

Note: The following text is excerpted from the **Thomas Nashe** chapter of Oxford's Voices. Voices' names are in **bold**, except that of Thomas Nashe, because in this chapter, he is the Voice to be proved. To access a reference, just click on the associated asterisk (\*). You can return to your text page by clicking on the "Back" button.

You can't know the story of the Pamphlet War until you know who the players are. There were in fact only four: On one side was the Earl of Oxford, writing under severalonyms. On the other side were brothers Gabriel and Richard Harvey and later Joseph Hall, who wrote under the allonym Richard Lichfield.

### **^The Pamphlet War Between Gabriel Harvey and Oxford's Voices**

Here is a remarkable statement: "By far the most important event of Nashe's life as a man of letters was his quarrel with the Harvey family."\* Why in the world would a young man steep himself in classical and modern literature for years only to spend most of his energy arguing with a pair of brothers, especially when "It is doubtful whether many people knew or cared what the quarrel was about..."?\*

According to orthodoxy, "When it began, Gabriel Harvey and Nashe would seem to have been almost unknown to one another."\* Ah, but in our context, they knew each other well. Biographers have mused about why Thomas Nashe chose to "spend, *perhaps waste*, so much energy..."\* battling a man fifteen years his senior and with whom he had no personal history. Our context resolves that question. The critic who came closest to sensing the truth was McKerrow, who mused, "There must have been some inherent opposition between the two."\* Yes, and only our context reveals it.

To understand fully Nashe's role as a Voice, we must analyze the publishing imbroglio in which he participated. His handling of it led to widespread appreciation among critics, both of his day and since, of his scoffing ability. Oxford was indeed a talent to be reckoned with, but as we will see, the chief emotional prop of Nashe's fame — that he defended poor, dead Robin Greene, against a humorless ogre — is as false as a three-dollar bill.

Before turning to the controversy in which Nashe became embroiled, let's set the stage. Oxford and Gabriel Harvey's early relationship, from the late 1560s through most of the 1570s, was friendly. In *Four Letters*, Harvey recalls of Oxford in the late 1560s, "in the prime of his gallantest youth, hee bestowed Angels [money] upon me in Christes Colledge in Cambridge [with which Harvey was affiliated from 1566 to 1570], & otherwise voutsafed me many gracious favours at the affectionate commendation of my Cosen, M. Thomas Smith, the sonne of Sir Thomas [Smith]." Harvey's "Cosen" was the son of Oxford's childhood tutor. If Harvey's comment is literally true, his uncle was Oxford's tutor.

The standard belief is, "We cannot say for certain what was the first cause of the ill feeling..."\* But the record establishes its genesis:

In or near 1577, Oxford chose John Lyly over Gabriel Harvey for the post of his personal secretary. This was a blow to Harvey, whose fellowship at Pembroke College was due to lapse in 1578, making him desperate for employment. Years later, Nashe in *Have with you* explained retrospectively what happened: "He that most patronizd him, prying more searchingly into him, [an]d finding that he was more meete to make sport with, than anie way deeply to be employd, with faire words shooke him of[f], & told him he was fitter for the Universitie, than for the Court or his turne, and so bad God prosper his studies & sent for another Secretarie to Oxford." Harvey, then, had reason to be annoyed at Oxford. That an actual Nashe would have known of this private event, and that Harvey would have complained bitterly to Nashe about it, are gross improbabilities attending the orthodox context.

Oxford's decision might have released Harvey, a man of propriety, to express what would have been his natural distaste for Oxford's bookish pursuits. In August 1578, he delivered his "*Gratulationes Valdinenses*" speech at Audley End, Essex, where Queen Elizabeth stopped during her progress toward Cambridge. In his speech, Harvey sang Oxford's praises, yet also, with a hint of ridicule, he attempted to nudge him, if not shame him, into putting down his "bloodless" pen and picking up a sword to defend England.

There is no recorded response from the Earl of Oxford, but *someone* after that time began embarrassing Harvey publicly. "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'..."\* "Extemporal faculty" means the ability to speechify as an occasion demands, suggesting that was suffering parodies of his Audley End address. Later publications (quoted below) suggest that Oxford is the prime candidate for having encouraged, if not formulated, these caricatures of Harvey, which may have well been staged, as Harvey's language implies.

Oxford even sent into battle what would ultimately become his most famous Voice: **Shakespeare**. Regarding *Love's Labor's Lost*, "Richard David judges to be 'overwhelming' the 'cumulative effect' of parallels in that play with the Nashe-Harvey quarrel."\* Clark dated the genesis of the play to 1578, the year Harvey annoyed Oxford at Audley end. The Bard continued to expand and edit the play for the next twenty years (see **Shakespeare** chapter), a fact quite compatible with animosity held between Harvey and Oxford's Voices that lasted through the same period and culminated in Nashe's *Have with you* of 1596 and, probably, *Love's Labor's Lost*, augmented for the last time for publication in 1598.

Harvey next issued an expression of annoyance toward Oxford in 1580, when he published private correspondence between himself and Edmund Spenser in a pamphlet titled *Three proper, and wittie, familiar Letters*. In the preface, an unidentified publisher claims to have brought the letters to press without the correspondents' knowledge, but Nashe figured out from the writing style that Harvey wrote the preface as well.

The letters contain shadowy references to Oxford. Harvey asks, "What saith M. Cuddie, *alias you know who?*" In Spenser's *Shepherd's Calender*, **Cuddie** stands for Oxford, and Harvey, a close friend of Spenser, knew it.

Included in Harvey's collection of letters is a Latin poem (rendered in full at [elizabethanauthors.com](http://elizabethanauthors.com).) titled "*Speculum Tuscanismi*," i.e. "Mirror of Tuscanism," describing someone fitting Oxford's characteristics. Much of it constitutes high praise. Miller \* figured out that the line in which Harvey calls his subject a "singular odd man" is in fact a high compliment, meaning "distinguished and extraordinary man." The phrase cleverly presents a double pun on *sanglier*, the French word for *boar* and the word *singular*, meaning *pack* when applied to boars, as in "a *singular* of boars," thereby doubly hinting at the boar symbol on the Vere family crest. The poem speaks of "his termes, and braveries in Print," fitting Oxford's neologisms and his numerous books. He is "a fellowe perelesse in England," fitting Oxford as the second-highest ranking English peer. He "doth practise of Italy in one yeare," fitting Oxford's one year of living there. He has the "sight of an Eagle, might of a Lyon," naming the symbols on Oxford's coat of arms and his Bolbec crest, respectively. He has "All gallant Vertues," a possible pun on *Vere*.

The poem uses Harvey's code name for Oxford, "A per se A" (see discussion above). Harvey and Oxford batted this epithet around in their publications to indicate Oxford, and in one case, Thomas Nashe, as detailed below. The **Earl of Oxford** chapter conjectures that one of Oxford's self-identifying words, *Ipse*, may serve as a contracted homonym of "A per se A."

Unfortunately for the two men's relationship, Harvey rounded out his description to match the overall impression given at Audley End that Oxford was not living up to his potential. He went on to charge his

subject with being a vain, Italianate fop who wears a funny hat and writes “no workes but woomanish onely.” In 1580, the latter charge would have applied to **George Pettie**’s *Petite Pallace*, **Henrie Wotton**’s *A Courtlie controversie* and **John Lyly**’s *Euphues Wyt*. Whether knowledge of **Robert Greene**’s equally qualifying debut, Part 1 of *Mamillia*, was abroad at that time, I do not know.

We know that Oxford felt stung by that portion of the depiction because responses to it appear at least twice in the Voices’ works. **Lyly**’s *Euphues England*, published the same year, describes a nobleman unjustly accused of being Italianate (see quote in the **John Lyly** chapter). In **Shakespeare**’s *Cymbeline* (V,i), the hero, Posthumus, declares, “I’ll disrobe me/ Of these Italian weeds, and suit myself/ As does a Briton peasant: so I’ll fight [for England].”

Harvey was brought before the Privy Council to apologize for “*Tuscanismi*.” He then hid out for eight weeks (as Nashe informs us) in the house of a nobleman (identified by scholars as the Earl of Leicester), who apparently had urged him to pen it.

A few months after “*Tuscanismi*” was published, “a set of Trinity men”\* from Cambridge caricatured Harvey’s Audley End speech in a play in Latin — in keeping with Harvey’s Latin address — called *Pedantius*. “The first performance of *Pedantius* took place...on 6 February 1581 — and no doubt in the hall of Trinity College.”\* *No-body and Some-body* by **Anonymous** describes the use of theatre for shaming: “Somebody/ Once pickt a pocket in this Play-house yard,/ Was hoisted on the stage, and shamd about it.” A dozen years later, Thomas Nashe in *Strange Newes* identifies Harvey as the play’s target and says that Harvey was ill with vexation about it. Nashe reports, “The whole Universitie hist him, Tarlton at the Theator made jeasts of him, and Elderton [was] beare-baiting him with whole bundles of ballets [ballads].” The man behind Oxford’s Voice **W.E. (William Elderton)** just happened to be involved.

Somehow, Thomas Nashe, who was barely fourteen years old at the time of the event and not yet at the university, knew all the details. Nicholl admitted, “Nashe was not yet at Cambridge when it was first performed, at Trinity College on 6 February 1581.” He shrugged off the problem with a conjecture: “but he seems to have seen it later...”\* There is no evidence, however, that the farce was restaged, and there is not much reason to think it would have been.

Although someone other than Oxford wrote the play (see Edward Forsett chapter), Nashe knows a lot about it, which means Oxford did. He could well have encouraged its creation. As Nicholl astutely observed, the play was “written by (*or on behalf of*) his rival [for] the post of Public Orator...Anthony Wingfield.”\* What are the chances that Mr. Wingfield had the talent to write a play, much less a satirical one? Because *Pedantius* was staged a few months after Harvey took aim at the Earl of Oxford with “*Speculum Tuscanismi*,” it seems reasonable to speculate that Oxford may have signed on as one of Wingfield’s campaign operatives. Thomas Neville, who in 1578 held a fellowship at Pembroke College along with Harvey, had described Harvey as one who “could hardly find it in his heart to commend of any man,”\* so his personality was likely unsuited for handling derision.

On the heels of such ridicule, Harvey’s ambitions collapsed. He “failed to become Public Orator when the appointment was made in 1581”\* at Cambridge. So, the campaign against Harvey was successful, and it delivered a mortal blow to his livelihood. Harvey left Cambridge in shame, “and it was eventually at Oxford that he incepted as Doctor of Civil Law in July 1585. ...After this Harvey disappears from the limelight — part of the time practicing civil law at the Court of Arches in London — until he bursts back on the scene in 1592, in public combat with **Greene** and Nashe.”\* As we will see, however, Harvey did not burst back on the scene that late; he helped his brother go after Nashe in 1590.

Although Harvey fell silent for a decade, Oxford’s Voices would not leave him alone. Derision from them continued throughout the 1580s. The quarrel was obviously a private one because the ridicule continued

during a time when Harvey enjoyed no modicum of public stature. In Part 2 of *Mamillia*, published in 1583, **Robert Greene** adapted Harvey's "*Tuscanismi*" verses to a poem described as "certaine vaine verses compiled by an injurious Gentleman heere in Saragossa, who with despightfull taunts hath abused the Gentlewomen of Sicillia, most peevishlie describing their apparell, and presumptuouslie deciphering their nature." One of the lines describes someone who sports an article of clothing "tuckt up like a Tuscan." In 1585, **John Lyly** ridiculed Harvey's astrologically inclined brothers, John and Richard, as the addled "Astronomer" in *Gallathea*, and in 1586, he caricatured Gabriel as the pompous pedant Tophas in *Endymion* (see **John Lyly** chapter). In 1587, Oxford issued a pamphlet titled *Straunge Newes out of Calabria*, which purports to detail prognostications of **John Doleta** from 1586 but in fact parodies one or both of the Harvey brothers' astrological booklets of 1583-1584 (see **John Doleta** chapter). Finally goaded to respond, Richard replied to **Doleta** in 1587 with *A Confutation* by "T.R." (For details, see the **John Doleta** and T.R. chapters.) Although Gabriel remained silent, **Double V's** *Pappe with an Hatchet*, published in 1589, berated Harvey's family and his *Three Proper Letters* of nearly a decade earlier. As we will see, Harvey knew who was behind the **Double V** pseudonym.

Perhaps because Gabriel Harvey had remained silent through all the Voices' attacks, or perhaps because Oxford finally felt he had done enough damage to his nemesis after **Double V's** contribution of October 1589, Thomas Nashe guardedly complimented Harvey in his preface to *Menaphon*, published the same year. Amidst praise for a dozen writers, Nashe credits Harvey with carrying on the tradition of Homer (see quoted passage below). Oxford's olive branch seems to have been designed to signal the end of his Voices' attacks.

Any such truce, however, became endangered by an action of Gabriel's brother. Richard Harvey took issue with both sides of the Martinist kerfuffle (see the Pamphleteers section) in *Plain Perceval the Peace Maker of England* (1590), which begins as follows:

To the New Upstart Martin, and the Misbegotten Heires of His body...Mar-Martin, Mar-Mar-Martin, and so foorth...To all Whip Johns, and Whip Jackes: not forgetting Cavaliero Pasquill, or the Cooke Ruffian, that drest a dish for Martins diet, Marforius....

...I spied me, a large P. with a wide mouth like a porrage pott, and being quicksent thrust forward on the trale, and found it was Papp...yet bearing a braine as well as a belly...I found that it was no meat indeed for Percevall...yet I see he that was Cooke can Cater, thought to feed Martin with these nunchions, as men feed Apes. [A] couple of these late Roysters would marre then Martins, at the cracking of a stage Jest. They have plaguy Clubfists, the one with his Counte-Cuffe, the other with his Country Cuffe...

In that space, Harvey refers to **Pasquill**, who had issued three books, **Mar-phoreus**, with his *Martins Months minde* (1589), *Pappe with an Hatchet* (1589) by **Double V** and two publications (see **John Lyly** chapter) by non-Voices from 1589: *A Whip for an Ape*, which speaks of lampooning Martin on stage, and *Mar-Martine*, both of which may have been written at Oxford's direction. In the body of the treatise, he asks, "Wot you what the little waggess said, when they had beene telling many precious miracles of Robin-goodfellow and the divell?" This is a reference to another Voice's work, *Tarletons Newes out of Purgatorie* (1590) by **Robin Goodfellow**. Richard condescendingly quips that anyone "bearing a brain" would find such works distasteful. He calls the anti-Martinist Voices "ruffe Roisters" and advises them, "put up your whinyards [swords]."

Hinting that he knows that one person is behind all these publications, Richard says of the repliers to Martin, "False witnes, & lying...is taken up now for a custome, of *one lewd Customer*, and hath got

Chapmen that will never lay it downe....” Hinting at the identity of said Customer, he says, “O so some of those companions ply the *bore, to bore a shadowe....*” Oxford’s crest features a blue boar, and it is he who has undertaken to bore the shadow, i.e. the pseudonymous Martin. He adds, “my plain speeches may have as much wooll (I dare not say so much wit) as is in your double pild velvet,” velvet being a cloth of the upper classes.

After his scolding, Richard bids the battlers, “shake hands & be friendes.” Yet he knows what his railing will prompt. He writes to himself, “But what if these Roisters draw their Pen and Inkehornes, and so set upon thee? ...some of these will be-daube thee with Inke, and plague thee with blacke and white.” Those words proved to be a better prediction than anything in his astrology book. He replies to himself, “Tush I can paint as fast as they, though perhaps not altogether so faire.” True again, to his later undoing.

A few months later in 1590, Richard issued *A Theologicall Discourse of the Lamb of God*. Contrary to most critical commentary on this book, one can well tag it as another anti-Martinist pamphlet. In it, Richard scolds Martin repeatedly, condemns “Martinists” and “martinisme” and calls for “neighborly concord” among the disputants. He completely avoids baiting Oxford’s Voices. So far, so good.

A few weeks later, the dam broke as the Harvey brothers opted not to leave well enough alone. A second edition of the book came out, containing an added address “To the favourable or indifferent Reader,” penned anonymously (see below) by Richard and his brother Gabriel. The address pummels Thomas Nashe for being presumptuous in his preface to **Greene’s** *Menaphon* and, for the first time, lumps him in with the author of *Pap with an Hatchet*:

it becummeth me not to play that part in Divinitie, that one Thomas Nashe hath lately done in humanitie, who taketh upon him...peremptorily censuring his betters at pleasure, Poets, Orators, Polihistors, Lawyers, and whome not? and making as much and as little of every man as himselfe listeth . . . Iwis this Thomas Nash, one whome I never heard of before (for I cannot imagin him to be Thomas Nash our Butler of Pembroke Hall, albeit peradventure not much better learned) sheweth himselfe none of the meetest men, to censure Sir Thomas Moore, Sir John Cheeke, Doctor Watson, Doctor Haddon, Maister Ascham, Doctor Car, my brother Doctor Harvey, and such like. . . Yet let not Martin, or Nash, or any such famous obscure man, or any other piperly makeplay or makebate. . . no carping Censour, or wayne Pap-hatchet, or madbraine Scoggin [Edward IV’s jester] or gay companion, any thing move me.

Some scholars have aimed to correct Harvey’s “misreading”<sup>\*</sup> of Nashe, stating that Nashe did not censure but rather praised most of the writers he mentions in the preface to *Menaphon*. Harvey did not misread anything. At that time, the term *censure* sometimes meant not *condemn* or *condemnation* but *judge* or *judgment*. For instance, when **Robert Greene** explains why he fulfilled a Gentlewoman’s request to treat the story of Susanna in *The Myrroure of Modestie*, he says, “shee perswaded me that to trouble your patience was but a small cracke, [and] To prove this hir *censure* was a sentence, & in this hir will stooode as a lawe. . . .” The word *censure* here means *judgment*. Harvey is saying, “Who is Nashe to judge his betters?”

Later, in *Have with you* (1596), Nashe mentions Richard’s *Plain Percevall* and, referring to himself in the third person (as Oxford sometimes does with his nym), reports, “by some probable collections he guessed the elder brother’s hand was in it.” He says he came to the same view of *Lamb of God*, whose second edition was the straw that broke his patience. He reminds readers, “before this *I praisde him* (after a sort) in an Epistle in **Greenes** *Menaphon*.”

Oxford’s conclusion that Gabriel was involved in Richard’s books is surely correct, because the address to the Reader quoted above refers to the “Butler of Pembroke Hall” and to “Martin, or Nash, or any such



famous obscure man,” and two years later, in *Four Letters*, Gabriel refers both to the “Butler of Pembroke Hall” and to “a wished friend, howsoever extremely mean or famously obscure.” Although Gabriel could have lifted these phrases from Richard, their near identity suggests that he wrote a portion of the preface to the second edition of *Lamb of God*. Because an “as...so” construction in the address mirrors others in the body of the book, which Richard wrote, the safest conclusion seems to be that the brothers co-authored the address.

Scholars have detected no response to the Harveys from either **Robert Greene** or Thomas Nashe prior to **Greene**’s *Quip* in 1592. As McKerrow put it, “some two years seem to have elapsed before any attempt was made by the writers criticised to reply.”\* That is not true.

In our context, we can plainly see that Oxford began replying immediately and in force. In 1591, “**Adam Fouleweather**, Student of Asse-tronomy,” whom some scholars identify as Thomas Nashe (see **Adam Fouleweather** chapter), countered with *Wonderfull, strange and miraculous Astrologically Prognostication*, a satire of Richard Harvey’s notoriously inaccurate astrological predictions in *An Astrological Discourse*. The same year, **Simon smel-knave** issued another parody in *Fearefull and lamentable effects of two dangerous Comets*. Sometime in 1590-1594, **George Peele** mocked Gabriel Harvey by putting a line of his poetry in the mouth of Huanebango, an unappealing character in *The Old Wives Tale*.

In April 1592 came the registration of *Defence of Conny catching* by **Cuthbert Conny-catcher**, another Voice whom many scholars have considered to be a pseudonym of **Robert Greene**. In a brilliant analysis, Jordan revealed that both the story and a specific portion of the text “were meant in all probability as a slur upon the Harveys, Richard Harvey in particular.”\* There can be little doubt of this conclusion. **Conny-catcher** charged, “This pure Martinist (if he were not worse) had a combat betweene the flesh and the spirite, that he must needes have a wife, which he cunningly conny-catcht in this manner.” Thereafter follows an allegorical tale of wooing by “a holy brother” who dresses his “elder brother” as his serving-man so he can appear wealthy. The ruse is outed at Paul’s Churchyard, a location where books were sold. The murky tale implies that Gabriel had “served” Richard by contributing to one of his books, which is exactly what Nashe had reported of *Lamb of God*. Linking all three Voices yet further, we find that cozening wives is also the charge that **Robert Greene** levies against Richard in *Quip* (see next paragraph) and which Nashe later levies against Richard in *Strange Newes*.

A bit of background may help to explain why the two main combatants were primed for escalating the quarrel. As the decade of the ’80s matured, Oxford began sliding toward the nadir of his life. In 1587, his infant daughter Frances and his best friend, the Earl of Rutland, died. In 1588, his wife Anne died. In 1589, Lord Burghley sued him. Professionally, he suffered “proscription of his acting companies by puritanical statute in 1589-90”\* after they presented Puritan figurehead Martin Mar-prelate as an ape. In late 1590, Oxford became aware that three trusted men had been cheating him for years, thereby placing major financial obligations in default, making 1591 “his nightmare year.”\* In 1591, Oxford signed over Hedingham Castle, the ancestral seat of the Veres and his boyhood home, to Burghley in trust for the benefit of his daughters (Burghley’s granddaughters). Waugh surmised that in another blow to his professional stature, “the financial crisis that befell Oxford in 1591...marked the end of Oxford’s reign as ‘Phoebus,’ the central figure in the world of Elizabethan theater [and] led to the rise of Burbage, Henslowe, and Alleyn beginning in 1592.”\* In 1592, Oxford failed in his suit to obtain a trading monopoly. “By 1592, he had completed the process of selling off all his inherited ancestral estates for cash [and] was reduced to borrowing money from his servants.”\* In those years, his Voice **Robert Greene** suffered a few bouts of disparagement (see **Robert Greene** chapter). Throughout this time, Oxford toiled in obscurity while others such as Edmund Spenser

and Christopher Marlowe enjoyed adulation and respect for their creations. With so much in his life awry, Oxford would have been emotionally primed for further animosity toward Gabriel Harvey.

Harvey's lousy decade was continuing as well. One after another of his ambitions were thwarted even at his new university: "he was passed over when he might well have become Master of Trinity Hall in 1585; and in 1592 he lost his Fellowship there."\* Harvey was approaching the desperate point of being unable to support himself.

So, Oxford and Harvey reached bottoms simultaneously in 1592. Society was reeling, too, having become tense with dread over the plague sweeping through London in the summer and fall of 1592: "From 1592 to 1593, London experienced its last major plague outbreak of the 16<sup>th</sup> century."\* The nerves of these two men under personal and social tension would have been raw, suggesting that it would take little to make them flash.

In the summer of 1592, **Robert Greene** took a fatal step. Gabriel, in Richard's *Lamb of God* of 1590, had criticized *only Thomas Nashe* by name. To scholars unaware of Oxford's multiple personae, the reply came, inexplicably, not from Nashe but from **Greene**! In *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, **Greene** broadened the scope of the pamphlet war with a passage in which he has Harvey's own father berate all three of his sons. Dear old Dad characterizes churchman Richard as "the limb of the deveill" and "a vaine glorious asse" whose parishioners complain that he "kisseth their wives"; physician John as a failed astrologer and "a foole"; and academic Gabriel as "the first that invented Englishe Hexamiter," who was "clapt in the Fleet" for his "other familiar letters and proper treatises." (See full text in the **Robert Greene** chapter.)

With respect to the charges about Gabriel, scholars have professed, "**Greene**'s allusion is not clear."\* But it is. "The Fleet was a prison generally reserved to 'those that act or speak anything in contempt of the Courts of Chancery and Common Pleas,' and was used mostly for the detention of persons convicted by the Star Chamber."\*The "familiar letters" to which **Greene** refers is to Harvey's *Three proper, and wittie, familiar Letters* (1580), which included the "*Tuscanisme*" poem that elicited a summons from the Privy Council. The event remained heavily on Oxford's mind, because Nashe later mentions "*Tuscanisme*" more than once.

Harvey began replying to **Greene** in his own name in *Foure Letters*, which he was apparently conveying to friends and Oxford as they were written. "The righteousness of Gabriel's cause, at least at the outset, must be granted. His father's honour and his brother's memory were uppermost in his desire to counter **Greene**'s 'mote-spying Malice'..."\*

Suggesting one last bipartisan attempt at de-escalation, Oxford yanked the offending paragraphs from the next edition of *Quip*. In a direct parallel to Nashe's favorable mention of Harvey in the preface to *Menaphon*, Harvey in turn held out a last olive branch to Oxford by including "Thomas Nash" at the end of his short list of worthy writers (see quote below). He evidently hoped that Oxford would call it even and cease responding. The back-and-forth recalls the old kids' game of punching each other in the shoulder, each one saying, "Now we're even!" so let's be friends.

But Harvey's attack in *Foure Letters* had placed his disgust with **Robert Greene** on full display, making it too vicious to be forgiven:

in steede of *Omne tulit punctum qui muscuit utile dulci* (that forsooth was his professed Poesie) Loe a wilde head, ful of mad braine and a thousande crotchets: A scholler, a Discourser, a Courtier, a ruffian, a Gamester, a Lover, a Souldier, a travailer, a Merchaunt, a Broker, an Artificer, a Botcher, a Pettifogger, a Player, a Coosener, a Rayler, a beggar, an Omnigatherum, a Gay nothing, a stoarehouse of bald and baggage stufe, unwoorth the answering, or reading; a trivial, and triobolar Autor for knaves, & fooles: an Image of Idelness, an Epitome of fantasticalitie, a Mirrour of Vanitie.

The gloves were off, and from then on, the combatants pulled no punches.

Temporarily giving himself an upper hand, Harvey played his trump card in threatening to sue **Greene** for libel over the portrayal of his father in *Quip*. He may have been serious, or he may have put forward the idea because he figured that the mere threat of a lawsuit would cripple Oxford's liberty to pose as **Robert Greene**.

Moving swiftly, Oxford killed off **Greene** on September 3. As explained in the **Robert Greene** chapter, he probably planned his death ahead of time as a memorial to the life path of Ovid, but Harvey's threat seems to have accelerated **Greene**'s demise. If Oxford received notice of Harvey's intent during his composition of *Groats-worth*, it would explain why **Greene** abruptly cuts off a fictional story in mid-telling and moves directly to penning wails of remorse and assertions that he is near death.

By retiring **Greene**, Oxford cleverly thwarted Harvey's purpose and, more important, he avoided a confrontation that might have revealed the man behind the pseudonym. In *Strange Newes*, Oxford gloats over neutering Harvey's menace when he has Nashe say, "But *by the meanes of his death thou art deprived of the remedie in lawe*, which thou intended to have against him, for calling thy father Ropemaker." (italics in the original) Nashe knew the law only because Oxford knew the law. That mocking declaration confirms that Harvey's threat hastened the death of **Greene**. Nashe then threatens to have Will Kemp portray Harvey's father as a clown on stage, extending the history of Oxford's lampoons.

Thwarted of a legal remedy against a deceased **Robert Greene**, and barred from outing Oxford as the true author, Harvey nevertheless used the turn of events to his purpose. On September 5, he provided his own humorously insulting description of **Greene**'s mock death, as detailed in the **Robert Greene** chapter. Harvey's opening lines show that he credits his own legal threat as the cause of **Greene**'s "death," which, he writes, resulted from "a surfett of pickle herringe and rennish wine or, as some suppose, *of an exceeding feare...to be called Coram for those forged imputations*." Harvey adds that he is "sorry" that **Greene** died, "because I was deprived of that remedy in Law, that I entended against him, in the behalfe of my Father." As recounted in the **Robert Greene** chapter, Nashe rebuts and denies the whole story, joking that if **Greene** died of anything, it was "an exceeding feare of his [Harvey's] Familiar Epistles."

Oxford must have continued to receive Harvey's letters upon completion because within days he dashed off *Greenes Funeralls*, in which **R.B. Gent. (Richard Barnfield)** defends **Greene**'s talent and reputation against Harvey's attack. Although *Greenes Funeralls* wasn't published until 1594, it was composed between September 5 and 26, 1592 (see discussion in the **Richard Barnfield** chapter). Why would the actual Richard Barnfield, a college student only 18 years old, have joined in this silly battle? As explained in the **Richard Barnfield** chapter, he wouldn't have, and he didn't. **R.B. Gent.** is a Voice. In the booklet, **R.B. Gent.** makes "an appeal to Thomas Watson, the poet, to come out into the open and help him to defend **Greene**'s memory."\* Watson was Oxford's pal, having dedicated his *Hekatompathia* to him in 1582. But he had no opportunity to rise to the challenge, because he died days after *Greenes Funeralls* was composed. That event may be why the booklet's publication was postponed.

Harvey registered his entire set of responses for publication on December 4, even though **Robert Greene** was two months dead, implying, of course, that he wasn't. Four days later, **Henry Chettle** in *Kind-Harts Dreame* included a letter purportedly given to him by the spirit of the dead **Robert Greene**, in which the writer just happens to take precisely the same approach as **R.B. Gent.** in making an appeal to a fellow poet, this time Thomas Nashe, to "reply to their twofold edition of invectives.... Awake (secure boy); revenge thy wrongs, remember me."\* Ghosts don't write letters, so scholars have presumed that the author is the actual Henry Chettle, but why would Chettle, a man not personally involved in the quarrel, have done such a thing on his own? He wouldn't have, and he didn't. As shown in the **Robert Greene** and **Henry Chettle**



chapters, Oxford wrote the pamphlet.

We can explain this sequence of events. Oxford must originally have thought that **Greene**'s death would silence Harvey. Upon discovering that Harvey had registered *Four Letters*, he decided to have **Greene**'s "ghost" deliver the challenge to Nashe via a publication in **Chettle**'s name. Oxford manufactured this motivation to give Nashe an excuse to take on Harvey with full gusto.

Thereby justified, Nashe immediately issued *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Divell* in late 1592. *Pierce* means *purse*, as **George Peele** reminds us in *Edward I* when speaking of "A mans purse pennilesse..." Throwing out a red herring, Nashe apologizes for having waited a few weeks to rebut Harvey's depiction of **Greene** and reports that he was out of town when Harvey's attack was published. Oxford was indeed out of town, posing as Nashe and lodging at Croydon, but he had not missed seeing Harvey's missives. He had merely taken time off to write the pamphlet by **R.B. Gent.**, to write and produce *Summers Last Will*, and finally to issue the pamphlet from **Henry Chettle** that set up Nashe's response. Nashe vows thenceforth to avenge **Greene** and **Lyly** by single-handedly taking on the role of answering the Harveys.

Nashe's new pamphlet is mostly "obscure political and religious satire,"\* but it also takes time to distress the Harveys, for instance by deviously ascribing Richard's *An Astrological Discourse* to Gabriel. To Gabriel's credit, he had in fact discouraged his brothers from penning astrological predictions. Richard reported that Gabriel had advised him "not so much to addict my selfe to the studie...of Astrologie," and John recalled of Gabriel in his preface to *An Astrological Addition*, "he had rather we should have bestowed upon the more popular and ordinarie studies of the right morall and natural Philosophie, Arithmetike, Geometrie, and Cosmographie..." Gabriel was level-headed and highly protective of his reputation for being so. Nashe's misattribution, therefore, was designed to throw Harvey into a state of embarrassment, indignation and defensiveness and prompt him to waste his time correcting the error.

*Pierce* replied only to Harvey's first two Letters. After the third and fourth Letters followed, Nashe answered the entirety of *Four Letters* in a new booklet, issued in January 1593, titled *Strange Newes*, inside titled *The foure Letters Confuted*.

The zeal with which Nashe attacks Harvey in *Strange Newes* prompted the DNB to observe, "His claim to intervene solely as Greene's champion cannot be accepted quite literally."\* "He was more active in ridiculing Harvey than in defending Greene."\* In other words, Nashe took over the attacks on Harvey as if he were just as passionate as **Greene** about him, and Harvey, in his turn, responded as if he were just as passionate about Nashe as about **Greene**! Further confusing from the orthodox point of view is that when Richard Harvey attacked Nashe, **Greene** answered passionately, and when Gabriel Harvey attacked **Greene**, *Nashe* answered passionately. In our context, all is explained: the literary **Greene** and Nashe are the same person.

McGinn was so taken with the similarity of **Greene** and Nashe's writing in the pamphlet war that he became convinced that "...**Greene** and Nashe collaborated on the passage in the *Quip*..."\* Miller agreed and proposed that "...**Greene** withdrew the attack because it had been written under the influence of Nashe..."\* And round and round we go.

Many Voices express immense respect for Edmund Spenser, but in *Strange Newes*, Nashe chides the poet for indulging in "this Idiots friendship," referring to Harvey. Nashe also devotes space to berating the poet Richard Stanyhurst, not just for ineptitude but *because Harvey likes him*: "Master Stanyhurst (though otherwise learned) trod a fool, lumbring, boystrous, wallowing measure in his translation of Virgil. He had never been praised by Gabriel for his labour, if therein he had not bin so famously absurd."

Even **George Peele** joined the fray, and he did so in the same specific ways as Nashe and **Greene**. In

*Strange Newes*, “Nashe...alludes to, and parodies, the precious effusion...”\* to a laurel tree, titled “Encomium Lauri,” that had appeared in Harvey’s *Three proper, and wittie, familiar Letters* (1580). As noted above, “**Peele** too ridicules the *Encomium Lauri* in his *Old Wives Tale* by putting a line of it into the mouth of Huanebango.”\* “Another [line in **Peele**’s play] (11. 801-2) is practically made up of tags from Stanyhurst (Aeneis, &c., 15-82), similar to those ridiculed by Nashe in his preface to **Greene**’s *Menaphon* (i 789).”\* The composition of **Peele**’s play, not published until 1595, seems to have been contemporaneous with the Pamphlet War. Is it not revealing that **Peele** and Nashe deride precisely the same poem from Harvey’s voluminous canon and that they both take time to disparage the lowly Richard Stanyhurst as well? In our context, we can see a single mind at work across multiple Voices.

Even curiuser with respect to the standard view of the affair, Nashe conveys in his responses an intimate knowledge of **Greene**’s motive in the quarrel while simultaneously distancing himself from **Greene** as a person. In *Strange Newes*, he explains **Greene**’s motivation:

Not mee alone did hee revile and dare to the combat, but [he] mistermed all our other Poets and writers about London, “piperly make-plaes and make-bates.” Hence **Greene**...tooke occasion to canvaze him a litle in his Cloth-breeches and Velvet breeches [*Quip*], and because by some probable collections hee gest the elder brothers hand was in it, he coupled them both in one yoake.... [quote marks added]

After expressing this careful understanding of **Greene**’s motive and method, Nashe professes that in his whole life he had consorted with **Greene** “only for a carowse or two”! A real live Nashe would have had little reason to create such a contradiction, but Oxford was likely trying to preempt any thought of investigating **Robert Greene** through Thomas Nashe about the flap caused by *Groats-worth*, as discussed in the **Robert Greene** chapter.

In the process, Nashe sneaks in a joke to frustrate Harvey. He asks about **Greene**, with a wink, “What a Calimunco am I to plead for him, *as though I were as neere him as his own skinne*,” which of course he was. He then says, utterly honestly, “I, who since I first knew him about town, have beene two yeares together *and not seene him*.” No one ever saw **Robert Greene**; he didn’t exist. Observe that Nashe uses the past perfect tense here, as if Greene were still alive. How Harvey must have bristled at wisecracks he was barred by Oxford’s protected status from openly refuting.

Throughout these exchanges, Oxford’s Voices express disdain for Harvey’s goal of having English poetry, plays and prose bound by classical forms such as hexameters and the unity of time, to which end he had joined forces with writers Richard Stanihurst, Philip Sidney, Sir Edward Dyer and Fulke Greville. In 1589 in *Menaphon*, Nashe had berated Stanihurst for his “hexameter furie [of] barbarisme [from] his ragged quill [representing] the extremitie of clownerie.” In 1593 in *Strange Newes*, he ridicules Harvey with “O heathenish and pagan hexameters!” implying that the pious Harvey is an infidel for using a form introduced by epic poets of ancient Greece and Rome. Four years later in *Have with you*, Nashe scorns Harvey for having “cryde in that verse in the verie moment of his birth.”

On this lone literary point, scholars have recognized a link between Thomas Nashe and the Earl of Oxford. McKerrow wrote, “The quarrel between Nashe and the Harveys seems in its origin to have been an offshoot of the well known one between Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, and Sir Philip Sidney in 1579....”\* Gilbert was more specific: “The pamphleteering feud between the old-fashioned stylist Thomas Nashe and the more modern stylist Gabriel Harvey was a fight between the humanist school of Erasmus, as represented by Nashe (and associated with **Lyly** and Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford) and Harvey’s scholasticism.”\* Gilbert extended the link: “He places **Shakespeare** on the side of **Lyly**, **Nashe**, Sturm and

the Greek rhetorician Hermogenes, against the new forward-looking, more scientific approach to literature as expressed by early modern philosopher Petrus Ramus (whose followers in England included Philip Sidney and Gabriel Harvey).”<sup>\*</sup> We can see now that the gang comprising **John Lyly**, **Shakespeare**, Thomas Nashe and the Earl of Oxford are all one man, who stood firmly against Sidney, Harvey, Barnes, Stanihust, Dyer and Greville.

In one of his most fiendish attacks, Nashe in *Strange Newes* magnifies his earlier ploy of assigning Richard’s *An Astrological Discourse* unjustly to Gabriel by deviously pinning the authorship of *Straunge Newes out of Calabria* (1587) on Gabriel’s unspecified “brother.” In fact, it is a *parody* of Richard and John Harvey’s books on astrology of 1583-1584 written by Oxford himself under the name **John Doleta**. Then, he gleefully berates said brother for writing it! (See discussions in the **John Doleta** and T.R. chapters.) The Harveys must have been livid over the injustice.

Around this time, Oxford inserted another parody of Gabriel Harvey into one of his plays. *Edward II*, the only play in Christopher Marlowe’s name that I find to be entirely Oxford’s work (see **Christopher Marlowe** chapter). The play was composed around 1592, during the pamphlet battle. In it, Young Mortimer, a bad guy who is but one Act away from being sent to his execution for treason, describes the King’s minion as a rich fop in a Tuscan hat, using lines reminiscent of a few from Harvey’s “*Speculum Tuscanismi*.” (An excerpt from his speech appears in the **Christopher Marlowe** chapter.) There is no known reason why an independent Marlowe would care to work the Oxford-Harvey feud into one of his plays, but in our context, Oxford was simply employing yet another Voice in the same cause.

Another weapon in the war was *Greenes Newes*, also from 1593, in which **B.R. (Barnabe Rich)** launches attacks on Richard Harvey. As noted in the **Barnabe Rich** chapter, he speaks of “a paltry Asse,” “a notable sheepe-byter” and “Ruffling Richard.”

Nashe works in some jibes at the Harveys even in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, which he completed on June 27, 1593 and published in 1594. For example, he admonishes himself for “talking of coblers, & tinkers, & *roapemakers*, and botchers, and durtdaubers,” lumping in Harvey’s father’s profession with the lowest of crafts.

It is absurd to think that so many writers, from **Robert Greene** to **Thomas Nashe** to **R.B. Gent. (Richard Barnfield)** to **B.R. (Barnabe Rich)** to **Double V** to **John Doleta** to **Adam Fouleweather** to **Christopher Marlowe** to **Shakespeare** would care a whit about the Earl of Oxford’s personal battle with a failed academic and obscure lawyer. But in our context, it all makes sense. Oxford was carrying out his assault on every front he controlled.

Then suddenly, Nashe mellowed. On September 8, 1593, he obtained a license to publish *Christes Teares over Jerusalem*. In that book, he repents his diatribes and bids

A hundred unfortunate farewels to fantastick satirisme, in whose veines heretofore I misspent my spirit and prodigally conspired against good houres. Nothing is there now so much in my vowes as to be at peace with all men, and make submissive amends where I have most displeasid.

Then he becomes specific and offers a warm apology to his opponent:

Even of Maister Doctor Harvey, I hartily desire the like, whose fame and reputation...I rashly assailed: yet now better advised, and of his perfections more confirmedly perswaded, unfaindly I entreate of the whole world, from my penne his worths may receive no impeachment. All acknowledgements of abundant Schollership, courteous well governed behaviour, and ripe experienced judgement doe I

attribute unto him. Onely with his milde gentle moderation, hereunto hath he wonne me.

Three years later, in *A Fig for Momus*, **Thomas Lodge** echoes Nashe's desire "to be at peace with all men," saying "...I purposely wrong no man...."

It was a striking turnabout. It tells us plainly that Oxford had decided to stop wasting his time satirizing Harvey and get back to the business of writing more palatable literature. His firm and unhedged apology put a period on it.

Biographers have presumed that an actual Thomas Nashe loved writing satire and was making money selling his satirical pamphlets, his only apparent source of income. Were those conclusions correct, to stop the process would have been financially suicidal. What, then, could have caused his abrupt change of heart? Our context is helpful here.

Between January and September 1593, three things happened to the Earl of Oxford that might have made him willing to walk away from the duel:

- (1) On February 24, Oxford's son Henry was born. It was his first (and only) surviving legitimate male child, so he finally had a son to carry on his noble title and the family name.
- (2) In May, perhaps partly due to **Robert Greene's** diatribe in *Groats-worth*, authorities harassed Christopher Marlowe, who was arrested for atheism, as well as Thomas Kyd, who was investigated under torture (see the chapter on [**Thomas Kyd**]). So, one writer whom **Greene** had outed and another that Nashe had dispraised (see [**Thomas Kyd**] chapter) were both under vicious attack from the authorities. Such terrible events, which his own writing may have perpetrated, might well have motivated Oxford to bid "A hundred unfortunate farewels to fantastickall satirisme."
- (3) Several weeks later, *Venus and Adonis*, which had been registered in April, was published to great acclaim, catapulting **William Shakespeare** into the limelight. The narrative poem was flying out of bookstalls, and what one might suspect to be Oxford's heretofore elusive desire for public adulation — which had diminished greatly since the adoration showered on **John Lyly's** *Euphues Wyt* of fifteen years prior — was suddenly being fulfilled. He had every reason to abandon a pointless prose battle with Gabriel Harvey in favor of directing more of his energy into new poetic Voices. That is just what he did. As noted above, the years 1593-1599 are when the Sonneteers came into prominence.

So, on three fronts that had been vexing him, Oxford was now at peace, which may have made him desirous of peace. His Nashe persona followed through by taking an abrupt turn away from satire and criticism to pen a religious pamphlet and a book of realistic prose fiction. In September 1593, Nashe registered the hefty *Christes Teares* and his adventure novel, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, which were probably meant to be Oxford's last big projects as Thomas Nashe.

Fate, however, intervened to crush the olive branch that Nashe had extended. Harvey did not read Nashe's "generous apology,"\* until it was too late. As *Christes Teares* came out, Harvey was busy finishing *A New Letter of Notable Contents*, and although he "makes some mention of *Christes Teares* in his *New Letter*, he had not actually seen a copy [and] knew of it only by repute."\* It was as if the two men's missives crossed in the mail. Whether reading Nashe's apology would have stopped Harvey's attack is debatable, but having *not* seen it certainly left his vanity wounded, leading him to assail Nashe again twice: in *New Letter of Notable Contents* and *Pierces Supererogation*, both of which rolled off the press in late 1593.

The latter book attacks **Lyly, Greene** and Nashe (see discussion near the end of the **John Lyly** chapter) and praises nearly two dozen contemporary English writers, only one of whom is a Voice (**William Warner**). Harvey snorts, “[Nashe’s] gayest flourishes, are but Gascoigne’s weedes,”\* a reference deriving from the subhead “Weedes” within *A Hundreth sundrie Flowres*.

One scholar found *Pierces Supererogation* to be chock full of “anti-Shakespearean sneers.”\* (A number of them are quoted below.) Why in the world does orthodoxy think Harvey would do that? There would have been no point in attacking an independent Shakespeare within an attack on an independent Thomas Nashe. But the combined attack makes perfect sense when we understand that Nashe and **Shakespeare** are the same target.

In response, Nashe retracted his peace offer. An introduction appended to the second edition of *Christes Teares*, published in 1594, “lashed Harvey anew with unbounded fury.”\* The text warns Harvey of the future consequences of a continued feud: “Let him trust to it Ile hamper him like a jade as he is for this geare, & ride him with a snaffle up & down the whole realme.”

*Pierces Supererogation* was to be Harvey’s last publication. Hibbard proposed that Harvey saw his own last tract “as a knock-down blow [and] was proud of it.”\* I rather think that Harvey regretted that happenstance had caused him to miss Nashe’s entreaty of peace and that Nashe’s fearsome threat made him think twice about another response. He must have decided for the second time that silence was the only rational option.

#### *Oxford’s First Failed Bid to Retire Thomas Nashe*

Oxford had retired **Robert Greene** when the heat over *Quip* and *Groats-worth* became unbearable. I think he planned to do the same with Thomas Nashe, whose retirement would have been further encouraged by the city fathers’ annoyance over *Christes Teares*. *Terrors of the Night* did come out later, but it had been in the works since 1592. Nashe never wrote another play, poem or work of fiction. In 1595, **H.C. (Henry Chettle)** published a “feeble imitation” of Nashe’s *Pierce Penilesse* titled *Piers Plainnes seaven yeres Prentiship*, showing that Oxford was assigning work that would otherwise have come out in Nashe’s name to another Voice. Yet Nashe’s name did appear again, *but only in response to circumstances*, as happened three times.

In 1596, three years after Harvey’s last tract, Nashe came out of retirement to fulfill his threat of retaliation made in the preface to the 1594 edition of *Christes Teares*. The reason, Nashe says, is that he got word that Harvey was boasting to friends that he had silenced him with superior jibes. So, Oxford revived Nashe for one last sally and “issued the most scornful of all his tracts,”\* *Have with you to Saffron-walden*, naming the town of Harvey’s birth.

Nashe explains his long delay by saying that he was otherwise occupied making a living, at what occupation he declines to tell us and of which there is no record. *Have with you*, he says, “had been composed in fits and starts over ‘this two or three yeare’.”\* Oxford’s passion for pounding the last nail in Harvey’s coffin had taken a back seat to other projects and duties, including launching songbooks and sonnet sequences under other Voices’ names.

*Have with you* is mock-dedicated to “Don Richardo Barbarossa de Caesario...for Trinitie College,” indicating Richard Lichfield, the barber of Harvey’s old college, Trinity. Similar mock dedications attend **B.R. (Barnabe Rich)**’s *Greenes Newes* (1593), **Philip Foulface**’s *Bacchus Bountie* (1593) and **William Kemp**’s *Kemps nine daies wonder* (1600).

Nashe begins “...I frame my whole Booke in the nature of a Dialogue,” just as Oxford’s Voices did in publications by **Barnabe Rich, Thomas Lodge, Samuel Nicholson, Pasquil** and Nashe’s own *Pierce Penilesse*. In this pamphlet, Nashe takes his time destroying Harvey’s reputation and “transforms...Harvey



into a great comic character,”\* a type of creation for which **Shakespeare** is likewise famous.

In his text, Nashe jokingly credits Lichfield for translating *Pierce Penilesse* into “the *Macaronicall* tongue” (intentionally ill-Latinized Italian\*) and “maimedly” into French. Some scholars have bemoaned the seeming loss of these fictional translations. From a barber!

Oxford’s *Voices* drew heavily from authors of the Italian Renaissance, so we may surmise that the Earl of Oxford would have known — if not coined — the obscure term, *macaronicall*. It originated with “...*Macaronea*, title of a poem by Tifi Odasi (c.1450-1492), 15<sup>th</sup>-century Italian author, that contained such verse and satirized those who used poor Latin and affectedly Latinized Italian, from Italian *maccherone*, macaroni (considered food for peasants).”\*

In *Have with you*, readers are treated to “Nashe’s marvellous account of Harvey ‘revelling & domineering at Audley-end’...”\* including details of his attire and comportment. How could that be? The event took place on August 20, 1578, when Nashe’s biography has him as a ten-year-old stuck in the backwater village of Lowestoft or the backcountry hamlet of West Harling. Oxford, on the other hand, at age 28, attended the speech and was a major subject of it. Our hypothesis especially explains Nashe’s heartfelt annoyance at Harvey’s “domineering” in presumptuously advising, and therefore embarrassing, the Earl of Oxford in the presence of his fellow courtiers and the Queen. Only Oxford’s personal experience accounts for Nashe’s knowledge of the event, the pique he expresses, and his passion in massacring Harvey because of it.

In *Have with you*, Nashe reminds readers of “my defiance to him in an Epistle to the Reader in *Christs tears*.” He assumes the tone of a king, explaining, “Heretofore I was like a tyrant which knows not whether it is better to be feared or loved of his subjects,” yet he resolved to punish Harvey because he “thought him selfe a better man *then his maister*.” The Thomas Nashe of orthodox biography, a man of lowly birth, could never have been Harvey’s master, but Oxford was certainly his master in terms of the social hierarchy. Nashe takes the tone of a well-to-do man with children when he says, “But for a mans very name in the way of praise to come in a noted fooles mouth, is an utter blemish to him *and to his heires*.” Nashe had no offspring and no money to pass on, but Oxford had both.

Nashe taunts Harvey with the fact that the Earl of Oxford hired John Lyly as his secretary rather than Harvey, who had wanted the job. Nashe is indignant that Harvey affronted Lyly by “calling him the Fiddlestick of Oxford.” In four separate sections of the pamphlet, Nashe is motivated to mention that Harvey “libeld against my Lord of Oxford...casts Tuscanisme, as a horrible crime in a Noble-mans teeth...short and sharpe uppon my lord of Oxford, in a ratling bundle of English Hexameters...and hid himselfe eight weeks in that Noblemans house, for whome with his pen hee thus bladed.” Nashe’s obsession with insults against the Earl of Oxford and the passionate offence taken over them surpass anything imaginable from an independent writer, yet in our context, they are natural and human.

Nashe engages in some wordplay that seems to refer to Oxford’s title. He says, “[Harvey] stands in such feare of casting his sheeps eye out of his calves head, though never meantst it, *but if it were an oxes* he should still keepe it...”

Nashe claims that Thomas Watson, “in the company of divers Gentlemen one night at supper at the Nags head in Cheap; first told me of [Harvey’s] vanitie...” He then quotes two hexameter lines making fun of Harvey that he says Watson handed to him. Some biographies have reported these assertions as historical fact, but it is obvious that Nashe made up both stories on the spot. Those lines were likely crafted in retaliation for an element of *Pierce’s Supererogation*, in which printed sonnets burlesquing Nashe are attributed to Harvey’s patroness.

Nashe goes on to give numerous accounts of the multiple embarrassments Harvey suffered throughout his life from his college days onward, with details — far too numerous to list — that the younger Nashe could

not possibly have known firsthand. Oxford, in contrast, had begun interacting with Harvey at college a year before Nashe was even born. Nashe also recounts Harvey's foolish appearance at Audley End, even though, as biographers have admitted to no result, "Nashe was too young to have been present at the Cambridge entertainment of 1578."\*

Did an independent Thomas Nashe study up on minute details of the Earl of Oxford's life and defend him *while Oxford himself stayed silent*? Or does the conclusion that Nashe is Oxford clear up explain every aspect of the picture?

We become privy to another obscure detail when Nashe viciously denigrates Barnabe Barnes and his poetry. His attack retaliates against Barnes' contribution of an anti-Nashe sonnet to Harvey's *Pierces Supererogation*, which in turn had recompensed Harvey for having produced Barnes' collection of poems titled *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* that same year. The year before *Have with you* came out, Thomas Campion, who disliked Barnes for his own reasons (see Thomas Campion chapter), slammed Barnes in an epigram within his *Poemata* (1595). Nashe rushes to cite "that universall applauded Latine Poem of Master Campions...an Epigram entituled *In Barnum*." In the process, Nashe reports an obscure fact when he accuses Barnes of stealing "a Noblemans Stewards chayne at his Lords installing at Windsore." The event to which Nashe refers is the ceremony in which Sir Henry Percy, the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland, became a Knight of the Garter. **George Peele** celebrated the occasion in *The Honour of the Garter [to the] renowned Earle of Northumberland. Created Knight of that Order, and installd at Windsore*. A real Nashe would not have known any such obscure detail about a high-society event, but we know Oxford attended it, because he wrote **Peele's** account of it. Observe that Nashe's and **Peele's** terms are nearly the same: "install(d)(ing) at Windsore."

Barnes continued to suffer attacks. **R.B. (Richard Barnfield)** (see **Richard Barnfield** chapter), joined in denigrating Barnes. In 1602, Campion dismissed English hexameters, which Harvey's circle had promoted, as "pitiful." In 1619, he published a new epigram denigrating Barnes and even took a swipe at Harvey. So, it appears that Oxford eventually found an ally in his literary stance.

In a merciless stroke, Nashe declares that he is planning to caricature Harvey in five new plays. "More than half of one of these I have done already, and in *Candlemas Tearme* you shall see it acted..." The plays seem never to have appeared, but the pledge must have been devastating to Harvey's peace of mind.

*Have with you* was the final pamphlet in Nashe's war with Gabriel Harvey. I think Oxford, for the second time, thought he was done with his Nashe persona.

#### *Dog Days: Retirement Postponed a Second Time*

A dramatic event forced Nashe's name back into public view. In the summer of 1597, Nashe was accused of having contributed to *The Isle of Dogs*, a "slanderous and seditious"\* play that made lewd fun of the court. In a resulting move to "clean up Times Square," the government destroyed every copy of the play, permanently shut down the offending troupe, and closed the Swan playhouse, where it had been staged, along with several other companies and theatres. Oxford's new protégé, the young Ben Jonson (see **Ben Jonson** chapter) was thrown in jail for his part in the play's composition.

"The legal proceedings that ensued...mention *only one collaborator*"\* with Jonson. Two years later in *Lenten Stuffe*, Nashe cops to co-authoring the play but attests only to a miniscule role in the production: "I having begun but the induction and the first act of it, the other foure acts without my consent, or the least guesse of my drift or scope, by the plaers were supplied, which bred both their trouble and mine to[o]."

Should we believe Nashe's heartfelt denial of knowing about the ultimate play's disrespectful political content? Unquestionably so, for two reasons: First, Jonson's later satirical plays and incarcerations for malicious satire tell us plainly that the heart of the play was his creation. Second, during his imprisonment

over *Eastward Hoe*, Jonson, writing “apologetically to Cecil,” takes full responsibility for the fiasco, referring to his earlier imprisonment over *The Isle of Dogs* as “my first error.”\*

From Nashe’s explanation, we can piece together the story: Oxford started a play, perhaps inspired by his own reference to “the ship of fooles...at the Isle of dogges” in *Summers Last Will* five years earlier. He gave the induction and the opening act to the 24-year-old aspiring playwright, Ben Jonson, at a time when, we must recall, he had yet to reveal himself as a writer of dangerous material. Jonson in those years admired Oxford’s satirical Nashe persona above all others (see chapters on Ben Jonson and the Parnassus Plays), so he had a field day emulating and radicalizing his hero’s satirical methods as he crafted the offending text. Oxford appeared shocked to be drawn into the ruckus. He had to publish under Thomas Nashe’s name yet again so he could admit to having begun the play, because Jonson had mentioned the name and perhaps because he found it convenient to blame a Voice he was retiring anyway.

A letter from the Privy Council on August 15, 1597 announced, “wee caused some of the players to be apprehended and comytted to pryson, whereof one of them was not only an actor but a maker of parte of the said plaie,”\* referring to Ben Jonson. Nashe did not depart London for Yarmouth until December 1597, implying in our context that Oxford stayed in town for four months, fixing things behind the scenes. “On 3 October the keeper of the Marshalsea received the Council’s warrant ‘for the releasing of Benjamin Johnson’ and the other two players. The restraint on the theatres was lifted and they re-opened.”\* After the debacle, Oxford tried to protect Jonson further by having Nashe charge anonymous “*placers*,” in the plural, with responsibility for the play.

Jonson, for his part, did not rat on his collaborator. Though authorities sent informers to chat him up, “he was advertised [wised up] by his keeper” “and remained silent.”\*

Oxford may have returned the favor. A year later, Jonson, as noted above, landed in Newgate Prison for killing Gabriel Spenser in a duel. Though charged with manslaughter, Jonson was ultimately released on a legal technicality about which a knowledgeable lawyer such as Oxford would have known.

### *The Enemy Faction’s Last Assault*

Harvey had fallen silent, and Oxford once again probably thought he could leave the Nashe persona behind him. But for the last time, the name was coaxed out of retirement when someone else extended the pamphlet war.

In 1597, a pamphlet called *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe* responded with glee to the *Isle of Dogs* incident. The tract was issued in the name of Richard Lichfield, the barber at Trinity College, Cambridge, the dedicatee of Nashe’s *Have with you*.

At first, I thought, as have scholars in the past, that Harvey must have been hiding behind the allonym. But scholars have observed that aspects of humor and style indicate that someone other than Harvey wrote *The Trimming*, and they’re right.

Unfortunately (see Richard Lichfield chapter), they have also universally attributed this pamphlet to the actual Richard Lichfield. I cannot fathom why so many scholars believe that a *barber*, of all people, a man who cuts hair, pulls teeth and bleeds people, took it upon himself to pen a learned and erudite tract worthy of a top student at the university.

I finally figured out that the true author is Joseph Hall, who used similar language to attack the Earl of Oxford as both **Shakespeare** and Thomas Nashe in two publications issued the same year. (See Richard Lichfield chapter, and the Joseph Hall chapter in *Those Who Knew*.)

### *A Final Emergence from Retirement*

*Nashes Lenten Stuffe* was published in January 1599. It is titled in response to a line in Lichfield's *The Trimming*, whose introduction states, "this which I have here provided was bred in Lent..." In other words, *The Trimming* was his Lenten stuff, and now we are presented with Nashe's. Nashe's subtitle, *With a new Play never played before...* is another response to *The Trimming*, which had linked Nashe to a Show never played, *Terminus & non terminus* (discussed below). A third response derives from Lichfield's challenge in referring to "Tho: Nashe...borne I know not where," to which *Lenten Stuffe* provides an answer. Despite these links, Nashe's subject matter is mostly apart from responding to Lichfield.

So, for the final time, Nashe emerged from retirement to pen one more tract. Oxford had three motives for doing to: to respond to Lichfield, to give Nashe a reason for having avoided arrest, and to establish a birthplace for his persona. The latter action is discussed in detail below.

#### *The Pamphlet War Resolves in Oxford's Favor*

The ultimate resolution of the Pamphlet War attests to Oxford's part in it and his ultimate success. In *A Motive to Good Workes* (1593), **Phillip Stubbes** had called upon

our grave and reverend Bishops, and other inferior magistrates and officers, to whom the oversight and charge of such things are committed [to look into] railing libels & slanderous pamphlets, as have been of late published in print one man against another [to the end] that *both the bookes, and the authors of them, to be utterly suppressed for ever*, the one by fire, the other by the halter or gallows, if nothing else will serve.

That is just what happened, but not at that time. The authorities delayed action, and for a while it seemed that the pamphlet war had subsided.

The last straws seem to have been Joseph Hall's *Toothlesse Satyrs* (1597), which excoriates the Earl of Oxford as Labeo (see Joseph Hall chapter), and John Marston's *Histrionomastix* (1599), which belittles Ben Jonson via the character of Chrisoganus. In the summer of 1599, shortly after *Lenten Stuffe* was published, authorities took the dramatic action of directing all combatants to cease publishing. John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury — who at the time was essentially a government agent — ordered "that all Nashes bookes and Doctor Harveyes bookes be taken wheresoever they maye be found, and that none of their bookes bee ever printed hereafter."\* The ban extended to specifically named satires by Joseph Hall, John Marston, Edward Guilpin, Thomas Middleton, T. Cutwode, Robert Tofte and John Davies & Christopher Marlowe. We may conclude that the authorities knew Mr. Lichfield the barber did not pen *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe*, or they would have included his name in the bans.

An ensuing order states, "Suche bookes as can be found...lett them bee presentlye brought to the Bishop of London to be burnt."\* "On the following Monday, 4 June, various books 'presently thereupon were burnt' at Stationers Hall."\* That the books were "burnte" is a reification of **Stubbes'** wish that the books be dealt with "by fire." In the end, Oxford got the action for which his Voice had called.

The bishops banned these books primarily because of their "satirical personal attacks on highly placed people that came too close to exposing them."\* An actual Nashe's animal allegory and swipes against Lord Cobham could squeeze under that umbrella, but in our context, the only person at serious risk of exposure was the Earl of Oxford.

Why would Archbishop Whitgift take such an extreme action against satirists, when the usual reason for censorship was risk to the state, atheism or pornography? Why would he care about a few lowly pamphleteers duking it out in the press? It is unlikely that he would have. But one of the combatants was not lowly, and

one of his Voices was at risk, which put them all at risk, which put the state at risk. Whitgift, moreover, was indebted to Oxford for two favors, namely his penning of a slew of pro-Anglican, anti-Martinist pamphlets in 1589-1591 (see the Pamphleteers section) and for Nashe's production of *Summers Last Will* for Whitgift's entertainment at Croydon in November 1592. So, Whitgift owed him a favor. And what a favor it was.

Historians have summarily concluded that Whitgift's act stopped the publishing activities of all participating parties. That is not so.

For the Earl of Oxford, the outcome was a brilliant coup. The edict silenced Gabriel Harvey's and Joseph Hall's attacks, yet Oxford was left fancy free to publish. The banning of Nashe's books meant nothing to him, because all he had to do was create new Voices. And that's exactly what he did.

Orthodoxy is stuck with a jarring dissonance: According to biographers, Nashe hobnobbed with Whitgift and his brother, agreed with Whitgift's anti-Puritanism, fought for the Anglicans against Martin Mar-prelate and produced a play at Whitgift's behest, yet Whitgift ignored Nashe's loyalty, banned his books and callously cut off his means of support.

In our context, there is only harmony. The pair remained allies throughout.

The two men's uninterrupted cooperation explains another otherwise mysterious fact: "The prohibition did not prevent Nashe's play *Summers Last Will and Testament* from appearing in 1600."\* Nor did the authorities recall the play or arrest the author or the printer. Why not? because Whitgift's directive was meant to silence writers other than Oxford. In the aftermath of the pamphlet war, Oxford went quietly about his business, which seems to have involved housecleaning with respect to publishing old works, including plays now ascribed to **Shakespeare**.

*Summers Last Will* was not the only book from a banned author to come out. Joseph Hall's *Virgidemiarum* was published in December 1599. Does that mean Hall got around the ban? On the contrary, Morris deduced that Oxford forced him to publish it, to whitewash any public memory of his previous satires:

Someone is upset about Hall's earlier satires.... He has put angry stars and notes in the margins of his copies. ...De Vere had recognized himself in Book 2, Satire 1, *Immodest Poetry*, as Labeo/Shakespeare[/Nashe] and was angry. ...It is clear that Labeo has caused Hall to be chastised, has demanded recantation, but then has granted forgiveness. ...A second document, issued by the bishops... listed *Virgidemiarum*...to be "staid," or *not* burned. [And] there it was in December, newly printed, and available to the public with the notation, "Corrected and amended with some Additions. By I.J." [Within it,] A long retraction of Hall's criticism of the age and its vices intervenes. ...Hall returns to Labeo and describes his writing, which he now praises.\*

Now we can understand why Nashe never delivered on his promise in *Lenten Stuffe* to issue "a pamphlet hot a brooding that shall be called the *Barbers warming panne*," "which was evidently his reply to *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe*, and was, as we gather from the Epistle to the Reader, to be expected in the following Easter term,"\* i.e. in early 1600: Hall's newly published praise obviated the need for a riposte.

With the Harvey brothers silenced and Hall forced to recant and indeed praise his former target, Oxford's pamphlet worries were over, and he was free to continue working on new Voices. He may even have slipped in a swipe at the Harvey brothers as late as 1603, when **Henry Crosse's** *Vertues Common-wealth* employs **Adam Fouleweather's** term in referring to "the Asse-stronomers" and their follies.

Hall avoided satire for the rest of his career. Richard and Gabriel Harvey lived another three decades, until 1630 and 1631 respectively, but neither man published another thing. I think their utter suppression is an example of "Will. Monox" finally wielding "his great dagger."



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