whence came / That Ancus Marcius, Numa’s daughter’s son, Who after great Hostilius here was king; Of the same house Publius and Quintus were, That our best water brought by conduits hither ... And [Censorinus] nobly namèd so, twice being censor, / Was his great ancestor. --2.3.237-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That on a time all the members of man’s body did rebel against the belly --240</td>
<td>There was a time when all the body’s members / Rebelled against the belly --1.1.94-95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### North’s Plutarch’s Lives

**For** matters being well **digested**, and their **counsels** thoroughly **examined**, touching the **benefit** of the **common wealth**: the Senators are cause of the **common** commodity that **cometh** unto you.

--240

### Shakespeare’s Coriolanus

… **For examine** /
Their **counsels** …, **digest** things rightly /
**Touching the weal o’th’ common**, you shall find / No public **benefit** which you receive But it proceeds or **comes** from them to you

--1.1.148-52

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s Plutarch’s Lives</th>
<th>Shakespeare’s Coriolanus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Fortune** had opened the gates of the city more **for the followers** than **the fliers** | **So, now the gates are ope. …**  
'Tis **for the followers fortune** widens them,  
Not for **the fliers**  
--1.4.44-46 |
|                                                                                         | **… Thou wast a soldier**  
Even to Cato’s wish, **not fierce and terrible**  
Only in strokes, but, with thy **grim** looks and  
The thunderlike percussion of thy sounds,  
Thou mad’st thine **enemies** shake (1.4.59-63) |
| **For he was** even such another, as **Cato** would have a **soldier** … **not** only **terrible and fierce** to lay about him, but to make the **enemy** afeared with the sound of his voice and **grimness** of his countenance … | **… [he] also gave himself in his words to **thunder** and **look** there withal so **grimly****  
--247 |
|                                                                                         | **[Marcius, i.e., Coriolanus:]**  
How lies their battle? Know you **on which side** / **They** have **placed their men** of trust?  
[Cominius:]  
**[Cominius:]** |
| Martius asked him **how** the order of their enemies **battle** was, and **on which side they** had **placed their** best fighting **men**.  
The Consul made him answer … | **[Marcius, i.e., Coriolanus:]**  
How lies their battle? Know you **on which side** / **They** have **placed their men** of trust?  
[Cominius:]  
**[Cominius:]** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the bands ... in the vaward of their battle were those of the Antiates.</th>
<th>Their bands i’th’ vaward are the Antiates, [Marcius:] ... I do beseech you, ... set me / Against Aufidius and his Antiates --1.6.51-59</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Then prayed Martius, to be set directly against them. --241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he should choose out of all the horses they had taken ..., and of all the goods ... (whereof there was great store) ten of every sort which he liked best, before any distribution --242</td>
<td>... Of all the horses, Whereof we have ta’en good and good store, of all ... We render you the tenth, to be ta’en forth Before the common distribution --1.9.31-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Coriolanus] did somewhat sharply take up those, who went about to gratify the people therein and called them people pleasers and traitors to the nobility --245</td>
<td>... you repined, Scandalized the suppliants for the people, called them Timepleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness. --3.1.45-47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They nourished against themselves, the ... seed and cockle of insolence and sedition, which had been sowed and scattered --245</td>
<td>... we nourish ’gainst our Senate The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition, Which we ourselves have ... sowed, and scattered --3.1.72-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they that gave counsel ... that the corn should be given out gratis, as they used to do in cities of Greece, where the people had more absolute power: did but only nourish their disobedience ..., to the utter ruin ... of the whole state. --245</td>
<td>Whoever gave that counsel to give forth The corn o’th’ storehouse gratis, as ’twas used Sometime in Greece— ... Though there the people had more absolute power, I say they nourished disobedience, fed The ruin of the state.--3.1.116-21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### North’s Plutarch’s Lives

they will not think it is done in **recompense** of their **service** past, sithence **they know well** enough **they** have so oft refused to go to the **wars**, when **they** were commanded, neither for their **mutinies** … whereby they have rebelled and forsaken their country; neither for their **accusations** which ... **they** have … **made** good against the **Senate** --245-46

### Shakespeare’s Coriolanus

… **They know** the corn Was not our **recompense**, resting **well** assured That ne’er did **service** for’t. Being pressed to the **war**, … **They** would not thread the gates. … **Their mutinies** and revolts, wherein they showed Most valor, spoke not for them. **Th’accusation** Which they have often **made** against the **Senate** --3.1.123-31

Whereupon **Sicinius** … commanded the **Aediles** to apprehend **him**, and **carry** **him** straight to the **rock Tarpeian**, and to **cast** **him** headlong down the same. When the **Aediles** came to **lay hands upon** **Martius** to do that they were commanded … **the noble** men … began to cry aloud, “**Help Martius!”**

--247

### [Coriolanus] Martius unmuffed himself …

If thou knowest me not yet, Tullus, and seeing me, dost not perhaps believe **me** to be the **man I am** …, I must of **necessity** bewray **myself** --249

### [Coriolanus:] (unmuffling)

If, Tullus, Not yet thou know’st me, and, seeing me, dost not Think **me** for the **man I am, necessity** Commands **me** name **myself**.--4.5.59-62
I am **Caius Martius**, who hath done to thy self particularly and to all the Volsces … great hurt and mischief, which I cannot deny for **my surname of Coriolanus** that I bear. For I never had other benefit nor recompense of all the true and **painful service** I have done and the **extreme dangers** I have been in. **But** this only surname; a good memory, and witness of the malice and displeasure thou shouldst bear me: indeed the name only remaineth. --249

My name is **Caius Martius**, who hath done to thee particularly and to all the Volsces Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may My surname, Coriolanus. The painful service, The **extreme dangers**, and the drops of blood Shed for my thankless country are requited But with that surname—a good memory, And witness of the malice and displeasure Which thou shouldst bear me. Only that name remains. --4.5.70-78

**The envy and cruelty of the people** of Rome have taken from me, by the sufferance of the dastardly nobility and magistrates, who have forsaken me and let me be banished by the people --249

**The cruelty and envy of the people**, Permitted by our dastard nobles, who Have all forsook me, hath devoured the rest, And suffered me by th’ voice of slaves to be Whooped out of Rome. --4.5.79-83

**This extremity** hath now driven me … to thy chimney hearth, not of any hope I have to save my life thereby. For if I had feared death, I would not have come hither --249

… Now this extremity Hath brought me to thy hearth; not out of hope— / Mistake me not— to save my life, for if I had feared death … I would have ’voided thee --4.5.83-87

**but** pricked forward with spite and desire I have to be revenged of them that thus have banished me … putting my person between thy enemies. Wherefore, if thou hast any heart to be wrecked of the injuries thy enemies have done thee--249-50

… but in mere spite, To be full quit of those my banishers, Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast A heart of wreak in thee, that wilt revenge Thine own particular wrongs --4.5.87-91
speed thee now, 
and let my misery serve thy turn, and so use it 
as my service may be a 
benefit to the Volsces … And if it be so 
that thou dare not, and that thou art weary 
to prove fortune any more: 
then am I also 
weary to live any longer. 
--250

… speed thee straight 
And make my misery serve thy turn. So use it 
That my revengeful services may prove 
As benefits to thee, … / But if so be 
Thou dar’st not this, and that to prove 
more fortunes 
Thou’rt tired, then, in a word, I also am 
Longer to live most weary 
--4.5.92-100

[Volumnia:] 
If we held our peace (my son) 
and determined not to speak, 
the state of our poor bodies and … our 
raiment would easily bewray to thee what 
life we have led at home, since thy exile 
(256)

Volumnia: 
Should we be silent 
and not speak, our raiment 
And state of bodies 
would bewray what life 
We have led since thy exile (5.3.94-96)

if I cannot persuade thee rather to 
do good unto both parties than to overthrow 
and destroy the one … thou shalt see, my 
son, and trust unto it, thou shalt no sooner 
march forward to assault thy country but 
thy foot shall tread 
upon thy mother’s womb 
that brought thee first into this world. 
--257

… If I cannot persuade thee 
Rather to show a noble grace to both parts 
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner 
March to assault thy country than to tread— / Trust to’, thou shalt not— 
on thy mother’s womb 
That brought thee to this world. 
--5.3.120-25
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shakespeare Writings</th>
<th>Why dost thou not answer me?</th>
<th>Why dost not speak?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dost thou take it honorable for a nobleman, to remember wrongs?</td>
<td>Think’st thou it honorable for a nobleman Still to remember wrongs? ...</td>
<td>There’s no man in the world More bound to ’s mother, ... Thou hast never in thy life Showed thy dear mother any courtesy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No man living is more bound to show himself thankful ... thou hast not hitherto showed thy poor mother any courtesy.</td>
<td>--257</td>
<td>--5.3.153-55, 158-61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Coriolanus:]</th>
<th>Coriolanus: O mother, mother! What have you done? ... Oh, my mother, mother! Oh! You have won a happy victory to Rome; But for your son ... / most mortal to him.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oh mother, what have you done to me? oh mother, ... you have won a happy victory for your country, but mortal and unhappy for your son</td>
<td>Coriolanus: O mother, mother! What have you done? ... Oh, my mother, mother! Oh! You have won a happy victory to Rome; But for your son ... / most mortal to him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--257</td>
<td>--5.3.182-89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| the next morning he dislodged, and marched homewards into the Volscies country again... there was not a temple in the city but was presently set open, and full of men, wearing garlands of flowers upon their heads, sacrificing to the gods, as they were wont to do upon the news of some great obtained victory. And this common joy was yet more manifestly shewed by ... the Senate [which] ordained that the magistrates to gratify and honour these ladies... would build a temple of Fortune of the women --257-8 with a world of trumpets, hautboys --563 neither with trumpets nor hautboys, but with great kettle drums --616 psalterions, flutes and hautboys, --980 | Sicinius Velutus. What's the news? Second Messenger. Good news, good news; the ladies have prevail'd, The Volscians are dislodged, and Coriolanus gone: A merrier day did never yet greet Rome... (Trumpets; hautboys; drums beat; all together) The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries… This is good news: I will go meet the ladies… Hark, how they joy! --5.4.539-57 Praise the gods, And make triumphant fires; strew flowers before them. --5.5.2.3 Ladies, you deserve To have a temple built you --5.3.206-7 |
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<tr>
<th>North’s <em>Plutarch’s Lives</em></th>
<th>Shakespeare’s <em>Antony and Cleopatra</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleopatra … laid herself down upon a mattress or flockbed, which Apollodorus, her friend, tied and bound up together like a bundle … and so took her upon his back and brought her thus hampered in this fardel unto Caesar.</td>
<td>And I have heard, Apollodorus carried … A certain queen to Caesar in a mattress. --2.6.70, 72</td>
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<td>---786</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>North’s <em>Plutarch’s Lives</em></th>
<th>Shakespeare’s Plays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caesar … only wrote three words unto Anitius at Rome: “Veni, Vedi, Vici,” to wit, “I came, I saw, I overcame”</td>
<td>I may justly say, with the hook-nosed fellow of Rome, “I came, saw, and overcame” --2 Henry IV 4.3.40-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“He came, saw, and overcame.” He came, one; saw, two; overcame, three. --Love’s Labor’s Lost 4.1.70-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caesar’s thrasonical brag of “I came, saw, and overcame.” --As You Like It 5.2.30-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caesar … made not here his brag Of “Came and saw and “overcame.” --Cymbeline 3.1.23-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---787</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>North’s <em>Plutarch’s Lives</em></th>
<th>Shakespeare’s <em>Julius Caesar</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thereupon also Caesar … tearing open his doublet … he cried out aloud to his friends that his throat was ready to offer to any man that would come and cut it.</td>
<td>he plucked me ope his doublet and offered them his throat to cut. --1.2.264-66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At that time, the feast Lupercalia was celebrated ... young men ... run naked through the city ... And many noble women, and gentle women also, go of purpose to stand in their way, and do put forth their hands to be stricken ... persuading themselves that ... being barren, that it will make them to conceive with child ... Antonius who was Consul at that time, was one of them that ran this holy course.

---791-92

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men were seen going up and down in fire ... also these solitary birds to be seen at noondays sitting in the great market place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men all in fire walk up and down the streets. And yesterday the bird of night did sit Even at noonday upon the marketplace</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>there was a slave of the soldiers that did cast a marvelous burning flame out of his hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A common slave—you know him well by sight Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>there was a certain Soothsayer that had given Caesar warning long time afore, to take heed of ... the Ides of March ... That day being come, Caesar going unto the Senate house, and speaking merrily to the Soothsayer, told him, “the Ides of March be come.” “so be they,” softly answered the Soothsayer, “but yet are they not past.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soothsayer: Beware the ides of March. Caesar: What man is that? Brutus: A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March. (1.2.18-19) Caesar: The ides of March are come. Soothsayer: Ay, Caesar, but not gone.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
when he heard his wife **Calpurnia**, being fast a **sleep**, weep and sigh, and put forth many fumbling lamentable speeches. For she dreamed that **Caesar** was slain, and that she had him in her arms …

Insomuch that **Caesar** rising in the morning, she prayed him if it were possible, **not to go out of the doors that day** …

And if that he made no reckoning of her dream, yet that he would search further of the **Soothsayers** by their **sacrifices**

---793

**Caesar** [him]self also doing sacrifice unto **the gods found** that one of the **beasts** which was sacrificed had **no heart**, and that was a strange thing in nature—how a beast could live **without a heart**

---793

**Decius Brutus** … laughed the **Soothsayers** to scorn, and reproved **Caesar**, saying: that he gave the **Senate** occasion to mislike with him, and that they might think he **mocked** them … And furthermore, that if any man should tell them from him, they should depart for that present **time**, and return again **when Calpurnia** should have **better dreams**: what would his enemies and ill willers **say**?

---793

**Decius Brutus**: I have, when you have heard what I can say;

And know it now. **The Senate** have concluded

To give this **day a crown to mighty Caesar**. …

Besides, it were a **mock**

Apt to be rendered for someone to **say**

“Break up the Senate till another **time**

**When Caesar’s wife** shall meet with **better dreams.”**

---2.2.92-99

Indeed, they say **the senators** tomorrow

Caesar: Thrice hath **Calpurnia** in her **sleep** cried out,

“Help, ho, they murder **Caesar!”**—Who’s within?

Servant: My lord?

Caesar: Go bid the **priests do present sacrifice**

And bring me their opinions of success.

Servant: I will, my lord.

Calpurnia: What mean you, **Caesar**? Think you to walk forth?

You shall **not** stir **out of your house** today.

---2.2.2-9

Servant: Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,

They could **not find a heart within the beast**.

**Caesar**: The **gods** do this in shame of cowardice.

**Caesar** should be a **beast without a heart**

---2.2.39-42
the Senate … [was] ready willingly to grant him all things, and to proclaim him king of all the provinces of the Empire of Rome out of Italy, and that he should wear his diadem in all other places, both by sea and land.

--793

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s Plutarch’s Lives</th>
<th>Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to see Antonius …</td>
<td>Antony …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that was brought up in all fineness and superfluity … drink puddle water … it is reported that even as they passed the Alps, they did eat the barks of trees, and such beasts, as never man tasted of their flesh before. --978</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Though daintily brought up, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thou didst drink … / the gilded puddle … The barks of trees thou browsèd. On the Alps It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh --1.4.56, 61-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the poop whereof was of gold, the sails of purple …, the oars of silver… kept stroke … after… the music of the flutes … for the person of herself: She was laid under a pavilion of cloth of gold of tissue … attired like the Goddess Venus commonly drawn in picture … on either hand of her, pretty fair boys appareled as … Cupid, with little fans in their hands --981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The poop was beaten gold; Purple the sails, … The oars were silver, Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke … For her own person … she did lie In her pavilion—cloth-of-gold of tissue—O’erpicturing that Venus where we see The fancy outwork nature. On each side her Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids, With divers-colored fans --2.2.202-13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight wild boars roasted whole … and … not many guests, nor above twelve in all --982</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight wild boars roasted whole at a breakfast, and but twelve persons there --2.2.189-90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean to establish Caesar as a king. And he shall wear his crown by sea and land In every place save here in Italy --1.3.85-88
| **Labienus** conquered all **Asia with** the army of the **Parthians, from** the river of **Euphrates**, and **from Syria**, unto the countries of **Lydia and Ionia.** | **… Labienus—**  
**… hath,** with his **Parthian force**  
**Extended Asia; from Euphrates**  
**… from Syria**  
**To Lydia and to Ionia**  
--1.2.105-109 |
|---|---|
| [On Pompey’s and Antony’s bargain]  
They had agreed that … **Pompeius** should have **Sicily** and **Sardinia,** with this condition: he should **rid the sea of** … **pirates,** …, **send** a certain of **wheat to Rome** | [Pompey, on his bargain with Antony]  
**… You have made me offer**  
**Of Sicily, Sardinia; and I must**  
**Rid all the sea of pirates; then, to send**  
**Measures of wheat to Rome.**  
--2.6.34-37 |
| [Pompey and Antony, after the bargain]  
one of them did **feast another,** and **drew** cuts **who** should **begin.** | [Pompey and Antony, after the bargain]  
**We’ll feast each other ere we part,** and let’s **Draw lots who shall begin.**  
--2.6.60-61 |
| **Pompey** … answered him:  
“**Thou shouldst have done** it  
and never **have** told it me.”  
--984 | **Pompey:** … this **thou shouldst have done,**  
And not **have** spoke on’t.  
--2.7.74-75 |
| a **soothsayer** … told **Antonius** plainly, that his **fortune** (which of itself was excellent good, and very great) was altogether blemished and obscured by **Caesar’s fortune.**  
and **therefore** he counselled him utterly to leave his company … For **thy demon, said he** (that is to say, the good **angel and spirit** that keepeth thee), … **being courageous and high** when he **is** alone, **becometh fearful** and timorous when he cometh **near** | **Antony:** Say to me,  
whose **fortunes** shall rise higher,  
**Caesar’s** or mine?  
**Soothsayer:** **Caesar’s.**  
**Therefore,** **O Antony,** stay not by his side.  
**Thy demon—that thy spirit which keeps thee—is**  
Noble, **courageous, high** unmatchable,  
Where Caesar’s **is** not; but **near** him thy **angel**  
**Becomes afeard**  
--2.3.16-23 |
| the events ensuing proved the Egyptian’s words **true** | **Soothsayer:** If thou dost play with him at any game, Thou art sure to **lose**; … 
Antony: He hath spoken **true**. The very **dice** obey him, / … If we **draw** lots, he speeds; His **cocks** do win the battle still of mine 
When it is all to naught, and his **quails** ever Beat mine  |
| --- | --- |
| For, it is said, that as often as they two **drew** cuts … or whether they played at **dice**, **Antonius always lost**. … 
**Caesar’s cocks or quails did ever** overcome. | **--985** |
| **in the show place,**  
**where** young men do **exercise** …  
he called the **sons** … **the kings of kings,**  
and gave **Alexander … Armenia, Media, and Parthia;** and unto **Ptolemy** for his portion, **Phoenicia, Syria, and Cilicia.** | **I’th’ common showplace,**  
**where** they **exercise.**  
His **sons he** there proclaimed **the kings of kings:** / Great **Media, Parthia, and Armenia**  
He gave to **Alexander; to Ptolemy** he **assigned**  
**Syria, Cilicia, and Phoenicia**  |
| **--996** | **--3.6.12-16** |
| The chiefest points of **his accusations** …  
were these: **that having spoiled** 
**Sextus Pompeius in Sicily,** he did **not** give him  
his **part of the isle.** | The people … have now received  
**His accusations. / … that, having in Sicily**  
**Sextus Pompeius spoiled,** we had **not** rated him  
**His part o’th’isle.**  |
| **--996** | **--3.6.23-27** |
| Caesar said … **that** they that should make **war**  
with them should be … **Eunuch Photinus** and Iras, a woman of Cleopatra’s bed chamber | … and ’tis **said** in Rome  
**That Photinus,** an **eunuch,** and your maids Manage this **war.**  |
| **--998** | **--3.7.13-15** |
And had with him … these kings and subjects following:

- Bocchus, king of Libya;
- Archelaus, king of Cappadocia;
- Philadelphus, king of Paphlagonia;
- Mithridates, king of Comagene and Adallas;
- King of Thracia …
- Polemon, king of Pont;
- Manchus, king of Arabia;
- Herodes, king of Jewry; and …
- Amyntas, king of Lycaonia …
- and the king of Medes

---999

The kings o’th’earth for war. He hath assembled

- Bocchus, the King of Libya;
- Archelaus, Of Cappadocia;
- Philadelphos, King Of Paphlagonia;
- the Thracian king, Adallas;
- King Manchus of Arabia; King of Pont;
- Herod of Jewry; Mithridates, King Of Comagene;
- Polemon and Amyntas,
- The Kings of Mede and Lycaonia

---3.6.70-77

Caesar had quickly passed the sea Ionium and taken … Toryne.

---999

He could so quickly cut the Ionian sea
And take in Toryne?

---3.7.22-23

fight a battle with him in … Pharsalia
as Julius Caesar and Pompey had done before

---999

… wage this battle at Pharsalia,
Where Caesar fought with Pompey.

---3.7.32-33

for lack of water men, his Captains did press by force all sorts of men out of Greece that they could take up in the field, as travelers, muleteers, reapers, harvest men, and young boys … But on the contrary side Caesar’s ships were … light of yarage, armed and furnished with water men as many as they needed

---999

Your ships are not well manned;
Your mariners are muleteers, reapers, people Engrossed by swift impress. In Caesar’s fleet Are those that often have ’gainst Pompey fought;
Their ships are yare, yours heavy.

---3.7.35-39

[Soldier]:
O, noble emperor, how cometh …
you trust to these vile brittle ships?
Do you mistrust

Soldier:
O noble Emperor, do not fight by sea;
Trust not to rotten planks.
Do you misdoubt
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s Plutarch’s Lives</th>
<th>Shakespeare’s Timon of Athens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **these wounds of mine and this sword?**  
Let the Egyptians  
and Phoenicians fight by sea, and set us  
on the mainland, where we use to conquer,  
or to be slain on our feet  
--1000 | **This sword and these my wounds?**  
Let th’Egyptians  
And the Phoenicians go a-ducking; we  
Have used to conquer standing on the earth,  
And fighting foot to foot.  
--3.7.62-67 |
| **had nineteen legions whole by land**  
and twelve thousand horsemen  
--1002 | **Our nineteen legions thou shalt hold by land,**  
**And our twelve thousand horse**  
--3.7.58-59 |
| **My Lords of Athens: I have a little yard in my house where there groweth a fig tree, on the which many citizens have hanged themselves and because I mean to make some building upon the place, I thought good to let you all understand it, that before the fig tree be cut down, if any of you be desperate, you may there in time go hang yourselves.**  
--1003 | **I have a tree which grows here in my close, That mine own use invites me to cut down, And shortly must I fell it. Tell my friends, Tell Athens, …  
… that whoso please**  
To stop affliction, let him take his haste,  
Come hither ere my tree hath felt the ax,  
And hang himself.  
--5.1.204-11 |
| **Here lies a wretched corse,  
of wretched soul bereft.  
Seek not my name. A plague consume you wicked wretches left.**  
--1003 | **“Here lies a wretched corpse,  
of wretched soul bereft.  
Seek not my name. A plague consume you wicked caitiffs left!”**  
--5.4.70-71 |
| **Here lie I Timon who, alive,  
all living men did hate.  
Pass by and curse thy fill,  
but pass and stay not here thy gait.**  
--1003 | **Here lie I, Timon, who, alive,  
all living men did hate.  
Pass by and curse thy fill,  
but pass and stay not here thy gait.**  
--5.4.70-71 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s <em>Plutarch’s Lives</em></th>
<th>Shakespeare’s <em>Antony and Cleopatra</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **[Antony:]**
  thou hast
  **Hipparchus** … **my enfranchised bondmen**
  with thee: **hang** him if thou wilt, or **whip** him
  **at thy pleasure**  
  --1005 | **Antony:**
  … **he has**
  **Hipparchus, my enfranchèd bondman,**
  whom / He may **at pleasure whip, or hang,**
  or torture
  --3.13.151-53 |
| **[Caesar’s response to Antony’s challenge to personal combat]**
  **Antonius** sent again to challenge **Caesar** …
  **hand** to **hand. Caesar** answered him that
  he **had many other ways to die.**  
  --1005 | **[Caesar’s response to Antony’s challenge to personal combat]**
  He … dares me to personal combat,
  **Caesar to Antony.** Let the old ruffian know
  I **have many other ways to die**  
  --4.1.3-5 |
| **[Antony, on his last supper]**
  He commanded his … **household servants** that
  they should fill his **cups** full
  **and make** … **much of him.**
  “You know not whether … **tomorrow**
  you shall serve another master.”  
  --1005 | **[Antony, on his last supper]**
  Call forth my **household servants.** …
  Scant not my **cups,**
  and **make** … **much of me …**
  … **Perchance tomorrow**
  **You’ll serve another master.**
  --4.2.10, 22, 28-29 |
| he went to set those few **footmen** he had in
  **order upon the hills adjoining unto the city,**
  and there he stoode to behold his galleys which
  departed from **the haven**  
  --1006 | But this it is: **our foot**
  **Upon the hills adjoining to the city**
  Shall stay with us—**order** for sea is given;
  They have put forth **the haven**
  --4.10.4-7 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antony on his weakness</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am indeed condemned to be judged of less courage and noble mind than a woman.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I … / condemn myself to lack The courage of a woman—less noble mind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--1006</td>
<td>--4.14.57-60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| O noble Eros …, it is valiantly done … to show me what I should … which thou couldst not |
| Thou teachest me, O valiant Eros, what I should, and thou couldst not. |
| --1006 | --4.14.96-97 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antony’s dying speech to Cleopatra</th>
<th>Antony’s dying speech to Cleopatra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She should trust Proculeius above any … about Caesar …</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None about Caesar trust but Proculeius. …</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she should not lament nor sorrow for the miserable change of his fortune at the end … but … should think him the more fortunate, for the former triumphs …</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The miserable change now at my end Lament nor sorrow at, but please your thoughts In feeding them with those my former fortunes, Wherein I lived the greatest prince o’th’world, The noblest; and do now not basely die, Not cowardly … [but]—a Roman by a Roman / Valiantly vanquished.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--1006-1007</td>
<td>--4.15.50-60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| [Proculeius]: be of good cheer; and not be afraid to refer all unto Caesar |
| [Proculeius]: do thyself great wrong |
| Proculeius: … Be of good cheer; … Fear nothing. Make your full reference freely to my lord, … |
| Charmian: O, poor Cleopatra, thou art taken. … [Proculeius]: thou shalt do thyself great wrong |
| Charmian: Oh, Cleopatra! Thou art taken, Queen. … |
| --1007 | --5.2.21-23, 36, 39 |
| [Cleopatra] said: | Cleopatra: |
| O Caesar, is not this a great shame … | Oh, Caesar, what a wounding shame is this, |
| that thou having vouchsafed to … come unto me, | That thou vouchsafing here to visit me, |
| hast done me this honor—poor wretch | Doing the honor of thy lordliness |
| and caitiff creature—that mine own servants | To one so meek, that mine own servant |
| should come now to accuse me | should |
| --1008-1009 | Parcel the sum of my disgraces |
| --5.2.158-62 | --1009 |

| I have reserved some jewels and trifles …, | That I some lady trifles have reserved … |
| but not … to set out myself withal, | As we greet modern friends withal, and say |
| but meaning to give some pretty … gifts unto | Some nobler token I have kept apart |
| Octavia and Livia | For Livia and Octavia |
| --1009 | --5.2.164-68 |

| Caesar [is] determined to take his journey | … Caesar through Syria |
| through Syria, and that within three days | Intends his journey, and within three days |
| he would send her away before with her | You with your children will he send before. |
| children. | --5.2.200-202 |
| --1009 | --5.2.200-202 |

| [Guard]: | First Guard: |
| Is that well done, Charmion? | … Charmion? Is this well done? |
| [Charmion]: | Charmion: |
| Very well … and meet for a Princess | It is well done, and fitting for a princess |
| descended … of so many noble kings. | Descended of so many royal kings. |
| --1009 | --5.2.325-27 |

<p>| her other woman called Charmion half dead, | This Charmion lived but now; she stood and spake. / I found her trimming up the diadem |
| and trembling, trimming the Diadem which | On her dead mistress; tremblingly she stood, |
| Cleopatra wear upon her head. … She said no | And on the sudden dropped. |
| more but fell down hard by the bed. | --5.2.341-44 |
| --1009-10 | --5.2.341-44 |</p>
<table>
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<th>Shakespeare’s <em>Julius Caesar</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>[Brutus:]</strong></td>
<td><strong>Brutus:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Ligarius, in what a time art thou sick!</td>
<td>Oh, what a time have you chose … … Would you were not sick!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>[Ligarius:]</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ligarius:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brutus … if thou hast any great enterprise in hand worthy of thyself, I am whole.</td>
<td>I am not sick, if Brutus have in hand Any exploit worthy the name of honor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--1059</td>
<td>--2.1.315-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he bequeathed unto every Citizen of Rome, 75 drachmas a man,</td>
<td>To every Roman citizen he gives,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and that he left his gardens</td>
<td>To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and arbors unto the people, which he had on this side of the river of Tiber.</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--1064</td>
<td>Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>His private arbors, and new-planted orchards,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>On this side Tiber</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--3.2.242-43, 248-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Octavius Caesar, Antony, and Lepidus … did set up bills of proscription and outlawry,</strong></td>
<td>That by proscription and bills of outlawry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condemning two hundred … to death</td>
<td><strong>Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--1067</td>
<td>Have put to death an hundred senators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--4.3.172-74</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brutus … did</strong></td>
<td><strong>[Cassius]:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>condemn and noted Lucius Pella …</td>
<td>You have condemned and noted Lucius Pella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brutus</strong> answered,</td>
<td><strong>[Brutus:]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Remember the Ides of March.”</td>
<td>Remember March, the ides of March remember.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--1071</td>
<td>--4.3.2, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>[Ghost:]</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ghost:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am thy evil spirit, Brutus, and thou shalt see me by the city of Philippi</td>
<td>Thy evil spirit, Brutus. … / … thou shalt see me at Philippi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>[Brutus:]</strong></td>
<td>Brutus:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well, then I shall see thee again. --1072</td>
<td>Well; then I shall see thee again? --4.3.284-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Cassius** began to speak first, and said:  
“The gods grant us, O Brutus, that this day we may win the field and ever after to live all the rest of our life quietly.  
But sith … the greatest and chiepest things among men are most uncertain, and that, if the battle fall out otherwise …, we shall hardly meet again, what are thou then determined to do?”  
--1073-74 | **Cassius**: Now, most noble Brutus,  
The gods today stand friendly, that we may, Lovers in peace, lead on our days to age!  
But since the affairs of men rest still uncertain  
Let’s reason with the worst that may befall.  
If we do lose this battle, then is this  
The very last time we shall speak together.  
What are you then determined to do?  
--5.1.96-103 |
| **Brutus** answered …  
“a certain rule of Philosophy,  
by the which I did greatly blame and reprove Catō for killing of himself”  
--1074 | **Brutus**:  
Even by the rule of that philosophy  
By which I did blame Cato for the death  
Which he did give himself  
--5.1.104-106 |
| **Cassius** … saw also a great troop of horsemen, whom Brutus sent to aide him, and thought that they were his enemies that followed him: but yet he sent Titinius … to go and know what they were. Brutus’s horsemen … shouted out for joy: and they that were familiarly acquainted with him, lighted from their horses and went and embraced him. The rest compassed him in round about a horseback, … so that they made all the field ring again for joy. But this marred all. For Cassius thinking indeed that Titinius was taken of the enemies, he then spake these words:  
“desiring too much to live, I have lived  
--1075 | **Cassius**: Titinius … / [ride] thee up to yonder troops / And here again, that I may rest assured  
Whether yond troops are friend or enemy. …  
Pindarus: Titinius is enclosed round about  
With horsemen, that make to him on the spur,  
Yet he spurs on. Now they are almost on him.  
Now, Titinius! Now some light. Oh, he Lights too.  
He’s ta’en.  
And hark! They shout for joy. …  
**Cassius**: Oh, coward that I am, to live so long
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thomas North’s Writings in the Shakespeare Canon—82</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **to see one of my best friends taken …**  
  **before my face.**  
  --1075 | **To see my best friend ta’en**  
  **before my face!**  
  --5.3.14-18, 28-35 |
| **[Brutus on the death of Cassius]**  
  **The last of all the Romans,**  
  **being impossible that Rome**  
  **should ever breed** again so noble … **a man** …  
  **his body** to be … **sent** … **to the city of Thasos**  
  … **lest his funerals** within the **camp**  
  **should cause great disorder.**  
  --1076 | **[Brutus on the death of Cassius]**  
  **The last of all the Romans,** **fare thee well!**  
  **It is impossible that ever Rome**  
  **Should breed thy fellow. …**  
  … **to Thasos send his body.**  
  **His funerals** shall not be **in** our **camp,**  
  **Lest** it discomfort us.  
  --5.3.99-106 |
| **[Lucilius:]**  
  **Antonius,**  
  **I dare assure thee, that no enemy …**  
  **shall take** Marcus Brutus alive:  
  and I beseech **God** keep **him from** that fortune.  
  For wheresoever he be **found,** **alive or dead,**  
  **he will be found like himself.**  
  --1079 | **Lucilius:**  
  … **Antony …**  
  I dare assure thee that no enemy  
  **Shall ever take alive** the noble Brutus.  
  The **gods** defend **him from** so great a shame!  
  When you do **find** him, or **alive or dead,**  
  **He will be found like** Brutus, **like himself.**  
  --5.4.20-25 |
| **[Antony:]**  
  **but I do assure you,** **you**  
  **have taken a better booty. …**  
  For **I had rather have**  
  **such men my friends … than enemies.**  
  --1079 | **Antony:**  
  … **but, I assure you,**  
  **A prize no less in worth. …**  
  … **I had rather have**  
  **Such men my friends than enemies.**  
  --5.4.26-29 |
Part II: The Smoking Guns

In the *Shakespeare Survey* 67 article of 2014, June Schlueter and I focused exclusively on the facts of North’s life in the late 1550s to early 1560s, including his work on the most recent translation at that time—*The Dial of Princes*—to confirm his original authorship of *Titus and Vespasian* (1561), the source-play for Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*. All the facts detailed in that paper pertained to one discrete period of North’s life, yet they were sufficient to make the case for his original authorship of that play.

What we did not point out in the paper, however, is that we could have provided a similar series of compelling arguments for essentially every play in the canon, each focusing on a particular time period of North’s life, and showing how he used personal events from that year and material from his latest travels, writings, and studies to create the play. This evidence is mutually reinforcing and thoroughly comprehensive.

Still, within this ocean of facts, some pieces of evidence are so compelling that, even when examined in isolation, they confirm North’s original authorship of a particular source-play beyond all reasonable doubt. With these facts, one need not consider the evidence in toto. One does not have to examine the hundreds of Shakespearean passages that derive from North’s translations, or know about the satires that discuss Shakespeare’s use of North’s source-plays, or understand the details of North’s biography, including his work with Leicester’s Men, or discover how he based the plays on the events of his life. With these particular facts, a few of which will be discussed in the next three chapters, you really need to know nothing else; they are probative in and of themselves. These are the smoking guns.
Chapter 4

Borrowings From North’s Unpublished Travel-Journal

In Thomas North’s 1555 Travel Journal: From Italy to Shakespeare (2021), June Schlueter and I explore a newly rediscovered journal that the 20-year-old North kept during his trip to Rome. The young translating playwright had travelled with an embassy sent by the Catholic Queen Mary, who had wanted a formal reconciliation of England with the pope. North then used the experiences he documented in his travel diary to help him write early versions of his very first plays, Henry VIII and The Winter’s Tale, sometime between 1555 and 1557. In fact, his trip, and especially his stay in Mantua, was a kind of Winter’s Tale and included the same unreal and fanciful images that have been captivating audiences of the play for centuries. Quoting from the book:

… North’s journal gives us a new perspective on The Winter’s Tale, for all of the play’s mysterious and wondrous exotica, from its strange settings to its striking visuals, derive from North’s trip to Rome and the circumstances surrounding them. This includes the far-flung settings of Bohemia and Sicily and the Kings that rule them; a Catholic trickster trying to con crowds with fake relics; a very honest Camillo; a pastoral feast with the goddess Flora handing out flowers; Apollo dressed as a shepherd; and a dance of satyrs. Indeed, everything that makes The Winter’s Tale seem dreamlike and otherworldly comes from North’s remarkable journey. We even find the origins of the lifelike statue of Giulio Romano, the only Renaissance artist mentioned by name in the canon, as well as the scene of Perdita kneeling and praying before the saintly statue of her dead mother, Hermione, just moments before she comes back to life. Finally, North’s journal confirms that The Winter’s Tale is an historical allegory and the story that it relates is true.

The young North wrote Henry VIII and The Winter’s Tale to please the Catholic high-ups of Mary’s reign, and we show how each is really an homage to the Queen, deifying her Catholic mother, Katherine, and romanticizing Mary’s efforts at counter-reformation.

While Thomas North’s 1555 Travel Journal examines all the extensive borrowings connecting the journal to these plays, we will look at one example here, which should be sufficient to prove the diary’s use by the original playwright. As shown below, both North’s journal and Henry VIII juxtapose eerily similar descriptions of two distinctive events: cardinals in a procession, with crosses and pillars borne before them, and the very specific seating arrangements of a
consistory, with His Holiness or Majesty seated in a high chair in the center and the cardinals and bishops sitting below and on either side.
North’s Journal

first, the officers of his household, …

**_after them_** followed two, **_carrying each of them_** a miter, and **_two officers next them with_** silver rods in their hands;

**_Then the cardinals, having a cross borne before them, and every cardinal his several pillar borne next before himself;_**

**_after them_** cometh the pope’s holiness

--June 12

(Margin: The lords repair to the court)
The pope sat in the conclave (or consistory), where he was chosen in a great high chair …

**The cardinals sat upon benches within the rails, round about the pope’s holiness, the bishops underneath them, and the pope’s servants lay upon the ground.**

--June 10

Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII*

Enter **two Vergers, with short silver wands;**

next them **two scribes …**

**after them … Canterbury alone; …**

next them, **with some small distance, follows a Gentleman bearing … a cardinal’s hat;**

then **two Priests, bearing each a silver cross …**

then **two Gentlemen bearing two great silver pillars; after them, side by side, the two cardinals; … The two cardinals sit under him as judges. … The bishops place themselves on each side the court, in manner of a consistory; below them the scribes. The lords sit next the bishops.**

--2.4.0.s.d.

Enter Cardinal Wolsey, the purse **borne before him.**

--1.1.114.s.d.

---

**Isolated Correspondences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s Journal</th>
<th>Shakespeare’s <em>Henry VIII</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>after them</strong></td>
<td><strong>after them</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>next them with</strong></td>
<td><strong>next them with</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>then</strong></td>
<td><strong>then … then</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>after them</strong></td>
<td><strong>after them</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two officers … with <strong>silver rods</strong></td>
<td>**two vergers, with short <strong>silver wands</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>followed two, carrying each of them a</td>
<td>follows … two priests, bearing each a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carrying … a miter [bishop’s hat]</td>
<td>bearing … a cardinal’s hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Then the cardinals, having a cross borne before them, and every cardinal his several pillar borne next before himself, after them…</strong></td>
<td><strong>then two Priests, bearing each a silver cross …</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The lords … the court … consistory …</strong></td>
<td><strong>the court … consistory … the lords</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The cardinals sat … the bishops underneath</strong></td>
<td><strong>The two cardinals sit under … the bishops</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The cardinals, having a cross borne before them

Cardinal Wolsey, the purse borne before him.

--1.1.114.s.d.

The opening lines of North’s journal-entry and the stage direction for Henry VIII both describe two men, whether officers or vergers, with silver rods (or wands) in their hands and men carrying a cardinal’s hat or a bishop’s hat (i.e., a miter). After them and next them with are the introductory adverbial phrases used in these lines. In both journal and play, then is the word that begins the next row, which notes crosses and pillars borne before the cardinals.

Both texts also include a remarkably similar description of a consistory, stressing the precise seating arrangements with the high chair in the center, and the bishops and cardinals sitting on either side and below. They both juxtapose the lords, the court, and consistory. This extended series of parallels is, of course, unique. As noted in Thomas North’s 1555 Travel Journal:

In Henry VIII, the juxtaposition of this coronation-like religious procession with similar descriptions of a consistory was ahistorical, an apparent invention of the playwright: there was no such parade into Katherine’s consistory-like courtroom. So, not surprisingly, both an EEBO and a Google search for other similar descriptions...produces no other results.

As an illustration, a Google search for cardinals AROUND(50) pillars AND consistory AROUND(50) “the court” AROUND(50) “the Lords” yields only Henry VIII (or works quoting Henry VIII) and our book on North’s Journal. 33 In fact, the following is a screenshot of the first page of results:
Thomas North’s Writings in the Shakespeare Canon—88
Perhaps even more astoundingly, even the identical use of the peculiar introductory
adverbial phrases to introduce the rows of marchers in both journal and stage directions—*after
them, next them with, then*—represents a unique verbal fingerprint. Again, a search of both EEBO
and the many trillions of webpages on Google confirms that these are the only two known works
that place *after them* within 30 words of *next them with*. Again, on the first page of results for
Google Books, we find “Thomas North’s 1555 Travel Journal” listed among various editions or
quotes of *Henry VIII*. The same is true for a search of just Google.

However, in the latter case, on one of the pages of results, we seem to find a different
work— a 1778 London publication of *Miscellaneous State Papers*. As it turns out, however, this is
the first known work to publish some of the entries of North’s journal, so that is why it appears
among the search results. The same is true for a 1910 issue of the Catholic journal *The Month,*
which also quotes North’s journal.
As Figure 3 indicates, the only works that juxtapose “after them” and “next them with” are Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII* (or works quoting the history play) and texts that include published excerpts of North’s journal of his trip to Rome.
Finally, the journal provides additional evidence that allows us to reject as an explanation the supposition that Shakespeare (or Fletcher, Shakespeare’s co-author of *Henry VIII*) may have gotten a hold of North’s journal. For North frequently relied on two historical texts—an unpublished manuscript version of George Cavendish’s *Life of Wolsey* (1555-56)\(^{35}\) and chapters on Henry VIII in Edward Hall’s *Union* (1548)—in order to help add knowing details to his journal entries. He even borrowed from Cavendish’s *Life of Wolsey* when crafting the entries describing the cardinal’s procession and consistory. North then took these very same source-passages that he used for his journal and reused them in *Henry VIII*, all the while echoing the language of his journal and modifying the actual historical events so that they more closely resembled his experiences in Italy. He does this at least three times. Quoting *Thomas North’s 1555 Travel Journal*:

The result is that reading various entries throughout the journal gives the surreal impression that North, in 1555, somehow managed to experience the most spectacular events of Shakespeare and Fletcher’s *Henry VIII*.

Even assuming Shakespeare and Fletcher somehow got hold of the unpublished travelogue—and for some reason wanted to reproduce its visuals—we are stuck with the even more important question of “How?” How, without the use of digital technologies, would either have been able to determine what source passages the young journalist had used for his entries—some of which include a mix of widely separated elements—so that they could then make sure to conflate these same passages in their play? They couldn’t. It was North who had carefully studied these scenes in Cavendish’s *Life of Wolsey* and Hall’s *Union*. It was North who, when writing about the fall of Wolsey in the play, conflated the language and visuals of his own journal with the historical events he was staging. And it is North’s play, now lost, that is the missing link between his journal and the *Henry VIII* play that Shakespeare and Fletcher co-authored in 1613.
Chapter 5
The Playwright’s Use of Nepos’ Lives Before North Published it

North began translating both the colossal Plutarch’s Lives (1579/80) and Nepos’ Lives (1602) many years before he would eventually sell them to printers. In the interim, North often used the stories and ideas he found in these unpublished translations as source-material for his plays. For example, in the mid-1590s, North decided to use Richard II as a vehicle for discussing the teachings on grief that he found in Nepos’ Lives. This is why the history plays seems practically obsessed with the subject. As Rolf Soellner writes, “Richard II focuses on one passion, grief, and makes it the prime mover of tragic sympathy … Grief imagery penetrates the play.”

Examples of these include the discussions between Bolingbroke and John of Gaunt (1.3), the Queen and Bushy (2.2), Richard II and the Bishop of Carlisle (3.3), and Richard II and Bolingbroke (4.1). These exchanges on sadness share a number of similarities. Several times, one character expresses his or her grief and then another counsels a more stoic attitude. Remarkably, all of these exchanges—both the description of grief and the ascetic solution to overcoming it--derive from the same three pages in Nepos’ Lives, 113-15, appearing in the chapter, “The Life of Seneca.”

That a Shakespeare play includes extensive borrowings from a translation of North is not surprising. As we have seen, everything Shakespeare ever wrote shows a remarkable and persistent fluency with everything North every wrote. But what makes this particular debt especially compelling is that North would not publish Nepos Lives until 1602—five years after the publication of Richard II (1597). In other words, as this chapter shows, the original playwright of Richard II had to have access to North’s personal drafts of chapters of Nepos’ Lives long before they were printed.

A full discussion on all the passages on grief and passion in Richard II is beyond the scope of this essay, but just one example will be sufficient to confirm the playwright’s reliance on North’s text. After giving an account of Seneca’s life, North’s chapter discusses the four causes of an unhappy life, which includes fear of death, pains of the body, psychic torments or “griefs of the soul,” and finally overwhelming passion:

Four things are enemies to that good… The first cause is death, that is to say, the fear and imagination to lose this earthly and corruptible life. For where there is fear…it is not a pleasant life, but a sorrowful life, and a torment of the mind. The second is the bodily grief, lingering diseases… Besides all this, there are the griefs of the soul … If the grief of the body affecteth the rest and contentment of the mind—much more doth the inward grief and anguish. And finally there are passions, as joy and pleasure, which hinder and abolish the feeling of a happy life.
After this listing of griefs, North’s translation then details Seneca’s stoic advice on how to shun these feelings. The playwright, in turn, then uses this list of passions – and the stoic homilies that they precipitate -- as a thematic blueprint for the play, reproducing them in four different exchanges.

In confronting the “griefs of the soul,” North’s chapter observes that it is the result of loss of perspective, plaguing those who “see things as in the water and with a corrupt eye.” Once we gain the proper perspective, we can overcome such griefs. The translation then discusses those whose “inward griefs” are so significant that they would willingly “dissolve the bands of this life,” thus abandoning hope and preferring death.

Remarkably, in Richard II, the exchange between Queen and Bushy (2.2) repeats these same ideas in the same order while frequently using the same language. The Queen first agonizes over the grief of her inward soul. Bushy then offers stoic counseling, explaining such agonies are the result of a loss of perspective, seeing things with a false eye as through the water of tears. The Queen responds that she has now abandoned hope and prefers death, which would gently “dissolve the bands of life.”
North’s *Nepos’ Lives* (1602)

**Griefs of the inward soul, seeing things in water, and dissolving the bands of life**

[Describing grief:] The first cause is death, that is to say, the and *imagination* to lose this earthly and corruptible *life*. For where there is fear…it is not a pleasant life, but a *sorrowful life* and a torment of the mind.

The second is the bodily *grief, lingering* diseases… Besides all this, there are the *griefs of the soul* … If the *grief* of the body affecteth the rest and contentment of the mind—much more doth the *inward grief* and anguish. And finally there are passions, as joy and pleasure, which *hinder* and abolish the feeling of a happy *life*….

to remedy the *griefs* before named …

Seneca … sheweth the wrong which men of understanding do, and the *error* of their *judgment*—who *see things* as in the *water* and with a *corrupt eve*….

---

[*dissolve the bands-of-life addendum*]

**Bushy:** Madam, your majesty is too much sad:

You promised, when you parted with the king,

To lay aside *life*-harming heaviness…

**Queen:** Yet I know no cause

Why I should welcome such a guest as *grief*…

Some unborn *sorrow* ripe in fortune’s womb

Is coming towards me, and my *inward soul*…

---

**Shakespeare’s Richard II** (1597)

**Griefs of the inward soul, seeing things in water, and dissolving the bands of life**

Bushy: Each substance of a *grief* hath twenty *shadows*,

Which shows like *grief* itself, but is not so;

For sorrow’s *eyes*, glazèd with blinding tears,

Divides one *thing* entire to many objects,

Like perspectives, which rightly gazed upon

Show nothing but confusion, *eyed awry*

Distinguish form. So your sweet Majesty,

**Looking awry upon** your lord’s departure,

Find shapes of *grief* more than himself to wail

Which, look’d on as it is, is nought but *shadows*

Of what it is not. Then, thrice-gracious Queen,

… *weep* not. *More’s not seen*.

Or if it be, ’tis with false *sorrow’s eye*,

Which for *things* true weeps *things imaginary*.

---

**Queen:** [dissolve the bands-of-life addendum]

**Who shall hinder** me?

I will *despair*, and be at enmity

With *cozening hope*. *He* is a flatterer,

A parasite, a *keep-er-back of death*

Who gently *would dissolve the bands of life*

**Which* false hope linger*es in extremity.**

--2.2.1-72

---

(113-115)

Envy *looketh awry upon* me (108)
### Isolated Correspondences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sorrowful, life, griefs of the soul, the inward grief</th>
<th>Life, grief, sorrow, my inward soul, grief</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>see things as in the water and with a corrupt eye</td>
<td>eyes, glazèd with blinding tears / Divides one thing … seen … with false sorrow’s eye … things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He would … dissolve the bands of this life, death, keep, which… hope</td>
<td>He … would dissolve the bands of life, keeper, death, which … hope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other content words or phrases from same passages (or chapter*)

| Imagination, lingering, hinder, shadows, Looketh awry upon* | imaginary, lingers, hinder, shadow, looking awry upon |

*looketh wry upon* appears in another stoic speech in the same chapter of Nepos’ Lives (108)

Both passages frequently repeat the word *grief*. It appears seven times in the first 36 lines of this scene in *Richard II*—and seven times in the relevant section of North’s *Nepos Lives* (113-15). As North describes first describes *griefs of the soul* and *the inward grief*, the Queen first describes the *grief* of her *inward soul*. Then, just as North’s Seneca claims that such grief is the result of loss of perspective, affecting those who “see things as in the water and with a corrupt eye,” Bushy responds analogously, again blaming the visual distortions that affect *eyes* that sees *things* through the water of tears. Importantly, both passages are not simply referring to the psychological influence of sadness; rather, they are referring to the physical alteration of vision by water or tears. The playwright even echoes other content-words from these same Northern discussions on grief, including *imagination, lingering, hinder, shadows*. In another stoic speech in this same chapter on the stoic counseling of Seneca, we find: “Envy *looketh awry upon* me” (108) which is also echoed by Bushy: “*Looking awry upon* your lord’s departure.” Nowhere else in the canon does Shakespeare use *look awry* in any form—and nowhere else in the translation does North use the word *awry*.

Finally, the Queen then quotes North’s concluding lines, referring to the abandonment of *hope* among those who would choose *death* and *would dissolve the bands of (this) life*. The Queen is just such an example.
He would have this wise man put himself to death, and of his authority and power **dissolve the bands of this life** … the which would have us keep a steadfast hope and confidence, yea even when things seem to be most desperate.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He would … dissolve the bands of this life, which—hope, keep, death, desperate</th>
<th>Queen: I will despair, and be at enmity With cozening hope. He is a flatterer, A parasite, a keeper-back of death Who gently would dissolve the bands of life Which false hope lingers in extremity. --Richard II 2.2.68-72</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

He … would dissolve the bands of life Which—hope, keeper, death, despair

We can prove with just this parallel alone that the dramatist is following North’s translation. Indeed, EEBO confirms that *dissolve the bands of (this) life* is nearly unique;38 only two other works have something similar, and both are quoting the same little-known prayer. We know the playwright is not working from this obscure prayer as it does not come in a stoic conversation on grief and includes none of the other peculiar echoes. For example, just searching EEBO for the “dissolve the bands of…life” line near death or grief again confirms the uniqueness of the parallel.

The same is true with a Google and Google Books search for “dissolve the bands of” within 20 words of both life and death.39 All results on all the pages are Richard II, excepting a few quotes of North’s Nepos Lives, which had been published under various titles in the nineteenth century. This cannot be a coincidence. It is of course wildly improbable that two writers would independently craft such similar passages on grief, expressing the same distinctive ideas while using the same language, which includes the same peculiar quote.

This particular parallel is especially telling because, as noted, North would not publish Nepos’ Lives till 1602, five years after Shakespeare published Richard II. And one cannot argue that North was, at this point, borrowing from Shakespeare, for, with much of this language, North was carefully following Simon Goulart’s French version of Nepos’ Lives. It is not from the play but from Goulart’s *despestrer des liens de ceste vie*40 that North first got *dissolve the bands of this life*. Similarly, one cannot argue that Shakespeare, himself, was also coincidentally working from Simon Goulart’s French text because the passage repeatedly echoes North’s idiosyncratic word choices. For example, a more likely translation of Goulart’s *despestrer des liens* would have been disentangle or untie the bonds –rather than North’s dissolve the bands. Likewise, North always translated Goulart’s tristesse as grief, not sadness, and interieure as inward, not interior, etc. And in every case, the playwright’s word-choice matched North’s word-choice.
In summary, it is simply impossible to deny that the original author of Richard II was extremely familiar with North’s English translation of the stoic discussions on grief in Nepos Lives – and was familiar with it before North ever published it.

This pic is of the old-EEBO search for the line within 20 words of death.

Figure 4
Chapter 6

North’s Marginalia

On March 29, 1591, Thomas North purchased a used, 1582-edition of his Dial of Princes for 5 shillings, signing the back and dating the purchase—a copy now kept at the Cambridge University Library. Then he began rereading or skimming certain sections, skipping from here to there, underscoring certain lines and passages, and adding various notes in the margins. In the middle of the book, he dates one personal comment as 1592, helping confirm that this used-copy did not just sit for years unopened; he made use of it immediately and continued flipping through it for the next year or so, perhaps longer. North’s commentary and markings are especially important as they confirm that he used this edition as his own personal research-storehouse and workbook for adding new material to his Arden of Feversham and The Taming of the Shrew. North also made use of it during his original penning of Macbeth. Not coincidentally, all three plays relate to fierce and (nearly) indomitable wives.

All three plays also have clear links to the early 1590s. North first wrote Arden of Feversham, the true-crime tragedy about his half-sister, in 1556-8. But it resurfaced again, perhaps with Shakespeare’s theater company, in the late 1580s to early 1590s, clearly influencing other playwrights from that time period, especially Thomas Kyd and John Lyly. It was then first published in 1592. North’s marginalia show indisputable links to this publication, suggesting a final touch-up at this time, especially the addition of certain scenes. Still other evidence suggests North wrote The Taming of the Shrew in 1570 while he was in or near Padua, but then in 1591-2 used his recently purchased Dial to rework it and especially Katherine’s final monologue. A close adaptation of the play, The Taming of a Shrew, was published in 1594.

Finally, North also used this old copy of The Dial to write Macbeth, the witches of which were partly inspired by the Scottish witchcraft trials of 1591. Many of the famous images and scenes involving Lady Macbeth were partly based on the true-life circumstances of Alice Arden. Other plays influenced by North’s highlighted passages include A Comedy of Errors, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Romeo and Juliet, Coriolanus, and Richard II. The extensiveness of this relationship between North’s marginalia and Shakespeare’s plays precludes a thorough discussion here, but the following examples should help serve as a useful introduction.

We can break down North’s markings into three categories. The first comprises normal large-tome marginalia, the same type we see in many texts of similar size. North would write out certain words or phrases in the margin to identify the subject of the passage that it bordered, e.g.,
“Pliny” or “The praise of Demosthenes.” Their purpose, of course, is to facilitate later skimming. North did this mostly in the first of the four “books” (i.e., sections) that comprise *The Dial*.

The translator also frequently made corrections throughout the text. Sometimes, the printer had made a mistake, or North did not like the language he had originally used. So he would cross out the offending text and write out the substitution in the margin. Both types of jottings in a work by North are unsurprising: We also find the same type of corrections and subject-based marginalia in his unpublished journal of his trip to Rome, which he wrote in 1555 at the age of 20.43

The third type of markings, and the ones that are by far the most revealing, are the personal ones: the underlining of certain sentences, vertical marginal lines that emphasized certain passages, his highlighting of certain chapters in the table of contents, and his stressing or writing out of certain quotes or ideas. As opposed to the corrections or normal marginalia, these scribblings help identify what particular quotes and ideas interested North in the early 1590s, which were often the same ones that he then reused in plays adapted by Shakespeare.

North’s note-writing begins early in the book, even in the prologue and table of contents. Importantly, out of 13 pages of table of contents listing 177 chapters, North only adds notes to three of those listed chapter-titles. All three chapters and their titles are relevant to his plays—and two of them, which focus on malicious or unruly women, are chapters especially significant to *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Arden of Feversham*. The first of these chapters (Figure 5a) gives advice, in effect, on how to tame shrews (or *shrowes*, in North’s spelling) and includes passages used for both *Arden* and *Shrew*. The second listed-chapter (Figure 5b) has a subtitle that North underlined and repeated in the margin, which clearly inspired the subtitle he used for *Arden* and also demarcated another important section for both plays.
Figure 5a. Margin: “Rules for married men.” Underlined: “And reciteth also certaine rules for married men, which if they be matched with shrowes [i.e., shrews] & do observe them may cause them [to] live in quiet with their wives.”

Figure 5b. Margin: “The great malice & little pacience of an evil woman” Underlined: Wherein is expressed the great malice and little patience of an evil woman.” (As shown, there is another marginal comment on this page—“Livia”—but that is merely correcting a mistake: “of Libia.”)

The reason North underscored these chapters and these lines is because they were relevant to the plays on which he was currently working.

Let us consider Figure 5b first. North obviously did not underline and then write out this subtitle verbatim in the margin for the sake of some future reader. He was not trying to summarize or draw attention to an adjoining passage. There is no adjoining passage. Indeed, this is why books never have marginalia next to their tables of contents. It would be pointless. North only writes such comments next to three of the 177 chapters in the tables of contents. So it is clear that North wrote this out in the margin for his own edification. His attention for some reason was drawn to this particular chapter, and he especially like the wording of its subtitle.

Why?
One clue is the year in which he wrote it—1591-2. North would also publish *Arden of Feversham* in 1592. The tragedy was about the murder of Thomas Arden by his wife, Alice, and her lover, Thomas Mosby. Alice Arden was actually Thomas’s half-sister; her husband was his brother-in-law, and her accomplice, Mosby, a North family servant. North knew all the people involved in the murder, and evidence suggests he actually first wrote it in the late 1550s. But it seems he also reedited the work for publication in 1592, including reusing the subtitle he noted in the margin. As shown here, he didn’t change it much:

Dial Chapter Subtitle: **Wherein is expressed the great malice and little patience of an evil woman**

Arden Subtitle: **Wherein is shewed the great malice and dissimulation of a wicked woman**

This is not a coincidence. It is essentially the same 13-word line, maintaining the same rhythm throughout, and includes a mere three substituted terms. If you were to search Google and its more than 130 trillion webpages for all known books, essays, blogs, articles, etc., that include something like these two lines, you will only find *The Dial* and *Arden of Feversham*. Indeed, the wording is so peculiar that even if you just search for the shared opening of the subtitle, placing the phrase “wherein is” within 10 words of “the great malice,” you still only get these two results. The following figure shows a screen-capture of this Google search, with a column of text boxes added for clarity:
The same search on EEBO also only yields *The Dial* and *Arden of Feversham*. In other words, as far as it is possible to tell, no one else has ever put those words together—not in the sixteenth
century, not in the seventeenth century, and not since—no one, that is, except for Thomas North and
the author of the tragedy about his half-sister.

And North also requotes this subtitle in the margin of the table of contents in the same year
the play is published.

The underlining in Figure 5a—“certaine rules for married men, which if they be matched
with shrowes [i.e., shrews] & do observe them may cause them [to] live in quiet with their
wives”—also deals with problematic women and certainly seems to recall The Taming of the
Shrew, in which the married men were indeed looking for instructions in how to tame shrews. Also,
the comedy, as it first appears in its first published edition in the First Folio, frequently uses North’s
spelling, shrow. Finally, in The Taming of the Shrew, Baptista says the following about marrying
off his daughter, Katherine, the titular shrow (as she is often called): “The gain I seek is quiet in the
match” (2.1.326). That’s shrow-quiet-match in the context of married men trying to cope with
difficult wives.

Significantly, North also added a number of marginal comments to this particular chapter,
which includes vivid descriptions of troublesome wives and the agonies that they could inflict on
their husbands. He then used these passages for his two plays, Arden of Feversham and Taming of
the Shrew. After all, as Thomas well knew, his half-sister had been the most troublesome wife of
all—far more so than Katherine in Taming of the Shrew.

North’s chapter, which he describes as rules for living in quiet with shrowes, comprises a
series of chapters in which Marcus Aurelius has been having numerous quarrels with his strong-
willed wife, Faustine. This particular chapter begins on 146v—while the listing of the rules begins
on 150r. If you look to the left of 150r, on the page opposite (149v), you will find that North
underlined two ideas and highlighted a passage with a vertical line:
North wrote “of the wife and husband” next to the passage, which begins with an underlined sentence that relates to The Taming of the Shrew (discussed in future work). In the second part, marked by the second vertical line, Aurelius complains that in most instances, religious teachings and concern for reputation are often enough to keep women virtuous. But, he says, “if the fear of the Gods, the infamy of the person, and the speech of men do not restrain the woman, all the chastisements of the world will not make her refrain from vice” (149v).46 Previously, in the beginning of this same chapter, Aurelius counsels Faustine against being “deeply rooted in vices” (147r).47

Thus, in the opening of scene 4 of Arden of Feversham, as Arden talks with his friend Franklin about the uncontrollable Alice, he makes this exact same point about his wife and uses the same language:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s highlighted passage in <em>The Dial</em></th>
<th>Arden, discussing Alice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the fear of the gods, the infamy of the person, and the speech of men do not restrain the woman, all the chastisements of the world will not make her refrain from vice (149v; 232) deeply rooted in vices (147r; 229)</td>
<td>If fear of God or common speech of men… Might join repentance in her wanton thoughts No question then but she would turn the leaf But she is rooted in her wickedness Perverse and stubborn, not to be reclaimed. Good counsel is to her as rain to weeds, And reprehension makes her vice to grow (4.3-12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Isolated Correspondences

| If the fear of the Gods…and the speech of men rooted in vices chastisements… will not make her refrain from vice | If fear of God or common speech of men, rooted in wickedness Reprehension makes her vice to grow |

Clearly, this is a unique parallel. Just an EEBO search for a juxtaposition of fear of God (or fear of the Gods) and speech of men yields no results other than *Arden* and *The Dial*. Even more incredibly, Google also only shows *Arden of Feversham* with no other results. *The Dial* does not turn up because of its archaic spelling—“if the feare of the gods”—whereas *Arden of Feversham* appears because many published editions include modernized spelling. However, when we search for “feare of” within 20 words of “speech of men,” we find only *The Dial of Princes* and two older editions of *Arden of Feversham*.
Moreover, the passages share still other conspicuous resemblances. For example, *chastisement* is a synonym for *reprehension*, and both are followed by *make(s) her…vice*. Each passage also makes the same distinctive point. The playwright has necessarily recalled a passage from North’s translation when writing about North’s half-sister, a passage that North himself had marked in the margins and that appears in a chapter that North had highlighted in the table of contents.

*North’s Marginalia and Suffering Husbands (Arden of Feversham)*

In this same chapter in *The Dial*, if you turn this page over, from 149v to 149r, you find Aurelius’s description of a pained husband: “[lifting up his eyes unto the heavens, fetching a grievous sigh] from the bottom of his [heart], [the husband] said these [words]…” And this is precisely how Franklin describes Arden, and he does so *in the very same scene and exchange* in which the distressed husband, borrowing from 149v, talks about “the fear of God or common speech of men….”
Once again, this is obviously unique. Indeed just a search of EEBO for `word NEAR/10 sigh` `NEAR/10 fetch NEAR/10 grievous` yields 9 records – and North is responsible for five of them: two editions of *The Dial*, one from North’s *Nepos’ Lives*, and two other works quoting North’s *Nepos Lives*. *Arden of Feversham* and three other works have the other examples. When we include *his eyes* and *the heavens*, the match is unique.\(^{48}\)

Yet again, in this same exchange, Franklin also observes that the distracted Arden frequently interrupts himself: “in the middle cutteth off his tale.” In the quarto version, *off* is spelled *of*. An EEBO search for `cut PRE/0 “of his tale”` yields only four results – North’s *Plutarch*, North’s *Doni*, *Arden* and one other work. Even a search for `cut off the tale` yields only 3 other results, and *King John* in the First Folio is one of them.\(^{49}\) This is another Northern fingerprint in a passage that begins with a unique Northern grouping.

**North’s Marginalia and the Plight of Women (Arden of Feversham)**

Still, in this very same chapter of *The Dial* that North marked in the table of contents, Aurelius notes the problems men have with women: “If he doth love them, they account him for light...If he laugh, they say he is a fool; if he laugh not, they say he is solemn” (148r). Elsewhere in *The Dial*, North writes that women face precisely this same difficulty, using this same kind of language to discuss the eternal dilemma of women, and especially widows, who can never win in the eyes of others no matter what they do:

\begin{itemize}
\item If she *laugh* a little, they *count* her *light*.
\item If she *laugh* not, they *count* her an hypocrite.
\item If she go to the Church, they *note* her for a *gadder*…
\item If she go ill appareled, they *account* her a *niggard* (*The Dial*, 483 in 1619 version, 300r\(^{50}\))
\end{itemize}

This was clearly the inspiration for the lament of Alice in *Arden of Feversham* that she can never win in her husband’s eyes no matter what she does:
If I be merry, thou straightways thinks me light;
If sad, thou sayest the sullens trouble me;
If well attired, thou thinks I will be gadding;
If homely, I seem sluttish in thine eye. (Arden 13.108-11)

This is a unique correspondence. Both passages make precisely the same points about the problems faced by women in a series of if-then statements listed in the same order and in the same sing-song manner. Both begin with essentially the same line: If she be merry (or if she laugh a little), then others will think or count her light. The next line refers to the opposite: if she is sad or glum. The third line in each passage notes that if she goes out or dresses up, others will think she is gadding or a gadder. In the last lines, the if-well-appareled string from the play corresponds to the if-ill-appareled string in the tragedy—and in each passage, a humble appearance leads to the impression that she is a niggard or homely and sluttish. Women just cannot win. A search of EEBO for a similar speech containing either gadder or gadding confirms this is exclusive and that the dramatist was basing Alice’s speech on The Dial. Indeed, this is less an echo or parallel than a seeming effort at memorial reconstruction or a full paraphrasing.

Of course, the dramatist has made a few verbal substitutions, but even these changes are Northern. For example, in the passage, the playwright has substituted merry and sullens for North’s laugh and laugh-not. But in his Plutarch’s Lives, North also uses this same merry-sullens antithesis: “that no man was of so sullen a nature but he would make him merry” (225). The playwright also used the peculiar phrase “straight ways thinks me” for North’s “they count her.” And elsewhere in The Dial, North writes “straight way … thinketh” (594) in a line that conveys the same meaning: to immediately form a new opinion. In other words, by using merry-sullens and straight ways thinks, the playwright has not veered away from North’s wording but substituted peculiar Northern wording and phrases into an undeniably Northern passage and placed them in the mouth of North’s half-sister.

North’s Marginalia and Slanderous Tongues (Arden of Feversham)

Again, in this same chapter, and on this same page shown in figure 7 (149r), directly beneath the emphasized passage on “the fear of the Gods…and the speech of men,” North underlines the following: “For women do more hurt with their tongues than the enemies do with their swords.” This comparison of tongues with weapons was not uncommon in Elizabethan literature and also appears in Arden of Feversham (“That carry a muscado in their tongue. / And scarce a hurting weapon in their hand,” 9.20-21). Importantly, however, it also occurs elsewhere in North’s Dial, in which, once again, North underlines part of the passage and writes in the margin: Pittacus: of the tonge (i.e., Pythacus, on the subject of the tongue):
And therefore said Pythachus the philosopher, that a man’s tongue is made like the iron point of a lance, but yet that it was more dangerous than that … I know not that man … but thinks it less hurt the bloody sword should pierce his flesh than that he should be touched in honour with the venomous point of the serpentine tongue. (441-441v/710)

Another passage in The Dial also emphasizes the commonness of “slanderous tongues”:

in working virtuous deeds shall not want slanderous tongues … Octavian by his words declared himself to be a wise man, and of a noble heart, and lightly to weigh both the murmurings of the people and also the vanities of their words. (116-17)

The title character of Arden of Feversham also addresses “slanderous tongues” in the same language:

Arden: Who lives that is not touched with slanderous tongues? … And I will lie at London all this term To let them see how light I weigh their words. (1.345, 358-59)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North’s Dial</th>
<th>Arden of Feversham</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Touched … with … serpentine tongue</td>
<td>touched with slanderous tongues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--441r-v/710</td>
<td>--1.345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you … shall not want slanderous tongues …</td>
<td>Who lives that is not touched with slanderous tongues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and lightly to weigh … the vanities of their</td>
<td>To let them see how light I weigh their words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>words</td>
<td>--1.345, 359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--116-17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slanderous tongues, lightly to weigh … their</td>
<td>slanderous tongues, light I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>words</td>
<td>weigh their words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shared spelling also makes the match compelling: an EEBO search for works that include both relevant groupings—slanderous tongues and light, * weigh, their words—yields only North’s Dial.\(^52\) Arden does not appear because of two slips by EEBO: the digitized reading of the 1592 quarto mistakenly substitutes stauderous for slanderous—and the EEBO search does not recognize the quarto’s wey as weigh. This latter quarto spelling of wey was indeed authorial as we also find the same spelling in scene 8: “Whose dowry would have weyed down all thy wealth” (Sig.
C4v; 8.89), and these are the only appearances of *weigh(ed)* in the tragedy. Interestingly, *wey(ed)* is also an early Northern spelling, appearing 12 times in *The Dial* (1568), including in similar contexts as *Arden*: *wey … words* (131v); *money … weyed* (128v) and *treasure … weyd* (3rd book, 47). North does not use the spelling *wey* in the corresponding passage on slander but opts for the similar *waye*. He also uses the spelling *slaundrous*:

*The Dial* (1568): *wey* the sentences more then the *wordes* (130v)
*The Dial* (1568): *slaundrous tongues … lightly to waye … their words* (56)
*Arden* quarto: *slaundrous tongues … light I wey their words* (Sig. B3)

In other words, the *Arden* passage uses Northern spellings in a typically Northern comment. Moreover, the playwright did not borrow the *wey* spelling from North’s passage on “slaundrous tongues”; instead, *wey* was a common spelling of North’s, as shown in other parts of *The Dial*.

*North’s Marginalia, Women, Love, Hate, and Spewing Venom (Arden of Feversham)*

This chapter that North marked in the table of contents begins at 146v, but the neighboring chapters are also part of the long argument between Aurelius and Faustine. If you turn one page backward to 145v, you find North has written another marginal comment and underlined part of a passage.
In the margin of figure 9, North writes “all women agree in one thing.” And he underlines the following: “that they will cherish them that they love and revenge them of those that they hate.” This is a perfectly apt description of Alice, and Clarke clearly echoes it when describing Thomas’s half-sister, who cherished the man she loved and helped murder the one she hated.

*The Dial*: (antithesis regarding Faustine) that they will cherish them that they love, and revenge them of those that they hate. (145v/227)

*Arden*: (antithesis about Alice) That rather than you’ll live with him you hate, You’ll venture life and die with him you love. (1.270-71)
The chapter ends on 151r. And just a few lines below where North has written “let her overcome in reasoning” in the margin, Aurelius says, “Now Faustine, since I have the old venom from my heart expelled, I will answer …” This clearly influenced a description of Arden’s exchange with Mosby.

*The Dial*: Now Faustine, since I have the old venom from my heart expelled, I will answer (151r/235)

Arden: … now thou hast belched and vomited
The rancorous venom of thy mis-swoll’n heart,
Hear me but speak. (1.324-26)

Finally, in the very last line of this important chapter, again on page 151r, Aurelius writes that he hopes “that my dissimulation should suffice to amend thy life.” And there it is. Dissimulation occurs nowhere else in the Shakespeare canon (other than the subtitle of *Arden*)—and only three other times in all of *The Dial*. The subtitle of another proximal chapter on women in *The Dial* (129v) includes “wherein is shewed” (and wicked women also appears in *The Dial*.) Hence, wherein is shewed, dissimulation, and wicked women are all Northern substitutions placed into a uniquely Northern subtitle:

Dial Chapter Subtitle: Wherein is expressed the great malice and little patience of an evil woman

Arden Subtitle: Wherein is shewed the great malice and dissimulation of a wicked woman
In a relatively sparsely marked series of pages, North does add one marginal note: “Description of sorrow” (296r) in the margin next to a passage that describes how people act when they are depressed: they crave solitude, hate the day, love the night, and their sighs go upward to the clouds while their tears water the earth below:
For truly the man which is sorrowful, sigheth in the day, watcheth in the night, delighteth not in company, and with only care he resteth. The light he hateth, the darkness he loveth, with his bitter tears he watereth the earth, with heavy sighs he pierceth the Heavens.

(296r; 475)

This passage is similar to one that appears just eight pages later—in which, again, it is stressed that the sorrowful lock themself into their own chambers, and their tears fall to the Earth while sighs move upward:

to hide and withdraw themselves within their houses, and to lock themself into their own chambers; and they think it their duties, to water their plants with tears, and importune the heavens with sobs and sighs. (483)

Still another page in The Dial uses this same imagery:

that with his deep sighs he pierceth the heavens on high, and with his flowing tears he moisteneth the Earth below. (590)

These are precisely the ideas and images the playwright uses to describe the despondent Romeo, who seems almost to have been crafted as an exemplar of North’s sorrowful man:

Montague: Many a morning hath he there been seen, With tears augmenting the fresh morning’s dew, Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs …
Away from light steals home my heavy son
And private in his chamber pens himself,
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,
And makes himself an artificial night. …
Benvolio: Have you importuned him [for an explanation]? (1.1.131-33, 137-45)

Friar Laurence: The sun not yet thy sighs from heavens clears (2.3.73)
Isolated Correspondences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Dial’s “Description of Sorrow”</th>
<th>Description of Romeo’s Sorrow</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to water their plants with tears</td>
<td>With tears augmenting the fresh morning’s dew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with his deep sighs he pierceth the heavens</td>
<td>Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs; The sun not yet thy sighs from heavens clears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to hide and withdraw themselves within their houses and to <strong>lock themselves into</strong> their own <strong>chambers</strong></td>
<td>Away from <strong>light</strong> steals home my <strong>heavy</strong> son And private in his <strong>chamber</strong> pens <strong>himself</strong>, Shuts up his windows, <strong>locks</strong> fair daylight out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sigheth</strong> in the day, watcheth in the <strong>night</strong> … The <strong>light</strong> he hateth, the darkness he loveth</td>
<td>Away from <strong>light</strong> steals home … Shuts up his windows, <strong>locks</strong> fair daylight out … And makes himself an artificial <strong>night</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>heavy</strong> … importune</td>
<td><strong>heavy</strong> … importuned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correspondences are both pointed and numerous. Both describe *tears* falling to the earth, while *sighs* float upward toward the clouds and *heavens*. North’s passage even notes that tears water the plants—just as Romeo’s tears are compared to dew (which, of course, waters plants). Both discuss hating the day and light, while preferring darkness and night. And in both cases, the sorrowful “**lock themselves into** their own **chambers**”/“in his **chamber** pens **himself**… **locks** fair daylight out.” Notice also that, in Richard III, we find: “Can curses **pierce** the **clouds** and enter **heaven**?” (1.3.195)

Perhaps, most surprisingly, just the word-string *with his deep sighs* confirms the obligation. This is a fingerprint phrase of North’s, occurring nowhere else in EEBO except for The Dial and Romeo and Juliet.
In this page of *The Dial*, North underlines two sections of a passage about the changing fortunes of the nobility in which the triumphant rise of one often requires the downfall of another. The passage appears in a reflective letter by Marcus Aurelius to his friend Cornelius. The philosophical emperor writes that he had just conquered the Parthians in Asia yet could not help but
feel for the brave and noble people he had defeated and taken as captives. He then observes sadly how the rise and success of a ruler often depends upon the fall of others.

Seldom times we see the sunshine bright all the day long, but first in the summer there hath been a mist, or if it be in the winter, there hath been a frost … For we see by experience, some come to be very poor, and other chance to attain to great riches: so that through the impoverishing of those, the other become rich and prosperous. The weeping of the one causeth the other to laugh, so that if the bucket that is empty above doth not go down, the other which is full beneath cannot come up. (251v/402; underlining is North’s)

The latter image is of a well with two buckets on opposite ends of a pulley system, in which when one is at the top, the other is then full at the bottom. The point is: the rising of one requires the downfall of another. Similarly, the vanquished are like a mist in summer or frost in winter, which will reign for a while before the bright and conquering sunshine melts it all away.

In Richard II, after Henry IV has successfully taken England and usurped the crown, Richard II uses these same analogies to describe their changing positions:

Now is this golden crown like a deep well
That owes two buckets, filling one another,
The emptier ever dancing in the air,
The other down, unseen, and full of water.
That bucket down and full of tears am I,
Drinking my griefs, whilst you mount up on high. …

God save King Harry, unkinged Richard says,
And send him many years of sunshine days! ...

But ’tis usurped. Alack the heavy day,
That I have worn so many winters out
And know not now what name to call myself!
Oh, that I were a mockery king of snow,
Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke,
To melt myself away in water drops! (4.1.185-90, 221-22, 258-63)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isolated Correspondences</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North’s <em>Dial</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bucket … empty above,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down, the other which is full … up</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shakespeare’s <em>Richard II</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buckets … emptier … in the air</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The other down, unseen, and full … up</td>
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</table>
As with North’s underlined passage, Richard II describes the victorious Henry IV (Bolingbroke) as the high, empty bucket and himself as a full bucket that has been brought down. Likewise, Richard II states that Henry IV will have a long reign of sunshine days, then compares himself to a “king of snow” as Henry IV is the sun that would “melt myself away.”

There is no doubt that North’s underlined sentences are the origin of Richard II’s political imagery. In his bucket analogy, the playwright essentially repeats all the content words in the same order as North. The only difference is that North has down, the other, Richard II says the other down.

The Dial: If the bucket that is empty above doth not go down, the other which is full beneath cannot come up.

Richard II: buckets … emptier ever dancing in the air, / The other down, unseen, and full …/ whilst you mount up on high.

This description would become more popular after Shakespeare had used it, but EEBO confirms that only North had used this language prior to Shakespeare.
Chapter 7

Seven Quotations from Early Modern Literary Insiders Indicating That Shakespeare Adapted Someone Else’s Plays

One question I often hear about the Thomas North discovery is: “Why didn’t anyone ever complain about this? Why didn’t people at the time mention that Shakespeare was just working from old plays?” I always respond that many people did complain about it—and many of these complaints are well known. Literary insiders repeatedly bemoaned the fact that Shakespeare was getting too much credit for adapting the works of an earlier playwright (or playwrights), and these grumblings began when Shakespeare was alive and continued during the decades after his death:

Shakespeare, the Upstart Crow (1592)

The first widely-accepted literary allusion to Shakespeare appeared in the satirical pamphlet *A Groatsworth of Wit* in 1592, allegedly written by the playwright Robert Greene.\(^55\)

Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart crow*, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger’s heart wrap’t in a Player’s hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. O that I might entreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses: & let those apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions…

--Thomas Nashe, *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592 (21)\(^56\)

*The crow is a classical symbol for plagiarist discussed in a fable by Horace

Modern Translation:

Yes, trust them [actors] not: for there is an upstart plagiarist, decorated with our work, that with his “Tiger’s heart wrapped in an actor’s hide,” supposes he is a great writer who is as well able to bombast out verse as the best of you and being an absolute Jack-of-all-trades fancies himself a great and thundering actor too—the only Shake-scene in a country. Oh, I do implore you to use your rare creativity and intelligence in more profitable courses: & let those apes create imitations of your past works, and never give them any more plays to adapt…
The *Groatsworth* passage is particularly significant because it is conventional that “upstart crow” and “Shake-scene” refer to Shakespeare. Nashe’s line is now so notorious that Katherine Duncan-Jones used it for the title of her biography, *Shakespeare: Upstart Crow to Sweet Swan: 1592-1623*. And *Upstart Crow* was also the name of a 2016 BBC sitcom on Shakespeare.

One give-away to the crow’s identity is the line “Tiger’s heart wrap’t in a Player’s hide,” which is a parody of a line from *3 Henry VI*: “Oh, tiger’s heart wrapped in a woman’s hide!” (1.4.137). Even more significantly, it is a parody of a stolen line. This line not only appears in *3 Henry VI*, it also appeared in *True Tragedy, Richard Duke of York*, a briefer, rewritten staged adaptation of the play (in fact, as will be shown in a later work, *True Tragedy* is the version Shakespeare himself wrote—just as its title-page states).

Scholars have also correctly concluded that Shakespeare was being denounced in the *Groatsworth* passage as a plagiarist because a crow beautified with the feathers of others comes from Horace’s classical fable on plagiarism. As J. Dover Wilson writes:

> [Horace] then goes on to warn Celsus not to pilfer from other writers any longer, lest those he has robbed should return one day to claim their feathers, when like the crow (*cornicula*) stripped of its stolen splendour (*furtivis nudata coloribus*), he would become a laughing-stock. … the crow in other birds’ feathers was closely associated with the idea of literary theft in the mind of anyone who knew anything of the classics and of many who did not.⁵⁷

Dover Wilson contends that the comment “was accusing Shakespeare of stealing and adapting plays upon *Henry VI* . . .”⁵⁸ Likewise, Peter Berek notes a similar *crow-feather* passage from the era that provides “quite explicit support” for the view that the *Groatsworth* comment “is accusing Shakespeare of being a plagiarist who takes credit for the work of other writers . . .”⁵⁹ This is, of course, exactly correct. And, in fact, as will be shown, the main person being addressed was Thomas North.

**He would “Buy the Reversion of Old Plays … And Marks Not Whose ’Twas First”—Ben Jonson (1600-1612)**

Ben Jonson also describes Shakespeare as a patcher of old plays—adding new details about North and Shakespeare in *Every Man In His Humor*, *Epicene*, and, especially, *Cynthia’s Revels*. In “On Poet-Ape,” a poem likely written between 1600 and 1612, he describes the chief dramatist of the era as a “thief” who would “buy the reversion of old plays” (*reversion*, a legal term, meaning the right of possession):

> Poor Poet-Ape, that would be thought our chief, Whose works are e’en the frippery of wit,
From brokage is become so bold a thief,
As we, the robbed, leave rage, and pity it.
At first he made low shifts, would pick and glean,
Buy the reversion of old plays; now grown
To a little wealth, and credit in the scene,
He takes up all, makes each man’s wit his own.
And, told of this, he slights it. Tut, such crimes
The sluggish gaping auditor devours;
He marks not whose ’twas first: and after-times
May judge it to be his, as well as ours.
Fool, as if half-eyes will not know a fleece
From locks of wool, or shreds from the whole piece!60

“Poet-Ape” refers to a poet-imitator, and, as Elizabethan and Jacobean satirists commonly referred to actors as apes, “Poet-Ape” could mean poet-actor. The epigram thus refers to a poor poet-imitator (or playwright-actor) who “would be thought our chief;” that is, the chief dramatist of the time. “Frippery,” in the second line, refers to a consignment shop, where old clothes are bought and re-sold “wit” refers to intelligence, especially creative intelligence; in the context here, it refers to the creativity and invention that goes into writing plays. Thus, a collection of works that are a “frippery of wit” is a collection of old, used plays that have been bought and resold. “Brokage” also refers to the trade of dealing—buying and selling—and “Buy the reversion of old plays,” refers to purchasing rights to produce and adapt them.

Although Jonson does not name Shakespeare in the poem, it is clear he is his target. Jonson’s poet-ape in fact recalls Nashe’s characterization of Shake-scene and his group—“let those apes imitate your past excellence . . . .”61 And Shakespeare had indeed become a man of means and reputation—“grown / To a little wealth, and credit in the scene.”

But perhaps the most significant form of internal evidence is that Jonson wrote the poem in the style of a Shakespearean sonnet: 14 lines of iambic pentameter, divided into three quatrains and a heroic couplet. The rhyme scheme links every other line until the last two: abab cdcd efef gg.62 None of the 100 or so poems in the 1616 collection of Jonson’s Workes is written in this style. Nor is Jonson the only person to identify Shakespeare in this manner. In a 1599 collection of epigrams, John Weever published a poem entitled Ad Gulielmum Shakespeare; again, he is careful to frame only that poem in this same Shakespearean style. As Honigmann writes (while quoting his prior work), “John Weever’s Epigrammes (1955) contains about 150 poems, most of them between 4 and 20 lines in length. ‘One, and only one, is fourteen lines long, and takes the form of a Shakespearian sonnet,’ the epigram addressed ‘Ad Gulielmum Shakespeare.’”63

But even if Jonson had not chosen that style for the poem, we still have external evidence confirming its subject. First, Leonard Digges (1588-1635), from the next generation of poets, outraged at Jonson’s slights against Shakespeare, wrote a poem defending the King’s Men’s
dramatist. In “Upon Master William Shakespeare,” Digges repeatedly paraphrases Jonson and references the satirist’s works. He also stresses that, despite what Jonson claims, Shakespeare most certainly did not “Plagiary-like from others glean / Nor begs he from each witty friend a scene …”64 This rebuttal of Jonson’s lines employs the same glean-scene-wit grouping in “On Poet-Ape”: “At first he made low shifts, would pick and glean, / Buy the reversion of old plays; now grown / To a little wealth, and credit in the scene, / He takes up all, makes each man’s wit his own.” Clearly, Digges believed that “On Poet-Ape” was an attack on Shakespeare.

Finally, it is conventional that when John Lyly had famously admitted to borrowing from Thomas North, he used the same language: “if I seem to glean after another’s cart for a few ears of corn, or of the tailor’s shreds to make me a livery, I will not deny …”65 Jonson has purposefully echoed Lyly’s glean-livery-shreds line because North’s clothing was once again being snatched.

For a full understanding of “On Poet-Ape,” it is important to remember that Shakespeare worked with other writers as well, including Thomas Nashe, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Middleton, John Marston, and George Wilkins. Also, other non-Northern plays were published with Shakespeare’s name or initials on the title-page, like Locrine, A Yorkshire Tragedy, The London Prodigal, and Sir John Oldcastle. A play with the same title as this latter work had also been published by Henslowe’s group, for whom Jonson also wrote. Currently, scholars believe that corrupt printers were publishing these differently styled, mediocre works in an attempt to profit from Shakespeare’s name, an assumption that will be examined in a later work. Regardless, the point is that Jonson had seen Shakespeare as a competitor who had first become famous by adapting works of North but also began reworking other people’s plays as well. A modern translation of “On Poet-Ape” makes it clear that this was the subject of Jonson’s displeasure:

Poor actor/poet-imitator, who would be thought our best dramatist,
Whose works are like old garments that have been bought and re-sold.
Play-brokering has turned him into a bold thief.
And we [fellow writers], the robbed, are no longer angry but pity it.
First he made subtle robberies, would be choosy and pick and glean.
He would buy reversions of old plays [like Hamlet and Henry V].
Now that he has become a little wealthy and famous in the theater scene,
He takes everything and is stealing everyone’s creations [like Middleton’s Yorkshire Tragedy and Sir John Oldcastle]:
And, told of this, he slights it. Tut, his crimes
Are eaten up by the dull-witted, awed audience member.
He doesn’t credit the original author, and future generations
May actually think the works are his—as well as ours.
The Fool, as if even half-closed eyes cannot tell the
Difference between a beautiful, coherent play [like the original version of *The Jew of Venice*] from the pieces and shreds he puts together from the whole [like the staged and extant *Merchant of Venice*].

The most straightforward reading of Jonson’s epigram is that Shakespeare bought reversions of old plays and pasted and patched together new plays from them, keeping the “shreds” of “old plays” that he liked. He also neglected to mark the original author, and Jonson expresses concern that Shakespeare would eventually get full credit, that is, “after-times / May judge it to be his.” The poem is a satirical but unequivocal contemporary report of Shakespeare’s playwriting methods.

**Jonson’s Ode to Himself (~1629)**

Ben Jonson’s self-addressed poem, “Ode to Himself,” makes the same argument about Shakespeare as his “On Poet Ape,” except that he uses a culinary metaphor rather than a sartorial one. More importantly, he explicitly references Shakespeare’s *Pericles*:

No doubt a mouldy tale,
Like *Pericles*, and stale
As the shrieve’s crusts, and nasty as his fish,
Scraps out [of] every dish,
Thrown forth and raked into the common tub,
May keep up the play club.
There, sweepings do as well
As the best-ordered meal:
For who the relish of these guests will fit,
Needs set them but the alms-basket of wit.66

This is the same description of play-crafting as in “On Poet-Ape.” Here, Jonson complains that plays like Shakespeare’s *Pericles* were popular despite the fact that they were based on an old work (a “mouldy tale”) and comprise “Scraps … / Thrown forth and raked into the common tub.” As in “Poet-Ape,” in which Jonson complains that the audience cannot distinguish a beautiful “fleece / From locks of wool, or shreds from the whole piece!” here he complains that the audience cannot distinguish “sweepings [of table scraps]” from “the best ordered meal.” As in “On Poet-Ape,” in which Jonson grumbles that Shakespeare’s plays are the “frippery of wit,” here he derides *Pericles* as the “alms-basket of wit.” A “frippery” denotes a place where old clothes of the rich are reused; an “alms-basket” denotes a place where old food of the rich is reused. This, again, is a cotemporaneous document, penned by a literary insider, identifying a play in the Shakespeare canon as the product of scraps and sweepings of an older play.
Ravenscroft: Shakespeare was not the original author of *Titus Andronicus* (1687)

Even in the decades after Shakespeare’s death, writers would still make similar comments. In 1687, Edward Ravenscroft wrote an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*, and in the preface he recorded the following tidbit:

> I have been told by some anciently conversant with the stage, that it [*Titus Andronicus*] was not originally [Shakespeare’s] … and he only gave some master-touches to one or two of the principal parts or characters.67

Naturally, we do not find similar comments regarding any other renowned author. We do not come across any fellow writers decrying Christopher Marlowe, Leo Tolstoy, or Jane Austen as plagiarists who got too much credit for works of other authors. We do not see any later playwright saying that they heard from an old theatrical insider that *Long Day’s Journey into Night* was not originally Eugene O’Neill’s or *A Doll’s House* was not Henrik Ibsen’s. There is a reason we keep finding this same claim repeated about Shakespeare: It was true.

Shakespeare Adapted the Plays of an Impoverished Historian (1728)

Later writers also mentioned these same rumors about Shakespeare. In a 1728 text entitled *An Essay Against Too Much Reading*, an anonymous author using the pen-name “Captain Thomas Goulding” recorded an interesting account of Shakespeare’s playwriting methods that he claims originally came from an “intimate acquaintance” of the dramatist. He wrote that Shakespeare kept an historian within his employ, a man who otherwise “might have starved upon his history,” and it was this man who first wrote the plays that Shakespeare later adapted:

> I will give you a short account of Mr. Shakespeare’s proceeding, and that I had from one of his intimate acquaintance. His being imperfect in some things was owing to his not being a Scholar, which obliged him to have one of those chuckle-pated historians for his particular associate, that could scarce speak a word but upon that subject; and he maintained him [the historian] or he might have starved upon his history. And when he wanted anything in his [the historian’s] way, as his plays were all historical, he sent to him, and took down the heads of what was for his purpose in characters, which were thirty times as quick as running to the books to read for it. Then with his natural flowing wit, he [Shakespeare] worked it into all shapes and forms, as his beautiful thoughts directed. The other put it into grammar; and instead of reading, he [Shakespeare] stuck close to writing and study without book….
[Shakespeare] was no scholar, no grammarian, no historian, and in all probability could not write English.\textsuperscript{68}

This rumor is, of course, true. Indeed, North’s major translations were collections of histories and by 1781, his \textit{Plutarch} would become known as “Shakespeare’s storehouse of learned history.”\textsuperscript{69} North was this hired historian, and it is true that he sold his plays to Shakespeare in order to escape poverty.

\textbf{“A Botcher up of old plays” (1837)}

Isaac Disraeli (1766-1848) was a well-known writer and literary historian who studied many of the same Elizabethan satirists and pamphlets that I had first started investigating with digital technologies in 2005. This includes the works of Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey. Thus, it is probably no coincidence that in the novel \textit{Venetia} (1837), written by Isaac’s son Benjamin Disraeli, we find the following remark:

\begin{quote}
And who is Shakespeare? … We know of him as much as we do of Homer. Did he write half the plays attributed to him? Did he ever write a single whole play? I doubt it. He appears to me to have been an inspired adapter for the theaters, which were then not as good as barns. I take him to have been a botcher up of old plays.\textsuperscript{70}
\end{quote}

\textbf{“[Shakespeare] was not the author but the adapter of them to the stage” (1837)}

Also in 1837, the same year as the publication of Disraeli’s \textit{Venetia}, British historian Samuel Astley Dunham wrote entries for Dionysius Lardner’s \textit{Cabinet Cyclopaedia}. Dunham was renowned for his “original research and sound judgement.” A friend of Dunham’s, Robert Southey, described him as an indefatigable researcher since a young boy, someone who would spare no expense and brook no obstacle in uncovering new details, making four extensive tours of Europe on scholarly missions.\textsuperscript{71} Dunham’s contribution to the \textit{Cyclopaedia} appeared in volumes dedicated to the \textit{Lives of the Most Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of Great Britain} and focused on early writers and dramatists. His long biographical treatment of William Shakespeare was particularly thorough and included the following conclusion:

\begin{quote}
we must observe that in the beginning of his [Shakespeare’s] career—for years indeed after he became connected with the stage—that extraordinary man was satisfied with reconstructing the pieces which others had composed; he was not the author but the adapter of them to the stage. Indeed we are of opinion that the number of plays which he thus recast
\end{quote}
as well as those in which he made very slight alterations is greater than any of his commentators have supposed.  

Later in the work, Dunham repeated this claim: “In fact there is not one drama of our author prior to 1600—perhaps not one after that year—that was not derived from some other play.”

Right here is the fork in the road. This is the moment where an offshoot and fringe theory about Shakespeare’s authorship began to develop. One particular writer, the American lawyer and novelist Joseph Hart, was especially shocked by Dunham’s biography of Shakespeare. In fact, it infuriated him. Hart soon began investigating the life of Shakespeare himself and published his conclusions in a work titled, oddly enough, “The Romance of Yachting” (1848). As one might expect, Hart devoted much of the book to descriptions of sea travel, particularly his own voyage across the Atlantic to Spain. But in one of the later chapters, he quotes a work of Samuel Purchas, an early seventeenth-century publisher of travelogues, and used it as a segue: “Shakespeare lived about the same time with Purchas,” he wrote. And then Hart continued discussing the Stratford playwright for the next 35 pages. Hart argued that Shakespeare lacked the education and experiences to create the plays attributed to him. “[Shakespeare] merely adapted other people’s works to the playing stage, like a Theatrical Factotum, as Greene calls him [in Groatsworth of Wit], and he was nothing else.” Hart frequently quoted long stretches of Dunham’s biographical entries in the Cyclopaedia, stressing that Shakespeare was not the originator of these works, and his anger about it is palpable. “It is a fraud upon the world to thrust his surreptitious fame upon us,” Hart ranted, and followed it up with an important question: “The enquiry will be, who were the able literary men who wrote the dramas imputed to him?”

Literary historians frequently describe Hart’s “Romance of Yachting” as the first known “anti-Stratfordian” work, that is, the first known published text that challenged Shakespeare’s authorship of the plays. But it is not exactly true that Hart denied that Shakespeare was a dramatist. He did agree that Shakespeare adapted the plays, but that the credit for their genius should be placed elsewhere. Still, over the next 75 years, there was an explosion of speculation about the original authorship of the plays as amateur researchers on both sides of the Atlantic entered the fray. Candidates for the original authorship of the plays began popping up every few decades or so: first, Francis Bacon was supposed to have been the true author of the canon, then it was Christopher Marlowe. No, argued Thomas Looney in 1920, it was really the Earl of Oxford. Wild conspiracy theories also started to proliferate: Bacon used ciphers to create codes within the canon; Christopher Marlowe was a spy who faked his own death; the Earl of Southampton was the love-child of Oxford and Queen Elizabeth; etc. Almost no speculation, no matter how feverish and wild-eyed, seemed to strain credulity. At the same time, their attacks on Shakespeare also became more outrageous and hostile. Eventually, many anti-Stratfordians began to claim Shakespeare was actually an illiterate stooge and wrote no plays at all. He was just an ignorant front-man for their particular candidate, propped up by the powers-that-be for murky political reasons.
Shakespeare scholars easily dispatched all these fanciful new theories. But in the ensuing ruckus, there was one important point that seemed to get lost—a point that insiders have repeatedly made since 1592: Shakespeare was *not* the original author of these plays, and up until now, we didn’t know who was.
Translations Used:

**The Dial of Princes** *(The Dial, first published in 1557)*


**The Moral Philosophy of Doni** *(Doni, 1570)*


**The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes** *(Plutarch’s Lives, 1579/80)*


**The Lives of Epaminondas** … *(Nepos’ Lives, 1602)*

Cornelius Nepos, *The Lives of Epaminondas, of Philip of Macedon, of Dionysius the Elder, and of Octavius Caesar Augustus: Collected out of good Authors. Also the lives of nine excellent Chieftaines of warre, taken out of Latine from Emlyius Probus, by S. G. S. By whom also are added the lives of Plutarch and of Seneca: Gathered together, disposed, and enriched as the others. And now translated into English by Sir Thomas North Knight* (London: Richard Field, 1602).
Notes


3 “Et tu, Brute” occurs in *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt ...* (London: Thomas Millington, 1595), E2. This play was the staged adaptation of *3 Henry VI*. “Caesar shall go forth” occurs in Christopher Marlowe’s *The Massacre at Paris ...* (London: Edward White, 1594), C8 (EEBO document image 23). Marlowe had to complete this play prior to 30 May 1593, the day of his death.


5 C. A. Greer, “A Lost Play in the Case of Richard II,” *Notes and Queries* 197.2 (1952): 24-25.


14 The original title of *Nepos’ Lives* was *The lives of Epaminondas, of Philip of Macedon, of Dionysius the Elder, and of Octavius Caesar Augustus: collected out of good authors, Also the lives of nine excellent chieftains of war, taken out of Latin from Aemelius Probus, by S. G. S. By whom also are added the lives of Plutarch and of Seneca: gathered together, disposed, and enriched as the others. And now translated into English by Sir Thomas North Knight* (London: Richard Field, 1602). Cornelius Nepos (110 BCE-25 BCE) was a Roman biographer, who wrote works on the lives of eminent kings, generals, philosophers, and poets. However, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, scholars believed that the histories were originally written by the fourth-century grammarian Aemelius Probus. In reality, Probus was just a later editor and reviser of the
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histories. Ironically, a similar confusion would occur involving Thomas North and William Shakespeare.

15 EEBO’s Boolean operators NEAR and PRE allow one to check for a particular word or phrase that is near or precedes another particular word or phrase. The default size of the grouping is four words, but this can be changed by adding a slash and number to the operator. So NEAR/10 searches for a word or phrase within 10 words of another word or phrase. Placing word-strings in quotes allows one to search for that specific phrase. Placing word-strings in quotes and curly brackets [e.g., "{but he that}" NEAR/10 "{my good name}" ] searches for those phrases and includes possible variations in spelling for each word -- an important factor in checking 16th and 17th century works. All such searches for "but he that" near "my good name" yields only North’s Dial and Shakespeare’s Othello. Google also confirms that Shakespeare was following North.

Other relevant passages in The Dial express a similar idea: “the noble hearts ought little to esteem the increase of their riches, and ought greatly to esteem the perpetuity of their good name” (243); “they should less hurt the master of the house, to ransack and spoil his house, and all that he had in it, than to take from him his honor and good name. … For to conclude, it were less evil to play and lose their money than to rob and spoil his neighbor of his good name.” (115)

16 Cypress trees originated in the Turkish-controlled Eastern Mediterranean, including on the isle of Cyprus, not far from the Turkish port of Tyre in modern-day Lebanon. As we discover in the first act of Othello, Turkey’s invasion of Cyprus in 1570 would start the Fourth Ottoman-Venetian war.

17 This may be quickly ascertained by searching Google for “milch kine to the pail” -shrew -shakespeare. This subtracts shrew and Shakespeare from the results and leads to a manageable number of entries. What remains are only entries quoting Plutarch’s Lives or a few quoting Shakespeare’s comedy without fully spelling out the name of either the play or author.

The reason for the rarity of the word-string is not hard to find: milch kine was not common, and when linked with to the pail, an odd farming expression referring to cows that are ready to be milked (the OED definition for “pail” includes: “used allusively in various phrases with reference to milking”), it becomes more peculiar still. But while neither Google nor EEBO indicates any other example in the English language of the precise phrase, I have unearthed three similar examples.

One is from John Day’s The Blind-Beggar of Bednal-Green … (1659), which uses “milch kine to your payl” in a different sense, alluding to cows that had been brought physically to someone’s pail. Day, a fellow playwright and emulator of Shakespeare, almost certainly was echoing The Taming of the Shrew, though he alters the phrase’s meaning. The second is again by Thomas North in “The Life of Artaxerxes,” also in Plutarch’s Lives: “The king therefore sent four score milch kine with him to give milk to the pail.” The other instance is in the account book of Thomas’s brother, Roger, 2nd Lord North. On 30 August 1589, Lord North recorded, “Milch kine bought—paid Will Smith for ii milch beasts for the pail.” In other words, this specific phrase was peculiar to the North family, used for the cows of the Kirtling estate. When we turn our attention to the French phrases in Amyot’s rendition of the Plutarchan passages that North translated, we find, simply, “vaches à lait”

18 Most editors and scholars credit John Florio’s translation of *Essays Written in French by Michael Lord of Montaigne* (1603) as the source for this passage in *King Lear.* As quoted in Fred Parker, “Shakespeare’s Argument with Montaigne,” *The Cambridge Quarterly* 28.1 (1999): 1-18, the passage reads: “when I consider man all naked … we may be excused for borrowing those which nature had therein favored more than us, with their beauties to adorn us, and under their spoils of wool, of hair, of feathers, and of silk to shroud us” (9). North’s *Dial* also contains all these shared content words (excepting only silk), and it also contains a dozen more (and far more peculiar elements). Still, scholars are obviously correct that this passage of Montaigne shares some kind of literary kinship with the corresponding passage in *King Lear.* But that is because Montaigne, as he was wont to do, was also borrowing from the source text for North’s *Dial of Princes—* Guevara’s *Reloj de Princes.* Moreover, Montaigne has so severely abbreviated and reworded Guevara’s passage that it leaves no doubt as to the true origin of Lear’s observations. Montaigne even put his own spin on it, arguing that the naked man borrows from other creatures because he is so naturally ugly and uses it to make himself beautiful. In contrast, both *The Dial* and *King Lear* argue that naked man is defenseless and must borrow from the animals to survive the elements: North’s *Dial:* “defend themselves from the cold of winter”; *King Lear:* “defend you / From seasons such as these” (3.4.31-32).

19 In old EEBO, a search for *in Arabia FBY there is FBY one FBY phoenix NEAR one FBY tree* yielded only North and Shakespeare. In new ProQuest EEBO, the search is more difficult but possible: (*unicorn* NEAR/50 one PRE/1 ph?enix NEAR/50 Arabia NEAR/50 one PRE/1 tree) again results only in North and Shakespeare. Many early modern authors do refer to the phoenix and its solitary nature, but none put it in exactly those words—*in Arabia, in one only tree.* And the few that came closest were clearly quoting either North or Shakespeare. For example, another similar comment appears in John Lyly’s *Euphues and his England.* But Lyly’s works on Euphues are well known for being based on North’s *Dial,* and here he is also obviously borrowing from North. The juxtaposition of the lone phoenix with a unicorn only accentuates the distinctiveness of this parallel as no other writer, of course, did that. See John Lyly *Euphues and his England* (London: Gabriel Cawood, 1580), 43v.

Thomas North likely got the phrase “fearing the wagging of a straw” from Richard Taverner’s translation of *Catonis disticha moralia ex castigatione D. Erasmi Roterodami, etc* (London: Richard Tavener, 1553), Eii r-v. It is possible that Shakespeare was also following Taverner, but the context (and his myriad other borrowings from North) strongly suggest he was following North’s play and that North got it from his own *Plutarch’s Lives*.


22 In the 1570 edition of *Doni*, two folios in a row are numbered “45,” there is no “46,” then three folios in a row are numbered “47.” If we count the second folio “45” as “46,” then the eagle and beetle tale begins on the first and “real” page 47.

23 Investigative journalist Michael Blanding and author of *North by Shakespeare: A Rogue Scholar’s Quest for the Truth Behind the Bard’s Work* was the one who first noticed the resemblances between the stories of Antigonus in North’s *Dial of Princes* and Antigonus in *The Winter’s Tale*. He then sent it to me in an email.

24 An EEBO-ProQuest search for *Antigonus* NEAR Noble* AND roaring NEAR the PRE/0 bears yields only *The Dial* and *The Winter’s Tale*.

25 An EEBO search for Coward* PRE/10 before PRE/10 valiant AND taste PRE/10 death yields no results other than North’s *Dial of Princes* and *Julius Caesar*.


27 EEBO-ProQuest confirms that “pretty tale” appears within 100 words of *body* and *belly* only in North and Shakespeare. Specifically, a search for pretty PRE/0 tale NEAR/100 body NEAR/100 belly results in three works: North’s *Doni*, Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*, and Nahum Tate’s *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth*, a 1682 adaptation of *Coriolanus*.


30 Open Source Shakespeare, the source of Shakespeare’s text that I used with plagiarism software, actually has “this world’s thraldom.” This is how many nineteenth-century editions of *Richard III* quoted this line, which is even closer to North’s line. More recent editions, however, use “this earth’s thraldom,” which is how it originally appeared in the First Folio (1623).

31 North’s edition contains a printer’s error here—one of thy secrets—rather than none of thy secrets.
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33 In the book, the EEBO search is for cross NEAR.100 pillar NEAR.100 cardinal NEAR.100 consistory, which yields no results other than Henry VIII. And the Google and Google Books search is for the same word-grouping --- cross AROUND(100) pillar AROUND(100) cardinal AROUND(100) consistory – again yields only Henry VIII. (The other results on the final pages of Google searches do not actually satisfy these results but are offered by Google as results that might interest the searcher.) However, this search is not perfectly analogous as in North’s journal, the word “consistory” is not grouped within 100 words of the other three. A more fitting example is the one quoted here.

34 The way to generate this particular query is by typing the following into the Google search bar: “after them” AROUND(30) “next them with.” The final pages of the Google-search results offer a few other works that do not precisely match the query, but approximate it or might, according to the Google algorithm, otherwise interest the searcher.

35 More than 50 copies of Cavendish’s manuscript now exist, and each includes minor textual variations. These verbal discrepancies have then leaked into various published versions of Cavendish’s manuscript, depending on the editor’s choice of manuscript. We relied primarily on two published versions of Cavendish’s text. The first is The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey. Written by George Cavendish, Illustrated with Portraits by Holbein (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1905). This follows an edition first published by S. W. Singer in 1815 with some corrections later added by F. S. Ellis. The other edition we used is The Life of Cardinal Wolsey. By George Cavendish, His Gentleman Usher, ed. John Holmes (London: Rivingtons, 1852). This version presents the manuscript that is now held at Lambeth Palace Library (MS 179). This manuscript has a subscription at the end indicating this was the very copy owned by the historian John Stowe, and Holmes clarifies that “Stowe’s manuscript was made the groundwork of the present edition” (x). Holmes also consulted Stowe’s Annals, as well as other copies of the manuscript, including another one held at Lambeth Palace Library (MS 250). In Thomas North’s 1555 Travel Journal, our choice on which publications to quote—Holmes’ or Singer’s—depended on which one we believed more accurately depicted that early copy of the mid-1550s version that North used.

36 Rolf Soellner, Shakespeare’s Patterns of Self-knowledge (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1972), 98.

37 Bevington’s edition substitutes “bonds” for “bands,” but “bands” is the original word in both the first quarto and First Folio versions of Richard II.

38 This search was done on the old EEBO. On EEBO-Proquest, it is no longer easy to search for word-strings near other words or word strings (for example “dissolve the bands of” NEAR life). But it is still possible. In this case, one must search for dissolve PRE/0 the PRE/0 bands PRE/0 of PRE/1 life, and you find only North and Shakespeare.

39 The precise search phraseology used for Google and Google Books is: "dissolve the bands of" AROUND(20) life AROUND(20) death. Hundreds of quotes of Richard II appear—as do a few quotes of North’s Nepos Lives, though under different titles.

41 I must thank investigative reporter and author Michael Blanding for taking pictures of all the pages in The Dial with North’s markings and sending them to me. Even more importantly, he also was the one who alerted me to a number of connections between North’s comments and the Shakespeare canon. This includes the story of Antigonus, used for The Winter’s Tale, and many of the connections to Macbeth (see next chapter.)

42 This may or may not have to do with the fact that North had likely been recently married at this time. While we still have not been able to uncover the precise date of North’s marriage to his second wife, Judith Bridgewater (nee Vesey), we do know it had to occur sometime after her first husband, Richard Bridgewater, died in 1588.

43 Since North did highlight some of his corrections in the margin, he also likely had some idea that he could return this copy to help him correct a possible future edition. However, to have been useful to a printer, North would have either had to transfer these corrections to a clean copy or at least tell the printer to ignore all his personal notes and markings.

44 To generate this particular query, one just needs to type the following into the Google search bar: “wherein is” AROUND “the great malice.” The double quotation marks bracketing both “wherein is” and “the great malice” ensures that Google will then only search for those exact phrases, not just each individual word. And “AROUND” in all-caps is a Boolean operator that forces a search for every webpage and text on the internet that places those phrases within 10 words of each other.

45 A quick way to determine that The Dial of Princes is indeed the only other work to juxtapose these phrases is to subtract out all results that include the word “Arden.” One can use a dash, or minus sign, to do this. That is, enter: “wherein is” AROUND “the great malice” -Arden.

46 This corresponds to page 232 in 1619 edition of Dial of Princes.

47 Page 229 in in 1619 edition of Dial of Princes

48 For example, an EEBO-ProQuest search for word NEAR/10 fetch NEAR/10 sigh NEAR/10 grievous AND his PRE/0 eyes PRE/10 the PRE/0 heavens yields only The Dial and Arden of Feversham.

49 The original EEBO may have had as many as nine examples of “cut off his tale.”

50 Unfortunately, at this point, I do not have access to this particular page of North’s personal 1582 edition of The Dial, but this is likely the page.

51 Again we find that North was not following his source—Jacques Amyot’s French version of Plutarch’s Lives—but employing his own language. Amyot has “qu’il n’y avoit moeurs si austeres qu’elle n’acoucit: ny nature si farouche qu’elle ne prist & n’amolist.” See Jaques Amyot,

52 A search of EEBO-Proquest “{slanderous tongues}" AND light* PRE/20 weigh PRE/20 "{their words}" , the result is only The Dial.

53 Montague refers to sighs reaching clouds rather than piercing the heavens, but elsewhere in the tragedy Romeo’s sighs do rise to heavens (2.3.73). The same language appears in 1 Henry IV (3.1.9-10).

54 As of 1623, an EEBO search just for empt* NEAR.10 the other NEAR.10 down NEAR.10 full yields only two editions of North’s Dial of Princes and Shakespeare’s First Folio. And this does not take into account all of the other pointed similarities.

55 Robert Greene had just died before the publication of A Groatsworth of Wit (1592), and in the ensuing months the satirist Thomas Nashe and Henry Chettle published strenuous denials that they were the ones who wrote the pamphlet—and then passed it off on the recently deceased Greene. In fact, as will be shown in future publications, it is quite clear that Nashe and Chettle were lying—and that Nashe was the primary author of the work. Nashe and Chettle denied authorship because the first part of the pamphlet contained an insulting family history of Thomas North, including negative portrayals of Thomas’s father and brother—the 1st and 2nd Lord Norths, respectively. Groatsworth is the first work to explain in detail how North came to write plays for Shakespeare.

Importantly, Nashe was not the only satirist who published works about North and Shakespeare. Gabriel Harvey, Samuel Daniel, the anonymous author of Histriomastix, and, most especially, Ben Jonson also wrote about the elderly literatus and his most famous disciple. What is more, they all told the same story: Shakespeare, the young and wealthy play-producer, adapted the plays of an elderly, well-travelled playwright—one they repeatedly identify as Thomas North. Their commentary is so consistent, illuminating, and persuasive that we may literally ignore all other proofs of North’s authorship of Shakespeare’s source plays—all of North’s travels, experiences, and prose passages that he put into his plays and all the external unpublished manuscripts linking him to the canon—and turn exclusively to the satires for a rigorous proof that Thomas North wrote the plays Shakespeare adapted for the stage.

56 [Thomas Nashe], Greenes, Groats-worth of witte, bought with a million of Repentance. Describing the follie of youth, the falshoode of makeshift flatterers, the miserie of the negligent, and mischieves of deceiving Courtezans. Written before his death and published at his dyeing request (London: Imprinted for William Wright, 1592).


58 J. Dover Wilson, “Malone and the Upstart Crow,” 57.


61 [Thomas Nashe], Greenes, Groats-worth of witte, 21.

62 Those who contend that Jonson was not referring to Shakespeare point out that other playwrights—Thomas Heywood and Anthony Munday, for example—were also actors at some point. Moreover, Shakespeare did not invent the “Shakespearean sonnet,” as it appeared in the 1580s; poets, including Philip Sidney, Samuel Daniel, and Edmund Spenser, also tried it. Yet Shakespeare is the one playwright-actor who fits all the details.


65 John Lyly, Euphues and his England (London: Gabriel Cawood, 1580), 3-4. In his edition of the works of John Lyly, R. Warrick Bond quotes the last lines above, beginning with “if I seem to glean” and takes for granted that Lyly here is referring to Thomas North. “It is noticeable, however,” writes Bond, after quoting Lyly’s admission of borrowing, “that throughout his work he never mentions either North or Plutarch or [George] Pettie by name.” The Complete Works of John Lyly: Now for the First Time Collected and Edited from the Earliest Quartos with Life, Bibliography, Essays, Notes, and Index, ed. R. Warwick Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 154n1.

66 Ben Jonson, “The just indignation the Author tooke at the vulgar censure of his Play, by some malicious spectators, begat this following Ode to himselfe,” Epilogue The nev vnne. Or, The light heart A comoedy. As it was never acted, but most negligently play’d, by some, the Kings Servants. And more squeamishly beheld, and censured by others, the Kings subjects. 1629. Now, at last, set at liberty to the readers, his Maties servants, and subjects, to be iudg’d. 1631 (London: Thomas Alchorne, 1631), EEBO document image 62. In a few subsequent versions of this poem published after Jonson died in 1640, the lines are “There, sweepings do as well / As the best-ordered meal” were altered so as to include a disciple of Jonson, Richard Brome, in the attack: “Brome’s sweepings do as well / There, as his master’s meal.” See Virginia Brackett, ed., “Ode to Himself,” in The Facts on File Companion to British Poetry: 17th and 18th Centuries (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 290-92; 291.

68 Much of this passage and other relevant quotations of Goulding’s work appear in Alden Brooks, *Shakespeare and the Dyer’s Hand* (New York: C. Scribner and Sons, 1943), 87-88. Although Goulding’s work was published in 1728, more than 100 years after Shakespeare died, he still claims he “had” the account “from one of his [Shakespeare’s] intimate acquaintances.” It is possible he means that the account had originally come from an “intimate acquaintance.” For example, perhaps this author met a grandchild of one of Shakespeare’s fellow actors or neighbors, someone who reported this old story as coming directly from the Stratford dramatist’s inner circle. It is also possible he did hear this directly from someone who knew Shakespeare, some of his acquaintances having lived until the 1670s.


70 Interestingly, Disraeli puts this comment into the mouth of Lord Plantagenet Cadurcis, a character based on Lord Byron. Benjamin Disraeli, *Venetia* (London: Longmans, Green, 1890), 437.


