Prechter's Reply to Anonymous Critique Posted online on July 1, 2025

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I welcome the opportunity to defend and expand the case that Thomas Nashe is a pen name of the Earl of Oxford. The aim of this reply is to inform and perhaps delight the intellectually curious.

This is an essay, not a paper. References cited in my book (*Oxford's Voices*) and paper on Nashe for *The Oxfordian* (TOX; link in Appendix 3) or in the "Critique" are not necessarily repeated. The aim here is to assess the validity of critics' arguments. I respond here to all their points, substantive and trivial.

The critique to which I am responding came in three parts. The author of Part 1 makes narrow points and puffs them up to imply major transgressions. The author of Part 2 makes flimsy arguments, easily refuted. The author of Part 3 seems to be genuinely trying to figure things out under the old paradigm.

I don't care that these critics decided to post anonymously. Perhaps one reason is that they have authored papers and articles, too, and wish to avoid the risk of having someone perform a hatchet job on them. The identities of the critics are not hard to figure out (I didn't do authorship research for 25 years for nothing), and I can assure you that dismantling some of their published claims would not take much effort.

Nevertheless, my focus is on defending and expanding my case, not attacking these people. So, let's get going.

Conundrums on Both Sides

On the question of Thomas Nashe's actuality, each side faces a serious conundrum:

> Traditional biographers must account for why Nashe and the Earl of Oxford (both as himself and Shakespeare) are intimately intwined in both language and concerns, without a notable difference between them.
>
> The thesis that Nashe is a pseudonym must account for why there is a paper trail indicating a life associated with the works that came out under the name Thomas Nashe.

Biographers of Nashe have failed to deal with the first conundrum. A few of them have expressed dismay over it. Most of them have avoided the question.

I dealt with the second conundrum head-on. I have interpreted the Thomas Nashe biography in a unique and consistent way, offering a coherent picture.

I perceive no alternatives. The idea that Nashe is an allonym doesn't work beyond the possibility that Oxford borrowed Nashe's name from a University of Cambridge butler or an unremarkable man from Lowestoft. The life of Nashe the writer, it seems to me, is either fully valid or fully manufactured. I think it's the latter.

A Brief Overview of the Case that Oxford Is Nashe

It is crucial to point out that when people observe how often Nashe and Shakespeare think and sound alike, they are really observing how much Nashe and *the Earl of Oxford* think and

sound alike. That fact can slip even an Oxfordian's mind when people refer to "Shakespeare" in the context of a discussion about Nashe.

Oxford's Concerns Are Nashe's Concerns

As noted in my TOX paper, Thomas Nashe exhibits obsessive interest in matters relating to the Earl of Oxford, stretching back years and displaying knowledge of obscure details of Oxford's experiences and the lives of his relatives, both living and dead.

Nicholl deduced that in *Pierce Penilesse* (1592), Nashe by way of an animal fable "precisely allegorized" events at the highest levels of society leading to the execution of Oxford's beloved elder cousin, the Duke of Norfolk, in 1572. Nicholl mused, "'Alas, goodly Creature' [is] a curiously poignant epitaph for a Catholic who had been executed for treason." The term is Oxford's: "Goodly creature" appears in *Pericles* (IV,i), and "goodly creatures" appears in *The Tempest* (V,i).

The Earl of Surrey, wrote Nicholl, is "featured prominently and approvingly in *The Unfortunate Traveller*," in which Nashe "praises Surrey unstintingly." Surrey was Oxford's uncle. He pioneered blank verse and the Shakespearean sonnet form, both of which Oxford adopted early in life.

Across three separate pamphlets, Nashe defends the Earl of Oxford against disrespect shown by Gabriel Harvey, citing Harvey's Audley End speech of 1578 and his "*Speculum Tuscanismi*" poem of 1580. These events would have been trivial to everyone except the Earl of Oxford, who experienced them personally. Even here, there is a linguistic link to Oxford. Nashe over two pamphlets refers to Harvey as "this Thraso" — a braggart — with his "Thrasonimse," and Shakespeare in *Love's Labor's Lost* describes the braggart Armado as "thrasonicall."

Nashe's skit, *Summers Last Will and Testament*, caricatures Oxford's father-in-law, his brothers-in-law and himself. It evidences knowledge of details in Lord Burghley's will, which did not come to broader light until Burghley's death in August 1598. Rita Lamb understood that parody was involved but could not fathom how Nashe got away with producing the play, much less publishing it eight years later, "without a flicker of response [and] no record, or even report, of Nashe being formally punished." In the play, the character Vere admits to having dissipated "all my flowry treasure, and flower of my youth…spent on good fellows, in these sports you have seene," meaning plays. In a 1601 letter to Robert Cecil, the Earl of Oxford used similar words: "yf yt shall pleas her Magestie in regard of my youthe tyme & fortune spent in her Courte…."

Nicholl wrote, "Nashe [knew] two of the Oxonian 'Wits' particularly well: John Lyly and Thomas Watson." No historical record places Nashe with either man, but connections to Oxford are direct: John Lyly served as Oxford's personal secretary, and Watson dedicated his only book of English poetry, *Hekatompathia*, to the Earl of Oxford.

Shakespeare and Nashe dedicated works to the Earl of Southampton in 1593-1594, then stopped. Southampton was being encouraged to marry Oxford's daughter Elizabeth until late 1594. After Southampton paid to avoid the match, the dedications ceased.

Oxford's Language and Nashe's Language Are Intimately Intertwined

As noted in my paper, scholars have made some stunning statements about the linguistic parallels peppering the works of Oxford and Nashe. McCarthy summarized Tobin's observations:

> [Stylistic parallels are] distributed over almost the whole of Nashe's oeuvre and many of Shakespeare's histories and comedies[, including] *Titus Andronicus, Richard III, Henry IV, Henry V, Julius Caesar, Troilus and Cressida, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, Merchant of Venice, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, All's Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure* [and] *Merry Wives of Windsor*. (McCarthy 151)
>
> J. Dover Wilson…said in conclusion that he could not account for them…. (McCarthy 146)
>
> Nashe is so much a part of the fabric of Shakespeare's works that it is not too much to say that Shakespeare without Nashe and his works would not be Shakespeare. (Tobin 109)

One of McCarthy's comments links these overlaps to shared emotional states:

> It is hard to imagine the process by which scraps of five of Nashe's works keep floating into Shakespeare's head, and eventually forced their way into the diction of [*Hamlet*] with such huge freight of apparently personal emotion…. (McCarthy 149)

So, the parallels are not only linguistic and ideational but also emotional. They show up not just in the plays and pamphlets past scholars have quoted but throughout the entirety of both canons, as any randomly chosen text from Nashe will reveal.

Oxford and Nashe *think* the same, *write* the same, and *feel* the same.

Shared Language Extends to Other Voices

How many times might you think my book (OV) refers to Nashe *outside* the Nashe chapter? A handful? The answer is: *over 2400 times*. It takes reading the entire book to understand how intricate the literary relationships are between the Nashe persona and Oxford's other pen names (Voices). Those observations form the tapestry of my case.

OV covers the equivalent of 6000 normal-sized book pages. Obviously, not everything I have observed about Nashe will fit into a short journal paper or even a full chapter, and I am sure you don't want me to insert 300 pages here to make the point. Appendix 2 provides examples of textual overlaps with two other Voices just to give you a flavor.

In *Shakespeare's Books* (p.310), Stuart Gillespie refers to "…Shakespeare's acquaintance with Nashe in echoes of *rare or otherwise distinctive words and phrases*." They show up even in places no orthodox scholar would expect, including two instances of private correspondence and a purported reminiscence by Nashe about his childhood (topics covered below).

A Quiz

Two books attributed to different authors in the Elizabethan era prompted identical stylistic assessments from critics. Can you guess which books they are talking about?

One scholar cited a book for these traits:

> "a gift for energetic doggerel,"
> a "weird and piquant vocabulary [like] Lewis Carroll,"
> a "jaunty and comic" tone
> and "a rugged English gusto."

Compare those descriptions, line by line in order, to what another critic wrote about another book:

> "he indulges his own kind of scribbledehobble,"
> "the nonce words come thick and fast [in this] dazzling piece of apparent jabberwocky,"
> conveying a "zestful humour"
> with "the full vigor of the English language…."

Isn't that correspondence remarkable?

Neither scholar quoted above indicated that he knew of the other's assessment. The first scholar was writing more than three decades after the second, about a book that was written more than three decades before the first. Did you guess the books correctly?

> The first book, described by J.F. Nims in 2000, is *Ovids Metamorphoses* (1567), attributed to Oxford's uncle, Arthur Golding.
>
> The second book, described by J.B. Steane in 1972, is *Lenten Stuffe* (1599), attributed to Thomas Nashe.

The two books are stylistically similar because they were written by the same man. The Earl of Oxford completed the first exercise when he was 17 years old (see article link in Appendix 3) and the second one at age 48.

No other writers of the Elizabethan era exhibit the same degree of sustained wordsmithing panache. Most other writers' material was conservative, if not leaden. Oxford's talent in this regard (as in others) was unique.

Conclusion

The two names — Nashe and Oxford — belong to *conjoined twins*. The cavalier suggestion that a real Nashe simply copied or absorbed Shakespeare's stylistic ways, or vice versa, does not work (more on that idea below). The most elegant and parsimonious explanation for the two canons' close correspondence is that one person is doing the writing.

A Bit of Context

Numerous scholars have remarked upon Shakespeare's literary debt to John Lyly. Do you really think the greatest master of language the world has ever known (Oxford, as Shakespeare) learned the complex and innovative literary technique known as euphuism from his *secretary*? If you doubt it, and if you think Oxford might have written the two Euphues books that came out in John Lyly's name, you have cracked open the door to Oxford's Voices.

Do you think it reasonable that John Lyly wrote two groundbreaking prose novels about Euphues in 1578 and 1579, causing a court craze, and then, despite living another quarter century, never wrote another? And that a newcomer named Robert Greene took over immediately in 1580, continuing the progression of prose novels, one of which features Euphues? If you think that shift is odd, you have opened the door to Oxford's Voices.

Do you think it strangely convenient that after Robert Greene's mock death in print, Thomas Nashe took on Greene's fight against the Harvey brothers, carrying forward with the

satirical tone Greene used in his late pamphlet, *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*? If so, read on.

Scholars have proposed that Shakespeare (Oxford) stole ideas, plots and language from Lyly, Greene and Nashe. But Oxford's publishing activity has been traced back to 1560 (Precher, TOX, 2007) and his playwriting activities back to 1562 (Jimenez, TOX, 2004), so Oxford is the progenitor in all three cases. Do all four names (Lyly, Greene, Nashe and Shakespeare) belong to independent writers who steal their ideas and language from predecessors? Or is one man behind them?

Gabriel Harvey recognized the progression described here by calling "*Nashe*, the Ape of *Greene*; *Greene*, the Ape of *Euphues*." He continues with, "Euphues, the Ape of *Envie*," which Oxfordians might recognize as a homonym for N.V., or Ned Vere. Harvey concluded with a summary: "the three famous mammets of the press, and my three notorious feudists, drawe all in a yoke." Here is the definition of *mammet*, from Google AI:

> *Mammet* is an obsolete English word, now primarily found in historical or literary contexts. It can refer to a false god or idol, or more commonly, a doll, puppet, or effigy, like a scarecrow.

Lyly, Greene and Nashe, says Harvey, are not living beings but *puppets* and *scarecrows*, i.e. fake people, and they are *yoked as one* because they are pen names of a single writer.

In *A New Letter of Notable Contents* (1593), Harvey conflates four literary personae of the Earl of Oxford:

> [They may] wonder how Machiavell can teach a Prince to be, and not to be religious?
> [who] within few moneths is won, or charmed, or inchaunted, (or
> what Metamorphosis should I terme it?) [and] whom shall he cunnycatch…?

He equates Nashe (as Machiavelli), Shakespeare (referencing *Hamlet*), Arthur Golding (referencing *Metamorphoses*) and Robert Greene (whose name is on four pamphlets about "cony-catchers").

One of our critics (Anon3) tries to accommodate such statements by adopting the proposal that a real-life Nashe may have been writing "on behalf of a crew of writers who were associated with de Vere." That idea does not pan out well, because although some scholars have proposed that Greene and Nashe were working nose to nose on pamphlets such as *Menaphon*, *Quip* and perhaps *Groats-worth*, Nashe testifies in *Strange Newes* that he had met Greene in the past "only for a carowse or two" and had "not seene him [for] two yeares"!

What is all that about? Someone is lying, and that someone, as Anon3 concedes, is "associated with de Vere." What I think happened is that Oxford dispatched his pen name Greene partly in response to Harvey's threat of a lawsuit (see more below), and he did not want anyone looking for Nashe to get information about Greene. So, he had Nashe say they were never close.

Our critics take orthodox stories for granted, missing hundreds of fine points that produce internal contradictions. When examined, the fine points fit my paradigm better than theirs.

In the Context of Oxford's Voices, Numerous Mysteries Evaporate

It is crucial to understand how intimately other Voices are linked to Thomas Nashe and how those connections reveal what is going on. Here is but one of a hundred examples provided in OV:

In *Christes Teares* (1593), Nashe writes to Lady Elizabeth Carey, "*To the eternizing of the heroical family of the Careys, my choicest studies have I tasked*." Nashe's comment does not fit the orthodox context. McKerrow admitted, "*Nothing of the kind…is known*." Think for a moment what a staggering admission that is. Nashe says he had dedicated his *choicest studies* to the Careys, yet Nashe's most dedicated biographers cannot find any trace of them. Where are they?

In my context, all is crystal clear. William Warner (another name with no bio) had dedicated *Pan his Syrinx Pipe* (1584) to George Carey and *Albions England* (1586) to Henry Carey. Robert Greene had dedicated *Orpharion* (1588) to Robert Carey. Thomas Lodge — a real person whose name Oxford used for literature — had dedicated *Rosalynde* (1590) to Henry Carey. Fitting Nashe's characterization, *Albions England* and *Rosalynde* are unquestionably among the "choicest" of all Elizabethan literature.

Observe how *Rosalynde* links to three other Voices: The book's subtitle, *Euphues Golden Legacie*, names John Lyly's hero; Shakespeare dramatized the story in *As You Like It*; and the story is so closely related to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* that John Payne Collier proposed that Greene wrote *Rosalynde*. Be wary of taking a step down that road. If Lodge is lying about his authorship of *Rosalynde*, then you can't trust anything these writers say, can you?

Nashe was the toughest of all Voices to establish because I had to accommodate the substantial body of evidence implying he was a real person. I think I did a pretty good job of it. My critics think I failed, and they explained why. Come along with me and see how they fare.

Replying to the Critique

The critique posted online is a massive and tedious 154 pages, much of it pasted-in filler. I present below every point made in it, condensed for easy understanding. I think there are interesting points throughout my replies, but if you care only to hit the highlights, just search on carats (^), and they will take you to the most fun parts.

Three people contributed to the critique. Privately, I call these shadows Mahue, Dodger and Dachau, but to be polite, in this reply I will call them Anon, Anon2 and Anon3.

Anon2 critiques my paper, and the other two critique a chapter in my book. None of their arguments confirm that Thomas Nashe was real. Some of them led me to additional, delightful evidence that the name is a persona.

Their title is "A Critique of the Theory that Thomas Nashe was a Pseudonym," but their treatment is far narrower than that. They evade the first conundrum described above and ignore the bulk of my case. Their approach is to selectively critique bits of my texts. Before moving on to specific responses, we must establish a key point.

Continually Affirming the Consequent

It is important to recognize that the critique is full of comments applying the logical fallacy of affirming the consequent. An example from Anon2 is, "Nashe's participation in the anti-Marprelate efforts fits very well with him living for a time in Archbishop Whitgift's home." Sure, *if* a real Nashe wrote the anti-Martinist pamphlets. If Oxford wrote them, then *he* was Whitgift's guest.

When one engages in that kind of thinking, one neglects to examine the context of a claim. After all, why bother? If the premise is self-evident, so is the conclusion.

Consider the situation that Anon2 takes for granted in the above-quoted statement. The intrusion of Martin Marprelate into English religio-politics was a threat to the survival of the state. Oxford, who had proved himself a consummate wordsmith over a period of 30 years, who

was trusted to maintain state secrets, and who had been an acquaintance of Archbishop Whitgift since their shared Cambridge days in 1563-1564, would have been authorities' natural choice for spokesman. A few years later, Whitgift did Oxford an immense favor by personally signing off on the publication of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*.

Would the Church of England have chosen the Thomas Nashe of traditional biography to represent its cause? Never. Like all Nashe's biographers, our critics evade an inconvenient fact: At the time the Church chose its primary literary defender, Nashe, fresh out of college, had not issued a single publication.

The first anti-Marprelate pamphlet went out in August 1589 under the name Pasquil. As Grosart assured us, "'Pasquil' was everywhere (contemporaneously) accepted as a pseudonym of Thomas Nashe." Nicholl confirmed of Pasquil's pamphlets, "There is certainly material from Nashe in them…." Yet Nashe's preface to Robert Greene's *Menaphon*, registered the same month, was not yet in print, and his first pamphlet, *The Anatomie of Absurditie* (though registered the year before), did not come out until early 1590. In short, Archbishop Whitgift would have had no basis for believing at a 21-year-old lad with no published writing to his name was qualified to take on a literary battle of crucial importance to the Anglican Church and the English state.

One should not give critics free passes to claim or dismiss things summarily when the simplest declaration can be encumbered by such a glaring yet blithely unconsidered improbability. This is the kind of thing that occurs throughout the biography of Thomas Nashe, which is what prompted me to take a closer look in the first place.

Every time readers come across a statement such as, "Nashe's participation in the anti-Marprelate efforts fits very well with him living for a time in Archbishop Whitgift's home," they naturally take it as perfectly sensible. Didn't you? But time and again, it is not.

Now for my replies to specific charges in the critique.

Anon's Critiques

Anon's critiques, by far the best of the bunch, are ultimately of no force. I start with a review of his fact-checking ability and then answer his arguments roughly in the order he presented them. Let's dive in.

Mr. Fact-Checker Needs a Fact-Checker

Anon tries to embarrass me in several places with respect to references, but his smugness is for naught. Consider these four instances:

> **1)** Anon asserts, "Robert Prechter provides the wrong page number for this quotation of Nicholl. ["Nashe says…the parameters."] He cites this as being on p. 279 of *A Cup of News*, it is actually on p. 38."
> —On the contrary, the cited passage is right there on page 279. Anon located a *similar* passage on page 38, yet he was blind to the *correct* one on page 279. See for yourself:

27 TN III 329, with particular reference to the *Bowre of Delights* (1591), ascribed to (though largely disowned by) Nicholas Breton. See below, ch. 7.
28 TN III 156–72, II 282–5.
29 TN III 280.
30 TN III 262.
31 TN I 376, II 227, 229, 232–3, 327, III 34–5, 94, 264–5, 263.
32 TN I 369.
33 TN III 351, 372–3, 375.
34 On Elizabethan schooling, see Foster Watson, *English Grammar Schools to 1660* (1908); T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Petty School* (1943); Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth*, pp. 530–50; Dodd, pp. 91–8; Schoenbaum, pp. 50–9.
35 TN III 156, 351. 'Ruinous and desolate' is a historical rather than topographical description: Thetford had been the ecclesiastical centre of East Anglia until the see was removed to Norwich in the eleventh century. In the parish church, St Cuthbert's, there is a reference to Archbishop Parker's legacy providing 6s 8d *per annum* for a minister to 'preach and declare one sermon at the town of Thetford'. This must have been effective when Nashe knew Thetford (Parker died in 1575) and may be loosely referred to in the phrase 'tenne shillings Sermones'.
36 He is not the same as the Philip Gawdy (1562–1617) whose letters are extant – ed. I. H. Jeayes (Roxburghe Club, London, 1906) – though the latter was also a Norfolk gentleman, and possibly related.
37 He says (TN III 127) of his father: '. . . and (as another Scholler) he brought me up at St Iohns'. McKerrow takes this to mean 'he maintained both me and another scholar at St John's'. It could, however, mean 'he maintained me, as a scholar like himself, at St John's'. While there were traditions, and sometimes obligations, for churchmen to assist in funding parish scholars, the other reading is quite possible.
38 TN II 123–4.
39 TN III 60, 70, 194, I 356.
40 TN III 279–80.
41 TN V 135. McKerrow's analysis of Nashe's reading (V 110–36) is masterful, if a trifle starchy in its judgments on Nashe's intellect ('not once, in however trifling a matter, does he seem to have thought for himself'). He is also unduly sceptical about Nashe's knowledge of Aretino: see references above, ch. 1 n. 18.
42 GH I 195. The line was axiomatic as simple '*amo-amas-amat*' Latin. The pedant Holofernes gets it wrong – '*facile*' instead of '*fauste*' – in *Loves Labors Lost*, IV ii 90.
43 TN V 133: McKerrow notes 38 quotations from the *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria*, 23 from the *Metamorphoses*.
44 TN III 63, 60.

3 CAMBRIDGE

1 Nashe says (TN III 181) he 'took up his inn' at St John's for 'seven yere together lacking a quarter'. Lichfield says (GH III 68) he left Cambridge while a 'batchelor of the third yere', i.e. between March 1588 and March 1589. He sold his first MS to publisher Thomas Hackett, in London, not later than 19 September 1588 (SR II 499). That he came up in late 1581 and left in summer 1588 seems to satisfy the parameters. It was customary

2) Anon declares "…Robert Prechter doesn't give a citation for the passage in Charles Nicholl's book that he's referring to here. There isn't one. Charles Nicholl is unaware of both the court recognizance and George Carey's letter to his wife."
—Here we have a double falsehood. I did not draw from Nicholls' *book* but rather his *article* for the New DNB, which was dated January 3, 2008, 24 years after his book was published, by which time he had incorporated the new information. In utter opposition to Anon's blanket statement, Nicholl was aware of both items, about which I accurately represented his opinion.

3) Anon says, "This is unclear in Robert Prechter's book, but this quotation about the 'imagined expulsion' is not from Charles Nicholl, but rather Alexander Grossart's introduction to his edition of Nashe's works, in Vol. I, page xv.
—On the contrary yet again, the reference in my book is crystal-clear. Had Anon bothered to click on the asterisk sourcing the quote, he would have seen that it cites Grosart correctly and precisely: "Grosart, Alexander B., Ed., *The Complete Works of Thomas Nashe*, Vol.1, privately printed, 1883-84, p.xv."

4) Anon warns, "The italics are Prechter's, not Grossart's."
—Aside from twice misspelling the good doctor's name (an error to which he would have devoted a paragraph had it been mine), Anon obviously neglected to read the Preparation section at the outset of *Oxford's Voices*, which states my policy of using italics for emphasis throughout the book, with all exceptions consistently noted as follows: "(italics in the original)."

Those objections are peculiar enough for being petty. They are worse for being wrong.

We will now move on to meatier material.

^Carey's Letter to His Wife

Anon's first major declaration is, "George Carey's letter to his wife, when combined with a recognizance found in the *Repertory for the Court of Aldermen* of November 1593, is nearly conclusive proof that Thomas Nashe was not a pseudonym." I had already provided a strong reason not to believe that statement.

Anon purports to present Prechter's scenario but offers only part of it. He selectively omits the rest, stating, "An evaluation of this speculated scenario has been omitted in this paper; we do not have to parse through the details of this scenario." Is that so? What exactly does he not "parse"?

Anon omits all five key points on which my proposed scenario about Carey's letter stands. As explained in my paper and chapter, they are:

(1) Rita Lamb discerned dishonesty in the letter;
(2) Duncan-Jones observed that Carey's letter to his wife contains striking Nashean features;
(3) Prechter linked the letter's most colorful phrases to Oxford as Shakespeare;
(4) the letter slips into third person; and
(5) it was written in haste.

Duncan-Jones discerned in Carey's letter a handful of impressive connections to the writing of Thomas Nashe. As summarized in my paper, "George Carey's letter emulates Thomas Nashe in rhetoric, poetic expression, coining boisterous words and crafting sophisticated metaphors." Duncan-Jones made special note of the phrases, "my hors heeles" and "comody-tragedicall." Naturally in my context, one is not surprised to find that both terms turn up in Shakespeare. The first phrase shows up in *Henry VI, Part 1* (I,iv) as "my horse's heels," and the second one shows up in *Hamlet* (II,ii) as "tragical-comical."

The literary aspect of the letter is particularly noteworthy because it is *private correspondence*, in which George Carey, Captain-General of the Isle of Wight, is waxing eloquent in the manner of Thomas Nashe and Shakespeare, which is to say Thomas Nashe and *the Earl of Oxford*. And he manages to do so while writing *as fast as his hand can trot*. How did *that* happen? Were Nashe and Shakespeare's compositional ways second nature to him? Impossible. Carey wrote bureaucratic memos but issued no creative writing. I concluded that Oxford, in a jolly mood, was dictating a list of excuses to help his friend (whom he had known since at least 1570, when they served in the military briefly against the Scots) explain to his wife why he had to remain away from home for just a few more days.

One way for Anon to counter the idea that Oxford dictated his friend's letter would be to present some other writing by George Carey that breezily emulates Nashe and Shakespeare. He doesn't do that. No one will ever do it.

Anon asserts, "Of course, Nashe was found and arrested, at some point before 13 November 1593. Carey writes that Nashe is "there presently in great missery." But we cannot believe Carey on that point because someone sounding just like Nashe composed his letter. Nashe could not have been both present and miles away in a jail cell.

So, is Carey's letter an element of "conclusive proof" and "definitive evidence" that Oxford was not posing as Thomas Nashe? On the contrary, it serves as an instance in which Thomas Nashe is present where he is not supposed to be, confounding the biographical story. Anon uses the text of the Carey letter to challenge other lines of reasoning in my chapter, but because the veracity of the letter is suspect, the challenges are of no force.

On a minor point, Anon states there is no evidence that Oxford was with Carey at the time. That point is true but of no weight. Oxford's biography is mostly blank in the 1590s, so there is little evidence of anything he was doing. I think the stylistic aspects of Carey's letter reveal something he was doing.

Anon also states that Carey's letter proves that Nashe was receiving money from Carey. That would be true if the letter were genuine. But it is not.

Anon concludes, "The implications of this one document undermine many of the further arguments that Thomas Nashe must have been a pseudonym." On the contrary, the document undermines the orthodox story and slides neatly into ours.

Quibbles and Bits

Anon says, "There is no supporting evidence provided to establish this scenario, that the London aldermen were informed that *Christ's Tears* was written by de Vere." That is true. I merely proposed that their becoming informed would explain why Nashe escaped punishment for anti-government writing, which in those days was common, sure, swift and brutal.

Anon tries to discredit my assessment of the low probability that Greene and Nashe, both suspected Voices, were recorded as having matriculated at Oxford's old college of St. John's. Having studied a good deal about the colleges, he says I should have considered the sizes and

entrance requirements for all 32 colleges at Oxford and Cambridge to obtain a *precise number* of how low the probability was. He says my not having done so is "problematic." Look how far he goes with this theme:

> Again, if one really wanted to perform this calculation, one would have to study what kinds of students were accepted at the various colleges. What purposes did the various colleges serve? What colleges would students like Greene and Nashe have been interested in joining, and would likely have been accepted into?

The overkill here is palpable. How can anyone know what colleges Greene and Nashe would be "interested in joining," when neither name has any life whatsoever attached to it prior to the matriculation records conveniently appearing at Oxford's old college? Even if my estimate — which was based on the number of colleges — were to drop from 1 in 1000 to 1 in 500, or even 1 in 200, the coincidence is still remarkable. Anon could have done the calculation himself if he thought it would explain why the probability didn't matter. Doing so, however, might have required an explanation from *him*. Anon challenged my calculation, but he did not challenge its implication.

In discussing the Nayshe family's low income and therefore its inability to pay for a pre-university education, I called Thomas' supposed father, William Nayshe, "non-ordained" because, as Nicholl wrote, he "was never formally instituted as vicar." Anon protests: "he was a 'stipendiary curate'…" meaning a priest or priest's assistant. The DNB, however, does not say Nashe's father was a curate. It says, "His father, who is called in the Lowestoft parish register 'preacher' as well as 'minister,' *seems* to have been curate there, and *never obtained preferment*," which means he was never promoted. Nicholl uses *seems* as well. I do not know why Anon removes scholars' repeated term of uncertainty. It is indeed likely, as Anon proposes, that William "was paid an annual stipend." So, what? His pay was surely minimal. As Nicholl stated of William's financial status, "At these lower echelons, the clergy was an impecunious business." Anon knows all this because my chapter on Nashe includes all these quotes.

Anon says that a comment in W.C.'s *Polimanteia* (1595) suggesting that Nashe left Cambridge early could only have been a fact known from real life. But as discussed in detail below, W.C. knew that Nashe was Oxford, negating Anon's deduction.

I pointed out that in the letter Nashe addressed to William Cotton (discussed below), Nashe says nothing personal to his friend. I made up some quips: "Nashe does not say, 'Thanks for bringing that cash to me in the Fleet,' or, 'Hey, it sure was fun partying on Accession Day,' or anything like it." Anon objects that Nashe would not have said those specific things. I concede he is right, and I have fixed my offhand quips. But I also added, "*or anything like it*." The point remains: Nashe says nothing personal to his friend. Even "Do you plan to be in London soon?" would impress me as personal. I still think the letter is literature, not personal correspondence. Not to mention that its naturally incorporated legal language fits Oxford, a trained lawyer, which Nashe was not.

Much More Than Book Reading

Anon argues that if a real Nashe had been at Cambridge for six to seven years, he could have read enough sources to produce *The Anatomie of Absurditie*. There is far more involved, however, than just book reading. As noted in OV,

As a teenager, Nashe further managed to become proficient in the euphuistic writing style, which he employs while echoing dozens of textual constructions, references and even a misspelling from his predecessors George Pettie, John Lyly and Robert Greene [all Voices], as cited time and again by McKerrow. Euphuism is based on voluminous reading and memorization, and even if one had the requisite resources, executing that dense and ornamental style is exceedingly difficult. How did Nashe do it?

Throughout the remainder of his 400 pages of notes on Nashe's texts, McKerrow expands the above list of sources significantly. "Nash seems…to have been well read in…the burlesque poets of Italy."* "[H]e was widely read in the classics and was well versed in…Italian satires…and the work of Rabelais."* Flowing naturally from our context, from "The extent to which Shakespeare was familiar with Francois Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*…it becomes evident that Shakespeare was actually quite well read in the work."* Nashe also drew from du Bartas' *Second Semaine*. Yet one critic was loath to conclude that he knew French: "…I cannot learn that the passage had been translated into English so early, but I do not think that is any reason for supposing that Nashe had read the work in the original French."* He's right: In the orthodox context, there is *no reason* for such a supposition.

…Nashe knew the works of numerous other English writers, too. In his introduction to Greene's *Menaphon*, he judges the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, John Lidgate, John Gower, Robert Greene, George Gascoigne, George Turbervile, Arthur Golding, Thomas Phaer, Abraham Fraunce, Thomas Watson, Thomas Newton, Gabriel Harvey, Edmund Spenser, Matthew Roydon, Thomas Achelow, George Peele and William Warner. Some of these works weren't even published yet. Regarding Roydon's "A Frends Passion for his Astrophel," "he must have known it in manuscript, since it was first published, anonymously, in *The Phoenix Nest* anthology of 1593."*

Nashe did not merely consult sources, either; in many cases, he knew their content by heart. Steane wrote,

> Almost every page of McKerrow's notes on the texts contains its allusions to Ovid, Virgil, Horace and other standard classical writers[, as well as to] Spenser, Marlowe, Greene, Lyly, Sidney, Thomas Watson, William Warner and Sir John Davies…. these were no doubt the standard authors of the educated Elizabethan, *but Nashe had them in his system*, not just in his notebooks, for the allusions come (in his own phrase) "thick and three-fold" and clearly *a part of his mind*.*

In other words, Nashe did not merely know *of* these sources or work from open books; he had memorized them so thoroughly that they contribute to complex, intertwined allusions incorporated into his stream-of-consciousness writing. Density and complexity of allusions, an extremely rare authorial trait, is one of the hallmarks of Shakespeare.

Nashe never explains how he obtained access to all these books, which were expensive and hard to locate. He mentions no tutor. He mentions no patron's library. He was too poor to afford books. He lived in London, far from the Cambridge library.

My Nashe chapter is over 200 pages long. It contains many observations showing that Nashe by age 20 had the mind of the Earl of Oxford at age 37.

To answer Anon: No, I do not think a recent college graduate could have possessed all this knowledge and composing talent, which just happens to be along the lines of Lyly, Greene and Shakespeare.

Recognizance

Anon makes only one substantive observation in his entire critique, namely that a "recognizance" is a court order implying that Nashe might have been previously arrested. Anon went down a long trail of investigation to figure that out, for which he deserves cheers and credit.

Even when proffering his best point, however, Anon plumbs the depths of pettiness to assert shortcomings on my part. It is absurd to imply that anyone who read Hutson's page-and-a-half article of 1987 (as I did; OV quotes from it twice) would come away with that insight. Hutson herself simply printed the word "recogn" from a marginal note in the *Repertory for the Court of Aldermen* and called the order a "recognizance." She did not comment on the implication of it. In fact, none of the full-length biographies of Nashe highlighted it, and none of the over 200 sources I accessed for the Nashe chapter explicitly — to my recollection — made the case. Had anyone done so, I would have addressed it.

Anon seems to excuse all Nashe scholars writing before 1987 from missing the implication of the marginal note "recogn" in the state record, but that "pass" is unwarranted. For 400 years, the abbreviated word was right there, for all scholars of Nashe to see. So, on this point of law, it seems that everyone before Anon has been unaware and deficient. Were I a trial lawyer or professor of criminal law and missed the implication of "recogn" in Hutson's brief piece, Anon might be justified in adding this lack of knowledge to a list of my insufficiencies, but neither I nor Anon is an expert at everything.

Anyone who thinks a clerk's note negates the entire case that the Earl of Oxford is behind the oeuvre of Thomas Nashe is welcome to that opinion. But there are good reasons to believe otherwise.

First, the entry itself states that Nash should be ready "to make answere to all such matters as *shalbe* objected against him," implying that no objections had yet been expressed.

Second, a recognizance need not be established in person. According to Google AI, "a lawyer can often establish a recognizance without the client being physically present, *particularly at early, non-trial stages* like an arraignment or a bond hearing." That is precisely the timing of the case here. Such a situation would explain why the clerk's note demands that Nashe "*personally* appeare" before the court, suggesting he had yet to do so. Even the Nashe of orthodox biography would not have been required to be previously present; one of his purported nobleman friends could have supplied counsel to represent him. Oxford certainly knew lawyers, and he could have had one represent his pen name as a stopgap measure, giving him time to remedy the situation behind the scenes. Finally, for Anon's point to stick, he would have to demonstrate that all records in the *Repertory* are perfectly consistent with respect to previous custody vs. non-custody. He does not do that.

Third, there is no arrest record or release record for Nashe — as there are release records for Gabriel Spenser, Robert Shaa and Ben Jonson — creating a bright, shiny reason to believe that authorities never had the body of an honest-to-God Nashe in custody.

Anon pushes a point about the recognizance and Carey's letter three different ways, all in a row, as if we aren't sharp enough to get it the first time:

> One problem in Robert Prechter's treatment of this information is that he deals with the recognizance separately from George Carey's letter. These two documents corroborate each other…. In his section on the recognizance, he doesn't mention George Carey's letter at all. In Robert Prechter's section on Carey's letter, he doesn't mention the details of the recognizance….

Two replies: (1) The documents do *not* corroborate each other. As explained above, the stylistic aspects of the Carey letter belie the whole scenario. (2) My organization of material is not a *problem*. I treated a long list of items, and each one gets covered. There is no reason to meld the two discussions. Nashe's biography is one giant meld, necessitating its dissection item by item.

The Single Eyewitness and Whom He Saw

Anon cites Hugh Broughton's letter to Lord Burghley as evidence that Nashe existed. That letter is no revelation. I saved that topic for last in my paper precisely because it is the lone record indicating that a person saw or met Thomas Nashe.

One must first consider the context: Not one of Nashe's supposed acquaintances — including William Shakespeare, Robert Greene, Edmund Spenser, Thomas Watson, John Lyly, Gabriel Harvey, Richard Lichfield, Robert Mills and members of the nobility and the military with whom Nashe implied a relationship — ever mentioned meeting him, and two of those people, Harvey and Lichfield, are on record as having tried but failed to locate him. Anon evades this stunning fact.

As my paper noted, aside from Broughton, "no person, court or office left a letter, a memo, a memoir, a bill, a payment, a lease, a contract, a grammar or prep school record, a legal proceeding, a marriage record, documentation of children or a burial record attesting to the existence of Nashe." No wonder Nashe himself confesses five times (as quoted in my paper) that his person is invisible to the world!

In his letter, Broughton tells Burghley he had been insulted by three people at Croydon, including Whitgift's "Nashe gentleman." That's all he says. I concluded that Broughton wrote to Burghley in hopes that he would do something about his son-in-law.

My conclusion about Broughton relies upon an idea that may seem strange to people: that Oxford occasionally went about role-playing in real life. Quite naturally, Anon is dismissive of the idea that Oxford might have posed, in clever fun, as one of his personae.

But my articles on George Peele's note to Lord Burghley of 1596 (see links in Appendix 3 and further discussion below) prove he did exactly that. The note is chock full of Shakespearean terms and expressions, including rare and obscure ones. Peele's father's records indicate that George had no children, whereas the note refers to its courier as "my eldest daughter," indicating that the writer of the note had at least three daughters, as Oxford did. At that time, Oxford was spending a lot of time with his eldest daughter, Elizabeth Vere, who was Burghley's granddaughter. When Oxford signed the note, "George Peele," he was playing a role, and his daughter and his father-in-law would have no doubt delighted in it.

The idea, then, that Oxford may have posed as Nashe to entertain the Whitgift household — including (1) insulting Broughton for the amusement of Whitgift, who detested Broughton's controversial religious views, and (2) staging a humorous play depicting, of all people, Lord Burghley, his two sons and his boisterous son-in-law — cannot be summarily dismissed as

"unfounded," "unnecessary" and "not…plausible." The more one examines the context, the more it comes to life.

Cambridge Records and a Missing Pre-University Education

In OV, I wrote, "As the most socially prominent alumnus of St. John's, Oxford would likely have been permitted to arrange for a few records at Cambridge suggesting the existence of a student named Thomas Nashe…." I did not say I had physical evidence that is what happened. Numerous indications that Oxford wrote under the name Thomas Nashe led to a *conjecture*.

People of the early 1600s falsified records about Shakespeare so convincingly that to this day, the vast majority of English professors still believe in them. It will not do for Oxfordians, of all people, to assert that the idea of falsified records with respect to a pen name of Oxford's is far-fetched.

I pointed out anomalies in claims about Nashe's time at Cambridge. Anon spends pages establishing that one can accommodate conflicting claims of Nashe's time at Cambridge, but this is his only pertinent statement:

> It's important to note that one's matriculation does <u>not necessarily</u> record the date that one arrived at Cambridge or began one's studies. … According to McKerrow, it seems to have been common for a student to spend some interval of time at a college before participating in the matriculation ceremony.

In other words, instead of entering Cambridge upon his matriculation on October 13, 1582, a real Nashe *could* have arrived in the "winter of 1581-82." Nichol made the same argument. I am content to accept that possibility, and I have slightly amended (thank you) a paragraph about temporal anomalies from my book.

Honestly, however, I don't care about this discussion because there is no evidence that Nashe *arrived* from anywhere. The possibility that a real Nashe *could* have arrived at Cambridge a few months before the university entered a record of him makes no difference with respect to the lack of evidence for a pre-university life. As I pointed out in OV and the TOX paper, we have pre-university education records for Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Lodge, Ben Jonson, William Gager and George Peele but not for my two suspected pseudonyms: Greene and Nashe.

In trying to justify an early admission for Nashe, Anon screws up his own case. He reports, "Males who attended [college] varied in age from 14 to 18 as, again, <u>performance at preceding levels was the most important factor</u>." Well then, we have a problem because there is no record whatsoever of Nashe's "performance at preceding levels," which we would likely have if a real-life Nashe had been an exceptional student somewhere.

I noted in OV that McKerrow proposed of Nashe, "we may suppose that he received his early education from his father." Because no one has found records of an education for Nashe, McKerrow did the sensible thing and seized upon a possibility. But he did so because he was locked into the idea Nashe was real and that he had entered Cambridge. What else could he conclude?

Anon suggests we should all accept McKerrow's conjecture. Why? The little we know of William Nayshe doesn't fit with the idea that he was equipped to teach his kids pre-university-level reading, writing, math and Latin.

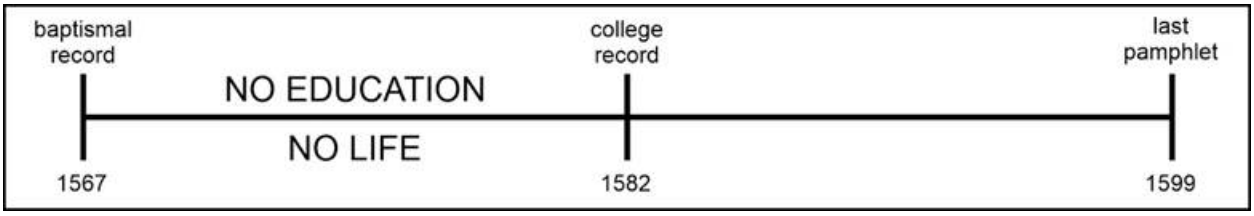
Did William *buy* his kids an education? Anon does a good job of establishing that William *might* have been reasonably well off after moving to West Harling. There is no evidence

that his family lived with him there, but they *might* have. If so, perhaps William *might* have been able to afford a tutor for his kids.

The problem with these scenarios is that William's other offspring, a daughter and elder son, who lived locally with their families, left no mark on society, suggesting that they did not benefit from the caliber of pre-university-level education being imagined for Thomas. The scenarios are based entirely on supposition, with no evidence for any of it, and they are confounded by a blatant contraindication.

^A Bogus Childhood Experience, Drawn from Shakespeare

Forget an education; there is no record of a *life* for Nashe between baptism and college. In short, my observation was, and still is, this:



Nashe himself tells us nothing specific about his early life. Yet listen to one of his biographers (Nicholl, in the New DNB) buy what Nashe is selling. He writes, "*Memories of rural childhood surface in Nashe's writings*." Really? Tell us! Here is the only passage he quotes in that regard, from *Terrors of the Night*:

> I have heard aged mumping beldams as they sat warming their knees over a coale…. When I was a little childe I was a great auditor of theirs, and had all their witchcrafts at my fingers endes, as perfit as good morrow and good even.

Observe that Nashe makes no mention of his age at the time, who the women were, or where these sessions took place. Yet biographers lap it up. And they do so without asking the simplest of questions, such as:

> *Is the idea that covens of witches were operating at that time or in that area — or anywhere, for that matter — historically accurate?*
> (No. Women were persecuted as individuals.)

And

> *What the heck is a minister's son doing listening time and again to a coven of self-professed witches?*

Wake up. This is not a real Thomas Nashe talking. It is the Earl of Oxford. How do we know?

Conjuring up a nearly identical image, Lady Macbeth (III,iv) entreats her husband not to believe scary tokens that "would well become/ A woman's story at a winter's fire,/ Authorized by her grandam." When you search Shakespeare's terminology, you find that Hecate, the goddess of witchcraft and head witch in *Macbeth* (III,v), calls her minions beldams. Nashe's beldams have a

burning coale; Shakespeare's have a burning flame. Nashe says he has their spells "at my fingers endes." Maria in *Twelfth Night* (I,iii) remarks, "I have them at my fingers' ends." Nashe uses the word auditor. What does Puck say in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? "I'll be an auditor;/ An actor too…." That's Nashe in a nutshell: a *spirit* who is an *auditor* and an *actor*. Not to mention that Shakespeare uses 18 witchcraft's, 20 good morrow's and a dozen good even's!

Oxford as "Shakespeare" puts tales into plays. His pen name "Nashe" pretends to live them.

I found these linguistic connections in a brief time. Try it yourself, on any colorful passage in Nashe's canon. To wit: I just opened *Terrors*, scanned the dedication for ten seconds, and found "Deare Mistris perswade your selfe that no frowning misfortune…." A quick search of Shakespeare turns up "Do you persuade yourself that I respect you?" from *Measure for Measure* (IV,i) and "hard misfortune" and "sour misfortune" from *Lucrece* and *Romeo and Juliet* (V,iii), respectively.

Tobin was not kidding when he said, "Nashe is so much a part of the fabric of Shakespeare's works that it is not too much to say that Shakespeare without Nashe and his works would not be Shakespeare." His only slip was to understate the connection.

^Robert Mills Helps My Case

Anon refers to "The Manuscript poem of Richard [sic] Mills, which provides details about the Cambridge student play, *Terminus & non terminus* [meaning *term* and *vacation*], which Thomas Nashe and Robert Mills had written together." But Mills does not say that he and Nashe wrote a play together. He writes, "Never an howre did pass but some toy still we devised." One would think that "we" refers either to the person to whom he is writing, John Finet, or to students in a general sense. He neglects to name Thomas Nashe, and he does so right at a juicy spot where orthodox biographers would expect to see him mentioned.

It is entirely reasonable for orthodoxy to put the Mills manuscript together with the comment from "Richard Lichfield" accusing Nashe of having been involved in the skit to conclude that both Mills and Nashe were involved. But even here, our heroes are living in print, and one must dig to discover what is really going on. Bear with me as I map things out.

Scholars have defaulted to ascribing *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe* to Richard Lichfield, a Cambridge barber. The pamphlet warriors have bamboozled them. Nashe had mock-dedicated *Have with you* in 1596 to the Cambridge barber Richard Lichfield, and in 1597 the "barber" replied with *The Trimming*. When I was a young buck working near Wall Street, I used to get my hair cut at a below-ground shop. The guys who worked there were fine fellows, but I'm sure none of them were capable of writing anything as learned and erudite as *The Trimming*. Nor did Lichfield, who lived another 33 years, write anything else.

I looked into the matter and figured out that the true author is Joseph Hall, as reported in my article for the *De Vere Society Newsletter*, January 2023 (link in Appendix 3). Hall attacked Oxford twice anonymously, once shortly before and once shortly after he issued *The Trimming* under the Lichfield allonym. In the other two pamphlets, Hall berates Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse* and *Valentines*, attributing them all to the same moniker, Labeo. By that fact alone, I concluded he knew full well that one man (the Earl of Oxford as Lab-E-O) was behind both pen names. That is why, in *The Trimming*, Litchfield puns relentlessly on *true* (*truly = Vere* in Latin) and bids Nashe to "apply it to your selfe." I quoted the passage in the TOX paper. So, when "Lichfield" says that "Nashe" was involved with *Terminus*, Hall is saying that *Oxford* was involved with *Terminus*.

Ironically, only in my context does Mills' testimony link authorship to the same man. Here is why: Mills recounts that in the play he was an actor, the very Lord Non Terminus, who would frown at the grave Lord Terminus and smile at a buffoon named Doleta, who were two characters in the play:

> See how I sitt in royall Chayre enthronissed emprer:
> Se how I frowne lyke a prince agaynste Lord Terminus Ireful:
> Se how I smyll to see the Jestes of merye Doleta:
> Goulden dayes, when Lord Non Terminus hyghly tryvmphed….

In OV and in an article for *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* (Fall 2024; link in Appendix 3), I proposed that *Straunge Newes out of Calabria* (1587), which purports to recount the astrological prognostications of one John Doleta, is a lampoon, adapted by Oxford from previously published material, of John and Richard Harvey's astrological predictions. Since Oxford wrote the Doleta pamphlet in 1587, isn't he a prime candidate for having been one of the composers of the skit featuring Doleta *that same year*?

Would a real Thomas Nashe — or any other Cambridge student — at the tender age of 19 have cared to make fun of Harvey brothers? I think that idea is ridiculous on the face of it.

Anon's own argument makes that scenario impossible. Gabriel Harvey, whose time at Cambridge overlapped Nashe's supposed time there by three years, claimed in 1590 that he had never heard of Thomas Nashe. I considered his statement supporting evidence that there was no Nashe. Anon countered, "It is entirely possible that neither Richard or Gabriel Harvey had ever heard of Thomas Nashe before reading Thomas Nashe's *Preface* to Greene's *Menaphon* (1589)." Ah, but Anon *also* claims that Nashe co-wrote *Terminus*, a skit so infamous that he blames it for a decision made by the university the following year to ban such entertainment. How could Harvey have failed to know about Nashe if *that* were true?

Only a year after his Audley End speech, "Gabriel Harvey wrote in 1579 to the poet Spenser, complaining that his friends were (figuratively speaking) thrusting him 'on the stage to make tryall of his extemporal faculty and to play Wylson's or Tarleton's parte'…" (DNB, Robert Wilson). In 1581, another skit acted at Cambridge titled *Pedantius* did the same thing. Obviously, an eleven and thirteen-year-old Thomas Nashe did not conduct those earlier skits. I think it fits neatly into my context to surmise that Oxford, continuing his practice of lampooning Harvey on stage, was at Cambridge in 1587, amusing the pants off younger Cantabs by having a buffoon named Doleta represent one or more of the Harvey brothers, the eldest of whom had annoyed him since 1578. He wrote the Doleta pamphlet around the same time, for the same purpose.

Our context makes it crystal clear why Harvey declared he had never heard of Thomas Nashe. Harvey would have associated *Oxford* with the skit, *not* a student named Thomas Nashe. He reports truthfully that he did not hear the name Thomas Nashe while at Cambridge, and now we have a sensible explanation for that fact.

Anon quotes the Folger's comment, "Rita Lamb has recently made the argument that parts of *Terminus & Non Terminus* may survive, as a palimpsest, inside *Summer's Last Will and Testament*." In the linked article, however, Lamb does not even mention *Terminus*. Her closest comment is, "I think…large parts of *SLW*, like the *Anatomy*, were written while Nashe was still at university."

Nevertheless, let's pursue the idea that Nashe mined from his own *Terminus* for *Summers Last Will*. Obviously, Nashe's orthodox biographers would see that as a fine fit. On the contrary,

it far better fits my case because *Summers Last Will* is not about some topic fitting Thomas Nashe, Cambridge college terms, the Whitgift household or even Gabriel Harvey. As noted above, it is about William Cecil willing various things to his sons Robert and Thomas while leaving nothing to his son-in-law, Vere, all in ways that match Lord Burghley's actual will, a private document that wouldn't be read to beneficiaries for another five years. Because *Summers Last Will* is about Oxford's family, *and* if you propose that bits of *Terminus* are in it, the sensible conclusion is that the Earl of Oxford had a hand in writing *Terminus* at Cambridge in 1587.

^**Nashe's Travels**

There is more to consider about Anon's discussion of Mills. He makes this statement:

> Robert Mills became a grammar school teacher in Stamford, Lincolnshire. …Andrew Hadfield noticed that this helps explain Thomas Nashe's trip to Stamford in 1595:
>
> > He appears to have visited friends in the country, such as his co-author from his student days, Robert Mills, who lived in Stamford Lincolnshire. (Nashe refers to the journey there in *Have with You*).

Since quibbles are the order of the day, we should note that Nashe does not say he visited anyone, much less Mills, and he doesn't say he took a "trip to Stamford." Rather, he had described hexameters as a "drunken staggering kind of verse, which is all up hill and downe hill, like the way betwixt Stamford and Beechfeeld." He thus depicts having traveled on a road near Stamford. Regardless, Anon omits my assessment in OV of this very valuable information. I wrote,

> An endnote of Nicholl's reveals why Oxford would have traveled to that area: "Lord Burghley's family seat, Burghley House, was a few miles from Stamford." Actually, the distance is just a hair over a mile. Oxford was visiting family.

This is a good place to point out that a real Thomas Nashe's travels and locations *could* have confirmed his corporeal existence. For instance, he could have convincingly described a trip to Portugal at a time when Oxford was known to be elsewhere, especially if records from Lisbon confirmed he was there. *That's all it would take*. Edmund Spenser, for example, spent most of the 1580s and 1590s in Ireland, where he served Lord Deputy Arthur Grey and bought estates. John Lyly worked for the Earl of Oxford and wrote letters to the Queen of England about a reversion he was promised. Thomas Lodge sued members of his family, sailed to Brazil, obtained a medical degree in France, and returned to open a medical practice. You cannot make a pseudonym out of any of these people. Nashe's biography has no such concrete elements.

Anon argues that Nashe's wanderings in 1597-99 following the Isle of Dogs incident form a coherent narrative. They do, but there is no documentary evidence confirming that the travels were undertaken by an actual Thomas Nashe. Nashe's trip to Great Yarmouth happens to slide neatly into a gap in Oxford's known activities, as shown in a table in OV. I think Oxford was doing the traveling while reporting on it as Nashe.

Some of Nashe's implied travels fit Oxford as *opposed* to Nashe, such as when he uses sailing terms and claims knowledge of Italy. Our critics do not address any of that.

^Handwriting

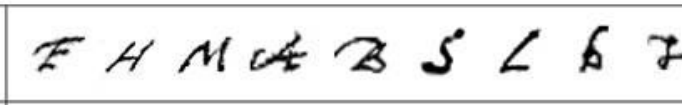
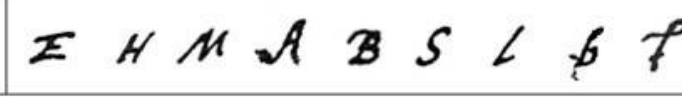
The Folger Library recently posted an announcement about handwritten marginalia in a copy of *An Almond for a Parrat* (1590), attributing the notes to Thomas Nashe. The most important sentence in the report for our purpose is this one:

> Nashe made these corrections in his best, most legible hand — quite different from the hand he employed in his letter to William Cotton and, apparently, in manuscripts he submitted to the press that compositors struggled to read.

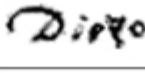
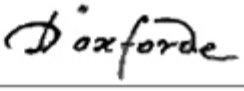
If Thomas Nashe can be allowed "*quite different*" hands, then the Earl of Oxford can be allowed them, too. That is especially true if he were role-playing.

If one were to scramble 50 handwritten documents of the day, I doubt a handwriting specialist would match the careful writer of the paraphrase of Ecclesiasticus, attributed to Nashe at college, to the sloppy writer of the Cotton letter, also attributed to Nashe. I further doubt that a specialist would match the Earl of Oxford's fine handwriting from the Doge's palace with the crabbed handwriting in his tin letters. If handwriting analyses were to fail to link *Nashe to Nashe* and *Oxford to Oxford*, then they cannot be used to distinguish Oxford from Nashe. A selectively applied, future handwriting exercise with a negative result would not confirm anything.

As it happens, I did look at the writing in the Cotton letter, because it struck me that it had the hardscrabble look of Oxford's tin letters. Both sources are difficult to read, the Cottom letter is too short to provide more than a few capitals, and I do not have my own forensic handwriting lab. But I did find some close matches as well as some dissonance. I do not claim this exercise proves authorship, but I do think it *allows* for Oxford to have written the Cotton letter.

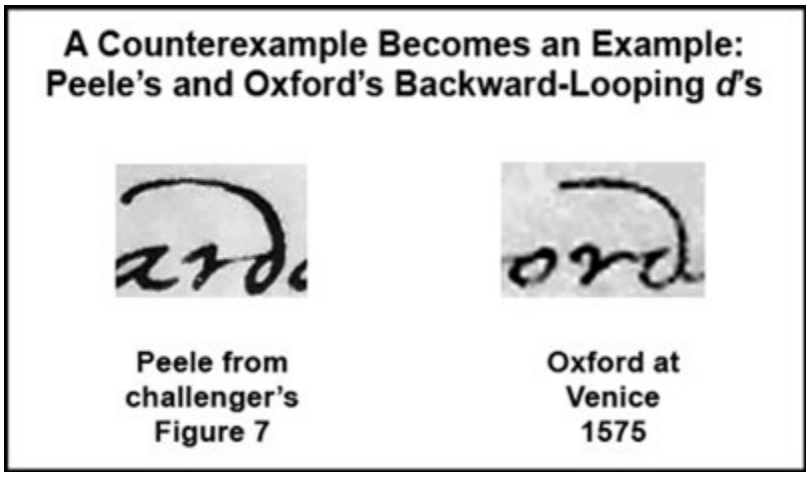
	F/E	H	M	A	B	S	L	b	sT/cT	I	f	p
Nashe's Cotton letter												
Oxford's Tin letter												
	same									different		

I also found that the capital *D* and small, isolated *o* in the 1575 permission slip that Oxford signed in Venice fit nicely alongside examples from Nashe's Cotton letter:

	capital D & small o	backslanting lower-case d
Nashe's Cotton letter		
Oxford's 1575 note		

Critics will say, “That doesn’t prove anything!” But it does. It proves that I have looked into the matter more than they have. Anon knew it, too, because it’s in my chapter.

My articles on George Peele (links in Appendix 3) show that Oxford’s most elaborately formed letters appear in George Peele’s writing while fitting no other items in W.W. Greg’s book of handwritten correspondence from the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. An experienced handwriting analyst challenged me with the objection that Peele’s backsloping *d* is absent from Oxford’s writing, so Oxford could not have written Peele’s note. Although handwriting analysis is not remotely my field, I quickly located the letter formation that the challenger said didn’t exist. It is on the slip of paper Oxford signed at the Doge’s palace in Venice, with a preceding *r* creating another dual letter combination, *rd*, that is gloriously identical:



Said critic protested that, well, a few other letters, such as Peele’s and Oxford’s *s*’s, are different! As if a few letter differences *disprove* single authorship. No one’s writing is consistently identical. I myself write *s*’s in two completely different ways.

Wouldn’t it have been a wonderful thing had our handwriting specialist *confirmed* that Oxford wrote Peele’s note? Oxfordians would have a united front on the smokingest gun we have. But no, apparently, it’s better to defend an old error to the death than to reconsider it.

The point is that no handwriting study by me is going to convince entrenched critics of anything. Demanding one is insincere. Our critics would just use it to argue with me. Their intractability is no different from Stratfordians’.

Unless they can produce honest studies showing that experts can match the disparate writing of Oxford and Oxford, and Nashe and Nashe, as opposed to Nashe and Oxford, whatever investigations they conduct won’t have any standing.

^Margaret Nashe’s Will

It is enlightening to be informed that Rita Lamb found that the will of Margaret Nashe, Thomas’ supposed mother, was written by an identifiable town clerk, a relative of Margaret’s. I did not know that. I nevertheless already proposed that if the will is genuine, it contains a problem because it left Thomas household items including a featherbed. I proposed that Margaret’s bequest fit a local Thomas better than a budding writer who was living 143 miles away in London.

Anon offers several scenarios (with one “imagine” and five “possibly”s) to account for why Nashe’s mom, with the blessing of Nashe’s elder brother Israel, the executor of the will, left

him a featherbed. I do not think the argument holds up.

Margaret's will was drawn up on December 2, 1589. The date is important because Nashe's biographers tell us that throughout the second half of 1589 and into 1590, Nashe was working closely with the Church of England, issuing pamphlets replying to a critic of the Church, the pseudonymous Martin Mar-prelate. The timing of those pamphlets challenges the idea that Margaret was leaving stuff to her son the writer. Consider:

Nashe issued *A Countercuffe given to Martin Junior* under the name Pasquil in August 1589 and followed up swiftly with *Pasquils Returne to England* and Marphoreus' *Martins Months minde* in late 1589, and then *The First partes of Pasquils Apologie* and Cutbert Curry-knave's *An Almond for a Parrat* in 1590. Nashe's *Anatomie of Absurditie* came out shortly after January 1590. Throughout this period, Nashe was demonstrably busy in London, far away from where Margaret was buried on December 10 in Lowestoft. If her son Thomas truly had been away from home for years and was at that time in or near London conducting state business, his family surely would have figured he wasn't close enough to pick up a featherbed on Thursday, much less cart it all the way home through the rain and mud of winter.

The Thomas cited in Margaret's will — if he was real — must have been a local lad whose whereabouts the executor knew and who could have collected the stuff he inherited. That conclusion is hardly more speculative than spinning "possibly"s about why Margaret was unaware that her son was miles way according to the very biography that our critics are trying to defend.

It would be fortuitous if a researcher were to find evidence of a Thomas Nayshe living in the east of England in the 1580s and/or 1590s. That would help sever the two Thomases for good.

Replies to Six Dubious Conjectures

Anon quotes Andrew Hadfield saying, "Nashe is now recognized as a pioneering playwright as well as a prose writer who collaborated with Shakespeare and Jonson early in their careers, as well as with Marlowe." Anon adds, "Besides his involvement in writing *The Isle of Dogs* with Ben Jonson, Nashe possibly also contributed to Jonson's *The Case is Altered*."

I don't know of any hard evidence for Nashe collaborating with Shakespeare, Marlowe or Jonson. The idea of collaboration with Shakespeare may be based on shared language, which we have explained. The idea of collaboration with Marlowe is based on the title page of *Dido*. But there is a stark demarcation of writing style within the play. Acts I and II are Marlowe's. Acts III-V of the play are Shakespearean in language, ideas and characters, implying Oxford wrote them. Collaboration was not involved; Oxford simply finished a play that Marlowe had been working on before he was murdered, and he put Nashe's name on it (Prechter, TOX, 2025; speech link in Appendix 3). As for Jonson, Nashe says he wrote the first act of *Isle of Dogs* and handed it over to someone else to finish, so there was no collaboration there, either. Finally, aside from the first scene, which Jonson wrote, *The Case Is Altered* (composed in 1598) is mostly Shakespearean, with a few Jonsonian touches here and there. I think Oxford used the name of the pre-famous Jonson as an allonym for the play, and Jonson managed to insert a few bits. This scenario accounts for why "Nashe" advertised the "witty" play in *Lenten Stuffe* and why Jonson later disowned it. All these ideas are discussed at length in OV.

Anon asserts that Nashe could have written not just *unpublished* plays but also *unknown* plays because he writes to William Cotton of an "<u>after</u> <u>harvest</u> I expected by

writing for the stage and the press." The idea that Nashe was a prolific writer of non-extant plays is a massive conjecture supported by no evidence of any kind, documentary or circumstantial. Nashe says he *expected* an after-harvest; he doesn't say he earned one or got one.

Because I am not stuck in the standard paradigm, comments like that immediately prompt me to ask, "Is there a husbandry metaphor like that in Shakespeare?" Sure enough, Shakespeare uses the two highlighted words, also metaphorically in connection with writing, in the dedication of *Venus and Adonis*: "I shall…never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest." Nashe's biographers do not find such connections because they are not looking. They aren't looking because their paradigm gets in the way. Who among them would think to search for a linguistic connection between a private letter penned by a prose writer and a public dedication penned by a famous poet? Only our context motivates a check.

On the law: Anon says, "Prechter compiles a list of phrases in the letter that pertain to the law," but as I clearly noted, the list was compiled by E.D. Mackerness in 1949. Nashe was expressing a legal mindset, as he had done in *Strange Newes*, which, as Hibbard put it, "is conceived of in terms that recall…those used in a court of law." As noted above, Nashe's legal mindset fits Oxford's. Using a variation of the Mermaid Tavern argument, Anon argues that Nashe *might* have learned some law. But we *know* Oxford did, at Gray's Inn.

Anon spends a lot of space arguing that a real Thomas Nashe *could* have made money in various ways. Anything is possible, but all we have from Nashe are one short play, part of another play and eight pamphlets. Even if Nashe is to be credited with most of the anti-Martinist pamphlets, the total is scant output for a real, full-time writer and would not have supported the man of orthodox biography. McKerrow agreed:

> Certainly, Nashe could never have existed by the sale to the booksellers of those of his writings which are now known to us: by far the greater part of his income, small as it was, must have come to him from other sources.

What sources are those? Nashe does not reveal any, no benefactor names any, and no evidence reveals any.

Anon supposes that Nashe was living off others, such as Robert Cotton, at whose home he wrote *Terrors of the Night*. Once someone accepts the notion that Nashe was real, then all kinds of proof-starved inferences suggest themselves. The same thing is true of Will Shaksper as Shakespeare: He *must* have been educated; he *must* have made money writing plays; he *must* have had patrons; he *must* have learned about sailing and Italy from travelers. Even the idea that Whitgift *must* have paid Nashe for the 1592 entertainment is an assumption. All we know is that Nashe's name is on the entertainment. Because that is all we know, I am allowed to speculate as to who really wrote it.

Nashe mentions Leyland in his 1589 preface to Greene's *Menaphon*, and a copy of a book by John Leland bears the handwritten name "Thomas Nashe" along with marginal notes pertaining to Marlowe's *Faustus*. This evidence fits well into the biography of Thomas Nashe. It does not, however, negate the idea that Oxford made the notes while role-playing.

Scholars have proposed that someone, Thomas Nashe being the prime candidate, added the prose section of *Faustus* to Marlowe's original verse play. Oxford is the most likely augmenting

co-author because elements such as the introduction of a clown are in Shakespeare's universe, not Marlowe's. The Clown's parts, moreover, mirror aspects of the Shakespeare-precursor play, *The Taming of a Shrew*. That Oxford made a marginal note about Faustus for use by "Nashe" would hardly be surprising. I suspect his plan was to add Nashe's name to Marlowe's *Faustus* as it had been added to *Dido*, but for whatever reason, it never happened.

Anon says that Nashe's mock dedication to tobacco user Humphrey King and a poem put out under the name Humphrey King with a prefacing, unattributed sonnet mentioning "famous Nashe, dear to us both," show that Nashe was real. They do not. If someone wrote, "famous Twain, dear to us both," it would not negate the fact that Mark Twain is a pseudonym.

^Jonson's Remembrance Fits My Context Perfectly

Remembrances by three people — Charles Fitzgeoffrey (discussed below), an anonymous Parnassus author and Ben Jonson — refer to Nashe's death. According to Anon, these epitaphs confirm Nashe's real death and therefore his real life.

That is not so. Writers from 1592 to 1617 referred to the death of Robert Greene, but that does not make him real. They were referring to a persona. Numerous clues, discussed in detail in OV, show that to be the case.

Jonson's format and words hold clues, too, and they favor my case. Consider these key portions of his extensive lines on Nashe:

> *Ad, charissimam memoriam Th. Nashi amici dilectissimi*
> *Beniamin Jons. Hoc eligidium consecrauit*
>
> View here a trophee of that tyrant deathe
> And let the obiect strike your melting eyes
> blind as the night, when you but read, Here lies
> Conquerd by destiny & turned to earthe The man….

Are the format and text familiar? Here are key portions of Jonson's text on the monument to "Shakspeare" in Stratford-upon-Avon:

> *Judicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,*
> *terra tegit, populus maeret, Olympus habet*
>
> Stay passenger, why goest thou by so fast?
> read if thou canst, whom envious death hath plast
> with in this monument Shakspeare: with whome,
> quick nature dide….

Jonson begins each epitaph with a statement in Latin. His lines on Nashe entreat the passerby to "View here…the object," implying a physical memorial, like the one in Stratford. Jonson's "tyrant death" echoes "envious death" on the Stratford monument. His "when you but read" echoes "read if thou canst," and his "Here lies…The man" is akin to "plast with in this monument." In the first instance, he names "*Th. Nashi*," and in the second he names "Shakspeare." The two memorial layouts and the texts quoted are of a kind.

For over a hundred years, Oxfordians have proposed that Jonson knew Shakespeare was a pen name, but (never mind cypher-based, hidden-message claims) he never clearly revealed who was behind it. I do not see why Jonson's words about Nashe should be construed differently. On the contrary, the two epitaphs are compatible in referring in like manner to personae of the Earl of Oxford. Far from proving Nashe was real, Jonson's epitaph neatly fits the case that he was not.

Anon closes by saying, "Jonson's closing couplet is especially moving." Yes, it is. That is where he exclaims, using a carefully chosen word, "Farewell, great *spirit*."

If I Were Forced to Guess

Critics might try to counter that Jonson could have used his epitaph on a *real* Nashe as a template for his epitaph on a *fake* Shakespeare. That idea, however, does not explain why Jonson *never published the poem*. Nor does it account for his words, "View here," in reference to Nashe, when there is no known grave for the man.

One scenario — that Jonson composed the manuscript text for a planned monument to Thomas Nashe — solves both riddles. The Nashe persona became so hot in 1597 that people, as Nashe reports, were inquiring into it. Perhaps Oxford developed a plot to confirm Nashe's "death" and solicited Jonson's help in the matter. The plan never materialized, which is why his epitaph and others remained in manuscript. In 1623, when Shakespeare was about to become hot due to the pending publication of the First Folio, Jonson applied the two men's previously conceived gambit and wrote similar text for the Stratford monument. Jonson's tribute to Nashe ran quite a few more lines, serving as a model for Jonson's lengthier address on Shakespeare in the First Folio. Together, the texts on Shakespeare on the Stratford monument and in the First Folio replicate Jonson's tribute to Nashe.

Had someone constructed a monument to Thomas Nashe in 1601, people today would be making pilgrimages to it after touring Stratford-upon-Avon.

That's it for Anon. He was the most challenging of the three to defeat. Now for the easy ones.

Anon2 Critiques My Paper

In Part 2 of the critique, a new anonymous writer takes over to level an attack on my TOX paper. He is prone to sweeping accusations and snide remarks:

> Before addressing Prechter's arguments, one question needs to be addressed: why were obvious sources not consulted? In academic papers, especially at university level or for publication, it is standard to include a literature review or at least a discussion of relevant prior work. This was not done here. The ODNB entry for Nashe, for example, or Diana Price's *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*, considered one of the seminal sources for the SAQ, and W.W. Greg's *English Literary Autographs* for Nashe's handwriting would have been obvious candidates. They contain documented material about Nashe that Prechter fails to mention, and clearly show his education was real, that he was capable of writing at a high level and make a mockery of many of Prechter's assertions.

What puffery.

Of course, I "consulted" the ODNB on Nashe, as well as the New DNB. Of course, I consulted Diana Price and W.W. Greg, whom *Oxford's Voices* cite more than two dozen times

each.

I do not need to be lectured that Diana Price summarized evidence of a life for Nashe and that Greg displayed handwritten items by Nashe. My paper took such evidence *as a given* and offered reasons to reconsider it in a new light. Anon2's tiresome reiteration of every item on Price's "Chart of Literary Paper Trails" takes up space but covers no new ground. It is a partial summary of what every Nashe biography already tells us. Anon2 wastes all that space because he has not bothered to read my book.

Anon2 comments on numerous lines in Nashe's Cotton letter to no negative effect. Sometimes the effect is positive to my case. He reminds us,

> As Price writes, "Toward the top, Nashe refers explicitly to his professional activities: '<u>an after harvest I expected by writing for the stage & for the presse</u>, when now the players as if they had written another Christs tears, as piteously persecuted by the L[ord] Maior" (Price, 118).

I do not know why he quotes Price just to quote Nashe, but neither Price nor Anon2 noticed that Nashe's metaphor of an <u>after</u> <u>harvest</u>, as noted above, shows up in Shakespeare. Should anyone say that their failing to mention that fact makes a "mockery" of their work? No one is omniscient.

Anon2 then shows us pictures of Nashe's writing and says, "We see Nashe's signature" in a book. That doesn't prove anything. The question I posed was, "Who put it there?"

^The Epitaphs Gambit Redux

Anon2 speaks of "Two epitaphs that Prechter ignored," i.e. the one by Jonson and another by Fitzgeoffrey. I did not ignore them. They were extraneous to the aim of the paper. Four different chapters in OV discuss the epitaphs on Nashe. As stated there, "Neither remembrance, however, provides any particulars of the man's life or death."

Anon2 quotes both epitaphs in their entirety to no effect. Since both epitaph writers could be referring to a persona, their "testimony" of its "death" doesn't mean anything. Moreover, in terms of facts, there is nothing testimonial about them.

Anon2 says Jonson's verse is "a straightforward and genuine tribute to a friend." I agree; I just think that Jonson is referring to the friend by his pen name, exactly as he does with "Shakespeare" in the First Folio. As a thought experiment, let's replace "Nashe" with "Twain" in Fitzgeoffrey's text and pretend it appeared in a Connecticut newspaper:

> When Death, obeying Jove's imperial will,
> Extinguished Twain's bright flame, his voice grown still,
> She struck him not in strength, but stole away
> His pen and tongue — twin bolts of fierce dismay.

Are you immediately tempted to blurt out, "This proves Mark Twain is not a pseudonym!!!!" Of course not. But that is what Anon2 thinks you should do. He thinks it's *obvious* you should do it.

^A Massive, Unsubstantiated Claim of One-Way Style Absorption

Anon2 tries to challenge my quoting of orthodox scholars on the linguistic intimacy between Nashe and Shakespeare. He begins by asserting that I am relying upon the Stratfordian

dating of Shakespeare's plays, which I am not. I quoted Stratfordian scholars to the effect that Nashe and Shakespeare share *voluminous stylistic parallels throughout both sets of works*. I pointed out that Nashe's biographers cannot explain how it happened. That does not mean I relied upon Stratfordian dating.

To straighten me out, Anon2 delivers breaking news that Oxfordians have determined that Shakespeare's plays were written before Stratfordians say they were. Good to know! To back up that proposition — as if we all haven't read volumes on the subject — he cites four sources, all modern and some trivial, while omitting seminal works such as Eva Turner Clark's *Hidden Allusions* (1930) and the quarter-century of work by Ramon Jimenez, who dated Oxford's first play to 1562.

All this worthless prelude leads to his big conclusion: There is no "problem" here because "Shakespeare came first." *That's it*. He wipes his hands as if we're all done here.

Apparently, we are supposed to join Anon2 in assuming that an independent Thomas Nashe memorized Shakespeare to the point that he echoes him throughout his works. It sounds good rolling off the tongue, but that scenario is impossibly far-fetched. Think about it:

Some of Oxford's plays were acted in the late 1570s, when Nashe was a boy. Most of Oxford's plays were acted at court, where the Nashe of orthodox biography would not likely have been admitted once, much less to every play. Not to mention that even if he had seen the plays acted, it is hardly reasonable to infer that he could have memorized all the texts in their entirety, on the spot. Consider also that during virtually all Nashe's time writing (1589-1598), no plays in Shakespeare's name were published. The *first* play credited to Shakespeare was published in 1598, which is the *last* year that Nashe wrote anything. Where would Nashe have gotten the unpublished texts, and how did he manage to obtain so many of them? There is no reason to believe that manuscripts of them were circulating and plenty of evidence indicating they were not. Then there is the converse conundrum: Oxford kept writing plays until 1604. How did Nashe's linguistic proclivities get into *them*?

Orthodox scholars are stupefied by the overlap between Shakespeare and Nashe, even while believing that both personae were real people living and working at the same time, a situation that could theoretically support a face-to-face relationship. Because Oxford started writing decades before Nashe debuted, however, the overlap, contrary to Anon2's blithe attempt at justification, is even *more* difficult to explain.

Let's try to make something up ("That's the ticket!") and see how it flies. Perhaps the Earl of Oxford welcomed a 20-year-old Nashe into the study at his home and let him camp out there for a month to read and take notes on all Shakespeare plays written before 1588, after which he let him come back to read every new play as it was written so that he could take notes on *them*. Oxford, in turn, memorized all *Nashe's* works so he could borrow language from them for plays written after Nashe stopped writing in 1598.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence for any such real-life relationship. On the contrary, Nashe's name is absent from Oxford's biography. Historians have identified several of Oxford's secretaries as well as members of his entourage, all of whom left traces indicating they were real people. Nashe's name is absent from both groups. There is simply no historical or documentary evidence that Oxford and Thomas Nashe were two people working in close collaboration.

Far-fetched scenarios without evidence are the stock-in-trade of Stratfordians. We should not let blasé apologists for Nashe's unlikely biography get away with them.

As we have seen, Anon and Anon2 have implied that I should be doing all kinds of massive research into handwriting analyses, fine points of English law and the details of college

life. If so, Anon2 should be obligated to prove his claim by investigating whether a real Nashe's supposed incorporation of Shakespeare's linguistic features is strictly limited to plays written up to 1598 and absent from those written thereafter. He doesn't do that. Nobody has done that. Nobody ever will do it. Because Oxford wrote under the names Nashe and Shakespeare, overlaps in language necessarily permeate the entirety of both canons.

My paradigm is useful because it *predicts* that one will find Nashe and Shakespeare overlapping throughout both sets of works. The standard story accommodates no such prediction, which is why orthodox scholars are at a loss to explain it.

The Collaboration Presumption

Anon2 tries to make a case that Oxford and Thomas Nashe were two people working in close collaboration, but his two arrows are randomly aimed.

He first quotes Nashe on a "policy of plays" and Francis Bacon saying that the Pallas myth contained "a secret of state." Both comments fit better into my context. Knowledge of state policy precisely fits Oxford, who was both an earl privy to state secrets and the playwright Shakespeare, who many Oxfordians believe hinted at matters of state in his plays. Would the administration have trusted a young hotshot with "a secret of state"? I doubt it. The idea that Thomas Nashe is a pen name of an earl is compatible with the idea of clandestine state activity.

Anon2's second riposte is that Moth in *Love's Labour's Lost* represents Thomas Nashe. So? Nashe (yet again) is just a character in literature. What does Moth have to do with two writers collaborating? It's *Oxford's* play.

That is Anon2's whole case supporting the idea of collaboration. It is difficult to see why he thinks he has answered my point. A response that weak virtually confirms it.

^Bogus Interpretations of Texts

I noted that Shakespeare and Nashe dedicated literature to the Earl of Southampton in 1593-1594 and then stopped, fitting the case that one man was at work. The timing neatly fits into the Earl of Oxford's life because at that time Southampton was being encouraged to marry Oxford's daughter. That possibility ended by November 1594. These observations fit together, presenting a coherent picture.

I also observed that in the dedication of *The Unfortunate Traveller*, Nashe says to Southampton, "*A new brain, a new wit, a new stile, a new soule will I get mee*, to canonize your name to posteritie," fitting my thesis wonderfully. Oxford had dedicated a poem, *Venus and Adonis*, to him in Shakespeare's name; now he's dedicating a novel to him under a new pen name. Anon2 replies, "This is an unusual interpretation." Well, it is *new*.

To counter my observation that both Shakespeare and Nashe "cared" about Southampton, Anon2 quotes three people who interpreted Nashe's texts to charge that Nashe was not friendly but rather *hostile* toward Southampton and/or the Earl of Oxford. Every one of their arguments is pitiful. That Anon2 resorts to such "interpretations" suggests he has a shallow well from which to draw. We will briefly review them.

The dedication in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, we are told, is not respectful but rather expresses "disdain for Southampton." I think it is ridiculous to propose that someone out to earn money as a writer would disparage his own actual or hoped-for patron, but Anon2 sees no problem with that idea. He quotes Sabrina Feldman, who asserted that Nashe "hinted at Southampton's erotic affairs with poets and their lovers: 'A dear lover and cherisher you are, as well of the lovers of Poets, as of Poets themselves.'" The passage does not read that way to me.

Nashe simply says that Southampton appreciates poets and their fans. Read the entire dedication for yourself (https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A08015.0001.001/1:2?rgn=div1;view=fulltext), and you will see that it is thoroughly respectful and humble, as are Shakespeare's dedications.

Anon2 next quotes from an obscure, undated, online essay by someone named Ian Steere. Steere came up with creative interpretations of Nashe's texts to argue that Nashe was continually insulting Southampton in pamphlet after pamphlet. Steere believes that Nashe's addressee for *Valentines*, Lord S., is the Earl of Southampton, but scholars have long been split on whether Lord S. is Henry Wriothesley or Ferdinando Stanley. Because Stanley was routinely called "Lord Strange," whereas Wriothesley was not commonly called "Lord Southampton," Stanley is a strong candidate. Stanley is also on record as having penned, "before September 25, 1593," what Steven May called an "unusually graphic" poem, to which "Nashe" might have been responding (or vice versa). Regardless, did *Valentines* intend insult, or was Nashe simply having fun with a friend?

In his essay, Steere claims that "insults, sarcasm and/or irony are discernable in almost every sentence" of Nashe's dedication to Southampton in *The Unfortunate Traveller*. Nonsense. The fact that Nashe's dedication shares verbal constructions with Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* does not mean — as he thinks — that the latter is a parody of the former. It is just more evidence that same person wrote them.

It is also ridiculous to believe that that a writer would hurl insults at his patron, that a commoner would publish insults aimed at a nobleman, and that he would do so at the outset of his most ambitious foray into literature! The whole construct is absurd.

Steere further claims that in *Pierce Penilesse His Supplication to the Divell*, "Nashe rails at length against an unidentified patron…" whom he thinks is Southampton. But (1) there is no evidence that Southampton was Nashe's patron, and (2) Nashe, as in the previous instances, is in fact extolling the individual in question. He even scolds Edmund Spenser for leaving that person out of his long list of praiseworthy people at the end of *The Faerie Queene*. Whoever the person is, Nashe is seeking his glory, not insulting him. As Steere himself admits (but Anon2 neglects to quote), "*This is not an opinion I have seen shared.*" No wonder!

In his third attempt to demonstrate that a real Nashe insulted people, Anon2 quotes an interpreter who charges Nashe with insulting an even more elevated peer, the Earl of Oxford! Alexander Waugh wrote, "Nashe's fallout with Oxford found its bitterest expression in the first part of *Pierce Penilesse* (1592) in which he alluded to his noble patron under such diabolical titles as 'the high and mighty Prince of Darknesse', 'Duke of Tartary', 'Marquesse of Cocytus', etc."

Waugh's claim is based on a misreading of Nashe. Nashe is not addressing the Earl of Oxford here; he is appealing to the Devil, exactly as the pamphlet's title — *Supplication to the Divell* — states. In good humor, Pierce addresses the Devil with numerous high-sounding epithets: "the High and Mightie Prince of Darknesse, Donsell Dell Lucifer, King of Acheron, Stix and Phlegeton, Duke of Tartary, Marquesse of Conytus, and Lord High Regent of Lymbo." There is nothing whatsoever in the text to indicate that a real Nashe is berating the premier nobleman of England.

There is even more damning counter-evidence: If a real Thomas Nashe had fallen out with Oxford prior to issuing *Pierce Penilesse*, why would he go to bat for him in the *same pamphlet* by telling a fable lamenting the fate of Oxford's first cousin, the Duke of Norfolk; and then bring Oxford's beloved poetic uncle to life in *The Unfortunate Traveller* in 1594; and then champion Oxford's cause against Gabriel Harvey in *Have with You* in 1596? It makes no sense.

Every one of those three quoted concoctions is a travesty. Anon2 displays no capacity for judgment with respect to such off-base theorizing.

^**More Irrelevance**

My paper challenges the idea that a young writer seeking or receiving patronage from the Earl of Oxford would address him in the cavalier and humorously insulting manner we see in *Strange Newes*. Anon2 responds that "One only has to imagine" (sounds like Greenblatt: "LET US IMAGINE") a real young writer doing it. But that's what *everyone* keeps doing: imagining a real Nashe doing all this stuff. I think it is incumbent upon Nashe's biographers to pay extra attention to something that is unique in Elizabethan literature, namely that a self-professed, poverty-stricken commoner would mock, in print, a wealthy and powerful patron who sits at the pinnacle of nobility. Anyone with a modicum of knowledge about the power imbalance of that era should categorically reject such an idea.

Besides, as I remarked, the address is funnier when read as a lampoon that Oxford wrote about himself. Anon2 says I don't "give any examples" of said humor. Is he incapable of enjoying a clever self-parody?

I noted that the only depiction of Nashe is a cartoon and challenged Nicholl's somewhat breathlessly expressed idea that it was rendered from life. Anon2 replies, "Of course it was fanciful." Tell that to Nicholl, not me. I already know that.

Anon adds, "Prechter can't have it both ways: he believes Harvey to have been a real person, yet he fails to put the drawings [the second representing Harvey in Nashe's *Have with You*] in context." In other words, because Nashe showed a drawing purportedly of Harvey, who was a real person, Lichfield's drawing of Nashe cannot be used toward an argument that he is not a real person. This is debate-class fluff, easily refuted. The context that matters is: There is massive evidence that Gabriel Harvey had a life. I did not say that the existence of a cartoon negates someone's life. When investigating pen names such as Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe and Shakespeare, however, it is pertinent that only cartoons of them exist. After all, we have portraits of Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson. I do not need to retract that point.

Anon2 says that I was unaware of the Robert Mills manuscript. That is correct. But as shown above, Mills does not mention Thomas Nashe, and his mention of Doleta fits my case that if anyone was on hand, it was Oxford.

My paper reported that independent researcher Nina Green "studied the stylistic reflections of Shakespeare in Nashe's works and concluded, 'Internal evidence in the tracts suggests that Thomas Nashe was a pen-name of Oxford's from 1589 to 1600.'" Anon2 snarks, "That Green and Prechter are the only two to endorse the theory speaks volumes as to the inherent weakness of many parts of the theory." That's like saying in 1921, "That J.T. Looney is the only person to come up with his theory speaks volumes to the inherent weakness of the theory." Anon2's statement is asinine. It's hypocritical, too; didn't he just quote Steere, whose opinion about *Pierce Penilesse*, by his own admission, *no one* shares?

^**A Magnificent Boomerang**

Anon2 quotes W.C. from *Polimanteia* (1595) expressing hope that Nashe and Harvey will reconcile and claims that the text proves Nashe was a real person. He says that W.C.'s couched suggestion ("courte-deare-verse," per a theory of Alexander Waugh's) that Shakespeare was Oxford stands alone in hinting at true authorship and that W.C. left *no trace* of understanding that Nashe was Oxford.

That is the kind of claim that people steeped in a paradigm make all the time. They are so sure they are right that they feel there is no need to examine with care the very evidence they cite.

Anon2's claim offers the kind of challenge that I have recognized and met countless times. Is this another instance? As they say in commercials, you decide. Read W.C.'s text carefully:

> bid him that is free by law, think it a shame to be entangled in small matters: but tell the other, he must leave to meditate revenge, for his adversarie…(to learnings injurie) lives unregarded.

The situation W.C. depicts is exactly as I have described it:

1. Oxford was "free by law" to do whatever he wanted in the realm of print. Thomas Nashe assuredly was not. According to biographers, the law went after him twice for writing infractions. Harvey got into official trouble for writing "*Tuscanismi*" in 1580.
2. There would be no reason for W.C. to say that it was "a shame" for someone in his twenties earning money from pamphlet-writing to engage in a press battle, especially since the pamphlets were selling. But because Oxford held a lofty position in society, it was indeed "a shame" that he had become "entangled in small matters."
3. Nashe, according to biography, was widely regarded among nobility, among commoners and at Paul's Churchyard. Yet W.C. bids Cambridge to remind Harvey that "his adversary lives unregarded," fitting the idea that Oxford was hiding behind a persona.
4. As W.C. may have been aware, Oxford had used the same term in the same context in Nashe's debut, *Anatomie of Absurditie*, where he explained to readers curious about his new persona, "pensiveness…hath compelled my wit to wander abroad unregarded in this satyricall disguise."
5. W.C. adds that the true author's decision to remain hidden is "to learnings injurie." That is achingly true, and I hope that *Oxford's Voices* has helped remedy the situation.

W.C.'s depiction fails to fit the biography of Thomas Nashe in any respect, but it does fit the idea that his name was cover for someone of high social standing.

That W.C. bids the University of Cambridge to rein in the pair of adversaries is not proof that Nashe was real. Oxford and Harvey both attended Cambridge.

W.C.'s advice to Harvey is sound. That Harvey's adversary is "free by law" and "lives unregarded" limits his ability to fight back. Harvey's writing is hampered by social status and law, which is why he had to hide out in a nobleman's house after publishing "*Tuscanismi*." Harvey cannot risk revealing who is behind that "satyricall disguise," because, as Anon2 himself reminds us, it was wrapped up in a state secret.

Scholars have not recognized these bold hints because they are operating in the old paradigm, just as Stratfordians are doing with respect to Shakespeare. Once you are attuned to what to look for, a whole new world opens up.

So much for Anon2. It was fun!

Anon3: Random Musings on the Pamphlet War

OV contains many pages on my view of the Pamphlet War between Gabriel Harvey's

alliance and Oxford's Voices. I interpreted a hundred of Harvey's passages as clandestinely addressing the Earl of Oxford. Anon3 explains his narrow aim: "What will be attempted here is a discussion of a few select passages of Harvey's *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets*."

Anon3 concedes, "Gabriel Harvey's pamphlets, like Nashe's, are filled with cryptic, elusive, playful sentences that could be interpreted in a number of ways." He reproduces passages from biographers interpreting the passages to fit Nashe as a real person, a completely natural thing for them to do. I had read most of them.

One Person or Two?

In arguing that Nashe is a real person apart from Oxford, he begins,

> Marshall McLuhan agreed with McKerrow, to some extent, that the pamphlet war may have emerged as an aspect of Gabriel Harvey's relationship with de Vere. McLuhan argues, however, that the conflict between Harvey, and possibly some of his literary associates, and figures like Lyly, Greene and Nashe was not entirely a personal conflict, but also had deeper, philosophical roots.
>
> …Whether it was through Nashe's friendship with Greene, or his involvement with the Marprelate affair (of which Richard Harvey's censure of Nashe in *Lamb of God* was a part), or it was an offshoot of the quarrel between the literary camps centred around Edward de Vere and Philip Sidney, as McKerrow and McLuhan suggested, is difficult to say….

That is a well-known idea, so there is no "however" involved. Harvey, for instance, championed hexameters, which Oxford avoided and "Nashe," in agreement as always, detested (see quote above). Such disagreements fit the philosophical opposition between Oxford and Harvey, and Oxford and Sidney, just fine.

Anon3 quotes McLuhan on McKerrow:

> McKerrow's general statement on the subject [of what caused the enmity between Harvey and Nashe] is worth quoting here as evidence of the kinds of difficulty which have hindered understanding:
>
> > It is hopeless for us now to try to understand exactly the nature of this opposition between Harvey and Nashe. Many things may have contributed to it; religious differences may have counted for something….
>
> McKerrow's mistake was to suppose that a merely personal quarrel should have had the ramifications of this one. His next statement concerning "religious differences" is vague because he has not considered that such differences of Scriptural interpretation in the sixteenth century….

Calling McKerrow mistaken on such points is risky business. One need not peer under rocks to figure out Harvey's "religious differences" with Nashe. Harvey flatly charges Nashe with being a man of no religion at all. Why would Harvey think that? Nashe's jolly supplication to the devil in *Pierce Penilesse* hardly qualifies him as an atheist, and *Christes Teares* is a

devotional text!

Once again, the shoe fits better on the other name's foot. As observed in the Shakespeare chapter of OV, several contemporaries testified that the Earl of Oxford was impious. His uncle Arthur Golding in 1571, Thomas Stocker in 1581 and the trio of Oxford's accusers in 1581 all confirmed what Oxford's father-in-law Burghley wrote in his Diary in 1576: that his son-in-law showed "contempt for God and all good orders arguing always against the articles of fayth."

By Harvey's own testimony, he never met Thomas Nashe, and despite entreaties, he was never *allowed* to meet Nashe (another fact that fits my thesis). So, he could not have heard atheistic talk from Nashe's mouth. But Harvey had met Oxford at Cambridge and would have known first-hand of his views on religion.

Next, Anon3 offers a scenario:

> There is a possibility that Thomas Nashe was, at least to some extent, writing his attacks on Harvey on behalf of a crew of writers who were associated with de Vere. Possibly they were composed *in conversation* with de Vere, possibly prompted by de Vere, but still written by Thomas Nashe himself.

That scenario is inferred and made up. It runs counter to depictions of Greene as dying, and Nashe as living, in abject poverty. The Earl of Oxford, who was celebrated in print numerous times for his generosity (see "Oxford's Accolades" on the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship website) would have taken better care of his "crew." Critics should not be allowed to invent untenable scenarios while accusing me of doing so.

Anon3 quotes Harvey's protest to Nashe (which I noted in OV) that he never meant to insult the Earl of Oxford. Anon3 observes, "it seems possible that Harvey is still concerned that de Vere may hold a grudge about this." *Exactly*: Harvey delivers to *Thomas Nashe* his passionate apology to *Oxford*!

Anon3 concludes, "This discussion is only to establish that Thomas Nashe, in his pamphlets against Harvey, was in some way writing in concert with, or directed by, or to gain favour with a figure like Edward de Vere." That conclusion is in no way *established*. It is a standard *interpretation* of what is going on, but the ghostly presence of de Vere better fits my thesis.

Anon3 couples an insightful observation with a stretch:

> At many places in *Pierce's Supererogation*, Harvey seems to address his sentences right past Nashe, to an unidentified person who is encouraging or co-ordinating these pamphleteers, who have ridiculed Harvey and his brothers. At times, the frequent mentions of Bishop Andrew Perne makes me wonder if Harvey suspects that Archbishop John Whitgift is somehow encouraging these attacks.

Harvey surely *is* speaking "past Nashe" to an "unidentified person." That doesn't make Nashe real. If Harvey wanted to address Oxford as opposed to a real Nashe, wouldn't he just do so? I think he *was* doing so.

Regardless, can you imagine for a moment that the Archbishop of Canterbury (who, as Anon reminded us, had an "army of retainers") would have cared or had time to direct a crew of down-and-out pamphlet writers to attack poor Gabriel, Richard and John Harvey, who until their first published replies to Nashe were comparatively unknown in Elizabethan society? And they

call my theory a leap!

Anon3 then says, "The phrase 'A per se A'…is used somewhat mysteriously by Harvey, and it's not entirely clear what he intends by it." That's certainly true, but look at Nashe's response:

> Passion of God, how came I by that name? My godfather Gabriel gave it me, and I must not refuse it. Nor if you were privy whence it came would you hold it worthy to be refused, for before I had the reversion of it, he bestowed it on a nobleman, whose new fashioned apparel *and Tuscanish gestures, cringing side neck, eyes' glancing, fisnamy smirking*, having described to the full, he concludes with this verse: *Every inch A per se a, his terms and braveries in print.*

As Anon3 correctly concedes, "Nashe is portraying the phrase as being a moniker for himself, that had previously been applied to de Vere in *Speculum Tuscanismi*." The fact that Nashe even *knew* about the previous application fits my context well, but the fact that he hereby *equates* Nashe and Oxford fits it perfectly.

Hanging onto the old paradigm, Anon 3 proposes of these literary exchanges,

> these don't necessarily require that Harvey believed that Nashe and de Vere were the same person. At several points in the pamphlet wars, it does seem like Harvey uses these allusive monikers to suggest Nashe is working closely with de Vere, or prompted by de Vere, in concert with de Vere.

If someone discussing Mark Twain used the term "America's chronicler," and the same person discussing Samuel Clemens used the term "America's chronicler," would you propose that Twain and Clemens were "two people working closely together"? You would not, because you already know they are the same person. But if you were steeped in a paradigm identifying them as different people, perhaps that's the kind of proposal you would come up with.

To show that he is not alone, Anon3 quotes Anderson & Stritmatter, bolding a few words to emphasize his idea: "They employ multiple nicknames for each other**, and for allies or would-be allies on both sides**." But look at the words he does not make bold in that sentence: "They employ multiple nicknames **for each other**, and for allies or would-be allies on both sides." So, with respect to the question at hand, the statement is moot. Ironically, as OV explains, Harvey was the only combatant with allies, namely Richard Harvey, Barnabe Barnes and later Joseph Hall, who in one case posed as Richard Lichfield. Oxford, writing as Nashe, tried to get Thomas Watson, Edmund Spenser and seemingly John Lyly to support him, but Spenser, a friend of Harvey's, remained aloof, as did Lyly, and Watson inconveniently up and died.

I am not sure why Anon3 spends so much space litigating the meaning of *A per se A*. It is to no avail.

Continuing his case that Nashe and Oxford can be perceived as separate entities, Anon3 says that Harvey's reference to "a lord's heart and a beggar's purse" may not refer only to Nashe but rather to Nashe and "a once generous patron who had abandoned him." In the first place, I do not see why a real Nashe would waste time grumbling about an erstwhile patron instead of setting out to find and celebrate a new one. In the second place, Harvey's words do not suggest two people to me. His "two unmeet companions" are aspects one person can have: "a lord's *heart* and a beggar's *purse*." Most of Oxford's fortune had been dissipated by that time, so

the description fits.

Anon3 proposes, "the following lines, about 'the decayed gentleman' with a noble house in ruin, might point towards de Vere as being this patron." On the other hand, it is *Nashe*, not his patron, who claims pedigrees and patrimonies and berates Harvey for low birth, yet Harvey does not counter him on either point. His silence is inexplicable in the orthodox context, in which Harvey outranked Nashe socially. But it fits my context.

An Old Fox and a Golden Asse

Anon3 corrects me on just one out of the hundred passages quoted in OV from Gabriel Harvey's and Richard Lichfield's pamphlets. He notes that Harvey's "old fox" is not de Vere but Andrew Perne. I am glad to be corrected. But he takes three tiresome pages to hammer home that simple idea. He notes, correctly, that Harvey "begins a diatribe of over twenty pages [beginning on page 294] denouncing the memory of Andrew Perne" and concludes by saying, "it is clear that Prechter does not grasp a lot of the context from which these passages were written." Nonsense. Aside from the single error he caught (thank you), I quoted nothing whatsoever from pages 288-311 because clearly their "context" is not about Oxford or his Voices. OV's quotations resume with a glorious passage from page 312 that lies within Harvey's "diatribe" and which Anon3 completely missed within that section. Here Harvey shifts to quoting Double V's *Pappe with an Hatchet* of 1589, which Oxford wrote, immediately after which he threatens to unmask a merrymaker in disguise, who most assuredly is not the Cambridge Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Ely Cathedral, Andrew Perne. So, Anon3 delivers a false accusation, misses a nugget of gold, and then completely evades the gold mine of information presented over numerous pages in OV quoting Gabriel Harvey's and Richard Lichfield's references to Oxford and his Voices, which are obvious once you have the background to understand them.

Consider just one scholar's observation in that regard (so you don't have to take my word for it). Robert Carver marveled, "Harvey names Apuleius sixteen times in *Pierces Supererogation*, identifying him *explicitly with Nashe*." Why did he do it? Scholars do not know, but I do. Apuleius is the Latin author of *The Golden Asse*, which Oxford translated under the name William Adlington in 1566. Oxford was sixteen years old at the time, thus inspiring Harvey's repeated epithet, *young* Apuleius, as opposed to the "Olde Asse," as Harvey calls Nashe, incongruously with respect to Nashe's supposed age at the time. As noted in the William Adlington chapter and in my article for SON (see link in Appendix 3), Tobin identified *The Golden Asse* as "Shakespeare's Favorite Novel." In our context, Harvey's aim is clear: He is begging his former friend to return to his younger days of wholesome writing as opposed to the satirical and pornographic stuff he was doing under the name Nashe.

A Nitpick That Doesn't Work

Anon3 takes issue with my thought that Harvey is referring to Greene and Nashe together when Harvey says, "I would wish the burned child not to forget the hot element, and would advise overweening youths to remember themselves." Anon3 says Harvey is talking only about Nashe despite the two plural words.

But Harvey's preceding line, which I quoted in OV, is important: "a Poets or Painters License, is a poore security, to privilege debt, or diffamacion." As I explained, "[In] *Foure Letters*, Harvey charged that Greene had canceled the offending passages because "of his great feare to be called Coram for those forged imputations,' i.e. to be called to court to answer the charge of defamation." (Google AI: "'To be called' in the context of 'coram' refers

to…being in the presence of a court, judge, or another authority.") Harvey is saying that even a poet who enjoys *a license* (fitting only Oxford, *not* the Nashe or Greene of orthodox biography) was nevertheless unprotected from having to deal with a defamation charge. Observe that he warns *Nashe* about *Greene's* defamation and conflates the two as a single "burned child." That's because he knows the two names belong to one person.

Anon3 quotes Nicholl from 40 years ago to the effect that perhaps Harvey's word "defamation" refers to a previous "quarrel" between Nashe and Thomas Churchyard. Nicholl, however, never thought to link Robert Greene to that charge because, like everyone else, he thinks Greene and Nashe are two different people. His guess about Churchyard would be well and good if we had no more information to consider. But we do: It was Robert Greene who defamed Harvey's father and his three sons in *Quip for an Upstart Courtier* in 1592.

In my context, Gabriel is simply reminding Oxford that his intemperate writing about the Harveys through his pen name Robert Greene in *Quip* had forced him to scramble to avoid a lawsuit, which would have brought Greene's true nature to light. Oxford quickly killed off Greene so no lawsuit could proceed, and he excised the offending passage from later editions of *Quip*.

Both interpretations work, but I think mine is better. It accounts for Harvey's use of the term, *defamation*, for his use of the plural word, *youths*, and for why he admonishes "*the* burned child" to watch himself.

Did Harvey Bid Thomas Nashe, or the Earl of Oxford, to Higher Poetry?

Anon3 takes issue with my reading of one of Harvey's passages from *Foure Letters*, which Harvey registered on December 4, 1592. He comments, "Harvey addresses Nashe as an 'orator' and not a poet…." I did not say that Harvey addressed Nashe as a poet. I wrote, "Harvey would have no reason to entreat Thomas Nashe, a prose satirist, *to become* a "devine Poet' in the mold of immortal Sidney and Spenser."

Anon3 tries to counter that statement by arguing that Nashe had in fact written "more poetry than he had printed." The only known example from Nashe is *Summers Last Will*, which contains both prose and verse, and which had been written and performed two months earlier. The problem here is that Harvey does not mention *Summers Last Will* anywhere, and it is highly unlikely that he knew about it. The short play was performed privately for Whitgift's household at Croydon in late 1592, with Harvey nowhere near the place, and the play was not published until 1600. So, that conjecture is out.

Anon3 tries to augment Nashe's short list of poetry with "his earlier student collaboration *Terminus & non terminus*." This idea doesn't work, either, for three reasons. First, the skit is not extant, so we cannot be sure it contained verse. Second, if *Terminus* was a *student* production, as all biographers and our three critics assert, how could its text have served to convince Harvey that Nashe was capable of high poetry? Third and finally, Harvey never connects Nashe to the skit, so he could not have had it in mind.

As a final bid to justify Harvey's entreaty, Anon3 notes that Nashe says, "I have written in all sorts of humours privately, I am persuaded, more than any young man of my age in England." It will not do, however, to take that claim at face value. *Where is all that writing*? There are no surviving manuscripts of writing "in all sorts of humours," much less in greater abundance than any Englishman of age 25 had produced. Even the unpublished *Valentines* survives in manuscript form, so wouldn't more of Nashe's vast poetry have survived? None has.

It is clear what is going on: Oxford was bragging to his readers that he was the most

prolific writer in England — an accurate statement, backed up thoroughly in *Oxford's Voices* — while speaking through a pen name whose biography didn't fit. So, he slipped in the word, *privately*.

Harvey was not entreating a real Nashe to higher poetry. He was imploring the Earl of Oxford.

With a final shrug, Anon3 writes, "Regardless, Nashe's *Pierce Penniless* does contain some of Nashe's poetry, and that is really all that is required for this passage from Harvey to make sense." I can agree with that. Saying so would have made for a short critique.

Things the Critics Got Right

Now for the critics' payoff. Yes, they do correct me on several points.

Two items have already been noted: Anon explains that the "recognizance" means "there is no temporal incongruity" with respect to a real Nashe being in jail before the recognizance was posted. That is true, but it does not prove that authorities ever saw Thomas Nashe face to face. Anon3 corrects me on one quote in which Harvey was referring to Perne, not Oxford. Apparently the other 99 quotes are fine. Just to be sure, I double-checked them, and yes, they remain in place. (And they are fun! If you have OV, just search on ^Harvey's and Lichfield's Texts.)

Finally, with laudably obsessive pains taking, our critics identified, correctly in these cases, nine small errors in my texts. Anon found that I referred to Nicholl incorrectly with respect to the 1593 incident rather than the 1597 incident; that I mislabeled a document from 1582 as from 1584; that I misread a detail in one of Nashe's passages; and that I named the wrong Nashe pamphlet for another passage. He also finds an instance in my book where I referred to Fleet prison instead of Newgate prison, although I cited the correct location in my paper. Anon2 corrects a reference page number and notes that I misread a line in a source. Anon3 corrects my reading of "Master Harvey" in one instance to mean Gabriel when it refers to Richard. Anon found a place where, in a long list of writers cited by Nashe, I erroneously included Pythagoras; but he neglects to note that my list on the very next page was correctly headed, "Roman and Renaissance writers *and philosophers*." He really dug for the smallest reason to make me look bad, with no hint of a collegial spirit.

This is a good place to note that Anon erroneously refers to Robert Mills as "Richard Mills," an error he would have milked had I committed it. No big deal. Stuff happens.

All but one of the slips our critics caught are not in my TOX paper but in my 200-page chapter on Nashe, which I wrote over a period of years, with books open all over my desk. Like all researchers, I find errors embarrassing, but we all make them. The preface to *Oxford's Voices* opens with a full-page discussion (see Appendix 1) of why omniscience and perfection are not valid options. I am gratified that the errors they found are small. Repairing them was easy.

The only error in my TOX paper relates to *Terminus & non terminus*, which I concluded never took place. Mills' manuscript confirms that it was a real event. As noted above, however, his testimony ultimately enhances my case, making my Thomas Nashe chapter all the better for it.

Unfortunately, I cannot credit anyone for these few fixes because the critics have elected to be anonymous. They hid their faces because they set out not to lend a hand but to ruin.

These critics failed to upend my case that Thomas Nashe is a pen name of Edward de Vere. Instead, they revealed how hopeless the opposition's rebuttals are when subjected to scrutiny.

Concluding Remarks

I trust the foregoing discussion demonstrates that I have given my subject a lot of thought. I hope it also shows that over the course of their 154 pages, the critical trio presented not a single definitive challenge to my thesis. Their handful of useful points and corrections would have fit on a single page, making them more effective. Better yet, they could have done it in the spirit of fellowship rather than antagonism and contacted me about it.

Yet at the same time, I am, in the end, grateful that these critics prompted me to discover new evidence for my thesis in Robert Mills' manuscript, Ben Jonson's epitaph, and W.C.'s entreaty to Cambridge, all of which found a cozy home in the Thomas Nashe chapter of *Oxford's Voices*. May the next attack provide as much value.

To readers: Thank you for spending your precious time with me. I hope you learned something new and had fun. As a closing gesture of gratitude, I would like to share with you this delightful Ted Lasso clip:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhKL-nWoC5Y

APPENDIX 1
From the preface of *Oxford's Voices*, as posted in 2021, here rechristened, "Prechter's Supplication to Angels and Devils"

If you have a suggested edit, correction or addition…I will be happy to credit you for fixing, improving or expanding upon the book.

I would rather credit you for correcting one of my mistakes than read about it in an attack based on some error or other that you find I have committed. Hostility seems to be in fashion these days. I welcome any courteous correction that gets us all closer to the truth.

I believe I have reached the point of expertise on Oxford's Voices in general. Yet my reading stopped short of making me an expert on every one of the 423 literary names — comprising 154 notable Voices and 269 notable non-Voices — or the 47 independently written anonymous works or the two groups of independently written anonymous works discussed in this book. Other researchers know far more than I do about, say, Greek and Roman mythology, Elizabethan printers, Shakespeare's biblical allusions, Latin and Greek literary sources, similar passages across various works, and so forth. If you are one of these people, and you know something that would alter one of my conclusions, please let me know. I am confident, though, that experts are more likely to find evidence confirming rather than contradicting my thesis. But I could be wrong.

My capacity for research was limited due to restrictions on my time, not to mention the limitation of lifespan. My assistant tells me I have accessed about 2500 sources and read and marked about 600,000 pages of material in doing research for this book. Yet millions of pages have been published. I cannot read them all, and one must stop somewhere. To give you a taste of the vastness of the field, consider that academic journals have published well over a hundred papers and articles about a book titled *Willobie His Avisa* (1594), which I analyze for authorship purposes in this book. I had time to read only a few of them. Each time I accessed information sufficient to reach my goal, I stopped. Few critics' articles are of value with respect to the authorship question, so tracking down every article would be unlikely to change my conclusions.

In the early years of this project, a newly discovered paper, article or book would contradict a tentative conclusion and lead me to a truer picture. Such revelations eventually stopped happening. Rather, every relevant fact I newly came across simply added more support for my arguments. The inability to read everything probably means that I missed plenty of additional evidence in favor of my case. I am confident that if you broaden my range of research, you will have the same result: more support for the case. Still, one of the sources I did not access may contain key information negating one of my arguments. I have read at least six sets of Oxfordian journals and newsletters, one of which goes back to 1963, but I did not access the archives of the *De Vere Society Newsletter*. I figure any key insights would have been covered in the newsletters I did access, but if you know of pertinent articles I missed, please let me know. Most important, if you have evidence that disproves one of my conclusions, please bring it to my attention. **You may contact me at bob@oxfordsvoices.com.** For minor matters such as spelling fixes, source questions or technical suggestions, please email info@oxfordsvoices.com.

APPENDIX 2
TWO QUICK EXAMPLES OF NASHE SOUNDING LIKE OTHER VOICES

Robert Greene

Compare Green to Nashe:

> [Writers] think to outbrave better pens with the swelling bombast of a bragging blanke verse. …Sundrie other sweete Gentlemen I know, that have…trickt up a companie of taffeta fooles with their feathers, [who] might have antickt it untill this time up and down the countrey with the King of Fairies and dinde everie daie at the pease porridge ordinaire with Delphrigus. But…beggers [have forgot] that ever they caried their fardles on footback.
>
> —Thomas Nashe, preface to Greene's *Menaphon* (1589)

> What though the world once went hard with me, when I was faine to carry my playing Fardle a footebacke. …why, I am as famous for Delphrigus, & the King of Fairies, as ever was any of my time. …those Puppits (I meane) that speake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours. …Yes trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that…supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you.
>
> —Robert Greene, *Groats-worth of Witte* (1592)

Some scholars have claimed one of them is lying about who wrote what. That concession opens the door of distrust to everything they say.

Phillip Stubbes

Thomas Nashe in Cutbert Curry-knave's *An Almond for a Parrat* (1590) advertises Phillip Stubbes' *Anatonie of Abuses* (1583). Why?

Anyone who studies Stubbes' writing and that of Cutbert Curry-knave will — ironically in the orthodox context but naturally in ours — notice numerous shared elements of style. They both use "the one…the other," "now-a-days," "together by the ears," "up and down" and "No, no…." They share the

terms *Tush*, *schismatic*, *dunghill*, *Machiavel*, *tedious*, *tyranny*, *treachery*, *treason*, *trash*, *blush*, *counterfeit*, *newfangled* and *quiddities*, and lots of religious language, including the terms *zeal*, *repent*, *repentance*, *whorish*, *devil*, *idle*, *pride*, *antichristian*, etc. They both employ "as…so" comparisons, Latin quotations and numerous lists of items.

What about orthodoxy's conclusion that Thomas Nashe's *Anatomie of Absurditie* (1590) stands entirely in opposition — as its title suggests — to opinions expressed in Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses*? On the contrary, much of it is in full agreement.

Nashe gripes, "Promotion which was wont to be the free propounded palme of paines, is by many mens lamentable practise, become a purchase." As McKerrow observed, "*Stubbes says exactly the same thing*, 'those that are learned indeed, they are not sought for nor promoted, but…sometime by mony ([i.e.] bribes) are intruded."

Nashe's entire opening complaint about women — if put into dialogue mode — would fit right into Stubbes' book without anyone noticing. In the very mode of Stubbes, he employs lists, cites instances, refers to past writers, supplies and translates numerous Latin quotations, characterizes the object of his complaint in extreme terms, and even creates the same Puritan context. Consider a short passage from Stubbes' lengthy diatribe against women:

> consider their coynesse in gestures, their minsednes [mincing] in words and speaches, their gingerlynes in trippinge on toes like yong goats, their demure nicitie and babishnes…. But though it wilbe a corrosive to their hautie stomacks, & a *nippitatum* to their tender brests to heare their dirtie dregs ript up and cast in their diamond faces, yet hoping that they, seeing the horror of their impieties, and tragiall abuses laide open to the world, (for now they sleep in the grave of oblivion) wil at the last like good Convertes and Penitentiaries of Christe Jesus leave of[f] their wickednes, call for mercie at the hands of God, repent and amend.

Can anyone contend that Nashe's attack on women is from a different pen? Here is a portion:

> yea thyre needles are nettles, for they lay them aside as needlesse, for feare of pricking their fingers when they are painting theyr faces, nay, they will abandon that trifling which may stay them at home but if the temperature of the wether will not permitte them to pop into the open ayre, a payre of cardes better pleaseth her then a peece of cloth, her beades then her booke, a bowle full of wine then a hand full of wooll, delighting more in a daunce then in *Davids Psalmes*, to play with her dogge then to pray to her God: setting more by a love Letter, then the lawe of the Lord, by one Pearle then twenty *Pater nosters*. Shee…joyes more in her Jewels, then in her Jesus.

The universally adopted idea that Nashe stands in opposition to Stubbes is wrong. In much of the book, he *is* Stubbes.

Oxford's Voices offers countless examples of textual overlaps such as these. Taken together, they belie the entire picture of literary England 1560-1604 painted by orthodoxy.

APPENDIX 3
LINKS

Three articles on an instance of Oxford playing the role of George Peele in real life:

Prechter, Robert. 2022. **"Who Wrote George Peele's 'Only Extant Letter'?"** *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Vol. 58, no. 1, (Winter 2022), pps. 12-16.
Prechter, Robert. 2022. **"George Peele's Personal Note from Shakespeare,"** *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Vol. 58, no. 3, (Summer 2022), pp. 22-26.
Prechter, Robert. 2022. **"Prechter Replies" (Another Oxford/Peele Handwriting Link)**, *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Vol. 58, no. 4, (Fall 2022), pp. 21-22.

Article on Oxford's translation of *The Golden Asse*, whose Latin author Harvey equates with Nashe:
Prechter, Robert. 2023. **"Who Wrote 'Shakespeare's Favorite Novel'?"** *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Vol.59, No.2, Spring 2023, pp.10-13

Article demonstrating that Oxford translated *Ovids Metamorphoses*, which was published under his uncle's name:
Prechter, Robert R. 2007. **"A Deeper Look at the Arthur Golding Canon."** *Shakespeare Matters: The Voice of the Shakespeare Fellowship*, Vol. 7, No. 1, (Fall 2007), pps. 7-14.

Article identifying "Richard Lichfield" as Joseph Hall:
Prechter, Robert. 2023. **"The Author Behind the Allonym 'Richard Lichfield'"**, *The de Vere Society Newsletter*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (January 2023), pp.39-42.

Article on the authorship of *Straunge Newes out of Calabria* (1587):
Prechter, Robert. 2024. **"Identifying John Doleta"** *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Vol.60, No.4, Fall 2024, pp.18-21.

Nashe paper:
Prechter, Robert R. 2024. **"Was 'Thomas Nashe' a Pen Name of the Earl of Oxford?"** *The Oxfordian*, Vol. 26, 2024, pps. 171-203

Speech on Nashe:
Speech video: Prechter, Robert. 2023. **"Thomas Nashe: Person or Persona?"** Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable, May 6, 2023

Speech on Oxford's contribution to the Marlowe canon:
Video: Robert Prechter. 2024. **"What Pieces, If Any, Did the Earl of Oxford Contribute to the Christopher Marlowe Canon?"** Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Conference, September 29, 2024