Shakespeare and Thomas More

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Acknowledgements

Prolegomena

A scout bee is a worker whose purpose is exploration, to find a new site for part of an overcrowded colony. I think of this book as the reconnoitering and report of a scout bee in places which have been given relatively slight attention. As such, the evidence uncovered in the project is preliminary, though I believe it noteworthy. I search for facts upon which to base judgments and with which to sanction speculations, through procedures that it will be good initially to clarify, even in their drab technicality.

The thesis of this study is that Shakespeare knew the works and the life of Thomas More much more than has been imagined, and that the playwright and poet transformed this awareness, with salient effects, into much of his own writing. This impact may be seen to an astonishing extent in the late Elizabethan play *Sir Thomas More* to which he is now thought to have contributed. The project involves looking for signs of Shakespeare's reading and of his literary hand, and therefore for his memories of texts, More's and his own. Since other sixteenth-century authors are also relevant to a portion of this task, I survey their works in the same way with the same intent. I make considerable use of verbal and conceptual parallels in documents, correspondences which are indispensable to such an inquiry. In the first part of this study I look for influential reading; in the second, I discriminate among authors. In each case, I find that Shakespeare's memory shows itself so remarkable that I can only conclude it was in some way photographic.

 The kinds of verbal parallels I record are in the current argot termed n-grams and collocations. The first type are exact reiterations of sequences of "n" numbers of words; the second, expressions sharing

language that includes words either identical or synonymous. Parallels differ in strength, of course. I believe all of them that I record to be plausible, but the less strong increase in evidentiary value when they can be located together with stronger ones. If, for example, the rather common expression "his noble mind" (cf. Hamlet's "nobler in the mind") appeared in a piece of writing, and "against a sea of troubles" a paragraph later, I would include the first phrase (though not by itself) among indications that a writer had read *Hamlet* 3.1. Since this allowance of space between linked elements seems generous in such a procedure, I should consider in more detail what the recording of such parallels is meant to demonstrate, and how it might do so.

Strictly speaking, the purpose of the linkage is to show that the concurrence in separate texts of language and idea is not due to chance. A number of explanations may, depending upon circum-stances, account for this determined reiteration; these include a recollection of one writer's words by another, a writer's memory of his or her own words, the copying or recalling of the words of others by a third party. Parallel hunters ought to follow rules in their searches, looking especially for identity of language, rarity of expression, propinquity of significant words, along with consonance of meaning. Yet in some kinds of investigation, the rules ought not to be applied simply, with a naïve rigor. A blend of the synonymous and the identical may prove more significant than strict sameness, and a mingling of common and rare utterances may have great significance as well. A writer's mind (which is not programmed to recover all its thoughts with mechanical perfection) should not be obliged to reproduce exactly the same meanings with its vocabulary in order for the product to be recognized as a true recollection.[1] And the same latitude may be in order in dealing with fragments of a writer's thought and expression that reveal themselves consecutively. Though

some scholars would restrict the allowable distance between words within parallel expressions to a small and definite number, important associations may be created through verbal links over a large space of text—or texts. One can see how this is so in the way that Shakespeare in composing *King Lear* recollected shards of language from over two hundred pages of Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Imposters*. Kenneth Muir has found, for example, fragmentary echoes of Harsnett's page 116 in *Lear* 2.3, 5.3, and 4.6; echoes of Harsnett 119 in *Lear* 4.1, 4.6. Conversely, he has shown a single clause in *Lear* 2.3 to be composed of elements from Harsnett's pages 41-42, 93, and 214.[2] I am not aware that anyone has objected to Muir's method of investigation or conclusions.[3] A certain amount of flexibility in the investigation of parallels is warranted, as we shall see frequently in the course of this book.

Especially in studies of attribution, "controls" or "negative checks" must be used to assure the validity of evidence. Because the quest for "an author" seeks to identify a unique individual, one cannot exclude the candidacy of others without including them in a comparative search. I take this necessity seriously. But my purpose in discussing authorship is here limited to a scrutiny of those writers who have already, on various grounds, been associated with the play *Sir Thomas More*. I raise questions of likely authorship, of co-authorship, and of different kinds of editorial collaboration described by James Purkis in a recent monograph[4] only in reference to these candidates. On the issue of "who read whom," of course, the project must not be to single out just one reader but to determine whether there was at least one reader among many possible.

And one must consider parallels in relationship to one another, as part of a single set or sets, not only as isolated units of repeated language and ideas.[5] Shakespeare used the expression "three-man song-men"

in *The Winter's Tale* (4.3.42). Was it evoked by his recollection of "three men's song" from Thomas More's *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*? Perhaps not, because "three man's song" also appears in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, Thomas Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday*, and Thomas Heywood's *1 Edward IV*, all of which preceded *Winter's Tale*. But it happens that in the next scene of *Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare wrote "pantler, butler, cook," just as More in his *Confutation* had written "pantler, butler, or cook" and (as will be shown) many other expressions that appeared in Shakespeare's works but not in those of other authors. Shakespeare may have known what the other writers published, but he is at least likely to have read as well More's dispute with Tyndale. As evidence accumulates, this likelihood will become a virtual certainty.

Recognition that collocations are genuinely parallel is often a matter of judgment. In computational studies of authorship through style, the ideal is often to diminish or even exclude the possibility of judgmental disagreements, which are considered to be "subjective," by making use of such evidence as function words (such as articles, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs), which are high in number and low in meaning. Such words are considered for their quantity, about which there can be little dispute. In the absence of disagreement, studies based on comparison of word counts can become "reproduceable," as required in scientific inquiry. Also quantifiable are the exact matches created by n-grams and by collocations formed by rules that allow meanings to be ignored as irrelevant so that only the numbers of matches are analyzed. Authors may unconsciously embed characteristic numbers in a text that may reveal or discount an authorial hand, distinguishing it from other hands. Reproduceable evidence, however, is not the only kind worth considering. There may be a point in trying to adjudicate differences. The better of discrepant judgments about authorship or influence

based on connoisseurship may be quite valuable, sometimes more so than punctiliously reproduced but unimpressive fact; and therefore what is disputable may with good reason be presented to those who follow an argument.[6] Risk that judgments may be erroneous should not preclude their being made and shared. Even mathematically based statistical studies, after all, produce only probabilities, which however impressive can produce conclusions that may be wrong.

This is not a strictly quantitative kind of study.[7] Here a reader is asked to attend to the semantic content of words in judging the quality or "strength" of parallels—a quality signaled not just by quantity (rarity of expression or high frequency of expressions) but by the imaginative force of the language in its meanings. Consider, for example, these lines from Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. A reflective Ulysses, after referring to Ajax's "*shoulder*," remarks upon "Time": "Time hath . . . *a wallet at his back*, / Wherein *he puts alms* for oblivion." The passage of time will make "*good* deeds past . . . *forgot* as soon / As done" (3.3.139-50). Ulysses continues in the same speech to observe: "*One* touch of *nature* makes *the whole world* kin, / That *all* with one *consent* . . . give to *dust*, that is a little *gilt*, / More laud than *gilt o'erdusted*" (175-79). The passage, with its language and imagery, is reminiscent of the words in two clusters of expressions from Thomas More's *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*—which, we shall see, Shakespeare knew.

> every man carrieth *a* double *wallet on his shoulder*, and *into the one . . . he putteth* . . . . In the other he layeth up . . . and swingeth it at *his back* (Yale *Complete Works*, 6, 296); given in *alms* (*CW* 6, 319)

> then *forget we* to look *what good men be* therein . . . . where we see a *good* man, and hear or see a *good thing*, there we take little heed (*CW* 6, 296)

there was and is *in all* men's heads a secret *consent of nature… . The whole world* (CW 6, 72, 75)

parted the *gilt* from the silver, consuming shortly the silver into *dust* (CW 6, 66)

I can find no other work in databases of early modern literature in which the language, imagery, and ideas from these texts come together in this way in two works. What is important is not simply the uniqueness of the set of parallels, which would make it just one in a count of singular matches, but their content: the shoulder and the putting of the wallet on the back and filling it (an image based on a fable by Aesop), the putting or giving of alms, the forgetting of the good that people do, the universalizing effects of nature, the covering by gilt of what is in essence dust. Not all parallels are created equal, and these have greater significance than others that can be discovered. They can be joined to other links of word and meaning between *Troilus* and works of More.[8] Their greater importance is due not to the rare joint appearance of words whose meanings do not matter, but to the concurrence of words whose meanings *do* matter because they suggest a unique affinity of two minds for the same group of complex concepts and images in contemplating similar ideas. This sharing may evoke two kinds of judgment: a literary one that pronounces on the quality of the imaginative associations, and an empirical one that the replication of a set of consciously produced associations of such quality is not likely to have occurred by chance. The elements taken together bespeak, without proving beyond all doubt, an effect had by a writer, More, on the imagination of a reader, Shakespeare, in a way that is hard to deny, even if no other consideration (like Shakespeare's knowledge, based on other information, of More's *Dialogue*) were to corroborate the evidence.

What, then, one may ask, becomes of a unique pattern of likeness in a discussion of influence when a greater and greater number of such synoptic sets of parallel materials are discovered and then consolidated? The significance of a first set is enhanced. The idea of a random joint appearance in the works of two authors becomes less and less possible to entertain. Two more examples may illustrate.

Language from a single scene in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* has links with a number of texts by More:

Ado 3.3	More
good men and true (1)	*good men and true* (*CW* 6, 260); *good men and faithful* (*CW* 12, 204)
that *touch pitch* will be *defil'd* (57)	hard to *touch pitch* and never *defile* the fingers (*CW* 12, 160)
merciful man (61-62)	*merciful men* (*CW* 1.2, 83; 12, 34)
[Conrade to Borachio, agents of the "*devil*" Don John, their "master" (155)] I am *at thy elbow* (98)	*the devil* stood *at her* (*our*) *elbow* (*CW* 12, 125; *CW* 13.1, 104)
elbow *itch'd* . . . a *scab* follow (99-100)	*scabbed itch* (*CW* 6, 125-26)
ducats (109)	*ducats* (*CW* 6, 371; *CW* 12, 127)
deformed . . . Deformed (124-25) (referring to Borachio, agent of the *devil*)	dark *deformed devil* (*CW* 12, 160)
god Bel's priests (134-35)	the *idol Bel* (*CW* 6, 89, 240); *CW* prophets . . . *of Bel* (*CW* 8, 30)

Hercules (136)	*Hercules* (*CW* 8, 34)
All this, I see, and I see that the *fashion* wears out more *apparel* (139-40)	*all* his *apparel*, and *all the fashion* (*CW* 8, 80)
shifted out (142)	*shifteth* in and *out* (*CW* 8, 664)
at the *temple* . . . before the whole *congregation* (161-62)	the common *temple* or parish church . . . churches and *congregations* of Christian people) (*CW* 6, 58)

The collection of parallels cannot be readily ascribed to coincidence. They match expressions from the small space of one scene by Shakespeare with texts by More in special ways. Six of the first seven examples involve the same work by More, *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation* (*CW* 12), with two of them from the *Dialogue* appearing on the same page and most of the rest on pages easily perused in a single reading. Not all of the expressions are rare, but they have pronounced meanings that are not usually discovered together and create a unique combination of pairs. One can find in early modern religious texts reference to the story of the prophet Daniel and the idol Bel (told in the Greek parts of the Book of Daniel, canonical in the Catholic Bible but apocryphal for Protestants and Jews) together with a church and its congregation called a "temple," and even with the pagan "Hercules." But only in Shakespeare and More do all of the matches occur. The priests of Bel, etc., in *Much Ado* can now join with the dorsal wallet, etc., in *Troilus and Cressida* as part of a larger trove of evidence.

Another linguistic comparison will increase the enlarged collection's size and importance. In this survey, the procedure entails considering a single work of More, his Latin *Epigrammata*, in relation to an array of texts by Shakespeare.[9] In Epigram 147, More writes of a foolish poet who tries to praise a king by awkwardly calling him "*princeps cui nemo secundus*," which means not (as intended) "a ruler second to none" but "a ruler to whom no one is second" (*CW* 3.2, 196). Shakespeare employs the same pun in *2 Henry IV*, giving the meaning a twist: "second to none—unseconded by you" (2.3.34). Then More imagines the suicide of a man so small that he used a spider's thread for a noose (*Usus Arachneo est stamine, pro laqueo*) (*Ep.* 166; *CW* 3.2, 206). Shakespeare also imagines such an image: "the smallest thread / That ever spider twisted from her womb / Will serve to strangle thee" (*KJ* 4.3.127-29). More satirized the profligacy of a wealthy man in these terms: "*Non miror sudare tuae te pondere vestis, / Quattuor haec terrae iugera vestis habet* ("I do not wonder that you sweat under the burden of your clothing; for this clothing carries in itself [because of a mortgage taken to pay for it] four acres of land" (*Ep*. 218, *CW* 3.2.242). Compare Shakespeare: "all . . . Have sold their fortunes at their native homes, / Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs [by spending on the armor that they wear]" (*KJ* 2.1.66-70); and "O, many / Have broke their backs with laying manors on 'em" (*H8* 1.1, 83-84). In Epigram 224, More reflects upon King Herod's keeping of his oath to grant Herodias the favor of beheading John the Baptist: "*O regem fidum, sed tunc tantummodo fidum, Maius perfidia est quum scelus, ipsa fides.* ("O faithful king, true to his oath, but true only when fidelity to the oath is a worse crime than breaking it") (*CW* 3.2, 248). Shakespeare takes up the same issue of illicit oaths, in similar language, also addressed to a king: "So mak'st thou faith an enemy to faith, / And like a civil war set'st oath to oath . . . . that which thou hast sworn to do amiss / Is not amiss when it is truly done; / And being not done, where doing tends to ill, / The truth is then most done not doing it"

(*KJ* 3.1.263-73). More's Epigram 254 prescribes as remedies for bad breath foods that smell even worse: "*foetorem si vis depellere cepae, / Hoc facile efficient allia mansa tibi*" ("If you wish to get rid of the odor of an onion, pieces of garlic kept in the mouth will easily do it for you" (*CW* 3.2, 266). The same prescription is given in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*: "marry, garlic / To mend her kissing with" (4.4.162-63). And perhaps it was Epigram 261 that sent Shakespeare to Apuleius's *Golden Ass* for Bottom's asininity in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[10] In the poem, a certain "*philosophus*" is described in this way: "*Aureus ille fuit. . . . Illi mens hominis asinino in corpore mansit*" ("That man was golden. . . . His mind remained that of a man, though in the body of an ass" (*CW* 3.2, 274). Bottom, after all, in his ass-head was a spokesman for "reason," a philosopher "as wise" as he was "beautiful" (3.1.143, 148). One should note that half of these passages are associated with *King John*. Taken as a group, they are quite heterogeneous in content, most unlikely to appear together elsewhere. This is a reasonable judgment, even if it is somewhat difficult to search comparatively in texts of different languages. Adding this set to the previous two makes the idea of coincidental parallelism more difficult to credit; and after much more searching and finding, a point will be reached, not with mathematical certainty or statistical precision, when that kind of explanation must be denied. Shakespeare, several decades after Thomas More wrote his words, read and remembered them.

Such convergence of evidence may be said to produce virtual not absolute certainty, leading to a conclusion that is beyond a reasonable doubt. If, however, the accumulation of parallels is, as MacDonald Jackson has insisted, "haphazard and biased," it leads to no certainty at all.[11] And as we know from judicial cases, judgments of strong likelihood, even when responsible, may by new evidence be eventually shown wrong. But then for the evidence to be disqualified,

it must be shown in specific ways why that is so. Objections to a case may also prove haphazard and biased.

Similar reasoning can underlie an attempt to distinguish and identify authors, as in the second half of this study, though the difficulties in making such distinctions are more formidable. We must look in this case to determine specifically in different parts of a multi-layered text evidence for the self-recollection of an author who is one of five possible. Yet the project's general purpose is similar in the search for influence, to rule out chance as an explanation for various signs, not all of them linguistic, that in this situation point to one author rather than the others. The process involves comparative testing of styles, the holistic consideration of verbal parallels of different kinds, judgments of the quality as well as quantity of verbal similarities, interpretative analysis—and all of this within an historical context.

 In a procedure that might raise questions, I have included in my searches for Shakespeare writings that are thought to be co-authored—by Shakespeare and others. I have done so on the principle that when words from a text that one has helped to create and with which one is otherwise deeply familiar appear in another work, the likelihood that they are recalled is substantially greater than that they were repeated by chance. My reasons for this approach can be indicated by an illustration.

Hamlet's most famous soliloquy contains a number of recognizable verbal parallels with Shakespeare's early history plays.

Hamlet 3.1.55-89	Early Histories
To be, or not to be . . . the *dread of something* . . . the native hue of *resolution* Is sicklied o'er with the *pale* cast of *thought*	steel thy *fearful thoughts* / And change misdoubt to *resolution*. *Be* that thou hopest *to be, or* what thou art / *Resign to death* . . . Let

	pale-faced fear keep with the mean-born man (*2H6* 3.1.331-35)
that is the question . . . ay, there's the rub	*Ay, there's the question* (*2H6* 4.2.141)
nobler in the mind	*noble mind*; *nobleness of mind* (*2H6* 2.4.10; *R3* 3.7.14)
to *sleep . . .* to *dream*	No *sleep . . .* Unless . . . some tormenting *dream* (*R3* 1.3.224-25)
natural *shocks . . . mortal* coil	*Mortal*-staring war . . . *shock* of arms (*R3* 5.3.90, 93)
give us pause	*bids us pause* (*3H6* 2.6.31)
the whips *and scorns . . .* the proud man's *contumely . . . .* the *spurns*	With scoffs *and scorns* and *contumelious* taunts . . . . *spurn* in pieces (*1H6* 1.4.39, 52)
the pangs of	*the pangs of* (*2H6* 3.3.24)
proud man's contumely . . . the *insolence*	How *insolent* of late he has become, How *proud* (*2H6* 3.1.7-8)
weary life	*weary of his life* (*1H6* 1.2.26)
conscience does make *cowards* of us	O *coward conscience . . . .* *Conscience* is but a word that *cowards* use (*R3* 5.3.179, 309)
enterprises of great pitch and moment	*matter of great moment* (*R3* 3.7.67)
their currents	*their currents* (*R3* 2.2.68)

| *lose the name of* action | *Hath not . . . The name of* valor (*2H6* 5.2.39-40) |

In addition to these collocations, a number of shared single words should be highlighted, of significance because they are not usually associated with one another: "outrageous" (*1H6*), "calamity" (*1H6*, *R3*), "whips" (*2H6*), "undiscover'd" (*2H6*), "native" (*2H6*, *3H6*) "sickly" (cf. "sicklied") (*R3*), "enterprise(s)" (*3H6*, *R3*, *1H6*), "awry" (*2H6*), "nymph(s)" (*3H6*, *R3*), "orisons" (*3H6*).

How might these similarities be explained? Many of the parallels are between *Hamlet* and *Richard III* and suggest that Shakespeare in the later play repeated, not always precisely, words he had written about a decade earlier. But the other likenesses originate in the *Henry VI* plays, which are now generally taken to contain the work of other dramatists, with little agreement about which of several writers was responsible for which parts.[12] Since some of the matching language may not be Shakespeare's at all, the safest course would be to ignore the evidence of recollection in the works judged co-labored. Safeness, however, may not be entirely satisfactory. The matches may constitute evidence that the places from which they came in the histories were Shakespearean. And even if they were not his, Shakespeare, with his deep knowledge of these plays, could well have harbored the language in his memory and brought it to mind in the process of composing *Hamlet*. The alternative possibility is that the resemblance between *Hamlet* and the histories occurred simply by chance, and there is little likelihood of that when the evidence is considered holistically. The parallels appear in texts which Shakespeare is known to have composed in whole or in part. Taken together the paired words and passages constitute a pattern which databases indicate is Shakespeare's alone. The scheme came about not by the accidental appearance of a few expressions by Greene or Nashe or Kyd or Marlowe, but by the residence of the expressions in a single mind,

Shakespeare's, no matter how they managed to enter it. To characterize such evidence as *a priori* inadmissible, no matter what can be done to render it legitimate, would be to ignore the urgent counsel of Browning's Fra Lippo: "count it crime / To let a truth slip." Case by case, if a judgment about the significance of a group of parallels is a close call, one may of course disallow examples from co-authored writings, or from parts of such writings, in a prudent agnosticism.

 In a study of this kind, words and sentences with their meanings are countable and may thereby count. More formal literary meanings may count as well, because interpretation can be in aid of identification, and vice versa. And so I venture literary analysis at many points, whatever the risks of "subjectivity." This is another reason why I do not offer in my conclusions a mathematical certainty, a final Q. E. D. The findings are open to modification. My purpose, however, is to open possibilities for responsible conjecture: not only in the work of judgmental interpretation, but of historical, even biographical inference. Thomas More himself, in researching the life of Richard III, found places in the evidence where there was "no certainty." And he recognized that "whoso divineth upon conjectures, may as well shoot too far as too short." Yet he proceeded in the search for "credible information."[13] One takes greater risks in proposing how something came to be, why it came to be, than in trying to establish that it did so. How could Shakespeare have known so much of the work of More? How did his voice come to be recorded so extensively in a play about More, which came into the hands of others? What were his motives in his initial project, that was taken up somehow by others? Temerity is required to take up these further questions, as I do. I admit to it. But in the words of Montaigne, "*Je n'enseigne point, je raconte*": I'm not teaching, just telling: telling about Shakespeare reading Thomas More, and about Shakespeare writing *Thomas More*.

In the characterization of parallels, one expression in particular requires explanation. I shall not use the phrase "unique parallel" in an absolute sense but to indicate that computer-assisted searches of specific databases of texts have shown me no other instances of a particular match. These online databases are *EEBO-TCP* (*Early English Books Online-Text Creation Partnership*), *Proquest One Literature* (Formerly *LION*, *Literature Online*), and the internet resource developed by Pervez Rizvi, "Collocations and N-Grams," accessible at https://www.shakespearestext.com .

Because the discovery of parallels has been aided but not entirely conducted by computer searches of texts, the results inevitably come short of completeness. Indeed, I have found that even wholly computerized scans of databases are less than perfect themselves, and not just because of the limitations of the investigator.[14] But I have not produced a statistical study of influence and authorship in which minor numerical differences in the evidence can affect the legitimacy of the conclusions. When I consider dissimilarities among authors, my interest for the most part is in major discrepancies, created by large numbers. Where some conclusions are approximate and revisable, they are not by that fact unreasonable.

Throughout the book, italics in parallel quotations signify that words are to be linked, thought of together, not necessarily that they are repeated. Translations where not specified are my own. Spellings are, with few exceptions, modernized. Quotations from the Bible are taken from the Geneva version unless specifically quoted from another text. Shakespeare's works are cited and quoted from G. Blakemore Evans, et al., eds., *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed.. Thomas More's writings are reproduced from *The Works of Sir Thomas More, Knight . . . Written by Him in the English Tongue* (London, 1557), from *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, (abbreviated *CW*, with contents of individual

volume numbers given here in the index), and from the *Selected Letters*, both published by Yale. The English translation of *Utopia* used is that of Ralph Robinson (1551). Texts of other early modern authors are referred to and quoted from the editions provided in *EEBO/EEBO-TCP* and *Proquest One Literature*, except where noted otherwise. Specifically, the play *Sir Thomas More* is usually cited from the Arden3 edition of John Jowett.

Part I

Reading Thomas More

Chapter 1
Shakespeare Reading Thomas More

That Shakespeare read works of Thomas More has long been recognized. A story by More, which he had heard from his father, about a false miracle exposed by the Duke of Gloucester at St Alban's, was the source of Saunder Simpcox's hoax in *2 Henry VI* 2.1. In *Richard III* Shakespeare relied heavily for language, tone, and content on More's unfinished *History* of the King. Stephen Greenblatt, in *Hamlet in Purgatory*, went much beyond earlier scholarship that had found wording from More's *The Supplication of Souls* in a speech of the elder Hamlet's Ghost. He analyzed at length the conceptual relevance to the play of the dispute between More and Simon Fish in matters theological, psychological, eschatological, ecclesiastical, and political.[1] Greenblatt was much more interested in the history and sociology of concepts than in what T. W. Baldwin once called "compositional genetics," and thus made few claims about "sources."[2] The Simpcox story, however, and Richard's history have retained their interest for scholars curious about Shakespeare's reading. Perhaps uncomfortable with too close an intellectual connection between the two men, commentators have suggested that Shakespeare would not have sought out More's work itself for any particular personal motive; he most likely would have encountered it in the course of his scouring the historical literature important to his dramas. More's anecdote about Simpcox, from *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (*CW* 6, 86-87), was closely paraphrased by Richard Grafton in his *Chronicle* and reprinted by John Foxe in his *Acts and Monuments*. The *History of Richard the Third* was incorporated by Grafton into Edward Hall's history and by Raphael Holinshed into his. No certain reason has yet been found to claim that Shakespeare went beyond these historians in his

recollections. But there is in fact much evidence that he did so; that from his earliest years as a writer, Shakespeare was reading More, and indeed, Moreana, in primary sources, as it will be part of the task of this study to demonstrate.

Investigation of Shakespeare's knowledge of More's work in its published form outside the abstracts and chronicles of the times may begin with a close examination of the tale of Simpcox as it appears in editions published by Catholic printers. In the second part of *Henry VI*, Duke Humphrey exposes the false claim of Simpcox's "miraculous" cure by tricking him into naming and distinguishing colors and thereby showing knowledge that a man "born blind" could not possess. Grafton and Foxe end their narratives where More does, at the placing of the hoaxer in the stocks. Several paragraphs after concluding his story in the *Dialogue*, however, where the reporters do not follow him, More describes Simpcox as a "blison" (for "bisson") beggar" and refers as well to a "meinie of monks" (*CW* 6, 88). "Bisson" (i.e., blind, or blinding) appears nowhere in Grafton or Foxe but is famously spoken by the First Player in *Hamlet*: "bisson rheum" (2.2.506: "Bison" in Quarto 2), while "meinie" or "meiny" (group or household) is found in *Lear* (2.4.35, Folio), and both words in *Coriolanus* (2.1.64, 3.1.64 [as "beesom"]).[3] This circumstance, involving words relatively uncommon in Shakespeare's day, suggests that we look for other parallel language that might link in a chain of recollection a play like *Hamlet* with the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*.

It would have been either from one of the editions of the *Dialogue* printed during More's lifetime by John and William Rastell (1529-31), or from the folio collection of More's English *Works* published by William Rastell in 1557 (and certainly not from Grafton or Foxe) that the author of *Hamlet* 2.2 would have recalled other passages in the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* such as the following:

Hamlet 2.2	*Heresies*
we shall *sift him* (58)	Satan hath desired to *sift ye* (*CW* 6, 107; cf. Luke 22:31)
falsely borne in hand (67)	*wrong borne in hand* (*CW* 6, 255)
What do you think . . . ? what might you think . . . ? What might you . . . (129-34)	*What would ye then think . . . ? What would ye . . . . What would ye . . . .* (*CW* 6, 154, 156, 157)
short tale to make (146)	*short tale to make* (*CW* 6, 79)
a dead dog (181)	*a dead dog* (*CW* 6, 296)
in the secret parts of (235)	*in the secret place of* (*CW* 6, 38)
I will tell you why (293)	*I will tell you why* (*CW* 6, 277)
have of late (295)	*have of late* (*CW* 6, 275)
all *custom of exercises* (296-297)	by *custom* of running and going and running . . . by some kind *of exercise* (*CW* 6, 132)
Man . . . not . . . nor women neither (309)	no man . . . *nor woman neither* (*CW* 6, 231)
give *twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats* (365-66)	asking first *a hundred ducats, then fifty, then forty, then twenty* (*CW* 6, 371)
swaddling-clouts (383)	*swaddling clouts* (*CW* 6, 381)
Buzz, buzz (393)	such another *buzzing* they make (*CW* 6, 259)

one *fair daughter and* (407)	the *fair daughter and* (*CW* 6, 371)
In *general synod take away* (494)	which was after, in the eighth *synod*, by the *general* council . . . , *annulled* (*CW* 6, 355)
the *barber's* (499)	a *barber's* (*CW* 6, 308)
blench (597)	*blenched* (*CW* 6, 251)
May be a *devil* . . .[who] *Abuses* [= deceives] me to damn me (599-604)	*whether* these miracles *be made* by God, and for good saints, or *by the devil for our deceit* and delusion . . . . whereby shall we be sure that God doth them? since *the devil may do* them, and we be not sure that God doth them *CW* 6, 95-96)

Additional evidence that Shakespeare was recalling the More folio in particular as he developed *2 Henry VI* 2.1 can be seen both in the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* and in several other compositions that the volume of More's *Works* contains. Expanding the original tale, Shakespeare has Simpcox pretend to be *lame* as well as blind, perhaps prompted by More's mention just before the tale begins of "some *lame* beggar" (2.1.93; *CW* 6, 85). Simpcox claims that his lameness resulted from a fall from a "*plum*-tree" as he tried to pick "*plums*" for his wife (2.1.95, 99). More had also spoken, some pages later, of "a *plum*" (*CW* 6, 130). Then too, the surname "Simpcox" itself may have been suggested by the *Dialogue*. There is in this work a comic character, something of a fool, surnamed "Simkin" (*CW* 6, 274-76; cf. Chaucer's "Symkyn" in "The Reeve's Tale"). The *OED* (s. v. "Simpkin") finds "Simkin" to be "a pet form of the male forename *Simon*," the suffix "-kin" being a diminutive. Indeed, elsewhere in the *Works*, More uses Simkin and Sim as a forename: "Saint Simkin," "Saint Sim," "Simkin

Salem" (*CW* 8, 153, 455; *CW* 10, 78, 223-24). Did Shakespeare, under More's influence, intend "Simpcox" to be a portmanteau expression combining "simple Simon" and "coxcomb"? That would help explain Saunder's reference to himself, much to the consternation of editors, as "Simon" (2.1.89). Among other verbal links between this scene in *2 Henry VI* and More, is one that connects Gloucester's final verdict on the imposter and his abetting wife, "Let them *be whipt through every market town*" (155), with another piece included in the 1557 *Works*, *The Supplication of Souls*, in which words from Simon Fish's *A Supplication for the Beggars* are quoted: "to *be whipped* naked *about every market town*" (*CW* 7, 9; reprinted by Foxe in *Acts and Monuments*). These are three of only four instances of the expression about whipping through every market town found from Shakespeare's lifetime in the databases of early modern literature (a later Catholic tract printed at St. Omer in 1620 quotes the *Supplication*).

That Shakespeare retained a deep memory of *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, especially in his works of mid-career, can be shown in a further sampling of parallels in language and thought.

Shakespeare	*Heresies*
1H4 3.2.46-47, 75-76: By being seldom seen, I could not stir But . . . I was *wonder'd* at . . . . He was but as the *cuckoo* is *in June*, Heard, not regarded	the acquaintance and daily beholding taketh away the *wondering* . . . .No more marvelous is a *cuckoo* than a cock, though the one be seen *but in summer* and the other all the year (*CW* 6, 80 [near the false miracle]
Ham 1.4.47: *canoniz'd bones*	the *canonized* . . . . [their] *bones* (*CW* 6, 216-17)

Ham 3.1.63-65: *To die, to sleep*—To *sleep*, perchance to *dream* . . . for in that *sleep of death* what *dreams* may come	[Luther, in a reversal of his earlier opinion about Purgatory] wrote . . . that all men's souls "*lie still and sleep* till Doomsday." "Marry," quoth your friend, "then hath some man had a *sleep* of a fair length! They will, I ween, when they wake forget some of their *dreams*!" (*CW* 6, 365)
Ham 3.1.75: *fardels bear*	great *fardels* . . . to the *bearing whereof* (*CW* 6, 104)
Ham 4.3.20-21: convocation of politic *worms* are e'en at him. Your *worm* is your only *emperor* for diet	appeared . . . at *Worms*, before the *Emperor* (*CW* 6, 362)
Ham 4.5.17, 84, 23-24.; 84-85; 3.1.120: *sick soul* / *In hugger-mugger* / [lines from the ballad of the *Walsingham pilgrim*]; / poor Ophelia Divided from herself and her fair judgment; / Get thee to a *nunn'ry*	*soul-sick* / *in hugger-mugger* / to *Walsingham* in *pilgrimages*; / the daughter of Sir Roger Wentworth, Knight [diabolically *crazed*; cf. Ophelia's madness]; / [who is cured and goes off to a *nunnery*] (*CW* 6, 343, 420, 91, 93-94)
TN 3.1.71-72: [Folio's *bad French*:] *Dieu vou guard Monsieur. Et vouz ousie vostre seruiture*	when we speak *French in sport*, *die vous garde, senior* (*CW* 6, 290)
TN 4.1.33-34: *I'll go another way to work with him*	*I will go* now *another way to work with thee* (*CW* 6, 250) [only ‖ in pre-Restoration drama]
TC 3.3.139-46: *on* the *shoulder* . . . .*Time hath* . . . *a wallet at his back,*	every man carrieth *a* double *wallet on his shoulder,* and *into the*

Whereon *he puts* . . . .

one . . . he putteth . . . . In the other he layeth up . . . and swingeth it at *his back* (*CW* 6, 296)

TC 3.3.144, 148: are my deeds *forgot . . . good deeds* past

then *forget we* to look *what good men be* therein . . . . where we see a good man, and hear or see a *good thing*, there we take little heed. (*CW* 6, 296)

TC 3.3.175-76: One touch *of nature* maketh *the whole world* kin, That all with one *consent*

there was and is *in all* men's heads a secret *consent of nature*… . *The whole world* (*CW* 6, 72, 75)

TC 3.3.178: give to *dust* that is a little *gilt*

parted the *gilt* from the silver, consuming shortly the silver into *dust* (*CW* 6, 66)

AW 1.1.217: *ascribe to* heaven. The *fated sky*

ascribe allthing *to destiny* (*CW* 6, 18, 376)

AW 1.3.204-207: *Indian*-like . . . I adore *The sun*, that looks upon his *worshipper*, But knows of him no more [+ *LLL* 4.3.218: *man of Inde*]

the *man of Inde* . . . can by *no* learning *know* the course of *the sun* (*CW* 6, 66) [+ *Utopia* : Some *worship* for God *the sun* (P8ᵛ)]

AW 2.2.13-28: *have an answer* . . . . *like a barber's chair* . . . .*groats* . . . . *Shrove Tuesday* . . . . *quean* . . . . as the *nun's lip to the friar's mouth* . . . . *pudding . . . . an answer of such*

have an answer / *as a barber's chair* / *groats* / *Shrove Tuesday* / *queans* / a *friar's* [i.e., Luther's] living that "weddeth" *a nun* . . . . by *mouth* / joined *friars and nuns together in lechery* / *pudding* / *the answer of such* (*CW* 6, 156, 308, 104, 267, 350, 349, 427, 321, 138)

AW 2.3.1-6: They say *miracles* are

the *cause* be to us *unknown* why

past, and we have our *philosophical persons*, to make modern and familiar, *things* supernatural and *causeless*. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into *seeming* knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an *unknown* fear

God doth in some place *miracles* and in some place none . . . . *things* that seem far against reason [i.e., miracles] because they be far above reason . . . . to show you further what necessity there is to believe other men in *things* not only *unknown*, but also *seeming* impossible . . . . the *philosophers* . . . .great-reasoned men and *philosopher*s have doubted [miracles] . . . *causeless* (*CW* 6, 55, 66, 72, 73)

AW 5.2.49-50: *one* brings thee in *grace*, and the *other* brings thee out

one would take hold of his *grace*, and *the other* would reject it *CW* 6, 402)

Shakespeare read extensively in others of More's collected *Works*, as can also be established. Since Shakespeare's debt to More's *History of Richard III* in his own *Richard* is large and generally acknowledged, we may begin with a consideration of this play. The immediate sources of the drama were Edward Hall's *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Houses of Lancaster and York* (1548) and Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577, 1587), from which Shakespeare had derived so much else in writing his history plays. These two chronicles had embedded More's *History*, with minor changes, in their own: Hall's posthumous version was produced by Richard Grafton, first in his *Continuation* of John Hardying's *Chronicle* (twice in 1543), then in his two printings of Hall; and Holinshed was able to rely for his copy on William Rastell's printing of More's *Works* (1557). It is clear that when Hall differed from Holinshed, Shakespeare followed one author in content and language, sometimes the other; and therefore the playwright must have had access to both. Thus at *Richard*

III 3.7.95 (s.d.), a fraudulently pious Richard is flanked between "two bishops" as he greets a delegation, a fact which Hall mentions but More and Holinshed do not. At 4.2.103-107, Richard, after being shown a castle named "Rouge-mont," is startled to be reminded of a prediction by "a bard of Ireland" of an early death after seeing "Richmond." This incident (without the Irish bard) is found only in the 1587 edition of Holinshed. But when as most often happens the chroniclers agree in their recording of More, and Shakespeare follows them, it cannot be determined whether the dramatist was indebted to the 1557 *Works* as a third source or stimulus. Shakespeare, for example, has Buckingham say: "Oft have I heard of sanctuary men, / But sanctuary children never until now" (3.1.55-56). More had written: "I have often heard of sanctuary men. But I never heard erst of sanctuary children" (*CW* 2, 33). Since both Hall and Holinshed reproduced More's text almost exactly, the parallels are uninformative on the question of influence. Proof that Shakespeare recalled the 1557 volume in composing *Richard III* emerges when, without reference to the chronicles, More's writings other than his *History* are seen to have contributed to the writing of the play.

The association of *Richard* with various works by More can best be appreciated by noting echoes concentrated in certain scenes. In 1.3, the old queen Margaret, distinguished for her many anathemas, calls upon God to hold back strategically for a time the plagues of his vengeance against the wicked, confident that he will be roused in good time from his apparent slumber as criminals flourish:

> let them [the heavens] keep it [a plague] till *thy sins be ripe*,
> And then hurl down their indignation
> . . . .
> I will not think but they [curses] *ascend* the sky,
> And there *awake God's* gentle-*sleeping peace*.
>
> (218-19, 286-87)