

Thomas Kyd, the secret sharer

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Between 1567, when the Red Lion Inn, Whitechapel, was converted to a public playhouse (opening on 8 July with *The Story of Samson*) and 1642, when the public playhouses were closed, some 23 professional theatres were built in and around London. As Herbert Berry observed, “Probably nothing of the kind had happened in any other city on earth”. Some of these buildings accommodated upwards of 3,000 spectators, and had been built at great expense. Investors were quick to spot the potential profits from this extraordinary boom, and some shrewd business heads (Henslowe, Alleyn, Burbage, Shakespeare) made fortunes. Others lost their capital as optimistic ventures dwindled into ruin and long-drawn legal quarrels – which fortunately provide much of our information about these ephemeral enterprises. Many theatrical companies were formed, flourished for a while under a noble patron (up to a hundred took on this role in the sixteenth century), but then “broke”, often on a country tour when the London playhouses were closed due to plague. When playing was permitted, up to 20,000 people a week patronised the rival companies, paying a penny for entrance and sixpence for a seat.

New jobs were available for actors, musicians, plasterers, painters, carpenters, seamstresses, and playwrights. Those who supplied the play scripts for these ephemeral entertainments might seem to have had the best chance of their names surviving, if only their working conditions had been better. The companies needed a constant supply of plays for their repertory system, and dramatists were expected to deliver their work within two to six weeks. The need for speed meant that often two or three authors collaborated on a play, not always achieving a unified composition. Payment was on delivery, after which the work belonged to the theatre company.

Having delivered their manuscript, most dramatists never saw a play again, and moved on to the next project. (We know their work far better than they did.) Once printers recognized a market for publishing play books, writers had a greater chance of surviving. But the theatre companies owned the copyright, only released plays when it suited them, and were under no obligation to disclose the authors' names. The majority of plays perished, and their authors remain shadowy figures. We know the titles of 1,500 plays performed between 1590 and 1642, of which only a few hundred survive: how many others were there? Between 1579 and 1593-4, when plague closed the London theatres, the names survive of barely a dozen dramatists in the professional theatre. Apart from Shakespeare, not much is known about any of them, but the career of Thomas Kyd seems unusually obscure.

Kyd was born in November 1558, the son of a scrivener, a professional scribe who prepared legal documents. He was educated at the recently founded Merchant Taylor's School located near Thames Street, just across the river from the South Bank theatres. The headmaster Richard Mulcaster, a distinguished humanist, encouraged drama, so successfully that his schoolboys were invited to perform at court in the mid 1570s. All that is known of Kyd's later life is that from about 1586 to 1593 he worked (probably as a secretary) in the service of a nobleman (possibly the Earl of Pembroke), who also employed Marlowe "in writing for his players". This chance association was Kyd's undoing, for in April 1593 an outburst of xenophobia in London resulted in offensive libels attacking foreigners being posted on church walls. Officers of the Privy Council, searching for the culprits, seized certain "vile hereticall Conceiptes denying the deity of Jhesus Criste our Saviour found amongst the papers of Thomas Kydd prisoner", a later hand adding "which he affirmeth that he had from Marlowe". Kyd declared that this manuscript (merely a copy of an early sixteenth-

century Theistic treatise) was “affirmed by Marlowe to be his, and shuffled with some of myne (unknown to me) by some occasion of our wrytinge in one chamber twoe yeares since”. In a letter to the Lord Keeper, principal officer of the Privy Council, Kyd complained that he had undergone “undeserved tortures” at Bridewell, had been dismissed by his employer, and was now “utterlie undon”. After his death in August 1594 his parents formally renounced the administration of their son’s estate; not a repudiation but rather, as Kyd’s biographer Arthur Freeman has suggested, to speed its settlement through Chancery.

Apart from a translation of Tasso’s *Padre di Famiglia* (1588) by “T.K”, Kyd’s name only appeared on his translation of Garnier’s closet tragedy *Cornélie*, in 1593-4. His authorship of *The Spanish Tragedy* (ca. 1587), the first and best revenge play, was only revealed by Heywood in 1612, but all Kyd authorities give him *Soliman and Perseda* (ca. 1588), a “Turkish” tragedy involving an orgy of onstage deaths. This small oeuvre of three tragedies can hardly account for the epithets his contemporaries applied to him. Thomas Dekker, himself a prolific writer, called him “industrious Kyd”, while Ben Jonson, eulogising Shakespeare in the 1623 Folio, dubbed him “sporting Kyd”, which suggests that he had written some comedy. In the last century two anonymous plays were ascribed to Kyd, *Arden of Faversham* and *The True Chronicle History of King Leir, and his three daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella*. I have long accepted these ascriptions, and some recent research has convinced me that Kyd wrote not only these two plays but also a romantic comedy, *Fair Em, The Millers Daughter of Manchester: With the love of William the Conqueror*, and much of *The First Part of Henry the Sixth*, as published in Shakespeare’s Folio. My evidence for these ascriptions, only part of which can be given here, derives from using a new software program, but before introducing it I

should like to sketch some aspects of Kyd's dramaturgy that these plays have in common. A convincing authorship attribution should account for many features of a work, from plot and characterization down to the details of language and style. The three elements I pick out are intrigue, the vengeful woman, and black comedy.

Kyd is the first master of intrigue plots in English drama. *The Spanish Tragedy* contains several parallel levels of intrigue which intersect with devastating effect, and often recoil on the intriguer. One Portuguese courtier accuses another of having murdered Prince Balthasar, but when news arrives that Balthasar is alive the accuser is executed. In the Spanish court Lorenzo uses Pedringano to murder Horatio, son of Hieronimo and beloved of Belimperia, so that Balthasar may woo her. Lorenzo then sends Pedringano to the scaffold with an empty box, supposedly containing his pardon, a scene yielding much grisly humour. But Pedringano has the last laugh, for his letter indicting Lorenzo is delivered to Hieronimo, identifying his son's murderers and inspiring his comprehensive revenge. *Soliman and Perseda* contains several intrigues which result in the deaths of the main intriguer, the Turkish Emperor Soliman, and all his kindred, friends, and lovers. Similar elements of intrigue and disguising animate *King Leir* and *Fair Em*, both plays containing separate plotlines which converge to create a happy ending. In Kyd's only surviving comedy, the male characters' intrigue plots are outmatched by three more resourceful women. In *Arden of Faversham* Alice Arden joins her lover, Mosbie, in a series of frustrated plots to have her husband murdered. Their intrigues finally succeed, and in the murder scene Alice cries "give me the weapon" and stabs him – just as Belimperia stabs Balthasar, and Ragan, bitterly protesting the fault of her birth – "O God, that I had bin but made a man", and the social convention by which women were thought incapable of murderous action, laments that she cannot herself "give the privie" stab

to kill her father. Setting aside Garnier's closet-drama, in all four tragedies Kyd uses black comedy to point up the grisly retributions that are carried out, as comic characters (Pedringano, Piston and Basilisco in the Turkish play) go to their grave alongside kings and courtiers. In *Arden* the two professional assassins, Black Will and Shakebag, arouse mirth by their mixture of bravado and incompetence, while the Messenger/murderer in *King Leir* is a fully-fledged stand-up comedian.

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I am not the first to attribute *Arden of Faversham* to Kyd. Two pioneering (if erratic) English scholars did so, Charles Crawford (1903) and H. Dugdale Sykes (1914), being joined by scholars from Germany (Walter Miksch, 1907), Denmark (P.V. Rubow, 1948) and France (Felix Carrère, 1950), all independently of each other. Works published in European languages are frequently ignored by the Anglophone scholarly community, but the agreement of five scholars over a 50-year period on Kyd's authorship deserves serious consideration. Shakespeare has been the favoured candidate, predictably enough, despite the categorical denials made by several outstanding scholars. There is no external evidence of the author, and conservative scholars have rejected the internal evidence for Kyd as consisting of "parallel passages", a supposedly unreliable method. It is true that some scholars have seen verbal parallels which remained invisible to others, or were easily rejected. Where the parallels were strikingly close, they could be dismissed as conscious imitation or plagiarism; where less detailed, they could be written off as phrases common in circulation.

To reinstate verbal parallels as a legitimate form of evidence in authorship attributions some pre-conditions can be postulated. They must not consist of single words, for common words are widely shared, and rare ones are easily copied. Since

the unique characteristic of natural languages is their ability to combine words in syntactic-semantic sequences, an author's individuality will be more visible if we can identify his preferred grouping of words, consecutive clusters of three or more. To avoid the accusation of biased selection, either by favouring specific phrases or by privileging those sections of a text which will produce the most favourable result, we must use complete texts. Further, in order to allow investigations to be replicated, these texts should be available in a machine-readable form and processed by means of generally available software programs that will pick out parallel sequences without human interference.

All these conditions are met by a publicly available program called "Pl@giarism", devised by the law faculty of Maastricht University to counteract student plagiarists. I use it for a different purpose, to study self-plagiarism, Elizabethan authors' re-cycling of their own work. When two text files are entered for comparison, the program automatically detects any sequence of three consecutive words common to both, and records the number of matches, identical three-word sequences occurring in the two texts. With *Arden of Faversham* as the reference text, comparison with the three canonical Kyd plays revealed 419 "triples" shared with *The Spanish Tragedy*, 447 with *Soliman and Perseda*, and 164 with *Cornelia*. (The lower score here reflects this play's nature as a translation from the French, which restricted Kyd's normal freedom of composition.) Naturally, many of these phrases are quite ordinary word combinations, such as "If I do" or "by the way", undoubtedly shared by many dramatists. A further selection process is needed to establish which of these three-word units occur only in *Arden of Faversham* and in the Kyd canon. If sufficient unique matches could be found, a high probability would be created favouring Kyd's authorship.

In order to estimate which matches are commonplace, which unique, we need to compare each of them with all the plays thought to have been written and acted before Kyd's death in August 1594. Drawing on a machine-readable corpus of English Renaissance drama built up by Marcus Dahl and Lene Peterson, and using the chronology established in the Harbage-Schoenbaum *Annals of English Drama*, I have created a corpus of 75 plays produced before 1596 (allowing some latitude for inaccurate estimates). With the help of another ingenious software program ("Info Rapid Search and Replace"), which can search this corpus in a fraction of a second, I was able to check each of the over a thousand "triples" common to *Arden of Faversham* and the three Kyd plays. This is a seriously time- and eye-consuming process, but an essential stage in identifying significant authorship indicators. Some weeks later I had identified 32 identical sequences of three or more words common to *Arden* and *The Spanish Tragedy* but found nowhere else in Elizabethan drama before 1596; 36 such phrases common to *Arden* and *Soliman and Perseda*; and 8 shared only by *Arden* and *Cornelia*. I had not pre-determined which phrases should be chosen, nor which selections of texts should be favoured. These are results that any scholar can replicate using this data and these software programs.

I can only present a selection of my results here, but the complete set can be accessed at <http://www.sas.ac.uk/LFAS/html>. Some of the shared word sequences in the two plays are almost identical: "For heare I sweare by heaven and earth and all" in *Arden of Faversham*, "For heare I sweare in sight of heaven and earth" in *The Spanish Tragedy*; "Well Ile discharge my pistol at the skye" (*AF*); "Dischargd his Pistoll at the Princes back" (*SpT*). (Quotations are modernized for u/v, and i/j spellings). One or two such close parallels might be dismissed as imitation, or plagiarism, but with over 70 identical word sequences, often quite banal phrases, common to each pair of plays,

that explanation falls away. No other plays performed before 1596 share these word sequences within verse lines: “And faine would have” (used twice in the Kentish, once in the Spanish tragedy); “Ile none of that”; “there is no credit in”; “thou wert wont to”; “on/upon your left hand”; “then either thou or”; “have your company to”; “sit with us”; “heere hard by”; “give it over”; “heaven is my hope”; “there he lyes”. As each further correlation is identified, the odds in favour of Kyd’s authorship rise.

These are not commonplace but idiosyncratic phrases, word sequences which function smoothly within the iambic pentameter. In many cases Kyd retains what we might call the music of a verse line, repeating three-word units in the same prosodic position:

Till then my blisse is mixt with bitter gall (*AF*)

Till then my sorrow never shall be spent (*SpT*)

For that will make her think her selfe more wrongd (*AF*)

Least absence make her think thou dost amisse (*SpT*)

The formulaic line-opening “Leave that to us/him/me” occurs twice in *Arden*, once in *The Spanish Tragedy*, once in *King Leir*, and nowhere else in Elizabethan drama before 1596. Similarly with line-endings: “Because her husband is abroad so late” in Kent uniquely parallels “Why, because he walkt abroad so late” in Spain. In Kent Alice Arden insincerely professes sexual desire for her husband: “Had I been wake you had not rise so soone” (a dialectal variant for “risen”). In Spain a courtier expresses surprise: “How now my Lord, what makes you rise so soone?”. These are all unique co-occurrences of three or four-word phrases, identified by a software program and checked against a corpus of 75 plays performed between 1580 and 1596. The most famous line in *The Spanish Tragedy*, frequently parodied, is Hieronimo’s exclamation on being woken by the noise of his son’s murder:

What outcries pluck me from my naked bed?

In the bourgeois tragedy *Arden of Faversham*, Francklin is also woken in the night on which a murder is planned, and enters with an almost identical line:

What dismall outcry cals me from my rest?

This is neither an allusion, nor a parody, but another instance of Kyd's self-plagiarising.

I am introducing a new tool in authorship attribution studies, which allows us to identify for the first time the amount of self-plagiarism in any Elizabethan dramatist, the inevitable consequence of the brain-to-pen existence under which they worked. It will be interesting to find out how many other playwrights plagiarised themselves. Kyd certainly recycled his own preferred phrases and in one case the repetition suggests a textual emendation. In Elizabethan English the word "fact" also meant "an evil or violent deed", and the appropriate legal formula ends a line in *The Spanish Tragedy*: "He that is apprehended for the fact". The similar line-ending in *Arden of Faversham*, "She being reprehended for the fact", should surely read "apprehended". The only other instance of this conveniently iambic phrase line ending occurs in *King Leir*: "And no man once mistrust thee for the fact". *Leir* also includes the line "Tis now undone, and if that it be knowne", a formulaic line-ending which recurs in *The Spanish Tragedy*: "For it beseemes us now that it be knowne", and in *Arden of Faversham*: "I have the gould, what care I though it be knowne". These three plays alone in Elizabethan drama drew this item from Kyd's individual storehouse of multi-word iambic phrases.

The case for Kyd's authorship of *Arden of Faversham* is strengthened by the discovery that it shares over thirty identical word sequences with his Turkish tragedy, *Soliman and Perseda*. Some of these clusters are also shared with *The Spanish*

Tragedy, such as the phrase “sit with us”, found nowhere else in Elizabethan drama before 1596. As we have seen, the first half of one line in *Arden*, “Till then my blisse is mixt with bitter gall”, reproduces a line-beginning in *The Spanish Tragedy*, “Till then my sorrow never shall be spent”. Its second half re-uses a line ending in *Soliman and Perseda*: “A sweete renowne, but mixt with bitter sorrow”. In both plays the language of lovers, true and false, is identical: “Dearer to me, than all the world beside”, says Erasto of his true love Perseda; “I loved him more than all the world beside”, says Alice Arden (hypocritically) of the husband she has helped murder. The parallels between the Turkish and the Kentish tragedy are very close, extending to phrases six words long, a congruence far too great for coincidence. Compare “Mosbie leave protestations now / And let us” with “Leave protestations now, and let us”; and “Did ever man escape as thou hast done” with “Did you ever see wise man escape as I have done”. Just as those co-occurrences involved words and ideas, so do other five-word phrases uniquely found in both plays. “And hurt thy freende, / Whose thoughts were free from harme” recycles “To wrong my friend, whose thoughts were ever true”, and “Why should he thrust his sickle in our corne” re-words “That thrust his sickle in my harvest corne”.

Kyd evidently had a repertoire of iambic phrases in his poetic subconscious which could be quickly deployed as occasion served. *Arden of Faversham* shares with *Soliman and Perseda* several longer word sequences unique within my corpus of 75 plays: “Why then by this reckoning”; “makes me wish that”; “Thou shalt not neede”; “Didst thou not heare”; “too slight a task”. Of the 18 three-word phrases shared by the two plays, several form convenient line-openers: “Be patient sweete”; “Tush I will”; “No sooner shall”; “But now when”. In some cases the music of a whole line is identical: compare “What ailes you woman, to crie so suddenly”, with

“What ailes you madam, that your colour changes”, and “Is he himselfe already in his bed”, with “Bicause we were already in his gallyes”. The temptation to recycle line-endings is one that Kyd seldom resisted, such as that sonorous metaphor for death, to send someone down “to everlasting night”, used twice in the Turkish, once in the Kentish tragedy, or “began to faint”, used once in each. Other common triples, as the Pl@giarism program terms them, include “you paltrie knave”, “may not 'scape”, “with eager moode”, “the back dore”, and “see his body”. The presence of so many complex phrases, drawing on an individual but limited repertoire of verbal ready-mades, suggests that Kyd wrote *Arden of Faversham*.

A small amount of supporting evidence comes from the third acknowledged play in his canon, *Cornelia*. This conscientious translation from the French did not allow Kyd so much freedom to use his own favoured phrases. But we still find a number of striking parallels shared with *Arden of Faversham* and with no other play published before 1596. “My house is cleare, and now I feare them not”, says Alice Arden with misplaced confidence; “I feare them not whose death is but deferd”, says Julius Caesar. “The heavens can witnes”, exclaims Alice Arden; “Carthage can witness”, exclaims Cicero. Always thrifty with invention, Kyd uses the line opening “Methinks I see them” for Arden’s servant, terrified of the hired assassins’ threats, and for a Messenger visualizing the grief-stricken Roman senators. Clarke the painter, a willing accomplice, incongruously approves Alice’s plan to kill her husband as showing “a noble minde”, a Stoic expression used appropriately in *Cornelia*, and nowhere else in Elizabethan drama before 1596. Other three-word phrases only occurring in Kyd’s Kentish and Roman tragedies are “past with me”; “me that am”; “then love of him”; and “me I saw”. *Arden of Faversham* can now be attributed to Kyd with a high degree of probability. An even stronger case can be made for *King*

Leir, which shares over 100 identical phrases with the three canonical plays and with no others published before 1596.

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Assigning anonymously-published plays to Kyd may not disturb anyone, apart from scholars who have put their money on other candidates. But to suggest that Kyd wrote a large part of *I Henry VI* is bound to arouse conflicting responses. At one extreme, Shakespeare conservators who accept as authentic anything ever ascribed to him, especially the contents of the first Folio, will dismiss me as a “disintegrator” of the canon: but I am in fact a restorer, giving back to Shakespeare and his co-authors each man’s contributions. At the other extreme, disbelievers that Shakespeare wrote any of the works reliably attributed to him will welcome me as diminishing his canon. (But if they think he wrote none of it, what would losing a few hundred lines matter?). Belonging to neither party, I note that Heminge and Cordell included in the Folio several plays of which Shakespeare was only part author, as is now generally accepted. In the early 1800s attentive readers identified two different styles in the Fletcher collaboration *Henry VIII*, but doubts about *I Henry VI* had been expressed much earlier. In his edition of 1768 Edward Capell disputed the chronological sequence established by the Folio editors, judging that Part 1 was written “some considerable time after” Parts 2 and 3. In his *Dissertation on the Three Parts of King Henry VI* (1787) Edward Malone rejected Shakespeare’s authorship of Part 1, as differing from his other works in diction, versification, employment of classical allusions, and treatment of historical fact. The play manifests several inconsistencies of characterization, and some clumsy dramaturgy, as in the scene where the Countess of Auvergne tries to capture Talbot, or the rambling concluding sequence where the exposure of Joan of Arc as an impostor, born of peasant stock and dependant on

witchcraft, runs parallel with a romantic comedy episode in which Suffolk woos Margaret of Anjou, daughter of the King of Naples. Although defenders of his sole authorship have demurred, considerable evidence now exists agreeing with Capell and Malone. In a recent essay in *Shakespeare Quarterly* (Fall 2007) I reviewed Gary Taylor's pioneering 1985 essay in which he assigned Act I to Nashe, seven scenes to Shakespeare (II.iv; **IV.ii- vii.32??**), and the rest of the play to two unidentified dramatists, whom he labelled X and Y. I accepted the case for Nashe, and for most of the Shakespeare scenes, but agreed with two more recent scholars, Paul Vincent and Marina Tarlinskaja, that only one other author was involved. My latest research identifies that author as Kyd.

Attempts to reconstruct its compositional process, like many details relating to this play, will always be conjectural, but it seems very probable that Part I was written after the other two parts, and as a "prequel" to them. Drawing on the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed it dramatised the English military campaigns in France, created a tragic-heroic figure John Talbot (never mentioned in Parts 2 and 3), and invented three notable unhistorical episodes. One scene, universally ascribed to Shakespeare, shows the original plucking of red and white roses which led to the York-Lancaster conflict; another shows Talbot outwitting a French noblewoman's attempt to trap him; and a third prepares for the major role that Margaret of Anjou will have in later events. She is discovered wandering alone through France when the Earl of Suffolk finds her, falls in love at first sight, and arranges her marriage. This episode corresponds to one in *Leir*, where the Gallian King comes across Cordella, another princess in distress wandering alone, and instantly falls in love. "Faine would I woo her", says Suffolk, "yet I dare not speake", a moment of hesitation shared by Cordella's admirer: "I can forbear no longer for to speake". When they find their

voices Cordella is addressed as “Thou fairest creature, whatsoere thou art”, while Margaret is “Oh Fairest Beautie ... Be what thou wilt.” The Gallian King declares “I am in such a labyrinth of love”; Suffolk admonishes himself: “Thou mayest not wander in the Labyrinth”. Cordella’s wooer says: “Thy birth’s too high for any but a king”; Margaret’s wooer declares “her birth / Approves her fit for none but for a King”. Many other shared expressions link the two scenes, as Thomas McNeal showed fifty years ago.

Commentators have often criticized these two romantic episodes as being dramatically cruder than the authentic Shakespeare scenes, and written in an alien style: both observations are just. I have no hesitation in ascribing parts of Acts 2 and 4, and the whole of Acts 3 and 5, to Kyd. In my conjectural reconstruction, the play was originally co-authored by Nashe and Kyd in about 1591. It may be the “harye the vi” that Henslowe recorded as performed by the combined forces of Lord Strange’s and the Admiral’s men to good audiences at the Rose between March 1592 and January 1593. When Strange’s men dissolved in the summer of 1594, its members forming two new companies, the Lord Admiral’s men (with Alleyn) and the Lord Chamberlain’s men (with Burbage, Shakespeare, Heminges and others), the playscripts were also divided, the Chamberlain’s men acquiring *I Henry VI*. Shakespeare started to revise it adding the Temple Garden scene (II.iv) and a scene for York (IV.ii), both scenes which stand out from those around them in several prosodic aspects. Some scenes, duplicating each other, may have been intended for cancellation. I had previously ascribed IV.iii-IV.v to Shakespeare, but this is not supported by the new evidence. As I have said, many problems connected with *I Henry VI* may never be solved, but I believe we can now identify the third author.

Compared to the three canonical Kyd plays, *I Henry VI* has most links with *The Spanish Tragedy*. The Countess of Auvergne's line, "Porter remember what I gave in charge" reworks one by a Spanish General, "For so I gave in charge at my depart", and her premature announcement to Talbot, "then art thou Prisoner" echoes a phrase from the same scene in the Spanish play. The English chronicle recycles whole lines from *The Spanish Tragedy*, including "That will not trust thee but for profits sake", from "Vice-roy, I will not trust thee with my life"; "To beat assaying death from his weake Regions", from "Could win pale death from his usurped right"; "And make this marriage to be solemniz'd", from "Advise thy King to make this marriage up". These word sequences are found uniquely in these two plays and nowhere else in Elizabethan drama before 1596. In *The Spanish Tragedy* Hieronimo laments the heroine's decision to kill herself during the play within the play (on Soliman and Perseda), rather than live on, as he had wanted: "Poor Bel-Imperia mist her part in this". About four years later Kyd reworked that line for a French courtier praising Joan of Arc's rousing oratory: "Pucell hath bravely play'd her part in this". From Renaissance Spain to medieval France Kyd recycled such distinctive phrases as "Mov'd with remorse", "blood of innocents", and "to break your necks". Less striking self-plagiarisms unique to these two plays include the phrases "That will not", "we both are", "thou didst force", all occurring at the same place within the verse line.

Kyd echoed *Soliman and Perseda* frequently in his scenes for *I Henry VI*, the most bizarre instance of self-plagiarism being the Old Shepherd's insistence that Joan of Arc is his daughter: "God knows, thou art a collop of my Flesh" (a collop is "a bit of meat"). In Kyd's Turkish tragedy *Basilisco*, a *Miles gloriosus*, describes his enforced conversion to Islam: the Turks tied him to a pillar, and then "They lopt a collop of my tendrest member". Kyd recycled several lines from the earlier play

virtually intact.” In *I Henry VI* he reworked “And I command you to forbear this place” as “Let me persuade you to forbear a while”; rephrased “Through which our passage cannot find a stop” as “Through which our Pollicy must make a break”; and reworded “I may have libertie to live a Christian” as “I may have libertie to venge this Wrong”. Other distinctive phrases found in these two plays, and nowhere else in Elizabethan drama before 1596, include “What offence it is”, “I owe him”, “rather than Ile (I’ll)”, “the gates of Heaven”, and “deny me not”. Considering that the main plot lines of this drama of English history were given by the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed, Kyd’s ability to re-use so much of his reservoir of blank-verse phrases shows how the individual voice can be heard, whatever the subject matter or source-material.

Kyd’s freedom of invention was also constrained in *Cornelia*, a translation published in 1594 but perhaps written earlier, yet this play shares many unique word-sequences with *I Henry VI*. In the English play the Duke of Gloucester is said to be “Inferior to none, but to his Majestie”; in Rome Julius Caesar proudly boasts that “I am inferior to none”; “And lay them gently on thy tender side” echoes the structure of “And lay them level with the charged earth”. Other line-openings unique to both plays include: “Turne not thy”, “When he perceiv’d”, “Might with a”, “If Death be”, and “With hope to”. The same parentage is seen in line-endings. In the Roman tragedy, four lines after the phrase “And lay them”, a Messenger describes a “passage choakt with bodies of the dead”; on a French battlefield the English request permission “to survey the bodies of the dead”. In medieval England a quarrelsome Lancastrian demands “libertie to venge this Wrong”, while the desperate Cornelia, newly widowed, asks “whither shall I flye / To venge this outrage or revenge my wrongs?” Other distinctive phrases common to *I Henry VI* and *Cornelia*, but found in

no other Elizabethan plays before 1596, include “be wedded to my” and “issued from the”. All of these co-occurrences go far beyond coincidence.

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Where do these discoveries leave us? Genuine Shakespeare lovers will hardly regret the loss of Nashe’s grotesque conceit, when Talbot consoles Salisbury for having lost an eye in an artillery attack: “One Eye thou hast to looke to Heaven for grace, / The Sunne with one Eye vieweth all the World”. Nor are they likely to regret losing the exhortation that Kyd wrote for John Talbot, urging his son not to join him in battle: “Oh, too much folly is it, well I wot, / To hazard all our lives in one small Boat”. And patriotic historians may be relieved to learn that the Joan of Arc scenes, a source of embarrassment for several centuries, were the work of Shakespeare’s co-authors. As for Kyd, his authorship of *Arden* and *Leir* should initiate a serious reevaluation of his contribution to Elizabethan drama. In the early twentieth century, when these attributions were current, he was often hailed as a pioneer at least equal to Marlowe. In 1919 T.S.Eliot praised Kyd as “that extraordinary dramatic (if not poetic) genius who was in all probability the author of two plays so dissimilar as *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Arden of Faversham*”, and as a greater dramatist than Marlowe.. But a conservative backlash against authorship attributions, and the untested acceptance of Marlowe’s originality, led to Kyd being returned to the shadows. It would be pleasing if a modern software program were to restore him to the eminence he deserves.