

THE MAKING OF SHAKESPEARE'S GENIUS

by

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ABSTRACT

The Introduction stipulates my area of research, which was to explore how Shakespeare developed into such an outstanding and long-appreciated writer. The method adopted was to study the criteria essential to the making of genius which had been researched by psychologists and then use historical research to ascertain how many of these factors were present in his life. The documentation used and its sources are detailed here.

Chapter 1 sets out the agreed findings of those psychologists who have made a special study of genius, followed by the factors over which they do not necessarily concur. Their insistence on the importance of the childhood and upbringing of the genius-to-be lead to Chapters 2-4. Chapter 2 investigates the situation pertaining to the town into which he was born and its history during Shakespeare's years of development. Chapter 3 considers the particular family to which he belonged and its history during his childhood and youth, while Chapter 4 attempts to ascertain what particular aspects of his life would have impinged upon him enough to effect a reaction and affect his development.

Chapter 5 considers five of Shakespeare's earliest known plays, looking for instances of the effects that having been brought up in Stratford-upon-Avon may have had upon him in order to assess the importance of his early environment upon the development of his literary output.

Chapter 6 looks briefly at how his work is linked with that of his predecessors and how he built upon existing dramatic traditions. It also considers how he used his source materials in his earliest writing and how we can begin to appreciate the skill he showed by the adaptations which he introduced.

The Conclusion aims to bring together the information gathered under the separate headings and assess how far they show the psychologists's findings to have been accurate and how many of the criteria they stipulate appertain to Shakespeare's early life. It notes that the three aspects of study I chose to bring together, namely psychology, history and literature, can only illustrate certain areas of Shakespeare's accomplishment; a different combination would be required to demonstrate adequately the development of others, notably his poetic ability. The factors chosen, however, do enable us to ascertain some of Shakespeare's characteristics and also to scotch some of the erroneous myths which still surround and confuse knowledge of him. The findings of the psychologists are confirmed by his life and achievement.

The thesis contains 76,944 words, excuding the reprinted part of the appendix, the notes and bibliography.

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1. Four examples of the Minutes taken at Corporation meetings follow Page 17.
2. A diagrammatic map follows Page 53. My thanks go to Mr Brian Woodward who turned my sketches into a clear representation of salient features of Stratford in the sixteenth century.
3. A letter from Daniel Baker to Richard Quiney, illustrating the difficulties attending financial transactions at this time follows Page 90.
4. A photograph taken at the new Globe Theatre follows Page 233. It was taken after a performance of *Twelfth Night* on September 21, 2002. My thanks goes to Mr Howard Smith for taking the photograph at my request and to Mr Mark Rylance for permission to reproduce it in this thesis.

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I am indebted to my Supervisor, Dr John Jowett, for his honest appraisals and direction of my studies throughout the last six and a half years. I should also like to thank the Archivists of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Dr Robert Bearman and Ms Maire Macdonald, who have been unfailingly helpful in supplying the documents I requested and in answering my questions. I am also grateful to the librarians of the Shakespeare Institute Library, Mr Jim Shaw and Mrs Kate Welch who have directed my book-hunting with unfailing efficiency and kindness. My thanks are also due to Mrs Brenda Peck who has painstakingly gone through the manuscript and highlighted not only technical errors but also pointed out places at which my expression was not immediately clear to the reader. Finally I have to thank my daughters, Lisa Taylor and Corinne Evans for their patient guidance when I was not working in harmony with my computer, and the latter for scanning in the photograph taken at the Globe. To all of these I owe a debt of gratitude.

THE MAKING OF SHAKESPEARE'S GENIUS

Writers like Shakespeare and Dante have altered the very languages in which our thoughts are rooted. There is no lack of reasons for making strenuous effort to uncover the influences that have made certain individuals exceptionally creative or inventive.¹

Michael J.A. Howe

INTRODUCTION

Psychological researches undertaken in the last decade of the twentieth century appear to have established as fact that genius is not an attribute with which certain people are born but that it represents an outstanding level of achievement by an individual possessing a particular group of qualities and spending formative years in situations which enable that person to develop at least one faculty to a very high degree. Their exceptional work is usually limited to one discipline. Both Professor Michael Howe in England and Professor Howard Gardner in America offer convincing and well-supported arguments to attest their belief. Moreover both aver that while genius has to be developed over a substantial period of time for such a high level of attainment to be reached, the contributory factors begin to assemble around an individual from the very beginning of his or her life. Even the circumstances into which the person is born will contribute to the making of a genius. Gardner writes: 'From the moment of conception, the embryo is affected by the physiological conditions of the womb, and forever after, the particular facts about the particular environment exert a profound effect on what the organism becomes'.²

Research into the making of genius is hampered by the belief that such musicians, writers, inventors, scientists and creators as have been acclaimed as geniuses can rarely be recognised as such until very near the end of their lives, more commonly some time after they have died. Robert Albert avers: ‘For all its individuality, genius is not easy to identify at an early stage’.³ David Lykken gives a possible reason for this: ‘...genius cannot be recognised except as it operates within a system of cultural rules, and it cannot bring forth anything new unless it can enlist the support of peers’.⁴ It may be necessary to query this claim later in the thesis. Most psychologists think genius is developed gradually; the early works of such people appear to be good for their age or to show sporadic promise rather than being, in their own right, works of genius. It is therefore very difficult to establish precisely and with assurance exactly what combination of factors produced such a satisfying end result. The gap between the necessary relevant concomitants amassing and the first appearance of work recognised as being of the highest outstanding quality appears to be at least thirty years, judging by the best work of such universally acknowledged geniuses as Mozart, Darwin, Einstein and Freud for example. These early years are not “wasted” years: they are the minimum amount of time that must be used by the person of potential genius to develop awakening skills to the highest standard, and need to be employed relevantly in some related field during those years of essential practice and experiment. Shakespeare turned thirty in 1594 and it is his work after this date that subsequent readers and theatre-goers have found most worthy of praise. This small fact is no cause in itself to avow Shakespeare to have been a genius, but this is not necessary in his case. I know of no one who would contest that the writer of his plays was a genius.

Although the work of many gifted people has been scrutinized, in all the research into the making of genius that has been recently undertaken, no one seems to have taken on the task of looking for the sources of Shakespeare's genius; for example, his authorship of the plays has been questioned for centuries, so one would think such a study highly relevant and desirable. Those psychologists involved in studies of genius have agreed that Shakespeare has to be accepted into this category of writer but none appears to have studied his early life in detail. Howe, for example, says 'we shall never discover how William Shakespeare became the genius he was, if only because we know too little about his early years'.⁵ In the chapter of *Genius and the Mind* entitled "The Creative Genius of William Shakespeare: historiometric analyses of his plays and sonnets", the assertion is made that 'Shakespeare was a literary genius *par excellence*. As an exemplary representative of the phenomenon, then, Shakespeare is most worthy of scientific investigation'. However, he is still deleted from the case study group because 'we know virtually nothing about Shakespeare's early years'.⁶

My belief and hope is that perhaps this is no longer the case. The most recent research into his life and times, more especially the living conditions pertaining in Stratford-upon-Avon during his childhood and the events that took place there while he was growing up, have ensured that these are no longer as vague and indistinct as they once were. There is still a tremendous need to try to extricate facts from fictions and unjustified imaginings. If there are good 'reasons for making strenuous effort to uncover the influences' which made Shakespeare 'exceptionally creative', as Howe claims, and if it is 'important to understand individuals who have made enduring *positive* contributions to the human

condition' as Gardner states, then even if the attempt proves abortive, it needs to be attempted and I intend to essay it.⁷ This will be the theme and purpose of this thesis: to try to uncover the source or sources of his genius and in doing so to establish facts about him as opposed to the welter of conflicting fact and long-believed conjecture which we have now.

My aim will be to try to establish any link there may be between Shakespeare having been raised in Stratford-upon-Avon and the subsequent development of his unique writing skills. Most people are aware of how far the situation of their birth, the place where they were raised, and the individual experiences they enjoyed or endured there have affected their character, their preferences and dislikes and their later attitudes towards the experiences of their lives.

The belief of many early writers and thinkers was that it is wise to train children, to brainwash them in effect, to do what adults feel will have most impact on the advancement and stability of the individuals and their societies; for example *Proverbs* assures us 'Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it' (22, 6); the thinking of Victorian social improvers such as Baden-Powell was that it was worth instilling good life practices into children at a very young age. The current beliefs expressed by psychologists support this concept: Michael J A Howe claims that even the years from birth to four years old are critical to a child's development, character and attitudes. He bemoans the fact that many of these years are wasted by parents who do not realise how much a very young child is shaped by his or

her learning long before being able to express him or herself and so demonstrate how much character and mindset are being influenced by the lifestyle offered.⁸ If his beliefs - that those whom we call geniuses are no different from the rest of mankind at birth and that a genius, among whom he unequivocally includes Shakespeare, is *made* rather than born with extra ability - are correct, then a close study of the dramatist's early life seems essential if one would like to understand what led to his becoming a world-renowned writer. This close study is what I wish to pursue here.

It will first be necessary to try to separate fact from speculation in assessments of Shakespeare's life which have already been written, to accept only high probability not mere possibility from the "knowledge" we have about him. In a praiseworthy effort to provide a continuous picture of William Shakespeare's life, early biographers often intermingled fact and conjectured fact, even mere imaginative speculation, until all were blended in the reader's mind. This practice does in fact continue today to a lesser extent. Using this method of imaginative biography it is not surprising that different writers aver "facts" which cannot all be accurate. For example, some claim that William Shakespeare was obliged to leave Stratford having stolen a deer, others that he went into the service of a Lancashire man who lived near Preston. Writing about his religious persuasion, some declare that he was indubitably protestant and others that he was undeniably catholic. It is simply hardly possible that all, or perhaps any, of these suggestions are true. Known facts, such as his father having been a glover, are presented, often with well authenticated documentation or other acceptable support, but at the same time factors of probability are given - such as that John Shakespeare was a highly successful and well-

liked glover, again possible but unproven. So, gradually, theories and claims have been built upon rocky foundations, and are no longer distinguishable from those built on proven facts. 'It is likely that he...' is later expressed as 'when he...', 'after he...', with the suggestion becoming assumption and then claimed as accepted fact. Obviously the writer is convinced of the truth of what he claims but if by chance his belief is inaccurate, the reader is given a mistaken belief. Should this conflict with another interpretation, which is the would-be scholar to believe? In any event, when knowledge is debatable, opinions become liable to fluctuation: rather than enlightenment, the scholar is offered only confusion. Ultimately such writing can give rise to myths or weakly founded beliefs about the dramatist, his writing, behaviour or character which can prove hard to destroy. On the rare occasions when some new fact is discovered which could add to our knowledge or perception of the poet, it often has to overcome, before it can be accepted as credible, a range of apparently contradicting evidence against its truth, "evidence" which had already become an established part of the admixture of "knowledge" we have of Shakespeare. Clearly any still existing myths need to be recognised and discarded before what I am hoping to identify can be isolated from such misleading pollutants. For that reason, when a biographer such as Ian Wilson writes: '...more guesswork is needed here', it is essential to ignore his claim - in this instance that "Harry" could only stand for Henry Condell - in case this belief dissuades us from authenticated evidence discovered at a later date. In the same paragraph, Wilson claims that all men assigned female parts in plays must *ipso facto* have been young men.⁹ This, too, should remain unspecified: a boy actor would be well stretched to play the role of Queen Margaret in *Richard II* for instance. Shakespeare himself has noted

that a man's voice changes back towards a treble voice sound as he ages, so an older, experienced and effective man-player would seem a more likely choice for such a role, of which there are several; there are, for example, the duchesses in *Richard II* and Coriolanus' mother, Volumnia, who could hardly be played effectively by a youth. Without the aids of present-day stage make-up, I cannot envisage an effective and convincing portrayal of a Coriolanus being persuaded from his intention by a younger "mother". Experienced acting companies should not be accredited with so little expertise and adaptability. I think even younger women's roles, where they demand a little more than youth and beauty, could well have been ascribed to experienced actors. Somewhat unnecessarily, since she is already dead, Shakespeare has Lear say of his daughter, Cordelia: "Her voice was ever soft,/ Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in women". Perhaps this quite difficult part was originally played by someone whose voice had broken long before? But here I am speculating, not *proving* that some female roles would have been played by men. Ben Jonson, on the other hand, says in his *Elegy for Simon Pavy*, written in 1602

And did act (what now we moan),
Old men so duly,
As, sooth, the Parcae thought him one.¹⁰

It is surely better to accept the knowledge of an actor of the era rather than modern speculation however rationally presented. For this reason I will make use of contemporary reference wherever I can, but holding in mind that one company having an excellent boy actor able to present mature characters effectively does not mean that all companies were so fortunately supplied.

It is good that there is now enough garnered fact and inherent interest in Shakespeare for us to dispose of the myths which have come to shroud him, set up by those who felt a need to create an enthusiasm for his work. We will now do better to trace signs of the influence Stratford and his family circumstances had on his writing and writing ability because it was the town where he was 'shaped, made aware'.¹¹ In order to do so I have found it necessary to look closely at Stratford's history and foremost concerns during the years of his youth. It will be necessary to consider, in as much detail as is possible after the lapse of four centuries, his family situation, the town and its inhabitants, its method of organization and the outside influences which affected the townspeople. While he was a boy it appears that life in Stratford was stable compared with the turmoil and problems it faced during Shakespeare's middle years when fire and prolonged famine devastated daily life for most inhabitants; in contrast, however, the fortunes of his specific family were far from stable during his boyhood as we shall note in more detail in this thesis.

Before embarking on this prolonged examination of the lifestyle surrounding the formation of genius potential in William Shakespeare, however, I shall first need to consider research by modern psychologists into the nature of genius, which will enable the reader to understand the necessity for looking so closely at his environs as well as directly at his work, the product of his outstanding achievement. Chapter 1 will set out the findings agreed by such psychologists which explain why a detailed analysis of his youth is necessary. I will try to evoke an appreciation of the town into which William Shakespeare was born in April 1564. It will be necessary to look, albeit briefly, at the effect caused by its geological and geographical siting, its past history, current concerns

and the effects upon it of such matters as its ruling hierarchy and the demands placed upon it by the crown, the local nobility and the church. I will discuss its existing legal status as a borough and its concomitant rights and responsibilities as far as these matters seem to be relevant. This will constitute the content of Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will look at the Shakespeare family and what may be assessed as the effect on William of being its eldest son. Chapter 4 will consider the likely influence upon him of the town and its affairs during his minority and also how far wider controls, that is those wielded by the church, nobility and state, would have impinged upon the life of a Midlands boy.

Chapter 5 will consider any evidence from his early writing of the influence which being raised in Stratford-upon-Avon had upon the development of his genius. Chapter 6 will consider his use of the source material for his early plays and the changes and supplements he gave to it, since these too may display the paths of his literary development. The Conclusion must weld together the findings from studying these separate disciplines to discover if we have any pointers towards how his genius came into being.

The methods to be adopted in order to gather together any information which may lead us to the sources of Shakespeare's achievement will be of three kinds. On relevant topics where my knowledge is slight and in subjects which are out of my usual spheres of study, I shall have to rely upon the expertise of those who have spent time and effort studying such matters as the composition of the soils upon which Stratford stands, for example. My contribution will have to be based upon accepting the validity of information offered by writers in these factual areas and trying to pinpoint the extent of the effects on

Shakespeare, his family or the town. Fortunately, and largely because of the interest in Stratford and its affairs which Shakespeare and his work have generated, relevant and often quite detailed work has been published upon which I am happy to draw. Where it appears necessary or relevant to do so, I will look at and assess the information suggested by biographers, my second source of information. This I will spend time with only selectively, rather where I feel able to accept their claims because they appear to be adequately justified than where the claim seems to me to be either tenuous or plainly wrong. My wish to discuss only those statements which I see as acceptable may lay me open to the accusation that I am intent on protecting a preconceived bias; however, in reality I am choosing to do this because I have no wish to perpetuate by repetition claims which I think should be forgotten. The third method of information collecting which I intend to use is by studying original documents relating to the Shakespeares, to Stratford and to theatrical history. These and their contents are outlined on the following pages.

Council Books A, B and C were the records kept by the Council between the years 1553 and 1657. Since *Council Books B & C* deal with the period from 1593 to 1657, no use can be made of these volumes in my research. These volumes, rebound in the early nineteenth century, detail some of the business, the resolutions and other matters which were dealt with by the Councillors of Stratford. As relevant contemporary reference material they are superb and wide-ranging. They are, however, selective and limited on the information given in some areas since they were, to those who wrote them, merely a record of what was known or could be established at any time. These records being so old are deteriorating quickly all the time. It is therefore fortuitous that the Dugdale

Society saw need to publish much of the material they contain in a series of volumes entitled *Minutes and Accounts of Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation*. This series currently has five volumes, all of which are available to be read in the Records' Department at The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust premises in Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon; in addition, Volume IV is available at the Public Library in Stratford and Volume V is still in print. There is to date no index to accompany these volumes which makes the search for information from them often arduous and time-consuming. However, compared with studying the original documents, reading the printed books is very much easier and information not contained in the *Council Books* but obtained from other source material has been included. There is hope that the final years of Elizabeth's reign will be covered in a sixth volume and an index appended in the not too distant future: specifically I have agreed with the Chief Archivist, Dr. Robert Bearman, to do this work after I have completed this doctoral thesis.

It is also better to consult the printed version than to expose the original documents to unnecessary light, wear and tear more than is strictly necessary. An embargo has had to be put on the photocopying of documents written before 1660. It is because of these sensible restrictions on access to the original documents that many of the references I shall give will refer to both the original document and to the printed version, so that verification of any factors may be made easily whilst preserving the legibility of the original documents for as long as possible. I do of course offer transcriptions of any passages from these documents from which I quote, where this appears to be helpful.

Council Book A (Records' Department reference BRU 2/1) contains the first records kept by the Corporation from its inauguration in 1553 until 1593, when *Council Book B* begins. My usage of this source provides most information concerning the situation of life in Stratford existing at the time of William Shakespeare's birth and during his minority. From its contents, it is possible to deduce much about the physical state of the town and how this was maintained, improved or deteriorated. It is also possible to work out where most people lived and what portions of the land each household was able to use for its livelihood. The Council had control over at least fifty percent of the property within the town and the records of the leases and tenancies of these buildings are a rich source of information whether one is trying to discover how much one individual had at his disposal, how rents changed within the period, how fairly distribution of the town's assets was made, or the likely standing of the Shakespeares in the town.

Written in Secretary Hand throughout, *Council Book A* is mainly filled with the chamberlains' accounts. This volume is designated as their book on page 124, but this original intention gradually changes. The Chamberlains were two men chosen from among the burgesses each year; they were responsible for the financial affairs of the Borough, collecting rents and other monies owed to the Council, and for distributing this money for the expenses and wages which the Council needed to pay for the upkeep of the town. An account was drawn up at the end of the financial year for the Councillors' knowledge and approval and any cash left over duly delivered to the next men elected. Elections took place each September and the officers assumed their duties in October. This, at least, was the designated procedure; in practice the business was not always so

simple. For example, John Shakespeare was burdened with this important but difficult task for four years, two as one of the Chamberlains and two more to help the following Chamberlains, including drawing up their annual accounts on their behalf. The reason he was called to serve in this capacity for so long is not clear. It was unusual. When his term of office finally finished, the Council was in debt to him and this debt was not cleared for eighteen months. It was more common for the Chamberlains to be unable to account for all the money which had passed through their hands and for them to be in debt to the Council. The accounts were written with the amount of money given in Roman numerals in pounds (li), shillings (s) and pence (d); sometimes this sum was followed by the abbreviation 'ob' which indicates a halfpenny. These amounts were not written in clear columns so that totalling them is difficult. It would have been so too for the Chamberlains: the total rarely appears to match accurately with the sums listed.

Council Book A also includes the accounts rendered to the Council by those who went on its business outside the town, to negotiate with landowners who had certain rights in the town, or who were sent to London to oversee the town's Petitions to Parliament, for changes it wanted made to its Charter, for example, or to deal directly with the Chancellor when a Petition to the Crown was necessary. Because of the control over local matters which central government (which at this time meant the Crown) maintained, this was far more common and inevitable than it is today. The expenditure incurred as a result of these prolonged visits to the capital by one or more of the Councillors was draining on the local economy but entirely necessary.

Besides accounts of the town's expenditure, *Council Book A* also gives details of one Rent Roll and the acceptance of a bequest from Thomas Oken who lived and died in Warwick. He donated forty pounds to be lent out in parcels of five pounds to eight needy people for four years to help them set up businesses. There are also to be found some notes concerning leases of property when a new lease was granted or when a rent was increased. A list of the properties under the Corporation's jurisdiction was drawn up in November, 1582, and it is included in this volume.

The third main category of subject matter included in the *Council Book* records is the minutes of the Council Meetings showing their times, frequency and the matters which were dealt with. These become more numerous by the 1570s, perhaps because of more careful preservation of their Minutes by the Councillors. The practice of listing all the Council Members and of putting a dot beside the names of those attending meetings, or 'Halls' as they were called, was also adopted during the same decade, but not consistently at first. Occasionally space was left in which to enter these names but no one carried out the task. With the new Senior Officials being sworn in each October, there was often a review of the town's rules made at this first meeting of the new Council and both new and retained arrangements were noted then. At other meetings the business noted ranged from none to a page of minutes, which can be very revealing. Occasionally mentioned are the disruptions in the smooth running of the town's business; their inclusion enables us to catch a glimpse of some of the clashes of personality which bubbled below the surface of the Town Councillors' reverences. That they were clearly anxious to sustain their standing in the town may be deduced from

some of the edicts they passed including the titles they were to be given, the dress they were to wear in public, and their method of dealing with their own members who did not live up to the standards the rest wished to present publicly. (The binding of this volume of the *Council Books* incorporates part of a mediaeval manuscript and excerpts from a copy of the Town Charter.)

The Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records is a series of five volumes published by The Dugdale Society and initially printed by the Oxford University printer, Frederick Hall. Besides being infinitely easier to read and allowing the original documents to remain little handled, they are strictly chronological, which *Council Book A* is not. In addition, manuscript material from other sources has been included so that a fuller, more rounded knowledge is made available. Where I have checked the transcriptions, I have found few and only insignificant variations from my own transcriptions, and which transcriber has been the more accurate would only be a matter for debate, so to read the version offered by these volumes is to lose little and gain infinitely in time and easier comprehension.

Volume 1 documents the years 1553 - 1566; the transcription is by Richard Savage and there is an Introduction and some notes written by Edgar Fripp in 1921. Besides transcriptions of documents from *Council Book A* there is also a full copy of the town's original Charter, records of the fining of some Councillors for non-attendance at meetings and note of some changes to the appearance of the town, for example the removing of the rood loft in the chapel and the addition to its comforts of seating. We

learn of the removal of William Bott from the Council - John Shakespeare joining it in his stead - and the appointment of John Brownsword as schoolmaster to the town. We learn too that the old practice of frankpledge, dropped in many places by 1500, was still practised in Stratford. Frankpledge was a way of helping to maintain good behaviour by the townspeople. At the age of fourteen, each young man had to pledge his loyalty to the monarch and promise to be a law-abiding citizen of the town. Each person was attached to a group of people and they were mutually obliged to check on each other's behaviour. If a man misbehaved, the others of his group had to bring him to justice within thirty-one days, or to make good his misdemeanours themselves. The last record of this oath being taken by a sheriff in Stratford refers to 1560, so it is unlikely that William Shakespeare ever took such an oath.

Volume 2 refers to the years 1566 - 1577; it was prepared by the same two men and printed in London in 1924 by Oxford University Press. It reproduces the documentation of several Council meetings, several Chamberlains' accounts and the issuing of some property leases. It covers the years of John Shakespeare's bailliewick, his election and oath. It also includes some documents referring to the Court Leet when he was Chief Magistrate. The latter are printed in their original Latin. This volume covers the period of the financial difficulties which beset John Shakespeare, beginning with the distraint made against his goods when Richard Hathaway, the father of William Shakespeare's wife-to-be, was unable to pay his debts for which John Shakespeare had stood surety in 1566; and also the occasion when a warrant for John Shakespeare's arrest was issued throughout Warwickshire when the accused was unable to settle his own debt to Henry

Higford in 1573. He was said to be unavailable and to have no goods left to distrain in lieu of the thirty pounds he owed. The effect that such an incident is likely to have had upon his nine-year-old son can be imagined. In comparison we learn from the Rent Roll that Adrian Quiney, said by some to be a close friend of John Shakespeare, was gathering the rents from five cottages and a barn belonging to the Council. John Shakespeare had no such regular basic income to rely upon. The differences between the experiences of the families of each Stratford inhabitant may be clearly appreciated.

The Corporation records from which these facts are obtained rarely detail all the factors we should like to know; how revealing an account is depends on what details the writer chose to include so naturally the Minutes of Council Meetings, for example, vary considerably according to the character of their writer. In some instances we have partially verbatim accounts, in others very little emerges and rarely do we find notes on the final resolutions of an issue or of the difficulties which were encountered. Even the murder while in office of the town Bailiff Richard Quiney does not get recorded officially, even though he was killed in his own house while pursuing work which he considered was for the town's benefit. Examples of such Corporation Minutes are reproduced following page 17. They are Minutes from the same year, 1571, and are together typical of the Minutes generally. They begin with a standard Latin introduction which only varies slightly in Illustration 2, which records the election of the new Bailiff and Chief Alderman.

ILLUS. 1.

11 July, 1571

[MEETING OF THE CORPORATION.]

¹ Stratford } *scilicet* Ad aulam ibidem tentam xj^o die Julij Anno
burgus } xiiij^o Regni Regine elizabethe.

nomina aldermannorum :	nomina capitalium burgensium :
Johannes sadler	Robertus bratt
Radulphus Cawdre	ab Thomas barber
ab Willelmus smithe	ab Willelmus smithe
Georgius waytlie	ab Nicholaus banister
Adrianus queny	Willelmus brace
Rogerus sadler	Johannes Tayler
Ricardus Hill	ab Georgius gylbert
Lodouicus vpwilliams	ab Thomas dyxson
Johannes weeler	Johannes bell
Humfridus plumley	Thomas Richardsons
Willelmus tyler	
Johannes shakespeare	
Robertus salisburie	

At this hall yt ys agreed and graunted by the seid balie and burgeses that m^r Adrian queny shall haue a lease of a tenement in myddle rowe in bridge streett late in the tenure of [*blank*] to haue and to hold the seid tenement to the seid Adrian and his assignes from the feast of seynt michael tharkeangle w^{ch} shalbe in the yere of our lord god a thowsand fyve hundreth threescore and twelf vnto the ende and terme of xxj yeres then next ensuyng yeldinge yerelie to the chamber vj^s viij^d and the seid m^r [A]drian must reedifie the seid tenement and so in the ende of the seid terme leve yt {sufficentle} used and competentlie repayred.

[*Council Book A, 145.*]

¹ In the handwriting of Henry Rogers.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON RECORDS

10 October, 1571

[MEETING OF THE CORPORATION.]

¹Stratford } *scilicet* Ad primam aulam Adriani queny ballivi
burgus } burgi praedictiac Johannis shakespeare capitalis
aldermanni eiusdem burgi ibidem tentam
decimo die octobris Anno Regni Regine elizabethe tertio
decimo

<p>Nomina aldermannorum :</p> <p>Adrianus queny ²</p> <p>Johannes shakespeare ³</p> <p>• ab. Willelmus smithe</p> <p>• ab. Radulphus Cawdre</p> <p>• ab. Georgius waytlie</p> <p>Rogerus sadler</p> <p>Ricardus hill</p> <p>Ludouicus vpwilliams</p> <p>Johannes weeler</p> <p>Humfridus plumley</p> <p>Willelmus Tyler</p> <p>• ab. Robertus salisburie</p> <p>• ab. Johannes sadler</p> <p>Thomas barber</p>	<p>Nomina capitalium burgensium :</p> <p>Robertus bratt</p> <p>Willelmus smithe</p> <p>Johannes Tayler</p> <p>Thomas Dyxson</p> <p>• ab. Willelmus brace</p> <p>Nicholaus barnehurst</p> <p>Thomas Richardsons</p> <p>• ab. Georgius Gylbert</p> <p>petrus smart</p> <p>p^d Thomas brogden</p> <p>Johannes bell</p>
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Mem. yt ys agreed at this hall by the balie aldermen and capitall burgeses herein assembled that Mr Adrian Queny now balie of the borowgh aboue seid shuld sell the copes and vesmentes here vnder wrytten to the vse of the chamber of the seid borowghe and therof to yeld accompte of all suche money as he shall receue for the same to the seid chamber beinge lawfullie warned thervnto ⁴

In primis one sute of blew velfytt vestmentes beinge thre in number

Item one sute of red velfytt thre in number

Item one sute of whyt damaske thre in number

Item ij Coopes of tauny velfytt

Item one Cope of whyt dammaske

Item one Cope of blewe velfytt

Item iij stoles and iij for the handes

[*Council Book A, 148.*]

¹ In the handwriting of Henry Rogers.

² Bailiff

³ Chief Alderman.

⁴ Introduction, p. xx

ILLUS. 3.

CORPORATION MEETING, 24 OCT., 1571 55

24 October, 1571

[MEETING OF THE CORPORATION.]

¹Stratford Ad aulam ibidem tentam xxiiij^o die octobris Anno
burgus Regni Regine elizabethe &c. xiiij^o

Nomina aldermannorum :

Adrianus queny
Johannes shakespeare
Willelmus smithe
Radulphus Cawdre
Georgius waytlie
Rogerus sadler
Ricardus Hill
Lodouicus vpwilliams
Johannes weeler.
Humfridus plumley
Willelmus Tyler
Robertus salisburie
Johannes sadler
Thomas barber

[*Council Book A, 149.*]

Nomina burgensium :

Robertus bratt
Willelmus smithe
Johannes Tayler
Thomas Dyxson
Willelmus brace
Nicholaus barnehurst
Thomas Richardsons
ab. Georgius Gylbart
petrus smart
Thomas brogden
Johannes bell

28 November, 1571

[MEETING OF THE CORPORATION.]

¹Stratford Ad aulam ibidem tentam xxviiij^o die novembris
burgus Anno Regni Regine Elizabethhe &c. xiiij^o

Nomina aldermannorum :

Adrianus Queny
Johannes shakespeare
Willelmus Smithe
Radulphus Cawdre
Georgius Waytlie
Rogerus Sadler
Ricardus Hill
Lodouicus vpwilliams
ab. Johannes Weeler
Humfridus plumley
Willelmus Tyler
Robertus Salisburie
Johannes Sadler
Thomas barber

Nomina burgensium :

Robertus bratt
Willelmus Smithe
Johannes Tayler
Thomas Dixson
Willelmus brace
Nicholaus barnehurst
Thomas Richardsons
Georgius Gilbert
Petrus Smart
Thomas brogden
Johannes bell

In the handwriting of Henry Rogers.

The inscriptions for Illustrations 1 and 3 read: ‘ Stratford Town, of course, to the hall in the same place’, which is then followed by the specific date, namely ‘11th day of July in the 13th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth’ for Illustration 1 and for Illustration 3 ‘the 24th day of October in the year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth the 13th’ and similarly for the 28th November in the same year. A ‘Hall’ was a council meeting. Illustration 2 follows the same pattern with the additional information: ‘At the first hall of Adrian Queny elected bailiff of the borough and John Shakespeare Chief Alderman of the same town on the tenth day of October in the thirteenth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.’ Then follows a list of those who had been called to the meeting of Councillors. Their names are recorded in Latin, with the first list naming the Aldermen, the second the Chief Burgesses for that year. The prefix ‘ab’ designates those who were absent from that meeting.

Illustration 1 is typical of a record of the commonest subject matter of these monthly meetings. It authorises the leasing to Adrian Queny of one of the properties in the town administered by the Corporation.

At this hall it is agreed and granted by the said bailiff and burgesses that Mr Adrian Queny shall have a lease of a tenement in Middle Row in Bridge Street late in the tenure of to have and to hold the said tenement to the said Adrian and his assignees from the feast of St Michael the Archangel which shall be in the year of our Lord God a thousand five hundred three score and twelve (1572) unto the end and term of 21 years then next ensuing, yielding yearly to the chamber 6 shillings 8 pence, and the said Mr Adrian must re-edify the said tenement and so in the end of the said term leave it sufficiently used and competently repaired.

The appellation ‘Mr’ was awarded to the Aldermen of right. Aldermen were called upon to deploy some of their wealth for the common good of the town. Reliance was put upon

their public spiritedness for such commodities as provision and maintenance of buckets of water which were to be quickly available in the event of a fire in any of the houses, and for contributing towards the maintenance of the bridges and roads, and the support of the incapable poor. This title, placing them above those who did not take office on behalf of the town, was one of the rewards of their position. Another advantage of these offices was that they could rent a cottage, barn or garden belonging to the Corporation. While they became personally responsible for the maintenance of such a property, it seems there were few restrictions on what rent they could charge to the people who rented the tenements, buildings or land from them, in order to recoup their losses. Nor does there seem to have been much supervision, if any, of what state of repair the property was kept in during the fairly long period of twenty-one years for which they were likely to have control of it. So long as it was handed back at the end of the period in a habitable condition, they could make as much profit as they were able. The occasional review of property in the town discloses several buildings where maintenance was not high on the agenda. The fixed rent remaining static for twenty-one years would sometimes have proved advantageous to the lessee and occasionally to the Corporation, depending on the changes in the economic situation. It is also interesting to see that while the saints were no longer an acceptable part of religious observance, their former days of remembrance were still used as a universally recognised means of dating on conveyances and other legal documents of the period.

In Illustration 2 we see that the names of the new Bailiff and Chief Alderman have been moved to the top of the first list, which was the usual practice. Henry Rogers, the town

scribe who recorded all three of these meetings, has this time appended a dot and 'ab' by the names of those who were not at the meeting; later minutes adopted the 'dot only' way of noting absentees. Only William Smith and George Gilbert are absent for a second time. These minutes record a unique happening: the plan to sell off the church vestments as being of no further use to the town. Perhaps after having had two monarchs who ruled only briefly, and three alternations of religion in quick succession, the parish was at last convinced that England was to stay protestant for the foreseeable future. To store and keep such materials in good condition would have been a problem no doubt and perhaps too there was a need or desire to demonstrate Stratford's loyalty to Elizabeth and her religion. Sold at a good price - of which we have no record - their sale would bring in useful revenue; it seems the leaders of the town were very practical men. The descriptions of the vestments illustrate the amount of money which had once been expended on the honour of the catholic church by this country town:

First one sute of blue velvet vestments being three [pieces] in number
 Item one sute of red velvet three in number
 Item one sute of white damask three in number
 Item 2 copes of tawny velvet
 Item one cope of white damask
 Item one cope of blue velvet
 Item 3 stoles and 3 for the handes

One feels that protestant services must have seemed comparatively dull and colourless with the vestments gone and the murals painted over. Whether these changes did help the parishioners to concentrate more on the word of God rather than iconographic religious attributes to their religion is difficult to assess from the remove of more than four hundred years. Perhaps this change helped to lead to the growing fashion for having

painted cloths to decorate interior house walls, and a growth in the need for aural rather than visual support for effective communication.

Again it would seem, if the entire meeting was minuted, that the monthly meetings were brief affairs with little work needing to be carried out. The rest of this minute only records who is to arrange the sale and what was to happen to the proceeds from it.

Mem[orandum]. It is agreed at this hall by the bailiff, aldermen and capital burgesses herein assembled that Mr Adrian Queny now bailiff of the borough above said should sell the copes and vestments here under written to the use of the chamber of the said borough and thereof to yield account of all such money as he shall receive for the same to the said chamber being lawfully warned thereunto

The large number of absentee aldermen from this meeting may indicate that some people were not happy to seal the demise of the importance of the catholic church in England in this way and so stayed away from this meeting. The phrase 'herein assembled' limits agreement to those who were present to discuss and vote for this sale of vestments, but it may have been coincidence. Certainly John Shakespeare, whom many claim to have been a covert catholic, was present and probably, as Chief Alderman, agreed to and assisted Adrian Queny in arranging their sale, as he had overseen the covering of the chapel murals earlier. Illustration 3 does show that for the next two meetings, absenteeism fell to only one man being absent from each meeting; this could equally well be accounted for by such a mundane thing as everyone having completed their harvesting, however. No business is recorded for either of these meetings although the names of those in attendance were written down. This occurs quite frequently in these manuscripts: the reason is unknown. What may be of interest is the inconsistent usage of

capital letters at this time. Although the notes are recorded in one man's handwriting, there is no pattern for how he chose to use capital letters. I would guess that Henry Rogers was gradually deciding how he preferred to record the Corporation names. I don't think any more specific conclusion can be drawn.

Volume 3 covers the period 1577 - 1586 and was produced by the same team as the earlier volumes and printed in 1926. This volume includes accounts of several Corporation Meetings. The Councillors were obliged to hold a muster during this period and produce troops to serve under the Earl of Warwick when the Queen so decreed, and to supply some armour. They were also obliged to send to the Crown a list of the alehouses and inn-keepers operating in Stratford. In addition, the Bishop of Gloucester drew up a list of recusants in Stratford, recusants being those who were not attending church regularly. The conjunction of these commands from central government demonstrates the changes to England's political and social concerns which affected small towns quite severely. We see the Council ordering a review of its lands and tenements, a subsequent raising of some rents and the need to impose a levy to furnish the soldiers on one hand and collections to support the poor 'accordinge to the forme of the statute' on the other. This volume also furnishes us with a list of the names and houses of the Gentlemen and Freeholders in Warwickshire in 1580. It also gives evidence of John Shakespeare still being hounded for non-appearance in court in relation to further debt claims filed against him when William Shakespeare was sixteen, and of the latter's marriage licence being issued when he was eighteen. We glean a fraught picture both for the town and for this particular family.

Volumes 4 and 5 refer to matters occurring after William Shakespeare's minority and so will be irrelevant to this study.

The letters included in *Minutes and Accounts* volumes are few but refer to Council concerns and therefore add to our knowledge of the history surrounding a situation or to the attitude adopted towards it. These therefore add considerably to our fuller appreciation of the matter at issue, and the tone of these gives us further insight into the variety of presentation of address used at this time, another subject to which sadly little attention may be paid in this thesis.

In relation to the plays themselves, the chronology I will be following is that suggested by Professors Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988). Quotations from his work will be taken from the same volume. My references to *Edward III*, which is not printed in that volume, will be taken from Giorgio Melchiori's edition of the play (Cambridge: CUP, 1998). The theatrical documents to which I refer are again contemporary with the Tudor and Stuart periods. Some I have been able to study directly; for others I am beholden to the excellent work carried out by Professor Glynne Wickham and his Associate Editors John Northam and W.D.Howarth in their *Theatre in Europe: A Documentary History*.

To reiterate, the aim of this thesis will be to attempt an analytical investigation of what led to Shakespeare's ability to develop and sustain a level of achievement higher than

that of his peers, predecessors and later proponents of drama. To do so, I will first discuss the factors which psychologists agree may lead to creations of genius quality and the criteria they have used to define such work, particularly in regard to writers - Chapter 1. The geographical and historical setting in which he grew up will form the subject matter of Chapter 2. Next I will try to assess first his family situation and then his individual experience in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. It will be necessary throughout these two specific chapters to separate facts from long-believed fictions or insufficiently supported assumptions in order to achieve an accurate picture. Chapter 5 will look at his earliest known writing to see if any influences upon his work may be discernable, while Chapter 6 will study some of the changes he chose to make to his source material. Finally I will assess whether I have found it possible from such cross-discipline research, calling upon psychology, history, and literature to form a clearer picture of the development of Shakespeare's genius,

CHAPTER 1 SHAKESPEARE AND THE GENIUS DEBATE

The combination of historical investigation coupled with the judicious use of systematic psychological studies can help to unearth a more probable profile.
Steptoe¹

Not much sustained research into what genius is and how it occurs had been done until the second half of the twentieth century. Jean Piaget called the creative sphere “a magnificent subject which remains to be explored”.² Ray Porter, in his introduction to *Genius and the Mind* writes ‘If our understanding of genius is to advance, there must be a meeting of minds from across the disciplines’.³ In my opinion, this is yet to happen but perhaps it is just beginning. Certainly the issue of what constitutes and gives rise to genius is being addressed on both sides of the Atlantic and has already resulted in interesting debate. Gardner claims it to be ‘pioneering work and so there are few guidelines’ - which allows the debate to be a particularly lively one, breaking new ground.⁴

So, what is genius? When we use this word, we each know exactly what we mean and intend to convey to others. Similarly, most of us would be quite confident if asked to define it in the context of a person of notably high ability in his or her field.

Psychologists and others studying the phenomenon in detail and depth, however, need to be much more precise and specific and it is at this level that either their opinions diversify, or perhaps only their terms of explanation and the way their beliefs are

expressed differ. Whatever the reason, it is necessary to explore what they consider genius to be before we can effectively express a valid opinion on their dictats. As Professor Joad was once famous for saying repeatedly ‘It depends on what you mean by...’ It is not possible or efficacious to judge the validity of their arguments unless they are debating precisely the same subject.

Historically, opinions have been expressed didactically in relation to Shakespeare’s genius, and sometimes without any explanation or definition. Nicholas Rowe in his essay “Some Account of the Life &c of Mr William Shakespear” stated the writer to be ‘the greatest *Genius* that ever was known in dramattick Poetry’ and added that ‘the people of his age, who began to grow wonderfully fond of diversions of this kind, could not but be highly pleas’d to see a *Genius* arise amongst ’em’.⁵ John Dennis declared Shakespeare to be ‘one of the greatest Genius’s that the World e’er saw for the Tragick Stage’, adding ‘those beauties were entirely his own; and owing to the Force of his own Nature’; he did later define genius as ‘great Qualities by Nature’, so he believed that this quality was inborn.⁶ Alexander Pope in the Preface to his 1725 Edition of Shakespeare stated ‘If ever any Author deserved the name of an *Original*, it was Shakespeare’.⁷ He also claimed that ‘Nature speaks through him’ and that ‘he seems to have known the world by Intuition’.⁸ While we might well concur with these statements, they do not clearly define what each writer meant in using such terms as ‘Nature’, ‘Original’, and ‘Intuition’. We do understand that Shakespeare’s work was early recognised as outstanding, even ‘inimitable’, as Dennis claims, but that is all we may infer.⁹ Carlyle spoke of Shakespeare’s ‘superiority of Intellect’ but defines this later as ‘unconscious Intellect’;

his Shakespeare is ‘our poor Warwickshire Peasant...through whom the voice of Nature speaks’.¹⁰ Again we see the belief that genius exists as a natural gift, a God-given talent which must be used.

Samuel Johnson is more definitive: he declared true genius to be “a mind of large general powers accidentally determined to some particular direction”.¹¹ Modern experts would concur with ‘particular direction’ but not necessarily with ‘large general powers’, as many insist that a genius can only work and be recognised in a particular and therefore limited field. Such opinions are shared by such men as Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi, as we shall see in due course. Steptoe offers us a selection of opinions from the past: [Genius] ‘has been seen as a response to divine inspiration, an offshoot of skilled craftsmanship, a manifestation of psychosexual disturbance, an inevitable product of genetically-determined abilities, a social construct, and as a response to deep emotional distress’.¹² All these could be true but some are, of necessity, in the ‘either/or’ category: for example, if one of them is described as ‘inevitable’ in its result of giving rise to a genius, then one must assume that the others are dispensable to becoming a genius, and that no “born” genius can fail to succeed.

Michael Howe, who sadly died in January, 2002, states that the word ‘genius’ is derived ‘partly from the Latin word *genius* which stems from *gens* meaning family, but also from the Latin *ingenium*, denoting natural disposition or innate ability’.¹³ His method of tracing the formation of genius is to study individuals who have been given this accolade, using psychological and biographical evidence to show how each one’s

particular abilities were probably formed. His main conclusion is that genius is simply a word which we apply to people who achieve great things in their sphere; that, in effect, it is a term used as shorthand referring to achievement, rather than to the individual who makes the achievement: that of itself, genius does not exist, there is no such thing as a natural genius, although there are geniuses, those being people who attain very unusual advancement in their chosen sphere. He defines a genius as one who ‘happens to possess just those skills or qualities that are needed in order to solve a particular problem at a particular moment in history... creating something that others admire, rather than being outstandingly clever’.¹⁴

Lykken agrees that there is likely to be a polygenic basis to the work of geniuses. He emphasizes a link between genius and genes based on two resultant factors: inborn characteristics and family background and stimulation. ‘Genetic factors are likely to contribute not only to specific abilities, but also to traits such as persistence, the capacity to concentrate for extended periods, and curiosity about certain types of stimulation. These properties may in turn affect the individual’s response to educational stimulation and tuition. The result is a complex interplay between inherited traits and environmental factors, in which the genetics may underpin exposure to nurturing, social and physical experiences’.¹⁵ He sees it necessary for ‘good general intelligence *together with* an assortment of other gifts’ to combine in one individual, as summed up by Neumann: ‘not just an abundance of one or several components such as IQ, but rather a harmony of attributes, a compound rather than merely a mixture’.¹⁶

Other researchers have tried and are trying to find a scientific approach to the subject. Agreeing with Howe to some extent, Csikzentmihalyi stresses the need to see genius as only existing when it can be recognised by its contribution to the discipline in which it is based, which he calls *the domain*. He also, therefore, seems to suggest that a person is not a genius but his work may be. He also finds it imperative that its quality is accepted by *the field*, that is, critics and other workers in that domain. But he still sees genius as a quality which exists in an individual; he describes it as ‘this ability to take enormous leaps’ which he thinks is ‘probably grounded in some peculiarity of the nervous system’.¹⁷ He does not follow Howe in thinking the best criteria for recognising genius will be set up by exploring individuals but believes ‘it will make more sense to focus on communities that may or may not nurture genius’.¹⁸ I think that his work is in danger, accurate or not, of leaving him open to a charge of his being racist in the eyes of some critics, but this would depend on what his analysis led him to claim are the communities which produce the most geniuses.

Gardner, an American, prefers ‘to construe all accomplishment as an interaction between cognitive potential on the one hand, and the resources and opportunities provided by the surrounding culture on the other’.¹⁹ He speaks of the ‘existence in human beings of at least seven different intellectual competences, each of which clearly has genetic origins, but each of which is also developed’.²⁰ He accepts Csikszentmihalyi’s three necessary components of genius - the individual, the domain, and the field - but goes on to categorize geniuses into six types: a Master, his example is Mozart, a Maker, among whom he places Sigmund Freud, Charlie Chaplin and John Lennon, an Introspector, for

example Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, an Influencer, such as Gandhi or Machiavelli, and adds two other types, the Spiritual Guru and the Moral Exemplar which he glosses over and does not discuss in any detail. Having separated geniuses into these types, he admits to seeing no sharp lines dividing these forms of extraordinariness and says that any individual may constitute examples of more than one form, which takes something away from the need to study these divisions of genius under separate headings, unless the genius under consideration has a very limited area of success, and so would be counted by many as a high achiever rather than a true genius.²¹ Gardner also identifies eight fields of intelligence: linguistic, logical, spatial, musical, bodily kinesthetic, understanding people, understanding self, and understanding the natural world. He calls this his theory of multiple intelligences.²² He says he adopted this because he believes ‘that the psychometric view of intelligence is anachronistic’, having been disproved by discoveries in the fields of biology, psychology and anthropology he claims.²³

Clearly there are some areas of disagreement between these writers. Some of the most interesting parts of *The Origins and Development of High Ability*, which there will be need to cite later, are the summaries of the sometimes heated discussions which followed the lectures offered by these men and others in the field. However, it is also fair to say that, putting aside the variations in their means of expressing their views, some consensus of opinion emerges. Accepting that each man will tend to be influenced by those with whom he is widely in agreement, by differing methods of working, or beliefs arising from their individual deductions so that there will be a tendency for cliques of agreement and opposition to form, overall they do concur in several aspects . For

example, all of them present genius as a composite attribute. They also see it as emanating from both inborn qualities and external situations. These, then, are the areas which I will be concentrating upon in my own assessment of the origins of Shakespeare's genius, and immediately it is obvious that we know very little about his character, something about his background. A main problem for me is thus already highlighted.

How far do the experts concur in their discussions on what factors contribute to the development of genius? As before, there is both agreement and contrasting affirmations. Since they all agree that genius is a composite quality, they find it simple to take for granted that not being entirely inborn it has to develop. Albert states 'Left on its own, giftedness remains at best a potential until it acquires direction and definition... Like all children, the gifted require specific stimulation and encouragement'.²⁴ Gardner sums this up more dramatically when he says geniuses '...were not born fully formed; they had to develop, minute by minute, day by day, into the remarkable personages that they ultimately became'.²⁵ He enlarges on this: 'How he combines his natural proclivities with the possibilities and the constraint of the ambient society will determine whether he reaches new heights - and, if so, whether those heights are the ones that are currently honored by the society or ones that alert the society or even humanity as a whole, to fresh possibilities.'²⁶ These possibilities for development must be suitable and must be followed, and these opportunities lie in 'decisions made within the cultural envelope in which the individuals find themselves'.²⁷ Gray's assertion that 'Full many a flower is

born to blush unseen,/ And waste its sweetness on the desert air' preceded Gardner's implication still more poetically.²⁸

So, what forms the 'cultural envelope' surrounding the developing genius? Fowler and his associates cite the family as being very important, claiming that there needs to be 'continued family support and stimulation throughout the child's development.'²⁹ They claim 'Our studies also suggest that early enrichment may be a key agent in launching a developmental process that greatly increases the possibilities of a child realising his or her potential'.³⁰ Albert agrees claiming that 'early accurate parental identification and encouragement of young talent could have advantages'.³¹ Gardner suggests that the parental role should be to give the young person confidence in their ability and right to follow their chosen domain; he gives examples of the effect such support had on both Gandhi and T S Eliot.

Some psychologists limit the time a family has to influence and develop the aspirant. Howe is very definite in his assessment: '[The first four years are] the earliest and most crucial formative years' he avers.³² Albert is less limiting: he notes the 'growing evidence that after the age of twelve or so, childhood malleability decreases sharply' and from then until the person reaches the age of about sixteen 'the influence of the individual's heredity increases'.³³ These beliefs may be grounded in what each writer is claiming to be the sphere of influence which a family holds. Fowler, for example, stresses the advantage which arises from early language stimulation, regardless of the area in which the budding genius will finally work, believing that this aids the child's

cognitive competence. Plomin and Thompson, on the other hand, state that ‘cognitive ability can be highly heritable in a population’; it would be difficult to ascertain therefore whether it was a child’s genes or family stimulation which had developed his powers.³⁴ Csikszentmihalyi’s researches have led to some interesting conclusions. He agrees on the important and effective part played by the family. Ending his report on the practical research he had carried out, he concludes that ‘Having both support and stimulation in the family is obviously a powerful help in realising one’s gifts’, and claims also, ‘It has been noted that alternatives to the family, such as the Israeli kibbutzim, appear to be detrimental to creativity’, a necessary component of genius.³⁵ From this one might expect that he would conclude that a stable and supportive family was most conducive to the development of genius, but he does not. ‘An average or normal childhood... may result in effective development, but is unlikely to lead to creative accomplishment’.³⁶ More strongly he has previously claimed, ‘Looking at the lives of creative writers, artists and scientists, one is almost driven to the conclusion that early trauma is a necessary condition for the flowering of genius’.³⁷

Csikszentmihalyi is adamant on this point and supports it effectively. He says there is ample historical evidence to suggest that the early environment of very highly creative people has usually been disrupted, and cites the early lives of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, two very strong examples. He believes that children growing up in difficult circumstances will try to escape from the painful situation by submerging themselves in some unusual, often solitary interest. ‘The motivation in turn leads to a full investment of psychic energy in the area of talent, often accompanied by a strong

desire to succeed. As Einstein noted, science and art are the highest forms of escape from reality'.³⁸ He continues 'The motivation to create, as well as original thinking, might be helped more by hardships than by positive facilitatory efforts'. Gardner would not agree: speaking of a wide variety of people predominant in their fields, including Thomas Stearns Eliot, Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso, Igor Stravinsky, Martha Graham, Mahatma Gandhi and Sigmund Freud, he states 'most of them did not grow up under conditions of adversity'.³⁹ Perhaps something else holds the key to whether a child is strengthened or destroyed by its upbringing. Supported by the fact that children subjected to the same influences and experiences, good and bad, do not react in the same way, I am inclined to accept Howe's opinion that it is how a person reacts to an experience rather than the intrinsic nature of that experience which will define the effect it has on him or her. In his attempts to unravel what has shaped a person of genius he says he is 'trying to lay bare the actual *experiences* of the men and women whose lives are examined'.⁴⁰ Gardner would, I think, concur with this for he claims: 'all individual growth reflects constant and dynamic interaction between an organism, with its internal programs, and the environment, whose constituent properties are never wholly predictable...[together they give] shape and meaning to an individual's existence and ultimate accomplishments'.⁴¹ An early suggestion that a dysfunctional family of any kind, or one which could not facilitate the advancement of the genius in their midst, could be advantageous comes from the words of an eighteenth century writer, William Duff, who wrote, 'an excess of Luxury is indeed almost as unfavourable to the cultivation of Genius in these [Poetry and Eloquence] as it is to the cultivation of Virtue...Poetic Genius in particular cannot flourish in uninterrupted SUNSHINE, or in continual SHADE.'⁴²

Pertinently, he also claimed, ‘The last cause we took notice of as favourable to original Poetry in ancient times, while society was yet in its rudest form, was the WANT OF LITERATURE, and an exemption from the RULES OF CRITICISM’⁴³ Clearly the dichotomy of belief in this area among the psychologists themselves, and also among those who comment upon psychological matters, leaves the layman neither able to make up his own mind for the present, nor to discount this aspect of upbringing as not always relevant to the final development of genius potential.

So the old debate between nature and nurture is still not satisfactorily resolved. We have already seen some suggestion that perhaps a characteristic is engendered by external experience or perhaps that a specific characteristic determines how an experience is viewed and that this controls what effect it may have on an individual.

[Csikszentmihalyi, page 30, regarding motivation and the power of original thought].

There is strong agreement among all these writers that character is important in changing genius potential into effective deployment of that ability. Whether relevant characteristics are engendered by birth, training, or experience need not hold up our discussion at this point. What is remarkable here is that the psychologists are in agreement over which basic characteristics are virtually essential to the development of mature genius. Naturally, some writers on the topic would require more characteristics to be present than other experts would - the nature of the genius and his field affects this - but there emerges a core of characteristics which are thought to be so closely allied to genius as to form part of that phenomenon. This consensus of opinion proves very convincing.

First, the genius has had a strong interest in his subject and a desire to learn about it and practise working in that medium for a long time; he studies it, essays it, and consequently he improves or modifies it significantly. In this way his genius is recognised by others in that field. Csikszentmihalyi, Howe and Lykken describe this characteristic as ‘curiosity’. Gardner describes the same asset but calls it ‘engagement’, while Steptoe refers to a genius’ ‘focused interest’. Because of his interest, he is motivated (Howe et al) - the second prerequisite for matured genius. His motivation ensures that he indulges in ‘self-directed practice’ (Lykken), ‘is not put off by failure’ (Csikszentmihalyi), and his ‘sense of will and purpose’ (Galton and Gardner), ensures his ‘determination to continue in this occupation’. (Steptoe) Interest and motivation, even allied to inborn talent may still be insufficient to obtain outstanding work. Along with all these there needs to be strong powers of concentration and also perseverance. Why are all these necessary? All agree that a genius is not born but has to be created by himself and others. It is this combination of characteristics which holds the key to unusual achievement because the latter, achievement, only comes from practice: it is practice, given all the other attendant circumstances and qualities, which creates genius.

These are the characteristics which all agree are required for the highest standard of work. Let us also consider the other attributes which some would see as needed in addition for a full flowering of the innate ability to be registered. I will consider the main writers I have read in alphabetical order, since they are contemporaneous with each other and I do not wish to suggest a bias. Albert feels it necessary for the genius to be very self-assured. He says this was true of one of his subjects, Ramanujan, and quotes in

support of his belief C.P.Snow writing on Einstein: 'He had absolute confidence... absolute faith in his own insight'.⁴⁴ Albert speaks of genius as being further characterized by the advantage of receiving 'a burst of immediate knowledge' and cites Morelock's description of this quality as 'spontaneous knowing'.⁴⁵ He also appears sure that high IQ is invariably present in a person of genius. He concurs with Csikszentmihalyi in feeling that some form of unhappiness or unease in the surroundings is instrumental in developing genius: he states that the 'home lives of creative individuals were far from happy, with significant overlay, and they were often socially ill-at-ease'.⁴⁶ Albert writes more fully than the other psychologists on the variety of development at different stages in the adolescent's life, in relation to genius. From twelve to fifteen he notes the importance of 'focal relationships formed with non-family members' and claims they often have 'a moment of self-discovery', perhaps because of their 'spontaneous knowing'.⁴⁷ In this connotation he makes an interesting separation between the genius and the gifted individual: 'Changes at ages 12-14 years are very specific and important for genius, but less so for giftedness'. Wryly one realises that if Albert is correct, this very important stage is completely lost to us in relation to William Shakespeare whose life, whereabouts and lifestyle during the period 1576 and 1578 have never been ascertained, only conjecturally reconstructed. He continues with his analysis of how the genius develops by claiming there is 'an age of ascent... the period during which the domain of a child's giftedness or talent clearly appears along with evidence of its power and final dimension'.⁴⁸ This he says happens when the genius-to-be is aged 15-20, after which there is a time of consolidation - 'the period during which budding

eminence takes a clear form and becomes public' - during the age period twenty to thirty years old. He concludes that 'maturation continues well after childhood.'⁴⁹

Csikszentmihalyi I have already had need to quote fairly extensively. His work on the effect of the development of genius has been highly influential on other researchers in the subject. He equates genius with creativity in the widest sense of the word, but he also believes that an idea is not creative in itself; its quality depends entirely 'on the effect it is able to produce in others who are exposed to it'.⁵⁰ I am not yet convinced by his argument. He states that 'what we call creativity is a phenomenon that is constructed through an interaction between producers and audience. Creativity is not the product of single individuals, but of social systems making judgements about individuals' products'.⁵¹ I myself feel unable to accept such a statement. This diktat seems to me to be justified only if you do not accept the idea that much genius, like many other good things, goes to waste, in the sense that, being unrecognised, it produces no improvement in the field in which it operates, no followers develop the changes which the person with genius initiated. Yet the quality of the work remains constant regardless of whether it has been recognised or not. Many innovators of ideas have initially been disregarded, even ridiculed, and only time and changes in knowledge or perspective have allowed the quality of the work to be established, either within or after the lifetime of its perpetrator. It would follow then that some work of equal potential accreditation never receives the accolade it merits. However, whether recognised or not, the quality of the work itself has not altered; what was produced remains the same: what it was, it still is, but Csikszentmihalyi only accepts as works of genius those that affect other people's work

and/or perceptions. Csikszentmihalyi appears to see genius as part of some kind of benign abnormality in the brain leading to outstanding creativity, which other workers of lesser ability in that field can only echo. He evidences ‘this ability to take enormous leaps is probably grounded in some peculiarity of the nervous system’ and informs us that a ‘superabundance of glial cells in the left inferior parietal lobe [was] found in the autopsy of Einstein’s brain’.⁵² These cells assist in the migration of neurons to link up. His thinking here does agree well with the idea of spontaneous knowledge I mentioned in the paragraph preceding this one. To my mind, this suggestion that there is a physiological link to having genius ability would also suggest that his belief in it having to be recognised to exist is flawed. On page 42, he writes ‘if by creativity we mean the ability to add something new to the culture’ - I think he is seeing creativity as a result rather than, as I have always considered it to be, a quality. Young children are often highly creative in their ideas, leaving more adult logic and its concerns out of the pattern of their thought. I see this as creative, although there will rarely be a quantifiable end result, because their ideas are stemming from a limited base and are rarely developed to any great extent. I presume Csikszentmihalyi would call this by some other name and so it is nomenclature which is the stumbling block. He defines creativity thus: ‘What we call creativity always involves a change in a symbolic system that has a counterpart in a mental structure.’⁵³ My problem is that I don’t know what name he would give to what I mean when I talk of creativity; I do not think many of the other relevant psychologists see creativity in his terms either, so the argument becomes confused. It may be that he sees this attribute as ‘originality’; on page 48, he writes that ideas must have ‘social validation’ in order to ‘distinguish ideas that are simply bizarre from those that are

genuinely creative ... As long as the idea or product has not been validated we might have originality, but not creativity'. It would appear the confusion is semantic rather than too real.

Csikszentmihalyi also declares that a genius will want to introduce novelty and change into his domain and must therefore be dissatisfied with the status quo. He suggests that likely (rather than essential) traits in the character of people of genius are divergent thinking and the ability to distinguish between their own effective and silly ideas. He thinks a genius-type personality will have a tendency to enjoy breaking rules and flourish best in an atmosphere of social unrest and change. This may be why he claims: 'the more successful artists of the Italian Renaissance also appear to have coupled creativity with social and diplomatic skill'.⁵⁴ These would indeed be needed if the development of their genius rested on 'the support of peers'.⁵⁵ Not all psychologists agree with all his theories.

Ericsson is not so controversial. He claims that innate capacity plays only a minor role in the development of genius or at least in the attainment of expert performance, which he may see as different from genius, but he makes no very clear distinction.⁵⁶ He saw more effective results stemming from the inherent enjoyment people get from the 'playful interactions', which Csikszentmihalyi had noted. He imagines that experts in any domain love sitting around talking about what they experience and getting other people's opinions.⁵⁷ If this is true of Shakespeare, he will not have been isolating himself in Stratford too often but would have preferred to stay with his Company and discuss his

work with those who were to perform it. In this, too, Ericsson is echoing Csikzentmihalyi.

Gardner, however, believes in the importance of natural talent and says that a potential genius may only achieve good work for a brief period. He claims disengagement can occur because society's tastes change or the selected domain in which he works may not follow the direction which inspires him. "Disengagement from talent" - a phrase he borrows from Csikzentmihalyi - can occur because society ceases to provide support, because the nature of accomplishment in the domain has changed'.⁵⁸ When one considers the direction which drama was taking towards the end of Shakespeare's writing career and how visually ornate the presentation of the plays of other writers were in contrast with Shakespeare's own decorative *style* of writing, this could account for his apparently ceasing to write anything which has survived during the final years of his life. It could explain his returning to Stratford too. Some might choose to claim that the change in dramatic writing signifies that Shakespeare was no genius if it is necessary for others to imitate and follow the direction of a genius' influence for this title to be legitimately applied to him. As I have said, I do not accept this diktat and so my belief in his status remains unchanged. Gardner says that a true genius must address the deepest issues and attract a global audience.⁵⁹ While obviously Shakespeare has done this, the claim may be less true for writers in general since language barriers and translations may interfere seriously with universal acceptance of written work beyond the confines of places where the writer's language is the first language of the readers. I think this criterion should be applied only in cases where a particular language is not involved, for

example in the domains of maths or science where formulaic communication does not rely heavily upon language but upon symbols as a medium.

Gardner's writing appears somewhat emotionally charged and his claims perhaps too exaggerated to be totally convincing. He states, for example, that all geniuses are 'strikingly similar in personality. All were hard-driving, extremely ambitious individuals, who sacrificed all for their work and who caused considerable damage to others close to them. They forged a Faustian bargain in which they sacrificed material or psychological comforts in order to pursue their projects'.⁶⁰ This seems a long way from the happy chatting postulated by Ericsson!

However, in agreement with some other psychologists, Gardner believes that genius cannot be forecast early in a person's life. He also suggests that the metier a genius will choose is not apparent as early as Lykken claims it is. Referring to the metiers of those widely varying subjects listed on page 31, Gardner declares, 'At the age of 20, it was completely unclear what would happen to these individuals'.⁶¹ He doesn't accept that adversity is necessary for the development of clear genius; he does claim that high intelligence is required and speaks of a 'rage to learn' which all geniuses share, and so advocates the focused attention which the psychologists universally agree is a prerequisite of developed genius.⁶² In addition he sees all creative geniuses as having a fusion of childlike and adult attributes which is indispensable to their production of outstanding work.⁶³

Michael Howe's book adds little more to the debate. (This is not meant to imply that he is a follower of others' pronouncements, merely that the points he makes have already been noted in this alphabetical listing.) His researches have led him to very similar conclusions and his criteria mirror exactly those attributes which the others have also posited as necessary to the successful development of genius, namely persistence, concentration and curiosity about their subject matter. He does add more weight to their conclusions in this way, and also by informing us that many geniuses who have spoken of their own mentality concur with these findings, citing both Darwin and Einstein.⁶⁴

Lykken is in agreement with Gardner concerning the importance of intelligence in the formation of genius and speaks rather vaguely of other necessary attributes.⁶⁵ He sees instead not only a need for 'gifts or attributes' but the mental energy to make good use of these talents. For him it is of prime importance that each potential genius has a strong desire to develop these gifts, together with concentration and curiosity.⁶⁶ His theory is that there may exist an 'emergenic configuration', when very good genes happen to get together with others of the same type of very high ability: then we get 'singular individuals whose accomplishments so far exceed the norm that we classify them separately from the common herd'. Thus we get work of genius quality when it is properly and fully exploited.⁶⁷ He adds to Howe's psychological researches basing much of his own work on studies of Thomas Edison and Isaac Newton.⁶⁸

Steptoe stresses the advantage of the greater amount of adult attention commonly received by firstborn and lone children in the development of any potential such children

may harbour. This is supported by the work of Albert and Sulloway.⁶⁹ Michael Howe, then Emeritus Professor at Exeter University, who had latterly been studying the emergence of brilliant footballers, reiterated the benefit given to young talent by constant parental attention to a specific ability.⁷⁰ Steptoe also feels that people with high self-esteem do not blame themselves for setbacks in their advance and ‘are less likely than others to respond to disappointments with despair and desponding’.⁷¹ Therefore he finds this quality a necessary component to withstand traumas.⁷² He also cites Simonton as not finding ‘stressful life experiences’ limiting to a composer’s output, and so, presumably, would accept the dictat that adversity and composition of many kinds can go comfortably hand in hand, but not necessarily go so far as to claim it a required adjunct.⁷³ His research has led him to believe that it is inner satisfaction more than external rewards for the work which is the stronger stimulus for creative people, who are thus enabled to continue to work without the benefit of guaranteed recognition or reward.⁷⁴ I would myself think that this has little to do with genius and can be felt by anyone who enjoys what they do, regardless of the level of their expertise.

In *Artistic Temperament and the Italian Renaissance*, Steptoe discusses the long-suggested idea that creativity has close links with madness. He states that there have been many ‘highly creative but worldly and well-balanced artists who do not fit such a stereotypical view.’⁷⁵ One might conclude, however, that this possibility is very likely to be true: those of genius quality could be said to be closer to disclosed or latent madness more than more average people, by those of the opinion that anyone who is some distance from the norm can be legitimately labelled ‘mad’. The word is left with too

vague a connotation in general discussion. Others, like Sir Peter Medawar, unpersuaded by the suggestion that genius borders madness, dismiss the notion as ‘gothic illusion’ and nothing more.⁷⁶ Jamieson, talking of Byron but quoting Keats, speaks of ‘this mobility and mutability of temperament’.⁷⁷ This is probably a better description than ‘madness’ of the mind-state of highly creative people but still the issue of madness and geniusness is suggested but as yet unresolved.⁷⁸ ‘It is a hypothesis which does not seem to have been closely followed up by many psychologists in recent years and Steptoe concludes that ‘Inferences about creative people that go beyond verified facts must always be treated with great caution’.⁷⁹ I, too, will leave the debate unresolved since our subject, William Shakespeare, also showed acumen in his financial dealings and so would figure among Steptoe’s list of ‘highly creative but worldly and well-balanced artists’.

What other factors may be widely thought to have a significant effect, for good or bad, on the full development and exploitation of an innate potential? There is less agreement here among the experts, fewer, yet still significant numbers, advocating further relevant features of geniuses’ young lives. Firstly, some researchers would lay more emphasis on the background against which the young person begins to operate. Gardner, for example, speaks of geniuses as ‘anomalies in the big picture of human history’, declaring they have to have lived ‘somewhere where experimentation was tolerated’.⁸⁰ This appears possibly true but only at the point where the work becomes public or noticed. I would agree it would need to be tolerated within the immediate circle of the young person who is developing his talent. This claim would be apposite if full development requires adult

support and encouragement, obviously. For the initial practice of skills, or until the genius aims for recognition publicly, I see this as a factor of limited importance.

Secondly, Csikzentmihalyi foresees ‘a new peak in creativity across many different domains’, arising from the widespread use of the internet, citing as his evidence the invention and use of printing presses over four centuries ago.⁸¹ I do not find myself convinced by what he says; however, given his belief in the need for ‘social validation’, I understand his argument. He uses the word ‘creative’ to refer to work which has its result upon others and which has some permanent effect. The work itself he would label as having ‘originality’, which he does not equate with genius. He obviously sees people of originality being able to use the internet to gain a wide audience and thus become ‘validated’, if the work gains public approbation. It probably will mean that some geniuses who may have gone unrecognised, will be recognised and acclaimed. That, I think, is what Csikzentmihalyi implies. I don’t believe this is the same thing as ‘a new peak in creativity’, however. Creative people, as we have seen, do not rely on external stimuli, finding enough personal enjoyment, engagement, and satisfaction in their work itself, and accepting recognition and praise as a pleasant, or financially enhancing, extra benefit. Besides, time spent using and loading the internet, be it with literature, music, or any other data, might well inhibit the output achievable. Another ‘danger’ to the creative talent a person has could be the inhibition arising from too much knowledge and awareness of others’ output, as some psychologists believe is possible.

Thirdly, some would like to emphasise the familial situation of a person as being highly relevant to his final level of achievement. Albert, for example, declares that ‘It is in the dynamics and relationships within families that the greatest environmental differences exist’, and that it is fair to conclude that the genius’ talent ‘reflects its family’.^{82 & 83} I believe this will prove more true of some than of others, but since he limits the time of this strength of effect as until the genius is about twelve years of age, it is probably largely true. Howe does not limit this environmental effect only to adult or parental guidance; he believes ‘the other children in the family can play an important role’.⁸⁴ He also claims that parents have most effect upon their child only until it is around four years old, when wider external influences are experienced.

To sum up: besides the circumstances which we have already considered, namely talent, adult support, and selection of metier, plus having the requisite characteristics, which are seen as concentration, perseverance and the desire to work, there are two more postulated criteria for the successful development of ability into genius. The first of these two relies heavily on the latter of the necessary attributes. Universally, researchers and, it is claimed, those geniuses who have spoken out, relate their outstanding contributions to their various fields to their own hard work more than to anything else. The insistence on the high importance of practice in a skill before any exceptional expertise can be acclaimed as genius is inescapable. Ericsson says this was proposed as early as 700 BC by Hesiod: ‘But in front of Superiority the immortal gods set sweat. It is a long and steep path to her, and rough at first’.⁸⁵ Later research has consistently underlined this truth. Ericsson puts the need for practice most forcefully: ‘Deliberate

practice is an effortful activity motivated by the goal of improving performance, which, unlike play, is not inherently motivating, and, unlike work, does not lead to immediate and monetary rewards'.⁸⁶ I find his opinion rather narrow and at odds with the belief, noted earlier, that a genius will be enjoying what he chooses to pursue. If you like your work and have selected it as your preferred medium, it is unlikely to feel like 'effortful activity' very often, especially if you find much of it to be, in Csikzentmihalyi's words, 'playful interaction'. However the perpetrator views it, it will still amount to useful practice. Ericsson *et al* found performers at higher levels tended to start practising earlier and to practise more than others who achieved less in the same field.⁸⁷ They find it unlikely that a late developer could ever catch up on the advantages offered by an early start in a suitable domain. They believe the effort would simply result in 'burnout' from trying too hard. The development of genius is, of necessity, gradual and steady. Gardner agrees wholeheartedly that 'The creative drive continues unabated, through emotional thick and thin'.⁸⁸ There are no gaps or inexplicable leaps in ability, though it may appear that there were, but these will turn out to be gaps in our knowledge of the subject's life.⁸⁹ Howe also found that 'the best performers accumulate more practice than less capable ones', and that this applies in all domains, science, the arts, sport, etc.⁹⁰ For musicians in particular, the only way to become more than good is by practice: 'The eminent performers of their time will distinguish themselves by fully exploring the instrument's capacities, or by surpassing existing skills in creative ways'.⁹¹ Scientists must try out possibilities and then, having discovered what they hope to be an answer, test and retest the theory until they can devise a way consistently to foretell the result of experiments. Physical skill, whatever the sport, must be honed and perfected and then new skills or

movements invented, dissected and perfected before the person reaches the apex of the sport. Writers must explore their medium too. This criterion holds good for the highest achievement in whatever field.

Mumford and Gustafson's review in 1988, quoted in the Ericsson Ciba article, may suggest to some an opposition to the view of practice as so important. They claim that too much knowledge of a domain will produce only 'minor contributions' because great knowledge can limit freedom of independent thought and so inhibit the ability to 'reorganize the facts'.⁹² However, the other researchers are emphasising the need for individual practice of the skills demanded by a medium, not the amount of knowledge itself which the perpetrator accumulates. Clearly the two are closely linked though separate entities. A considerable amount of knowledge will be required in order to practise all skills effectively. What is more important, I think, is not to become hidebound. A person with a natural delight in creativity is unlikely to fall into this trap. I would say that extensive knowledge *per se* does not become an inhibitor, so long as the individual has developed powers of creativity and lateral thinking, making his knowledge a useful tool rather than a hindrance to his development.

The second of the last two prerequisites I mentioned is time. Geniuses are neither born nor develop overnight. There is common acceptance among the experts on genius that, from the time when the one with genius potential and all the necessary attributes in place selects his field of activity, ten years of work in that sphere will have been amassed before good work is followed by great work. The time for flowering to occur is said to

be either ten years from the commencement of activity in the domain or not before the age of thirty. Ericsson claims this is so because ‘Attaining elite performance involves far greater changes over more time than is commonly believed’.⁹³ Gardner concurs with this necessary decade of practising.⁹⁴ Howe says that, at least in relation to composers ‘no major work was produced prior to the tenth year of their composing career’.⁹⁵ We need to remember before we cite what we see as exceptions that we are not talking of work showing high ability but of work which is accredited as being above and beyond what previously existed. Gardner goes further: ‘It took at least ten years for each individual to achieve an initial breakthrough, and subsequent breakthroughs occurred also at intervals of about ten years’.⁹⁶ With all the experts claiming this essential decade of work must necessarily precede works of genius emerging, there is a possibility that one expert is simply accepting the belief or findings of another. However, their claims are backed up by each naming specific and varying geniuses, and so perhaps it is safe to accept their opinions without too much question.

It might seem now requisite to apply this knowledge of what is common to people of genius to our subject, William Shakespeare. There is not the necessity to prove Shakespeare was a genius; the aim is to discover how his outstanding genius arose. Therefore we must ferret out as much information as we can on the environs and the family in which his ability was nurtured. However, we can already, from these experts’ assessment of the origins of genius, hypothesize certain attributes of his character. By accepting only the universal propensities on which they agree, and since, without exception, they see Shakespeare as undoubtedly a genius, we can conclude that, of

necessity, he must have been a man dedicated to his chosen field, he must have practised written composition from a very young age and repeatedly, and he would have been diligent and not easily discouraged. When he encountered difficulty, he would have proved persistent. He must have found a motivation and a desire to write. We are also able to refute the arguments of the few who still claim it to be impossible for such a great writer to have come from his background. Perhaps his parents could not write - a lack of formal education does not indicate a lack of intelligence or verbal ability; their very limitations may well have given him a freedom to write without criticism, too much formatted guidance, or too much control. Their need to have a son who could write on their behalf and their admiration for his skill would then have been the greater and so would add to his self-esteem and motivation to persevere. No knock-backs for him then. The vicissitudes of his father's career may have given him a disrupted childhood; this too is considered by some to aid the development of superlative ability and performance. Certainly it would have enabled him to live and work in London, as he must have done, among the lowest and least respected of workers, and accept this (in spite of a growing fortune), as part of a normal, everyday life and, specifically, an actor's burden.

Shakespeare, then, was equipped to develop his genius. How did it happen? As Howe says: 'Once we gain a detailed knowledge of the events of a person's childhood, it is likely that we will begin to discern how and why the child gradually turned into the adult he or she eventually became'.⁹⁷ This is the next subject for attention.



CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND TO SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTH

Researchers can get into difficulties by failing to appreciate the necessity to start with good descriptions. The tendency to construct detailed theoretical speculations from flimsy supporting evidence was a weakness of the psychodynamic theories underpinning psychobiographical explorations of people's lives. Howe.¹

In order to avoid this pitfall, it seems essential to try to reconstruct the Stratford into which William Shakespeare was born, which was very different from the present-day town with which he is closely associated. One can, I think, assume that he spent his formative years entirely in Stratford-upon-Avon: there is no valid reason for him to have spent at least the first twelve years of his life anywhere else. We know that John Shakespeare was living in Stratford throughout William's life since all his children were baptised there in Holy Trinity Church; he himself regularly attended Council meetings and was active in Council work until William was twelve, and legal documents referring to the litigious suits John Shakespeare was involved in cite him as only resident in Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon. Since John Shakespeare was here, then clearly his son would almost surely have been living here too, at least during the major part of his minority. Even its environs may have been unfamiliar to him. Woodland was a place of work and residence for some people at this time, not a place set aside for leisure and relaxation. It is indeed advisable, when trying to create a mental picture of his life, to expunge from the mind all modern concepts such as the weekend being a period of leisure time during which a father might take his family on an 'educational' or

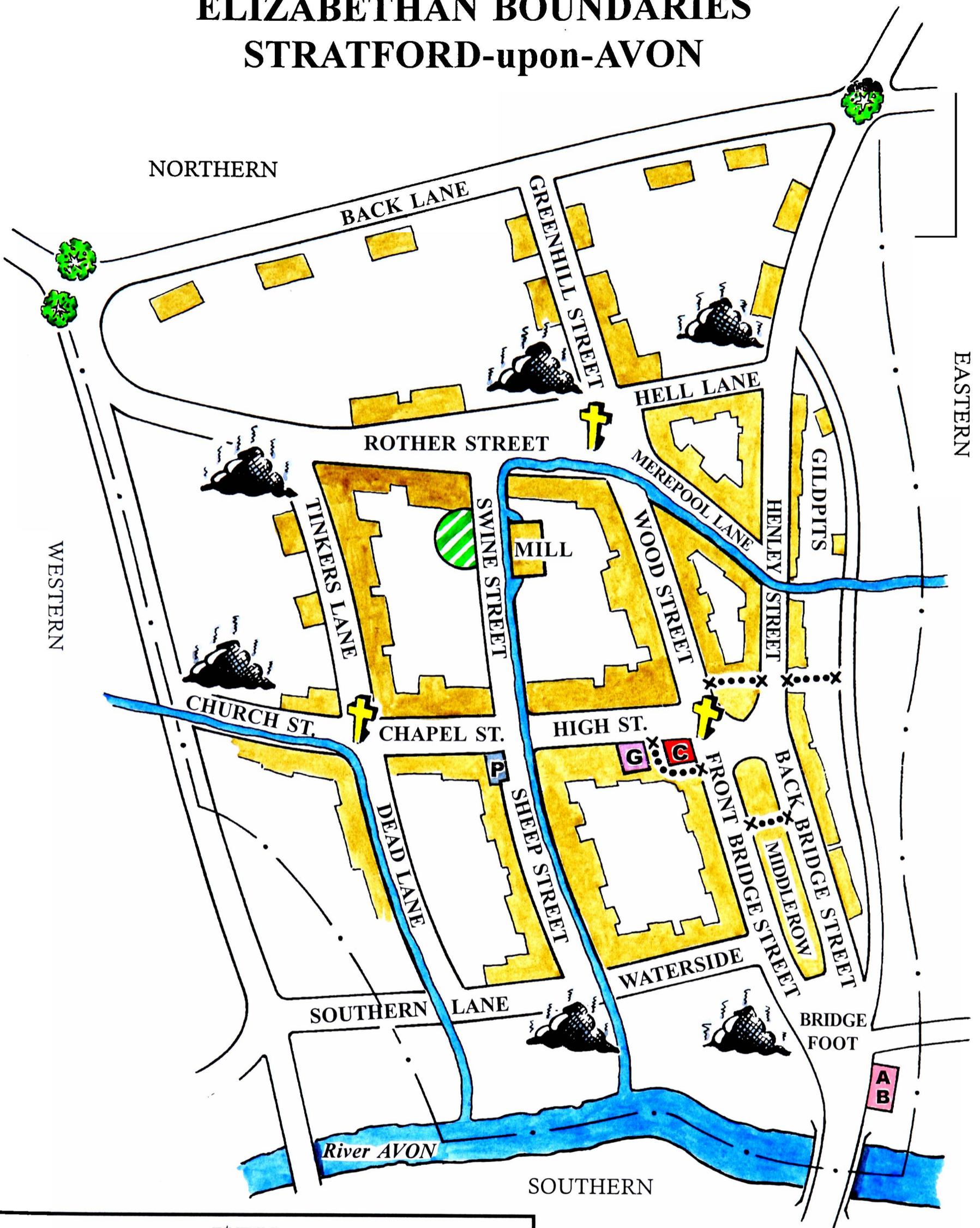
‘rewarding’ visit to a place of interest. Nor was forest or parkland designed for the use and refreshment of the general populace.

Before looking in some detail at his family’s experiences, it would be as well to look at the town in which John Shakespeare chose to base his family, since he was not a native of Stratford. There is the need to assess life and attitudes within the Elizabethan context; it is also necessary to be fully aware of how different Elizabethan Stratford upon Avon was from modern Stratford-upon-Avon, despite the fact that such things as the basic ground plan of the centre of the town, some buildings and the town’s Charter remain relatively unchanged. Rarely, if ever, I believe, would William have been taken away from the town while he was a child so that it is life within this particular town which would have helped to formulate and gradually adapt his ideas about and attitude to life. His morals, standards and interests would have been, initially at least, those engendered by the people, and place in which his life existed.

STRETFORD VPPON AUON

A descriptive re-creation of the town as it was when William Shakespeare became an inhabitant can be made fairly accurately. Since no contemporary map is extant, if one ever existed, I have drawn up the map overleaf from existing archive material. It illustrates the features of the town which I will have cause to mention. While I drew and composed the map, this neater version was prepared for me by Mr Brian Woodward, a trained graphics designer, to whom I am indebted.

ELIZABETHAN BOUNDARIES STRATFORD-upon-AVON



KEY	
	CROSS
	STREAM
	CHARE
	MUCK HILL
	ARCHERY BUTTS
	GAOL
	ANIMAL POUND
	CAGE
	BOUNDARY ELM TREES
	PILLORY

The river formed most of the southern boundary of the town land, the gild pits the eastern. Back Lane, now Arden Street and Grove Road, formed the northern extremity and Old Town, a separate administrative area, abutted it to the west, as the outline map on the preceding page shows. Stretford covered a fairly limited area but it seems to have been ample for the requirements of the time for not all the land available for house building was used for this purpose. Some of the plots are described as having only a barn or an orchard.² This was sometimes because the house the family lived in was sited on a different plot of land, sometimes because a family in need of housing could not afford to buy or build: some families seem to have lived in barns or outhouses not designed for people's accommodation, or to have shared a house with people outside their immediate family group, whilst others leased more than one house and had other spaces they rented too.³ Legislation and surveys by the Corporation suggest these variations to have been current at this time.⁴ Those with money to spare could use a system of landlording Corporation property: they could guarantee to the Corporation that the rent would be paid at the rate settled upon in the Council chamber, but then charge more to the tenant or tenants who actually lived there, collecting their own outlay plus "interest" gradually.

Important areas of the town were dominated by three large stone or wooden crosses. One stood where Bridge Street abuts on to the High Street; this was known as High Cross. It was not then possible to look across Bridge Street since it was divided into Front Bridge Street and Back Bridge Street by the houses and small shops of a Middle Row which no longer exists. Present-day Union Street had not been built then: Bridge Street continued uninterrupted on this eastern side to the chewer or passageway which still links through

to where the gild pits area was, now called Guild Street, and so a continuous line of buildings adjoined the east sides of Henley Street and Bridge Street. (See map following page 53.) We have a tenuous reminder of the appearance of Bridge Street in Elizabethan times when stalls are set up in a double row, back to back, for some of the fairs the town still holds, according to its Charter rights to do so. Near High Cross there was the Market House and “the cage”; what exactly that was is not known precisely but clearly wrongdoers would have been likely to have been on public display while confined in it. While its name is fairly descriptive we do not know what wrong-doings merited its use. It must have been close to the gaol which was sited on the southern side of the High Street where W H Smith’s shop currently trades.⁵ It was at this crossroad where Wood Street met the High Street that tanned leather goods were sold on Thursdays, and cheese too under the open arches of the ground floor of the Market House, weights carefully checked by the Corporation official, each seller paying one penny to have a stall there. Those selling the same commodity were grouped together; their customers could easily see what range of goods was on offer and compare their qualities. Prices of most goods were set by the Corporation not by the sellers, so competition could not be through price wars, only through the relative skills of the makers and the preferences and perhaps personal biases of the buyers towards the sellers.

It is a short distance along the High Street to the next dissecting road where the corn market operated, with the sheep market nearby (in Sheep Street). Not only was the corn market here but also the pillory, yet another example of the custom of public humiliation which was used as part of the policy of deterrence of the townspeople from

misbehaviour. A stream made its way across from Ely Street, where there was a mill, and continued down along Sheep Street to cross Bankcroft and enter the Avon. The track of this waterway shows that the town was not as flat as it is today since the watercourse took a long and devious route from the Welcombe Hills, coming to the Avon via the gild pits. Having crossed Henley Street, it formed a marshy pool in the area now called Mere Street before flowing on into Rother Street then turning south along Ely Street towards the river.⁶ (See map following page 53.) It must have been partially responsible for the layout of the Mediaeval town (as many natural features are) and have affected where local industry sprang up. What we do not know is whether its flow continued reliably all year or whether for some months it was dry, boggy or muddy. In Elizabethan times it may well have been a health hazard to the people in the centre of the town, especially after market days, when cattle and horses would have been cleaned and watered in it before it reached the High Street and Chapel Street area.

Continuing on along Chapel Street would quickly bring an Elizabethan to the second cross, the White Cross, which stood opposite the Gild Chapel. William Shakespeare never saw the mediaeval paintings on the internal walls of the chapel. By 1564 Queen Elizabeth's battle to restore protestantism and stamp out catholicism had been given practical application by the injunction of 1559 demanding that all icons or pictorial representation of religious figures be destroyed: "shall take away...and destroy all shrines...paintings and all other monuments...so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glass windows, or elsewhere within their churches and houses".⁷ It had

been John Shakespeare's responsibility in 1563 to have them removed, defaced or covered over. In his accounts for the year, presented to the Council in January, 1564, is included the entry: 'Item payd for defasyng ymages in ye chappell ijs'.⁸ The chapel had plain, lime-washed walls when his son was born. On the external walls, the stone would have been brighter, less weathered than today. Certainly the area was kept cleaner than the rest of the town for a woman was paid to keep it swept, as we learn from the Chamberlain's accounts for each year.⁹ Cleanliness elsewhere depended upon the standards of the nearby householders and how far the Corporation was able to enforce its by-laws. Each new Bailiff of the town, in his inaugural address to the Council, reiterated the need for each householder to keep the road outside his premises swept, tidy, and in good condition. The wording of this injunction hardly varied from year to year: '[Householders] shal well & Suffycyently repara & pave the pavements afor ther soylles vnder the peyne of forfeitur vj^s viij^d'.¹⁰

A second stream giving easily accessible water to the town flowed past the chapel, coming from along Church Street and turning towards the river at Chapel Lane - also called Dead Lane - beside New Place and the Gild garden. One of the town pumps stood here and there should have been fire ladders in the chapel yard and leather water buckets at the Gild Hall - the aldermen were responsible for supplying these. Fire was an ever-present hazard because the houses were made largely from wood and many were still thatched, cooking was done on open fires, and candles the source of light. Should only a small fire get out of hand, the danger to the whole town is obvious. The houses were

often close together, their roofs adjoining. A slight breeze would carry flames from one house to the next swiftly, as was to happen in Stratford in September 1594 and again in September 1595, with devastating consequences. Large areas of High Street, Chapel Street, Sheep Street, Bridge Street and Henley Street were destroyed by these two fires. It was many years before all the houses which had been burnt were re-erected and it would have been a fairly ramshackle town for William Shakespeare to come back to at the end of the century. The guild chapel bell still rings a warning reminder every evening from around seven fifty five until eight o'clock, although townspeople are no longer bound by its sound, as they had been since mediaeval times, to douse their fires and extinguish their candles.

For most of the Elizabethan week, this "official" area of the town, with its guild hall, the almshouses and the grammar school would have been a comparatively quiet and sober area, but on Thursdays, the butchers purveyed their selection of meats on the west side of Chapel Street along with other vendors, and from Tinkers Lane (now Scholars Lane) the noise of the tinkers' cries would come and the sound of animals in the pinfold or pound which was also sited there and was used to impound straying livestock until the owner had been identified and fined. The land for this belonged to the inmates of the almshouses and from its use they derived some rent from the Corporation.¹¹

Venturing along this noisy, smelly lane, passing one of the officially appointed muck heaps situated in the gravel pits in this road, would bring the Elizabethan - as it still does,

though infinitely more salubriously - to Rother Street, site of the third town cross, the Market Cross, another public pump, some fire hooks and the stream which left Meer Pool. On market days, this was the place where a man could buy or sell cattle and horses, or rawhides near the Cross, or trade with the pewterers and braziers whose pitches were at the Rother Market end of Wood Street; the coopers were further along Wood Street towards High Cross. The muckhill for this area was in Greenhill Street “by nycholas lanes hedge” whereas the position of the one in Henley Street is less specific for us since documents only declare it to be “in ye old place accustomed”.¹² That is unlikely to have been near John Shakespeare’s house for he, along with Humphrey Reynolds and Adrian Quiney, was convicted of making one where it suited them rather than in the official spot (a very common misdemeanour), and he was duly fined twelve pence in April 1552 for breaking the Corporation’s by-law. Henley Street, where John Shakespeare and his family lived was, in common with all but the central part of the town, a mixture of houses, shops, barns and yards. It was a main highway leading to Bridge Street and the bridge from the north; there were taverns where vintners sold their wine, alehouses where tipplers sold their beer, and inns to house travellers along the way.

Bridge Street, as I said, a continuation of Henley Street, was at least as busy, noisy, dusty or muddy, according to the season; in addition on market days, it was in Bridge Street that ironmongers and rope and collar-makers set up their stalls. There were always at least three inns in this short stretch of road, sometimes more during the years of William Shakespeare’s lifetime. At the river end near the bridge were the town butts - archery

still had to be practised by law - and another dungheap.¹³ The land next to the river, Bankcroft, and this lower part of the town was liable to flooding, probably an annual event then. This may explain why the more important housing areas were sited well back from the river and its tributaries. Bankcroft was held as common land for pasturing cattle and growing crops, which were harvested when all agreed to make way for cattle again. A further dunghill was permitted at the end of Sheep Street, and the sixth and last of these was sited in Church Street “benethe John Sadlers barn”.¹⁴ It is clear that the placing of the muckheaps had been carefully considered. They were placed on the outskirts of the town, fairly conveniently situated for any householder and where animals were most commonly to be found and so where they would be most necessary. Anyone leaving waste elsewhere, other than on his own property if he so chose, was fined. “No dung or muck to be laid in the stretes or lanes but only on their own properties or on the common dunghills”. The fine for defaulting on this was three shillings and fourpence. If any tenant of corporation-owned property allowed unlawful muck-laying on his ground he was fined ten shillings.¹⁵ Any unwanted material or foodstuffs could be placed upon the common muckhills; they must have been noxious, rat-infested, insect-ridden eyesores. They had only to be cleared twice a year, once before Pentecost (Whitsun), and again around Michaelmas (September). This arrangement was confirmed at the meeting of the Corporation on 6 October 1563, when several measures were minuted, all aiming to ensure a healthy and orderly life for the townspeople. For example, every inhabitant “shal well & Suffycyently repar & pave the pavementes afor ther soylles under the peyne of forfeitur to ye use of ye chambur of Stretford every person offendyng vj^s viij^d to be

levyed uppon ther goodes and cattel”, and the date by which the work had to be carried out was set, or a householder would be fined the six shillings and eight pence.¹⁶

The public buildings which are still standing had a different precedence and appearance then. The parish church, Holy Trinity, did not have the beautiful spire by which it is now most easily recognised but did have a charnel house attached to the building on the river side. As it stood outside the town boundary, and was not so near as the Gild Chapel, it was often at this time left in a fairly dilapidated condition and ruling bodies had to get Parliament’s help to force parishioners to pay for its repair on more than one occasion. The Gild Chapel, beside being more convenient to visit, had much more significance for the leading families of the town since their immediate forebears had been affiliated to its Gild and had certain privileges there. Inside there had been wall paintings which could have been something of interest and instruction to gaze at. Many of the local preachers seem to have been inadequate, judging by the comments made about them in a later bishop’s review, and the murals before they were painted over may have done more to inculcate moral behaviour than the preachers could, even though their sermons were protracted. However, by 1586 at least, when a survey was commissioned on the state of the ministry in Warwickshire, Stratford had in Richard Barton, its licensed preacher, a man who was “learned, zealous and godlie, and fit for the ministerie. A happie age yf o^r church were fraight manie such”.¹⁷

The almshouses had already been added to but were still thatched then.¹⁸ Residence was officially reserved for those who had worked for the town in previous years and their dependents, which was not always adhered to. For us these buildings have a certain glory because of their age and fashion, but they probably seemed merely old or antiquated in the sixteenth century. The wood would not have been the colour it is now, the daub not so homogenous in tone as we see it today. None of the graceful black and white buildings many of us enjoy looking at were so painted at this time either, which is why Shakespeare Birthplace Trust properties are brown still. As Richard K. Morriss writes: ‘...these timber-framed buildings were never designed to be painted black and white. Originally, the oak would have been allowed to retain its own colour and age naturally. The “tradition” of black timbers came about partly because of the use of pitch and tar preservative on what were then old and rotting timbers from the later eighteenth century onwards - the look caught on’.¹⁹ Some of the panel infills were painted, but not usually just in white. The infill panels were created from a mix of whatever was easily and cheaply available, and which would stick together to keep out the weather, namely clay, mud, dung and animal hair. Interspersing the patchwork of browns in summer would have been the greens of the numerous oaks, elms and fruiting trees which grew then within the town’s boundaries. Few of these were actually on the streets as we have them now but grew on the land attached to each little holding and were a source of revenue by being sold for building when extra money was needed.

So the town would have been overall of a brown colour, buildings and road surfaces merging and blending together, with only the trees, the church buildings, the crosses and of course the brick-built New Place, which we no longer have, showing variation. The roofs of these important buildings, being tiled, would again give variety to the thatch of the rest, more expensive tiling being usually reserved initially for public buildings and the residences of the demonstrably rich. Brick chimneys should have been in evidence everywhere for they had been decreed by law at the end of the fifteenth century but it may have taken some time for these to have been erected on all houses.²⁰ Stratford people seem to have taken some advantage of the town's distance from the centre of government in London; it was not until the 1580s that William Hill in Rother Street 'and all other then habitantes of this borrowe shall before the feast of seint James thapostle next Cominge (25 July) make sufficient Chymneys in their several habitacons or romes for the better preservnge of the rest of then habitantes of this borrowghe their howses goodes and Cattelles from the danger of the fyer upon payne that everyone that maketh defalt therein to lose x^s'.²¹ Laws took some time to be enforced in many such distant provinces.

Roof heights would have varied. The Bishop of Worcester, in the thirteenth century, had the town arranged to his specification of long plots or burgages measuring approximately sixty feet along the road frontage and stretching back from the road about one hundred and ninety-eight feet. Moriss informs us that this size was laid down by statute - three and a half perches wide and twelve perches long, an area of just over a quarter of an

acre. Moriss notes: “The arrangement is not quite the typical grid pattern of such mediaeval plantations, but more of a parallelogram with the shorter streets running at a slight angle to the longer ones. This was not a mistake, but an attempt to make maximum use of the slightly raised gravel terrace by the river and thus avoid the flood plain.²² But the townsfolk did not fully build up these plots so smaller houses and a mixture of barns, orchards and open spaces enabled them to use their land allowance to more practical effect than covering so much of it with only a large house. So among the large and impressive houses were the smaller barns and “industrial buildings” essential to the work which kept the people of Stratford comparatively well off and well fed, which the majority in the seventh decade of the sixteenth century were. The work which supported the townspeople was quite varied but the commonest stable sources of livelihood were the wool trade’s cloth-making enterprises, which were on the decline, and malting. Quiney claimed, perhaps exaggerating the importance of malting to the town since only a few people are known to have been legitimate maltsers (forty-four people were named in 1595): ‘our towne hath no other especiall trade haveinge therbye onely, tyme beyownde mans memerye, lyved by excersysenge the same, our howses fytte to no other uses, manyed servantes among us hyered onely to that purpose’.²³

Stratford enjoyed advantages which made it a good town to be born in. It was an accredited market centre which brought in money and goods from elsewhere. The market began early each Thursday and closed at 11 a.m, its closure announced by the ringing of a bell. Stratford had a good, stone bridge which, if kept in repair, made the

town accessible from the south for most of the year. A further advantage was its situation lying between two types of soil, the one to the south being good for growing annual crops, the one to the north better for growing trees and for supporting livestock. Stratford itself stands on its slightly raised beds of gravel, to the north the soil is largely based on mudstone and here trees and cattle are well supported, while to the south lias clay gives good arable land.²⁴ Therefore, whatever it was that a man could sell or needed to buy, he would find a disposing and supplying market for that commodity at Stratford. With many visitors to, and travellers through the town, because the river was bridged, many hostelries grew up, particularly near the bridge and along the roads leading in and out of the town. All these factors created the 'Stretford' which existed in 1564.

The administration of the town was not, however, so advantageous, the anomalies stemming largely from its previous history. The town came under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Worcester. It had been carefully constructed in the fourteenth century near the existing settlement, though resited slightly further north, probably to avoid the devastation the river could cause. This led to there being no clear centre associated with the position of the church, which in older towns is more commonly centrally sited and within the boundaries of the town. Holy Trinity and Old town were not therefore within the jurisdiction of the town the Bishop had built. This led to the Gild Chapel forming a religious focus for many people and to Holy Trinity Church often falling into disrepair. The religious power in the town (here, the College of Priests sited near Holy Trinity Church) was diminished by Henry VIII's

dissolution of everything monastic; most of the property the College owned passed to Crown control in 1547. When the town was granted its Charter in 1553, the most powerful sect were those who had belonged to the Gild of the Holy Cross which already administered its own range of properties, and to their care passed most of the property which had belonged to the church previously, only now they were named ‘the Corporation’.²⁵ Ownership of most of the buildings and houses in Stratford was largely corporate with relatively few individual people owning property. Houses were usually rented, either from the Corporation, from the Lord of the Manor who by 1564 was the Earl of Warwick, or from one of the richer men of the town (most of whom would also be Aldermen or Burgesses). Stratford supported a hierarchy of families. Palliser says it would have been the usual situation in England at this time that in a corporate town “a clearly defined body of men monopolised power”.²⁶ The muster roll from the twenty-eighth year of the reign of Henry VIII (1519), proves that families already resident then include those named Smythe, Quayney, Rogers, Cawdrey and Plymley.²⁷ Each of these families provided during William Shakespeare’s lifetime at least one alderman, often more than one, and several bailliewicks. The Smythes could boast of supplying six bailiffs, the Quineys four. Other families which regularly claimed precedence in the town included the Sadlers, the Hills, the Salisburys, the Barbers, the Gybbes, the Tylers and the Wilsons, who all held three bailliewicks each during these fifty or so years. These property owners were able to affect the lives of many others by the rents they charged, and also the condition of many of the buildings by the agreements they made with their tenants with regard to the upkeep and usage of the buildings. At the same time, religious

jurisdiction still belonged to the Bishop of Worcester, and Royal and Parliamentary power had also to be reckoned with: the efficiency which surrounded Stratford's day-to-day organisation therefore had to depend on co-operation between all those who were able to influence the running of its affairs, or the indifference of those who might contribute but chose not to do so.

In addition to these ruling bodies, the tone of Stratford would be set, as it is today, by its long-standing inhabitants and the behaviour of its visitors and would-be immigrants, who were numerous. On the entry into office of each new bailiff in October, the minutes of his first council meeting habitually contained a reiteration of the town's by-laws with additions appended. These reflect the problems of the moment. Typical is that of 6 October, 1563, when Humphrey Plymley became bailiff with Adrian Quyny as his Capital Alderman.

The injunctions they saw fit to make included the usual stipulation that: "every inhabitant beforre the birth of St John the Baptist shal well and Suffycyently repar and paue the pauements afor ther soylles under the peyne of forfeitur to ye use of ye chamber of Stretford every person offendyng vj^s viij^d to be levyed upon ther goodes and cattel". The penalties were the harshest they could devise to encourage co-operation. Loss of use of "ye chamber" meant that the offender's ability to follow his trade in the town would be impaired. The addition of a fairly heavy fine - six shillings and eight pence being similar to a doubling of the annual rent of a house - was clearly an incentive to keep one's property clean. Since coin was not always

easily to hand, payment was often made in kind. This would be less easily put to good use by the Council so probably was not always worth the exacting. Perhaps, therefore, the fine's deterrence to poor parishioners was weaker than would at first appear. It was, however, always hopefully reiterated by each new bailiff. Another common injunction was that there was to be "No vexing or suing by any inhabitants against any others by writs or other suings except for those which cannot be tried within the Court of Record upon payne of forfeiture of 40^s".²⁸ This would seem to be laid down largely as a safeguard to the Councillors from the townspeople and from each other since it is clear from some of the minutes still extant that disagreements between those serving the community were quite common and often bitter, with insults hurled across the Chamber wildly. The Council report of William Bott's words in May 1565, for which he was banned from further sitting on the Council is one example: 'that ther was never a honest man of the Councell or the body of the corporacyon of Stratford'. He was also reported to have spoken deprecatingly about the Bailiff himself.²⁹ The fine of forty shillings imposed for this offence is much heavier than the preceeding one, with no suggestion that goods would do in lieu of this possibly crippling fine. A bailiff in office was equally likely to indulge in some verbal invective. When accused of buying up barley before it reached the common market, a practice known as 'forestalling', "Mr Thomas Rogers Bayly (bailiff)doeth saye that he will justifie yt and he careth not a turde for them all and theise words being spokinge the 28th day of november".³⁰ We are inevitably reminded of the attitude shown by Dogberry when he insisted that everything said to him be duly recorded. It also suggests that it would be those townspeople with some money who

would turn to legal methods to protect themselves from a perceived abuse. Trial within the Court of Record would in fact mean that the situation would be adjudicated by the current bailiff and chief alderman, whose sympathies might well be relied upon if councillors or their decisions were involved.

Item four of these orders offers further protection to the Councillors: those living in Stratford were “not to criticise its officers” - the fine for simply speaking out against anyone of them was 20 shillings. The alternative to paying this fine was intended to be public humiliation by the offender being imprisoned or openly stocked. There was clearly disagreement between the Councillors on the appropriate length of time a person was to be punished for this offence, since the directive “for three days and nights” was scored through in the minute book.³¹ Whether this implies it was considered too strict, too lenient or whether more leeway with the length of time designated was wanted we cannot definitely establish.

“Peyne yt non receve & kep in ther houses eny [s]traunger woman beynge w^t chyld ther to be brought to bed of chyld peyne xx^s” seems now a particularly inhumane decree.³² This offence carried a penalty of a 20 shilling fine. This injunction stemmed from the fact that a person’s place of birth was ultimately responsible for his or her well-being throughout life. The women most likely to be caught in this Mary-like situation would be itinerant or unsupported women, probably rejected for their “wrongdoing” and seen only as liabilities. To be saddled with the offspring of such feckless women was not to be encouraged by any town’s leadership. It was

necessary to keep heavily pregnant women on the move to their own place of birth, or at least beyond the town's boundaries.

Yet another 20 shilling fine could be imposed for "unlawful games played in private houses".³³ Already a protestant work ethic seems to have been emerging. Since playing games did not add to the general good of the town as a whole, it was to be discouraged. Leisure time was short and people were expected to be working, or caring for their property and landholding, or attending religious ceremonies and sermons. The idea of using time for personal renewal and relaxation was not at this time felt necessary, for the working class at least.

The Corporation records from which these facts are obtained do not often detail so many items in this way: most of the minutes are brief, sometimes only listing the names of those who went to the meeting. How revealing an account is depends on how detailed a particular record happens to be and naturally the minutes vary considerably according to the character of their writer. In some instances we have partially verbatim accounts, in others very little emerges and rarely do we find notes on the final resolutions of difficulties encountered. Examples of such Corporation minutes are illustrated overleaf.

Unfortunately no Court Leet rolls survive for the period from 1560 to 1626 but documents which are still extant suggest that not all the inhabitants were unfailingly law-abiding and not all were content to accept the jurisdiction of the families who

held power here. There were lively religious disturbances as late as 1561 and fighting between townspeople in dispute with each other occurred with only the local constables, fellow residents in power for a year or so, to restore order. For example, seven men were amerced for making affray with others, as we learn from the Court Roll for May 4, 1561.³⁴ The Corporation had its mechanism for dealing with such incidents and its gaol was on the High Street but this alone was not deterrent enough in heated moments. There were, as ever, factions within the town; a man had to be of some financial standing to be an Alderman or Burgess. There would be a financial divide, therefore, between many of the governed and their overseers and the resulting antipathies of such a situation are still one of the common difficulties when one set of people rules another. There was continual litigation between the townspeople themselves and also between them and outsiders.

The effects of being nurtured and raised in such a town vary, of course, from one individual and another, but for all those who grew up there certain factors would be common. Because it was an important river crossing situation, visitors to the town would be regular and of a wide variety. To the north lay Coventry, at that time a much more important and sizable community than Birmingham, which remained only a fairly insignificant village for another two centuries. Also to the north was Warwick, the major town of the local earldom. To the west was Worcester the religious centre for this area. The town's strong, though not invincible, bridge was important in giving Stratford precedence over neighbouring places; the number of ancient roads that lead to the bridge demonstrate its importance to travellers through

the midlands. To the south lay Oxford and Banbury, both having importance for various reasons. Travellers would be constantly moving between these towns and those to the north via Stratford's reliable bridge. Queen Elizabeth crossed it at least once on her progress from her visit to Kenilworth Castle in 1575 back towards the south via Charlote Manor.³⁵

Stratford had to be a magnet for anyone in need of a marketplace. Its ancient Charter approved not only its weekly markets but also three annual fairs. In an era when entertainment was not seen as good for people and many condemned it upon religious grounds, it was all too easy for any form of relaxation to be banned by strong-minded Councillors. In Stratford, however, three fairs a year guaranteed at least some respite from a life of tedious toil. At these times, travellers from all walks of life would be able to come to the town and many seem to have managed to stay here. Tradesmen sometimes set up business, but the Corporation was quick to protect its existing workers. Issuing a would-be vendor or artificer with a licence, the Corporation gave a 'stranger' tradesman only two weeks to show he could make a living from his trade or he lost his licence to vend and had to leave the borough.³⁶ The alternative fine of three shillings and fourpence would not have been a viable alternative: if he could pay that he was in a position to support himself for some time. On the whole, those who lasted were families who had a skill or commodity to offer which was not already being sold in the town. In this way, Stratford had gained a sprinkling of Welsh people and others from the east of England. William Shakespeare, therefore, was not born into a place where not a lot happened; for its

time and situation, Stratford must have been one of the more alive and vibrant provincial towns in England. Special development of some minds in such a town is not to be wondered at or deemed an impossibility. While we may not be able to specify events or moments which caused his extra development, the situation in which he grew up would have been stimulating and often enthralling to someone with characteristics which enabled him to appreciate and benefit from his environment. As Howe says: 'The routine every day incidents and events that make up a person's life are generally much more influential than the more dramatic occurrences to which biographers are prone to attach importance'.³⁷ There would have been memorable incidents occurring regularly in such a town as Stratford.

CHAPTER 3

JOHN SHAKESPEARE AND FAMILY

A whole variety of recent views of history....point to the reality of social contexts¹

Park Honan

A father was not only the head of his family, he owned it too in a way we find difficult to visualize. What happened to him the other members of his family also enjoyed or suffered; besides which, they belonged among his goods and chattels and he could therefore dispose of them as he thought fit. His wife was a necessary adjunct to his success and well-being. If she did not perform her duties well, he was disadvantaged. Though he could not easily reject or dismiss her, he could train her into better management of his household by any means he found effective. His wife was expected to accept his behaviour towards herself. In the Homilie printed in 1571, in the section devoted to *The State of Matrimony*, those linked in an unhappy marriage were advised that “thereby is laid up no small reward hereafter, and in this life no small commendation to thee, if thou canst be quiet”.² While we may find Petruchio’s treatment of his wife Kate quite unbelievable in its success, it may not have seemed so to an Elizabethan audience, fed on weekly homilies on how people should behave. He disgraced her by his behaviour in front of her wedding guests, disagreed with everything she said, denied her food and rest and the clothes she would have liked to wear. After initially fighting against his control over her, she finally tells other women:

I am ashamed that women are so simple
 To offer war where they should kneel for peace,
 Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,

When they are bound to serve, love, and obey. *Taming of the Shrew* 5.2.166.

Gerald M. Pinciss in *Shakespeare's World* quotes a doggerel rhyme he claims to have been recited by some clergymen of the era, "A spaniel, a woman, and a walnut tree, / The more they are beaten, the better they be."³ Haynes clearly makes an understatement in writing 'Marriage was a relationship of unequals'!⁴ Before mid century, the Government had published *Certain sermons or Homilies appointed by the King's Majesty to be declared and read by all Parsons, Vicars and Curates, every Sunday*. The first twelve were issued in 1547, then a second series of homilies appeared in 1562, and in 1571 the homily *Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion* reiterated clearly what was important to those ruling England. This included: "He [God] not only ordained that in families and households the wife should be obedient unto her husband, the children unto their parents, the servants unto their masters, but also, when mankind increased and spread itself more largely over the world, He by His holy word did constitute and ordain in cities and countries several and special governors and rulers unto whom the residue of His people should be obedient."⁵ Anyone who became involved in any rebellious act at any level was claimed to be mired in the "whole puddle and sink of all sins".⁶

While St. Peter's words are quoted as the authority for the proclaimed correct attitude to be adopted by God-fearing people, Peter himself had softened the command by adding "Yet I speak not these things that I would wish the husbands to be sharp towards their wives, but I exhort the women that they would patiently bear the sharpness of their

husbands”.⁷ While women were supposed to be respected and used considerately by their husbands, if their wives did not receive such treatment they had no legal basis for redress or protection and were expected to put up with everything, looking forward to the Day of Judgement! To help her, a wife’s own female children, while still very young, might be trained to assist their mother’s defective housewifery and there would usually have been a good source of domestic help available in any village or town among a pool of, most often, female children, whom their parents would be willing to send to support an inefficient housewife or an elderly woman in return for little more than bed and sustenance for the child while she learned to keep house. An old lady wanting to go into the almshouses in Stratford, where she would receive some financial support from the charitable aid which residence there offered, had first to dispose of the twelve-year-old girl who was living with her. ‘At this Halle ffraunciscuss pynder ys admitted one of the almes people so that she place the Chyld she nowe dothe kepe in some service, so sone as the Chyld shalbe able to be putt to service, or else herselffe to be displaced ageine.’⁸

Children had an even lower status in the family hierarchy than the woman of the house. Initially a child was little more than a natural consequence of a man fulfilling his conjugal rights and duties. A first child, especially if it were male, would usually be a cause of rejoicing since its existence proved the fertility of the couple. No doubt most people felt blessed by their children and loved them. But they were also needed as assets: for those with possessions, to ensure a continuing family inheritance line, for those without, as insurance against the uncertainties of life and, in particular, old age.

The children, of course, did not necessarily feel the need to support parents in the same way; if gratitude and duty failed to cause children to care for parents who lived beyond their most useful years, the law in 1598 made them responsible for infirm parents and, after 1601, for their grandparents too. Article 7 of the 1598 Poor Law Edicts stated: “And it be further enacted, That the parents or children of every poor... and impotent person... being of sufficient ability, shall at their own charges relieve and maintain every such poor person in that manner and according to that rate as by the justices of the peace... shall be assessed; upon pain that every one of them to forfeit 20s for every month which they shall fail there in”.⁹ In 1601, there was a slight amendment which was of some importance when much of England was impoverished. The Poor Law was largely reiterated, but in Article 7: “As in the above Act Paragraph 7, with the substitution of ‘the father and grandfather, and the mother and grandmother’ for ‘parents’ ”.¹⁰ Respect for one’s parents, with a concomitant duty of care, had always been taken for granted in a Christian country; now, where duty sometimes failed, the Law stepped in. The picture that Shakespeare draws in his plays of the troubles caused to old people who lacked caring children is not limited to the problems of such characters as Lear or Old Adam: for a much wider view read the M. Phil (unpublished) thesis *Shakespeare’s Gerontology* by myself held at The Shakespeare Institute or the University of Birmingham Libraries, (1996).

Male children were intrinsically more valuable than female children: a male child could be used in his father’s business or apprenticed to another, depending on what seemed to be the more viable option. Henry Field, an artisan in Stratford of the declining trade of

glove-making, apprenticed his son Richard to a printer, an up-and-coming occupation in the early 1580s. On the death of Henry in 1592, Richard, being by then a qualified printer, took on his younger brother, Jasper, aged fifteen, as his apprentice. Sons were more useful than daughters for they could more easily sustain the family trade, or widen the family's prospects by diversification into other fields. Female offspring were often looked upon more as liabilities than assets: if a girl could marry well she could prove of use, but to marry well required having a sizeable dowry. It was shameful for a man to marry without gaining more of an advantage than simply a woman to take care of his household. Alan Haynes in *Sex in Elizabethan England* claims 'When young aristocrats, like Lucius Cary, made a marriage entirely based on his feelings for his impoverished bride, it could lead to acute family disharmony and a flow of angry retorts from father to son'.¹¹ If a girl remained unmarried she was most commonly a financial drain on her family, even though she might be invaluable in running the household's domestic arrangements if her mother grew incapable or had died early, as many mothers did, often in childbirth.

If a man had no son to take over or assist in his business, then it was not unusual for a daughter to fulfil this function, at least until she married, when her husband might well step into her shoes. After the Poor Law Act of 1601 poor girls might be apprenticed until they were twenty-one or until they married. The openings available for them seem to have been severely limited. The only 'moral' way most women were likely to enrich themselves was by multiple marriages to increasingly rich husbands, preferably in failing health. Many astute women followed precisely this path. Even so, the woman herself was

not rich except during her widowhoods. From the time her father 'gave her away' at her first marriage, she belonged to her husband and his family. As soon as she remarried after being widowed, her possessions belonged to her new husband.

Having a child or children for one's support was not in itself a guarantee of having created a strong family unit; the child or children had first to be brought to maturity. Very many children died and most couples in Stratford during the relevant period lost at least one of their children. John and Mary Shakespeare had lost two daughters before they succeeded in producing a family of six offspring, and one of those, Anne, died when she was eight years old, leaving only William, Joan, Gilbert, Richard and Edmund. Of the twenty-six boys born in Stratford in 1564, like William Shakespeare, at least ten died during childhood.¹² The variability and unreliability of the claimed child mortality figures of other towns and therefore national figures too makes any attempt at meaningful comparisons meaningless; for this study at least; however, Palliser notes that baptismal totals were generally rising from 1560-1586, and were well ahead of the burial rates nationally.¹³ Basing his comments on a table set out by E.A. Wrigley, which he reproduces, however, he also claims: 'Recording shows unexplained peaks of mortality - sometimes meaning that, for a year or more, burials nationally exceeded baptisms. Intensive recent researches into such "peaks" have made them more puzzling than before; old certainties have dissolved as a complex pattern has been unveiled'.¹⁴

While poverty and unhygienic living conditions no doubt put the lives of poor children most at risk, the children of the rich were also vulnerable while young. The Cloptons,

living out in the countryside a mile to the north of Stratford, lost at least one young member of their family. Such unhappy figures are not limited only to Shakespeare's lifetime or to Stratford district but were common throughout England for many centuries. Sir Edward Heath documented his fairly typical family history in telling detail: 'Note that my wife had her first child before she was full fifteen years of age. That she had her daughter Margaret, being her fifth child, before she was nineteen years of age. And that she had had seven children within very few days after she was full twenty-one years of age. These seven were borne living and were baptized and also one boy and one girl born living but unbaptized. In all she was delivered of twelve great bellies in the space of twelve years, we having been man and wife together full fourteen years and about three months, and at the time of her death she was just twenty-six years four months and nine days old...a good wife, a good friend and a good woman'.¹⁵ It is a wonder that so many women and children survived at all; and childbirth and child rearing were not the only health hazards to be faced.

In 1564, William Shakespeare was one of the forty-five children born and baptized in the parish. This might seem to be a huge addition to the population of a small town but it was more than matched by the year's death toll. Twenty-one people had died before July 11th when the recording of the death of the apprentice Oliver Gume in the Church Register is followed by the chilling sentence '*Hic incepit pestis*' - Here beginneth the plague.¹⁶ Another 236 inhabitants were to die before the year ended, including eight of these newly-born infants, though none of these seems to have died from plague. The effect of this visitation of plague must have had a devastating effect on the town, not

only at the time but in the following years. This disaster was the first of many which hit Stratford during William Shakespeare's lifetime, changing its outward face from that of a prosperous town to one beset with problems.

The happiness and security of any particular childhood is usually closely linked to the stability of the family unit to which that child belongs. The character and financial success which a father had was of considerably greater importance than it is today when other support for a family in difficulties is to be had if it is needed. John Shakespeare's paternal success therefore is important. We are fortunate to have as much information about Shakespeare's father as we have, but on the whole it is not the information which we would most like to have and much of it is more confusing than enlightening, leaving room for speculation and differences of interpretation.

1564, the year of William's birth, was only the sixth year of Elizabeth I's long reign. John Shakespeare, William's father, was Borough Chamberlain for the third time. He appears to have been ambitious to advance his standing. Palliser says 'Law and government office, like trade, were avenues to social advancement for the fortunate few... by active zeal in local government'.¹⁷ Though not born in Stratford, John Shakespeare had worked his way up, first through the lowly position of Aletaster to the more onerous position of Constable, a position often filled by townsfolk who were 'unpaid...mostly unskilled and unwilling, some almost illiterate'.¹⁸ Their work was quite extensive, largely a policing role which included care and control of the town armoury, which each parish had to provide under the Act of 1558, and the control, punishment and

ejection of rogues and vagabonds who entered the town.¹⁹ He had command of all the available articles of punishment which in Stratford included the stocks, whipping post, pillory, ducking stool and cage, and it was he who would administer decreed punishments. He was also responsible for the impotent poor, the supervision of alehouses, the convening of parish meetings. 'Where so much was to be done that few men could carry out the whole of their duties, many made no attempt to discharge the half of them'.²⁰ John Shakespeare must have carried out his duties well enough to rise to the higher position of Chamberlain by 1561 and to continue in this position for three or four years, the normal length of time served in the post being only two. Whilst not a high position in the Corporation, it was an important one and meant he was also responsible for handling much of the money the Corporation received in rents for its numerous properties and administering the parish rates for paying pensioners and soldiers. In 1564, George Whateley was the bailiff, John Brownesworde the schoolmaster, John Bretchgirdle the protestant vicar. Their Chamberlain was no doubt a very busy man, having also the extra responsibility of new fatherhood.

The Shakespeares' house was not near the centre of the town but well on its outskirts. Smaller streets such as Hell Lane, now Windsor Street, were not as yet much built up, and Back Lane, now Arden Street, was on the boundary of the town. The house stood, however, on a busy thoroughfare with many travellers passing by; it would have been quite a good site from which to sell goods on the days when the market was not operating. However, since he was so continually active in town affairs, one has to wonder if John Shakespeare found very much opportunity to continue his adopted trade. It

was unlikely that his wife would have the necessary skills to continue much of his work when he was busy with other matters. He would not have been the only person available to buy from since John Shakespeare was only one of a number of purveyors of gloves. Was he, then, a very successful glove maker? It was decreed by the Council that all workers should organize themselves into Companies of workers whose occupations were similar or linked in order that trading should be fair and could be contained to suit the requirements of the town. Once a ruling body had been set up, strangers had to pay a fee to be licensed to begin to trade in the town. Apprentices finishing their time had to be guaranteed as well trained and capable by their former masters and also to pay a fee to belong to the Company. However, the Glovers and Whittawers Company was not formed in Stratford until 1606, five years after John Shakespeare's death, so no restrictions would have been strongly enforced during his working life. There were at least five glovers working in Stratford in his time, probably too many for such a small community to support adequately. Coventry, a much bigger town, only supported five glovers itself. Many of the inhabitants at this time seem to have dealt in more than one trade or commodity to make an adequate living: there may have been a fair amount of duplication which would have led to problems for some vendors. Perhaps not all the licensed glovers made gloves but unless a man belonged to other Companies, or followed a second calling, there were limitations on how he might make a living. If five men were designated 'glover', then one must accept that this work formed at least part of his livelihood. Several steps were taken by the Corporation at various times to organise a fair distribution of trade, control trading practices and protect the interests of regular

traders within the town.²¹ The majority of aldermen were after all shopkeepers themselves and appreciated trading problems.

We have factual information about John Shakespeare's standing in the town for a short period of his life, of his wool-buying and usury activities, of his property-buying, mortgages and sales of property; we know he unsuccessfully tried to obtain a coat of arms for his family and that he gave up attending Corporation meetings and church-going. We know also that John Shakespeare is nominated "glover" in several documents; he has also been designated butcher and money-lender by some historians. This apparent anomaly is not a matter of conflict since it was common for a man to use several different methods of making money to support his sometimes numerous family. The particular combination of skills attributed to John Shakespeare, however, does seem difficult to accept. Schoenbaum, in his book *Shakespeare's Lives*, quotes at length from C. I. Elton to prove that the two occupations, of leather worker and butcher, were rendered incompatible by law: "He could not keep a regular meat-shop while trading in skins, and no one has seriously suggested that he worked as a slaughterman, though such people were classed among butchers. (See page 457). Anthony Holden claims: 'After serving (we can but assume) the statutory seven-year-apprenticeship, Shakespeare's father had entered trade as a glover and whittawer'.²² This assumption is no more than that. Holden points out that earlier, in a document relating to John Shakespeare's father, Richard, John is nominated '*agricola*', that is, a farmer.²³

At this time, it was possible - others did so - to set up in a business for which you had not received apprenticeship training. The requirement of young men serving a seven-year apprenticeship was not instigated until 1563, by which time John Shakespeare had established his business in Stratford; this Act of Apprenticeship specifically excluded those “such as now do lawfully exercise any art, mystery or manual occupation”.²⁴ If there was a need for a product in a town and no one was being given too much competition, no one was likely to complain. The first Companies were thought not to have been set up in Stratford until 1570; these were those of the Dyers and Shermen, and the Smiths.²⁵ A Glovers Company was not organised there until the beginning of the next century, in 1606.²⁶ Whittawers worked with soft skins prepared with alum, a much shorter operation than the lengthy tanning process which the heavier leathers required and so it might well have been easier to master these skills without lengthy training. What time John Shakespeare could give to his trade is unknown.

There were strict controls on usury, but as there had to be a ‘wide extent of the use of credit in early modern England’, partly due to the shortage of actual coinage then, it has been found that loans to other people made up 13% of the total value of personal effects of people who died, according to the East Midlands and Yorkshire figures which have survived.²⁷ That John Shakespeare should practise usury is not surprising; it certainly was quicker to arrange such transactions than to fabricate well-made gloves. So too would have been the buying and selling of wool, probably, if this was indeed another of John Shakespeare’s means of supporting his family.

Can these claims be verified, refuted or amalgamated so that the precise situation in which young Shakespeare was raised becomes clearer? It will be found to be impossible at present and the natural inclination is for the would-be chronicler to decide which interpretation seems to him or her to be the most likely explanation for any apparent discrepancy and suggest it as truth. While this may make for a satisfactory reading of Shakespeare's life experience while he was in Stratford, if the chosen scenario is not accurate, it may be a long time before the truth is ever gained. It may then make it difficult for this newly-discovered truth to be accepted; or if we have been utterly convinced that the possibility is the actual truth, we may exclude any other likelihood from our minds permanently. It is better I think to accept that some things are never likely to be reliably ascertained now and accept our loss. From the manuscripts we have, we can know what happened to his father, though the precise reasons for the considerable changes of fortune which he and his family experienced may remain hidden.

John Shakespeare, while being a Warwickshire man, was not native to Stratford. Born in Snitterfield, he bought property in the town, married and set up as a glover. Most of our subsequent knowledge of him comes from his involvement with the Corporation of the town and from the law suits in which he was regularly involved. To go to a court for help to settle a dispute, or to be sued when someone considered you had mistreated them in some way, was not unusual. When there is no permanent, trained police force to monitor behaviour in a town, the inmates are

reliant on the willing co-operation of everybody to behave honourably without coercion. When a person cannot or will not carry out his duties and responsibilities without outside pressure, there will have to be set up various ways of causing him or her to co-operate or accept punishment. The men most responsible for physically keeping good order in the town were the two, or more, elected constables, a position John Shakespeare held in Stratford before William was born. This was a post only held for a year or two but it was “verie ancient” and “the chiefest within the realme for conservation of the peace, and thereof taketh his name *Constabularius, quasicuncta stabiliens* - one that establisheth and setteth all things in peace, good order and quietnesse.” Their work included keeping the Queen’s peace by taking and holding malefactors of all types, and those who appeared to do nothing at all. They had to disarm miscreants and also ensure that each household kept weapons of self-defence, such as a club or two. They had the right, and duty, to search houses and other premises to find “suspected persons”. These they had to escort to the perimeter of their boundary and hand over to the constable of the adjacent area, if they had no right to be in Stratford by birth, or to present them before the Bailiff’s Court when it was next sitting, which was about once a fortnight. On Sundays their duty was to round up those not in church and either persuade them to attend or to report them for not going there. They also had to report any property which they thought was in a condition which might endanger the townspeople, by falling down or catching fire. Their duties also included escorting the Mayor and Corporation when the latter were carrying out their official duties, and informing Councillors, when someone had died, who was to be the inheritor of his goods and property, and if he had left

orphaned and dependent children. It was not a job for a weak or enfeebled man, and it had to be time-consuming.²⁸

Before his son was born, John Shakespeare had been involved in at least twenty court cases, sometimes as litigant, sometimes as defendant. Most refer to money he claimed was owed but unpaid to him, some to claims for debts against him. Again this does not necessarily imply that he was careless or grasping where money was concerned. With no banking system in place, monetary transactions depended upon where coin was available at any given time, its accessibility not necessarily convenient to the needs of would-be transactors. The fact that for the four years from 1561 to 1565 he was a Chamberlain for the town and would have been responsible for holding, collecting and distributing sums of money on its behalf suggests that he was thought to be both capable of conducting financial affairs and honest. In fact it was eighteen months after he had relinquished the office that the Corporation completed paying back to him all the money he had distributed on its behalf; he had used his own money to discharge the Corporation's liabilities.²⁹

Perhaps John was careless with his money. We might deduce from the court records that he was either unlucky, generous, very kindly, or a poor judge of men, for on at least three occasions he stood surety for a relation or neighbour who defaulted, leaving John Shakespeare to pay the outstanding debt.³⁰ It is noteworthy that on two occasions he did this for Richard Hathaway, later to be William Shakespeare's late father-in-law. The closeness of the two elder men is clear; that John was twice led into payment on Richard's behalf may be of significance. John also stood surety for

his own brother Henry in 1587, a man who had already proved somewhat irresponsible or unreliable.

His financial situation is impossible to unravel with any certainty. He bought property in 1575; in 1578 he used his wife's property, Asbies, as surety for money he borrowed and subsequently lost the house. He did not attend church, which would have incurred fines, and the Corporation record claimed his non-appearance at church was to avoid his creditors.³¹ In 1579 he sold his wife's share in the Snitterfield estate of which she was one legatee.³² In 1582, the year that William married, John Shakespeare would not return a tenant's unused rent; the resulting court case dragged on for several years and by 1592 he needed to pay the man back or be arrested.³³ During these ten years, others also sued him for debt and he in turn sued his debtors. The court where these claims were made was a local one where each year's current bailiff or his deputy, the chief alderman, was responsible for making the judgement in each case. It was not unusual for a man to be both accuser and accused on the same day in separate cases. This was the case for John Shakespeare in 1592 when at the same sitting of the court on 24 February, Hugh Plumley, Adrian Quiney and Richard Hill sued him for debt and in a separate case he sued Richard Jones for debt.³⁴ A suitable amount of John's goods were distrained to the men to whom he owed money and a suitable proportion of Jones's goods were distrained to him. Whether these 'payments' ever actually changed hands or not or who decided who should have what, the records do not show but we are informed that John Shakespeare and Richard Jones "reached agreement" by October.³⁵

Without a banking system, monetary transactions were a source of difficulty for everyone. To carry very much money about when travelling was inadvisable. The well known letter from Richard Quiney to Shakespeare is appealing to the latter for funds because Quiney, clearly a rich man, had run out of ready money and the further supply he was expecting had not materialised: “craving your help with £30....Mr Rosswell is not come to London yet, and I have especial cause”.³⁶ Several letters from this period speak quite desperately of an urgent need for a loan to carry someone over a period when money was not available to the supplicant. For example, Robert Duborne, a playwright, writes to his commissioning source, asking for twenty shillings “howsoever my want inforces me”, to support him and his family while he finishes writing a play.³⁷ He sent his wife with the request. There were many begging letters sent during this period. Perhaps a letter from Daniel Baker to his uncle Richard Quiney, the writer of the only extant letter written to Shakespeare, illustrates most clearly the problems people faced without an effective banking system being available. [For the reader’s convenience, modernized spelling and punctuation has been used throughout. A facsimile of the letter itself follows].

Uncle quyne my Commendations done etc., I understand by your letter to Mr Alderman that Mr Kympton is not yet paid his four pounds seven shillings which I much marvel of for that I appointed Mr Barber to appoint three pounds to be paid to Mr Kympton this last week if he were not paid before, otherwise to pay the three pounds to Mr Woolly and the money was paid to Mr Woolly whereby it, should the sum that Mr Kympton was paid before. I pray you know certainly if he be paid and if not then use some means either to pay him speedily or else send me word that I may send it him for I am ashamed that he is so long unpaid. My Aunt Quyny telleth me that you are to receive twenty or thirty pounds in London and that you will pay some money for me if need be; and in that respect I have lent her some money already to serve her occasions. So if you can pay me

twenty pounds then discharge Mr Kympton and the residue pay to Mr Francis Evington at the Checker in Watling Street. If Sir Edward Greville have paid him ten pounds then do you pay him ten pounds more. If Sir Ed[ward] paid him none then pay Mr Evington - fifteen pounds if you can or twenty pounds if your money will hold out: and then if you have any more spare money leave ten pounds for me with my cousin Underhill upon Ludgate Hill and I will write to him where to pay it for me. But if you think that you shall not have money for me let me know with all speed that I may otherwise provide and so in great haste I commit you to God.
Stratford 24 July 1599.

Yours ever, Daniel Baker.

How it was ever possible to keep accurate money accounts when they were as complicated as this is hard to conceive. These particular loanings and debts relate to transactions between members of a family and debts to people working privately for these Councillors; Mr Evington was a London draper, most probably a supplier for the Quyny family drapery business in the High Street in Stratford. Mr Kympton was likely to be another supplier who had not been paid for some time.

That many people were forced to use the local court to sort out their financial borrowings and lendings is not a source of wonder. A huge proportion of litigation at this time was given over to the settling of monetary disagreements. As far as Stratford was concerned, however, constant and widespread suings of one resident by another to reclaim money borrowed from the litigant do not appear to have led to lasting or personal animosities very often, and the fact that John Shakespeare was in monetary dispute with several creditors in the town did not stop him from being asked or required to do work on the Corporation's behalf, such as helping to draw up inventories of men who had died intestate so that their affairs might be put in order.³⁸ His last recorded service to Stratford was in 1601 when the town was in

dispute with Sir Edward Greville over what rights each party had in town affairs.

The case for the town was “drawn up in consultation with four oldest inhabitants” of which he was one, the other three being Adrian Quiney, Thomas Barber and Simon Biddle.³⁹ He died in September of that year.

It is clear that in the light of the Elizabethan legal and social context, the status and success of the father of the family carried with them the fortune of his dynasty.

When William Shakespeare was sixteen and John was contesting the possible loss of Asbies through a debt claim, he cited his son as heir to the property - a house which William never gained possession of. John Shakespeare’s fluctuating position in Stratford society is fairly well documented and must have had its effect on his eldest son’s upbringing and attitudes. In the early part of William Shakespeare’s life, his father held an important position in the town culminating in the highest honour of holding the bailliewick in 1568. William was just four years old, but if Michael Howe’s estimation is correct, these years of his father’s importance and success would have coincided exactly with the boy’s most formative years. John Shakespeare had asked to be excused that office just the previous year and in fact the Corporation often found it difficult to persuade anyone to take on the office. Some pleaded age, some failing health, some unavailability. It became necessary to impose a fine upon those who refused the post without sufficient reason.⁴⁰ It was a time-consuming office and unless a man was willing to use it to his financial advantage, as some seem to have done, then it could have been a financial drain as well.

Perhaps this difficulty in getting suitable townspeople to fill the offices required for

the running of a town is reflected by Shakespeare in his portraits of the attitudes and behaviour of the Watchmen, Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and in the weakness of the Governor of Harfleur in *Henry V*.

We yield our town and lives to thy soft mercy
 Enter our gates, dispose of us and ours,
 For we no longer are defensible.

Henry V III 3 48-50.

It is very much to the detriment of our knowledge concerning William Shakespeare's family background that we know virtually nothing about the other members of his family. Now we are aware how significant the influences are upon a growing child of his mother and siblings, we only know that we don't know enough. Just recently, in 2001, the real identity of the property called 'Asbies' has been established. It has been confirmed that Mary Arden was not the daughter of the family of the big farmstead in Wilmcote which has been known as 'Mary Arden's House', but of the much smaller property which lies next to it. It has always seemed to me much more likely that John Shakespeare's bride would come from a less well set up family than from such an obviously rich one, in view of his own property-less family who were only tenant farmers in Snitterfield. Mary's dowry of the Asbies farm and its growing crops would have boosted his financial situation well but not so much as has formerly been believed. It later proved useful as security, and a source of revenue.

Of Mary and her mothering capabilities we know nothing. Her first two children died and later an eight-year-old daughter too, although none of the causes of these deaths is recorded. She reared five children to adulthood successfully. Of their subsequent

lives we also know little. Perhaps we may presume that whether they got on well together as children or not, in later life William remained close enough to them all. He was confident enough in his brother Gilbert's ability to act in his stead in a property deal in Stratford;⁴¹ his younger brother, Edmund, seems to have followed in William's footsteps in becoming a London actor.⁴² At the time of William's own death, only his sister and mother were still alive. He had owned the property in Henley Street, now known as the Birthplace, since his father died in 1601 and had allowed his mother and his sister's family to occupy it at a nominal rent for the next fifteen years. Although he bequeathed the property to Susannah Hall and her husband, his mother and sister's family were to go on living there. He also bequeathed his clothes to his sister's family, a not inconsiderable gift.⁴³ Clearly, therefore, William's relationship with his mother and siblings was, at the very least, amicable and he had kept his position as his father's heir. We should claim to know little more I believe. In the following chapter, I will try to pinpoint some of the aspects of life for this boy in Stratford which would have been most likely to have impinged on his development.

CHAPTER 4. SHAKESPEARE'S MINORITY

The experiences of childhood and early life make it possible for some individuals to prepare themselves for major creative achievements in their maturity.¹ Howe.

So far, it has been possible to create a general picture of the town and family into which William Shakespeare was born. The next step is to isolate those factors which would have affected this particular child and try to assess which, if any, would be likely to impinge upon his upbringing and mental development enough to have a part in shaping his gradual flowering into an outstanding and influential writer - as Jonson claimed, 'He was not of an age but for all time'.² At this juncture it becomes clear why psychologists interested in the making of genius have in the past decided that to try to decipher the making of this particular genius cannot be achieved satisfactorily. The overwhelming obstacle is that we have no personal memoir from him and little of proven, first-hand substance in the 'memories' of him which have come down to us. Even though we have so much written by him, almost all of that is presented in the guise of another person, usually a character in one of his plays. To claim that anything he has written reflects his actual feelings or attitudes is at best merely to make a debatable assertion; his skill was such that he could express polemically-opposed viewpoints as and when the subject-matter of a play or a character within a play demanded the expression of one or the other feeling, attitude, action, or belief.

In the examples of case studies offered by those leading research into the creation of geniuses, great emphasis has been laid on the advantage, almost the necessity, of having letters, diaries or reports on work written by the subject of a particular study, or by someone very close to him. Information of this sort is available for such men as Mozart, Faraday and Darwin, for example. No similar manuscripts are extant from the hand of Shakespeare nor by anyone who knew him as a child or young man. However, some of those case studies quoted by researchers show that what a man believed was the source or the cause of the work which subsequently made him outstanding, was frequently belied by his earlier notes or other people's firm belief that the precise truth of the matter was otherwise. Even where their claimed source of expertise is not in dispute, what they claim to have been influential may only be part of the circumstances which shaped their geniuses. Therefore, it seems legitimate to me to proceed to look at what we do know, at least some of which will have played some part in Shakespeare's extraordinary linguistic and literary achievement.

What effects the development of a child most palpably, nature or nurture? David T.

Lykken claims:

The question is no longer whether genetic or environmental factors determine behaviour, but how they interact. ...Complex human behaviours typically have a polygenic basis. Genetic factors are likely to contribute not only to specific abilities, but also to traits such as persistence, the capacity to concentrate for extended periods, and curiosity about certain types of stimulation. These properties may in turn affect the individual's response to educational stimulation and tuition. The result is a complex interplay between inherited traits and environmental factors, in which the genetics may underpin exposure to nurturing social and physical experiences.³

Andrew Steptoe concurs:

‘Modern behavioural genetics suggests that genes may influence general abilities and specific talents, while at the same time affecting background characteristics such as persistence and capacity for hard work. Genetic factors may even promote exposure to particular sets of environmental stimuli.’⁴

We accept that genes are responsible for much of a person’s behaviour, tendencies and selected lifestyle and that the environment and family prejudices encountered early in life shape the rest of a personality; disagreement comes concerning the precise percentage of effectiveness each component carries. The influences on a given child will vary according to its age, circumstances and the era in which it developed. For example, the children of prosperous Victorians may have been largely secluded from their parents’ adult lifestyle until suitable servants had the children trained to an acceptable level of social behaviour, whilst children from poorer families were constantly surrounded by parents, siblings and neighbours living in very close proximity. Variation in these two groups’ comprehension of the adult world would have been inevitable. Modern-day children may be isolated from an extended family unit and their peers until they have reached statutory school age, or they may have spent much of their early years in a creche or nursery school. Since the amount of stimulation, encouragement and friction each child encounters will vary as widely as their innate abilities, while we may agree these factors will surely have their effect on a child, how much effect each will have on each individual child is incalculable. Fortunately it is not necessary for the purposes of this thesis to enter into this debate, merely to note that it, as yet, still exists.

The era in which the young William Shakespeare developed was very different from our own, and we have virtually no secure knowledge of the tenor of his existence between the evidence of his birth in the baptismal register for 1564 - and this is only a copy made in 1570 from a record no longer extant - until he was named as his father's heir in a court action against John Lambert in 1589, when he was twenty-five. We cannot ascertain or even estimate the course of his physical, mental and emotional development very reliably, it would appear. We can, however, bring together some of the factors which are known to affect the development of children to varying degrees. I think it necessary to outline such events which occurred during William Shakespeare's minority. Later we can consider which appear to have had significance for or impact upon the developing child as seen in his mature writing.

By his baptism in April 1564, he was made a member of the established church under Elizabeth and therefore, officially at least, a Protestant. Plague raged in the town from July when William was barely three months old, until winter brought some respite and the numbers of parishioners dying each week returned to a normal level. Approximately sixteen per cent of the townspeople had died by then, leaving Stratford more than decimated. It is not possible to be precise on population numbers at this time. The assessment is based upon the diocesan return of 1563 which states there were 320 families attached to the parish church, and from the 262 deaths from plague claimed in 1564 in the burial lists.⁵ The Corporation had to deal with the outbreak as best they could and it was for this purpose that the September Meeting of the Council took place in the open air of the Council Garden - grouping in

confined spaces had been recognised as likely to exacerbate the transmission of the virulent infection.⁶ We may need to feel grateful to this group of men for its circumspection: John Shakespeare was already an active council official and might easily have carried the infection to his young son. We cannot assess the impact of the plague being in the town upon William Shakespeare's nurturing; we can accept that the majority of the survivors would be grateful for their lives being preserved and for some time at least appreciate life and freedom from disease. To see this as a survival engineered by God Himself would have been the commonest reaction in a religion-centred society, and would most likely be followed by a period of strong religious fervour: such is the nature of man. This gratitude for lives preserved may well have affected the atmosphere in which the baby William was initially nurtured and contributed to his later attitude towards and appreciation of being alive.

In the following year, 1565, his father became an alderman, one of the twelve leading figures in the town - a feeling of the importance to the community of one's family or a family member is another known life-enhancer. In the Shakespeare family, this person was also its household head, not a less important member. This honour was given to John Shakespeare rather more quickly than would have been expected, upon the removal of William Bott from the Council for disparaging his fellow members.⁷ William Bott was one of Stratford's less reliable characters. He, like John Shakespeare, was originally a Snitterfield man: he became William Clopton's agent. It was he who obtained New Place from the Cloptons in 1563, selling it in 1567 to William Underhill. The death from plague of the vicar

Brechtgirdle also caused a switching of responsibilities within the town: Will Smart, the school teacher, took over as vicar and Brownsword became the schoolmaster. He too would be gone long before William joined the school since teachers' contracts lasted only two years. It was clearly the stability of leading families within the town which offered continuity to its daily affairs, rather than the long-holding of influential positions by some individuals. Conversely, to be outside this group might well limit one's standing in the town. In William's earliest years, the Shakespeares seemed to be joining this hierarchy, but it was a status which crumbled during his youth.

Events were happening outside Stratford in this same year which were to impinge on the town's affairs in due course. In Scotland, Mary Queen of Scots married Henry, Lord Darnley. Their subsequent history was to make Stratford a nervous town for a year or more. In London, Elizabeth was in the seventh year of her reign: it seemed to the Monarch and her Privy Council time to improve the strength of the Protestant Ministry. Commands were issued - The Advertisements - setting out the church procedures to be followed by all. Standards and practices of the Ministry were found to be very variable at that time. So it was ordained that vicars had to be relicenced to preach when they had proved their knowledge of and adherence to protestant dogma. They were now required to wear a surplice when officiating in a Church service, baptise at the font, process at Rogation. Their congregations were to kneel while receiving communion.⁸ These customs are now mostly taken for granted in the Church of England but all such regulations needed to be laid down and clarified to

those officiating to each congregation (though William Shakespeare was too young to be immediately affected by these changes), if the Church were to become a standardised, reliable political support to its Head - the Queen. Stratford itself proved to have installed an acceptable vicar already but many of those men responsible for the outlying villages were rated very poorly.⁹ In contrast, Stratford's Richard Barton was included among the thirty good men out of a total number of 186. He was described as 'learned, zealous and godlie, and fit for the ministerie'. Clearly William Shakespeare's religious teaching at the church and later in school would have been of a strongly protestant nature.

In 1566, when William Shakespeare was two years old, the Scottish Queen also made a contribution to some factors of infant William's later life in giving birth to her son James.¹⁰ This child was destined to become both his mother's and Elizabeth's heir, so uniting the crowns of England and Scotland in one person. He was also to become Shakespeare's patron after his succession to the English throne, by taking over the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1603, of which Shakespeare was by then a long-standing member, and renaming it The King's Men. While helping to ensure the troupe's standing among its peers, James could also command its attendance and/or performance at Court and could possibly influence what was played and the type of play being written. In my opinion, Shakespeare's apparent retirement from constant literary output was linked to the changing fashions in plays' subject matter and style, attitude and content. However, none of these facts could have had any part in the actual making of the great writer-to-be: they would only

have been of importance to him when his ability had been already created and so cannot be discussed at length in this thesis.

Of much more immediate impact on two-year-old William would have been the birth of his own younger brother, Gilbert, who was taken to be baptised on the thirteenth of October.¹¹ No longer an only child, he became the elder child and subsequently the eldest of his parents' children. This change in status is thought to be highly significant by many child psychologists. Representatively I will quote Robert Albert, writing in *Genius and the Mind* on three men, all leaders in their field: 'All three men were first children and oldest sons'. Steptoe in the same book, accepts both Albert's and Sulloway's opinions: 'First born and lone children have inestimable advantage in terms of parental investment'.¹² Another significant feature in 1566 on the developing William was that his father lost money. He had stood surety for Richard Hathaway in two legal agreements and the latter proved unable to pay either when this was required of him. Consequently, nineteen pounds-worth of John Shakespeare's goods were distrained to Joan Biddle and John Page on Hathaway's account.¹³ What these were is not recorded, but the Shakespeare household would have been somewhat lessened in material goods than heretofore. In a similar case, in 1568, another payment for arrears of rent was made by the defaulter, not John Shakespeare, handing over "bedding and naperie".¹⁴ Perhaps the ornate wallhangings represented in the Birthplace house since 1999 had been "surrendered" by the Shakespeares before William was three! Losing money may well have been a cause rather than a consequence of John Shakespeare's decline from prominence in

the town but we cannot know for certain. Whether his losses were caused by over- generosity, naivety, spending time working for the Corporation rather than pursuing his business effectively or accidental hard luck is not for consideration here, but financial stringency is likely to have been an important factor affecting the development of the characters and well-being of the young Shakespeare children who lived through it. A decided change in material circumstances and the unrest and unhappiness that a lowering of expectations leads to is another factor which is likely to have had an impact on William's developing character.

Early in 1567 the Scottish royal scandal erupted. In February, the father of the young prince was murdered by the Earl of Bothwell, whom the widowed Queen married just three months later. One might almost say "The funeral baked meats/ Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables".¹⁵ Although William Shakespeare was just three years old when the event occurred, one suspects that this affair would have been the subject of comment during many more of his formative years, especially during the months when Mary Queen of Scots was in danger-fraught custody near Stratford. In *Hamlet* Shakespeare makes the period between the murder of Old Hamlet by Claudius and the remarriage of his widow, Gertrude, to his killer even shorter. This change may well have been for stronger dramatic effect or to avoid any clear connection between the factional and fictional murders, in deference to the newly-crowned King's susceptibilities when the play was printed in 1604, the year of James' coronation. The parallel situation of the Queen marrying the murderer of her first husband is an interesting one to have used at this particular time and may have

lost William Shakespeare some personal favour with King James, but again, consideration of this possibility has to be excluded from this particular study.

Meanwhile in Stratford, under Bailiff John Whelar's leadership, there was a fair amount of refurbishment going on. More than customary amounts of both bricks and timber were purchased on behalf of the town. The sollar, or loft, and chimney were taken down from the school house and a new clay floor constructed inside it. In September Stratford again found it difficult to replace its bailiff, those elected refusing to take office. Robert Perrott was elected but excused himself. John Shakespeare did the same. Rafe Cawdrey finally filled the vacant post. What was the problem? It was a continuing one throughout the period so the Council had to make it difficult to refuse. Several people preferred to pay the fine at least once before conceding, which may suggest that the office was more of a financial drain than the fine imposed for refusing to become bailiff, in spite of the kudos and other benefits a man and his family might hope to gain. The Council seemed to be perpetually in some financial difficulty with few ways of creating a more secure position for the town's fiscal affairs. As we saw, John Shakespeare was owed money by the Council when his work as Chamberlain finally came to an end. It was eighteen months later that this debt was finally fully repaid, on January 12, 1567, yet he seems not to have been thought well-off at that time since his levy for support for the poor was assessed at twelve pence, an average contribution.¹⁶ The difficulty of maintaining financial security seems to have dominated William Shakespeare's formative years.

1568 was to prove a significant year for William, although at four years old he would not have been aware of its future importance to him. His father was again elected Bailiff and this time, for whatever reason, he did not excuse himself but accepted the position. This made him judge at the Court of Record and while sitting on the bench John was neither litigant or defendant. He would have been obliged to take the oath demanded of every Bailiff and Principal Alderman:

Yow shalle swere that as a Justice of the peace and baylyffe of thys borowghe of Stretford & liberties thereof for thys yere to Come, ye shalle to the vttermost of your Cunnige wytt & power maytene & defende the liberties of the same borowghe, and shalle do egall right aswell to th pore as to the riche after your knowledge wytt & power & after the lawes & Customes of thes Realme & statutes therof made, And yow shalle not be of Counsell withe any person in any quarrell or sute that shalle Come before yow, nor shall lett for any gyfte or other Cause but well & truly shall do your office in that behaffe, And yow shall not directe or cause to be directed any warrant by yow to be made to the parties to the accon, but ye shalle directe them to the officers and ministers of the seyd borowghe or to some other indifferent person or persons to do execution therof so help yow god etc.¹⁷

If John Shakespeare was a catholic, he was perjured in taking this oath because he would not be upholding “the lawes & Customes of thes Realme & statutes therof made”. The catholic faith was regarded with suspicion since the Head of that Church, the Pope, was a political as well as a religious power and there were catholic claimants to the throne likely to be supported by other catholic countries. To be catholic seemed to be trying to serve two masters and Elizabeth never felt so secure that she could countenance anyone in the kingdom who might not always show undivided loyalty to herself. Her government also wanted to ensure that England should be united under the Queen and protestantism. Alderman Shakespeare would have taken the same oath again in 1571 when he accepted the

post of Principal Alderman. Either the oath and his religion were not opposed or he gave little importance to the one or to the other. To know the answer to this would settle several arguments concerning the religious persuasion followed by the Shakespeares, but it is another moot point. It would also throw some light on the morality and ethics which the family respected.

His father's holding the highest office the town afforded should have added more interest and stimulation to the growing William's life: there are likely to have been more visitors to the house than usual, for example. Inescapably his father's importance would have been communicated to the child, if only by his father's dressing in the mayoral robe and being escorted from his house to the monthly Hall, the Councillors' Meeting, by the Beadle, and by the family's right to sit in the front pew on the north side of the nave in the parish church. When later his father's 'reverence' was diminished, any young boy would have noticed the contrast between his time as the son of a leading figure in the town and his later 'shames' when his father avoided even going to church, allegedly because of his indebted situation.¹⁸

Events occurred elsewhere which were of clear importance later in William's life: both Richard Burbage, who was to be the first actor to enjoy performing many of roles of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, was born, and so too was Robert Armin who was one of the two leading comics for whom he was to write. Published this year was the 'Bishops' Bible, which is thought to have been the source which Shakespeare used for many of the religious references in his plays.

In 1568 Mary Queen of Scots had escaped from imprisonment and finally fled to England seeking asylum. Queen Elizabeth accommodated her but did not give her freedom. By 1569 it was clear that her presence was disruptive. Both her supporters and her opponents wanted control of her. For England, she also represented renewed tension between catholic and protestant. Her location was moved from stronghold to stronghold, to make it difficult for her supporters to organize her release from custody, and by November she was being held in Ashby-de-la-Zouch when the Northern Rising was finally organized. On the whole, the northern areas of England showed support for Mary while most of the southern part preferred to maintain the *status quo*. The Midlands were more divided in their loyalties and so proved uncertain allies to either faction. Stratford had both strong protestant supporters and some well-known catholic families within its environs. John Shakespeare had by this time relinquished the post of Bailiff; he was still however an Alderman and as such would take part in deciding where the public sympathies of the town as a whole were to be.

The Earls of Leicester and Warwick both led troops to counter attack the Rising and show support for Elizabeth, and, by December, Mary was being held in Coventry. Many of the leading families in the area around Stratford and within the town, however, were still openly catholic, and therefore were likely to be called upon for assistance by her supporters, if only to help restore papal control of religious observance in England. Corporation Minutes for 1569 show that catholics were choosing to leave their posts, or being ousted. In Stratford, William Butcher was

replaced by Henry Haycroft as vicar and John Acton by Walter Roche as schoolmaster. Many men left the country to be trained as priests on the continent, including Robert Dibdale from Shottery.¹⁹ With Elizabeth about to be excommunicated, England was attracting many enemies. At the behest of the Pope, any hostile nation had the right to invade her and “rescue” the English people and the catholic monarch, Mary Queen of Scots. Elizabeth’s kingdom was very vulnerable to attack at this juncture and Stratford would have been relieved when the rising was abandoned at Christmas. Whether the five-year-old William was affected by these events we cannot be sure; it is possible he felt the tension and was influenced by his elders in what he believed about the situation. He could well have been made aware of the way a monarch’s behaviour can have severe repercussions upon his or her subjects, which in turn could initiate his interest in the topic, which his later choice of play subject matter reflects.

In March, stronger edicts concerning the rooting out of vagabonds came from London. Nationwide, a search of all houses for unauthorised residents was instigated by the Privy Council:

A straight serch and good stronge watche to be begon on sondaie at night aboute ix of the clocke which shall be the tenth of July, in every parishe and warde of that Citie and the suburbes of the same within youre rule and iurisdiccion and to continewe the same all that night vntill foure of the clocke in the after none of the nexte daie. And after this serche made, which is intended to be made generall at one tyme throughe the whole Realme...to make at least monnethlie the like serch in that Citie vntill the firste of November or longer as youe shall see cause.²⁰

While this particular letter was addressed to London boroughs, the practice can be seen to be required throughout England. We do not have firm evidence that in Stratford this work was observed to the letter, but since it was required that returns were made from each area, it must surely have been carried out here in some measure. Such monthly nocturnal visitations would have been a memorable experience for a child of five, together with any discoveries of 'illegal' residents having to be evicted and sent across Stratford's borders. A muster of troops was made also in July and Stratford set about repairing and reviewing its armoury ready to be at the Queen's service.²¹ This action too may well have settled indelibly in his young mind. Certainly the scene he drew later in *Henry IV* has an authentic ring which chimes in with some extant contemporary prose accounts of the mustering of army personnel.²² To see the young men of the town lined up, some selected to serve in the Queen's army under the Earl of Warwick, to watch their training at the town butts and then to see them marched out of the town is not likely to be forgotten by an impressionable child. Because of the strong catholic element hereabouts, the town needed to take steps to prove its loyalty to the Crown and English Church. Like other towns, it forbade private gaming in houses and instead instigated renewed practice at the archery butts by the river, in line with royal edicts.²³ Such activity could also prove either stimulating and exciting or very frightening to a child.

On 26 November, the vicar, William Butcher, was replaced by Henry Haycroft, a more strongly protestant adherent. John Shakespeare is believed by some to have been still catholic but his bailliewick had been terminated naturally the previous

month and the position taken over by Robert Salisbury. (It is interesting to note that the Chamberlains were unable to hand over to the Council all the monies due and they remained in debt to the sum of £4.18^s, a reversal of the situation pertaining when John Shakespeare quitted the same office.) However, if John was known to be a catholic sympathiser, this may have been another reason for his not returning to the highest office, as many others did. Whatever his sympathies, at this time or slightly later, his first surviving daughter, Joan, joined the young brothers in this year and was taken to church to be baptised into the Church of England on 15 April, 1569.²⁴ Although John Shakespeare sat on the Magistrates' Bench for the last time on 21 September 1569, he must have been seen as a knowledgeable and reliable man still at the end of his term of office, for he was an arbitrator together with Lewis Ap Williams in a lawsuit the following November at the instance of Henry Braggs, and so still a respected figure in the town one might safely assume, his family sharing in his respect.

So ended the decade in which William Shakespeare was born and he would have been almost ready to begin school. Besides the events and situations which we are able to draw together as those which may have been helping to form his genius during his infancy, there is one more so far unnoted. Players are known to have performed several times in Stratford during these six years. During John Shakespeare's bailliewick, two sets of players were licensed to perform by him. The town's accounts show that the Queen's Players were paid nine shillings and the Earl of Worcester's Men twelve pence.²⁵ As Bailiff, John Shakespeare would have to see

and license the entertainment offered, so his son would have been aware of, may well have watched, players from a very early age. Between 1568 and 1583 no fewer than fifteen playing companies performed in Stratford. To any young child, his whole life period seems stretched out to an eternity and so life at this time would have seemed almost static and predictable to William. The impact of visiting acting companies would have been very noticeable, even for those who might disapprove of such entertainment. Sundays divided weeks but religious observance would have tended to put a limit of its own on enjoyments. Weeks would include a market day - of little interest to the very young. Annual holidays had not been invented; only saints' days, single pockets of variety where they were still observed, broke up the long working year, together, with the doubtless long-looked for Mop Fairs. These would bring into the town all those seeking employment and those seeking to employ, which, in turn, would bring in others wanting to use the opportunity to trade in their own goods. However, Mop Fairs only occurred twice a year and then in quick succession, therefore, the coming to town of pure entertainers, even if their performance claimed to be 'improving', was surely a welcome contrast to everyday life. Strange, unknown, colourful players acting out a story or an important event would be memorable to any small child in these circumstances. It is possible that as early as this, William Shakespeare knew what he wanted to be.

In 1570, the year when Shakespeare became six years old, the Pope finally excommunicated Queen Elizabeth. Catholics were now in a quandary and had to decide where their strongest sympathies, or their salvation in this world or the next,

lay. Religion and patriotism were, for many, difficult to blend together in their lives, and some Catholics found it difficult to keep their positions in society. While they themselves might feel able to remain loyal to their Faith and to their country and its Queen, whatever her religious persuasion, the Crown and her Ministers were less persuaded to trust them. An oath of allegiance to the Crown was required for many quite humble offices. In the recriminatory atmosphere that was created, James Hilman, Stratford's curate, left without his wife and child; the gossip, his going and his family's subsequent plight is likely to have impinged on William's consciousness. There would have been other matters to frighten a child at this time, and he would feel more personally involved. His father was twice accused this year of breaking usury laws by charging high interest on two loans to Walter Musshem and consequently fined by the court for one of these instances. In the following year, William's father was accused of making illegal wool purchases. These accusations were made by a 'professional' informer, James Langrake, who may have been bribed to drop them eventually but not before John Shakespeare had made several appearances in court and he was not finally vindicated.²⁶ However, they do not appear to have affected John's standing in the town adversely since he continued to serve on the Corporation for several more years in responsible capacities.

Stratford was at this time in its history clearly an unpretentious and hard-working town. It was the sturdy bridge across the river which gave it importance and some grace. The local orders issued by the Bailiff and Aldermen remind us of the atmosphere of Stratford's streets, which by now young William must have been

often walking in. We get a very rural picture of the town, alien from Stratford as we know it. That does not make it unusual for its time: London itself would seem very countrified to people today. Up to six swine per family might be pastured on the common ground of the Bancroft in Stratford, and all swine had to be ringed and accompanied on the streets. Geese and ducks had to be accompanied too.²⁷ Whether the twopence fine imposed was an effective deterrent we cannot tell - except that such edicts were regularly repeated as if the people needed to be reminded often for them to comply. Reiterated too was the order concerning keeping the soils in front of the houses clean, and a new order was issued forbidding inhabitants to block the street with timber.²⁸ Stratford, then, was no sleepy backwater but a vibrant and lively place with people and livestock always about on the streets.

Clearly not all the people were disciplined and law-abiding. For example, arbitration was eventually sought in 1571 to settle the long-running dispute between the Corporation and Robert Perrott, brewer, and owner of the White Swan, which was managed by his brother William. Robert Perrott, like William Bott, found the members of the Corporation not to his liking and vowed never to be one of them again.²⁹ In return, they exempted him from holding office forever, but bound him to obey the town's laws and he was heavily fined. This was only after he had refused several orders to attend the monthly Halls and had run up a sizable fine of £5 for each non-attendance. Through arbitration he was eventually required to pay £13.6.8 to the Council and a further £40 which was to be used in the borough.³⁰ He was however given the right to decide how that money should be spent in the town, so it

is most likely that the Corporation's employment of public funds was the basis of their contention. By the time this possibly town-splitting dispute was settled - the Corporation celebrated with a quart of wine paid for from the public purse! - William was almost certainly at school.³¹ He may well have attended a dame school previously; we know it existed but not where it was situate nor who ran it.³² Simon Hunt succeeded Walter Roche as schoolmaster at the boys' school at Michaelmas, 1571. Whether either man taught William Shakespeare very often is debatable: with only one master for the whole school, it is more likely that initial teaching would be largely in the hands of senior boys or a deputy teacher, leaving Simon Hunt free to instruct the senior pupils. With no King's School Records surviving from this time, we cannot be sure about the system used. However, common practices in other places suggest this to have been the likely scenario; in addition we know that William Higgs, alias Gylbert, did occasional work as schoolmaster, usher, curate, clock winder and will writer, so perhaps he was William Shakespeare's first academic mentor.³³ Nothing is known of the man's personality however.

Towards the end of the year, soon after the birth of William's second sister, Anne, who was baptized on September 28, Adrian Quyny became Bailiff again, with John Shakespeare as his Chief Alderman.³⁴ During their term of office, the catholic vestments were sold. Six sets of robes, three of them in different coloured velvet and one in white damask together with their adornments were disposed of, leaving Stratford Corporation clearly committed to protestantism.³⁵ During this period of high office in 1572 when William was eight, his father went to London with Adrian

Quyny on behalf of the town. Stratford was having difficulty in working harmoniously with the current Earl of Warwick, Lord Ambrose. There was a dispute over demarcation of responsibilities within the town and the payments which Stratford was obliged to pay to the Earl. This was perhaps John Shakespeare's first visit to the capital, for he would have had little need to go there on his own account, and his impressions were no doubt savoured by his young son and would have given William some early knowledge and awareness of life beyond Stratford.. At eight years old he surely would have shown interest in London, and retained any information he gleaned easily, a likely characteristic of a developing genius. One of his earliest plays, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, begins with an expression of the need for a young man to leave his home town and experience a wider canvas:

'Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits' and suggests it is better

To see the wonders of the world abroad
Than, living dully sluggardized at home,
Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness.

I.1.11.i &vi-viii

His father's visit to London may well have triggered a desire in William to explore life further afield. He would have had to learn, then or later, that leaving your place of birth was not simply a matter of choice. Your home town was the only part of the kingdom which had any responsibility for your welfare. To leave it you needed to be able to support yourself, to have guaranteed work or some other means of sustenance.³⁶ And everywhere, towns like Stratford had national laws and by-laws to protect their own inmates from incursion by outsiders.³⁷ To be welcome, it was necessary to have something to offer which that town did not already provide for

itself, or not in sufficient quantity. Nor could a man wander at will in the romantic tradition without being in serious danger of being treated as a vagabond and punished severely. William Shakespeare's later 'welcome' to living in London was to be his ability to write entertaining plays and popular poetry, but first his skills had to be developed and honed.

In this same year, 1572, Parliament was tackling England's problem with itinerants. Besides the age-old problem of crimes perpetrated on travellers by thieves lying in wait for them on highways, there was a perceived need to guard against priests entering the country. Evangelical catholic priests were being trained in Rouen and elsewhere on the continent to minister secretly to catholics in England and to save their souls in spite of Elizabeth. By insisting that everyone who had no good claim or reason to be out of his or her home town return to it, it became simpler to see who had no place to go to and keep these people on the move and unsupported. Once a person was in his own locality he would be known and his propensities recognised more easily.³⁸ It was also the responsibility of his local authority to control and care for him. Anyone offered work he could do and refusing it was to be imprisoned.³⁹ There must have been a serious national situation for such stringent measures to be enforced.

Government strategy relied on the swift recognition of potentially problematic people to avoid dangerous situations and so would only license a person to beg in his or her own district; if they were not successful it was the parish's duty to support

them - hence the strong embargo against allowing a woman to give birth other than in her home town, since her offspring became the ultimate responsibility of the district of birth of the infant.⁴⁰ With the high incidence of death during or immediately following childbirth being considerable, we should not be surprised by the apparently cruel refusal to accept highly pregnant outsiders into a town or village.

Mercy was not a quality notable in the jurisdiction of this time. John Shakespeare faced a serious problem too. Henry Higford, who had been Steward in Stratford until this year, sued him and two others for unpaid debt. He claimed thirty pounds was owing him by John Shakespeare and, since John Shakespeare didn't respond in court, took out a warrant for his arrest.

....So that he have their bodies here at this day, namely from Easter Day in five weeks; And the Undersheriff now of late sends word that they have not been found etc: Therefore it is a precept to the Undersheriff that he have them sought out from county to county until that etc., they be outlawed if not etc.; and if etc., there he take them and safe etc., so that he have their bodies here from the day of St. Michael in fifteen days and whence etc.; And it is to be known that the Justices hence in court in that same term have despatched a letter to Anthony Greene, the deputy of the Undersheriff of the County aforesaid in form of the law to be executed etc.⁴¹

What effect might this hunting of his father, if indeed it took place, have had on John Shakespeare's young son, having his father pursued as a common criminal? It is interesting to note that imprisonment for debt features in Shakespeare's plays.

Antonio, in *The Merchant of Venice*, is imprisoned when he cannot repay to Shylock the money he borrowed to fund Bassanio's amorous excursion to solicit the hand of

Portia. It is the enmity of his creditor which will not allow him extra time to repay his debt. He is imprisoned and his life is forfeit. In *The Comedy of Errors*, the bad relations between Ephesus and Syracuse has led to a cessation of trading links and any merchant ignoring the injunction ‘To admit no traffic to our adverse towns’ (I.i 15.) endangers his life. Baptista, unless he can pay one thousand marks within the day, stands in a similar danger, even though he is not at Ephesus to trade but is only looking for his missing son. In both cases Shakespeare emphasises the rigidity with which the law is administered: mercy is not considered, only pity is accorded to the unfortunate sufferers. It is no wonder then that men in Shakespeare’s plays are often desperate to boost their flagging finances as best they can, including Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice* and Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Nothing else of relevant note seems to have been recorded at this time in Stratford and survived. Control of wandering and grazing livestock would appear to have been of greatest concern to the Council, who limited the people to grazing only one horse on the Bancroft. Visitors might pasture their horses there for only one hour. As this area of the town land was also its most necessary flood plain, there would have been times in the year when even this modest concession was unavailable. Perhaps the town was thriving and more people owned a horse than formerly, or perhaps a dry season was destroying the grass and some preservation measures had to be taken. For whatever reason the Bailiff felt the need to appoint someone to impound “unlawful” animals on the Bancroft, obliging their owners to pay a fine before they could reclaim their animal.⁴² Again there is a picture of a somewhat unruly and chaotic

townlife emerging, which could have proved both interesting and educational to the children. Since the town boundaries did not include Old Town, the Borough justices could not punish the “horrible disorders...about the church and churchyard byways”.⁴³ What was so described we have only imagination to formulate; nor do we know if young William was aware of these activities. There was some acceptable entertainment however: February 1574 saw a visit by the Earl of Leicester’s Players, for which they were paid five shillings and eight pence.⁴⁴ Since their performance was in the town, at nearly ten years old, William is likely to have seen it. It would have been another welcome interruption of the fairly routine life shared by all the town’s inhabitants.

The rent roll which was compiled in the same year gives us some indication of who were the Shakespeares’ nearest neighbours. Richard Hill rented a close, or animal field just around the corner in Hell Lane, Robert Gibbon had an orchard, Roger Green a garden and William Wilson, another whittawer, had a barn there and rented a tenement in Henley Street as too did Roger Green.⁴⁵ It would seem William lived in an area of varied shop-keepers, including whittawers, ironmongers, a baker, a haberdasher and a blacksmith, but not all of them lived in Henley Street. They made extra money by taking over the leases of cottages belonging to the Council and administering them as they saw fit, renting them out to others. In the main, those sharing the Shakespeares’ locality provided a stable neighbourhood of people who must have known each other well, although there were exceptions as we shall see. John Ichevar the brewer lived in the corner cottage where Hell Lane and Henley

Street met. He ranked as a yeoman and held leases on a house in Middle Row and a barn in Swine Street behind John Hearinge's house in Wood Street.⁴⁶ He also could be engaged as a courier when necessary. In 1565 his name was on the list of Burghers but never registered there again although he was still alive in 1600, so it would appear that he left Town Corporation duty by choice. Perhaps John Shakespeare's intermittent sitting on the Council was not so unusual. Next along Henley Street was the house of Richard Dyson of whom we know little although his name appears once in the Court of Record. Robert Hall sold a house in Henley Street to John Shakespeare in this year, 1575, which may have allowed some family expansion - unless John Shakespeare wanted to use it to rent out.⁴⁷ His family was still not very large by the standards of the time, but it indicates that the financial situation of the Shakespeare family may have been fairly sound again, at least for a time.

To the south side of the Shakespeares was the house owned by William Wedgewood the tailor. The tenancy of this property was more changeable: Wedgewood conveyed it to Edward Welles or Willis of Kings Norton, another yeoman, who subsequently passed it on to Thomas Osborne of Hampstede. These changes were occasioned by the scandal of the year in Stratford. William Wedgewood had been found to be living with a woman not his wife and was compelled by the outraged Corporation and townspeople to quit the district quickly.⁴⁸ This affair may well have made a deep impression upon their young neighbour but the effect it had upon him, if of any lasting nature, can now only be surmised, however significant to his developing

personality. The next house, the one where currently the Birthplace Trust have sited their gift shop, was that of Richard Hornbie, the town's blacksmith of long and respected standing in Henley Street, and next to his, but across the stream, was the house (now Stratford's Public Library), of William Wilson, another whittawer. He took it over from Gilbert Bradley, a glover. Two bays of his house were 'consumed to the ground' in the fire of 1594 but this may have been as far as the fire penetrated.⁴⁹ Near this house was the covered channel of the brook which flowed into Meer Street and formed the pool there.

The houses on the opposite side of the street held a similar group of local people. On the corner with Hell Lane was John Whelar and his family of four children, all born between 1557 and 1563 so some may well have been among William Shakespeare's earliest playmates, although none is remembered in his will, so any early friendships they may have shared appear to have weakened later -or all had already died.⁵⁰ The tenure of the next few sites is less clear and over the following years tenements seem to have been altered to become smaller properties. John Whelar was responsible for converting two tenements into four. Next to these, what appears to have been tenements owned or tenanted by Nicholas Robinson and Dyson in 1561 became two plots of stabling almost directly opposite the Shakespeares' house. Perhaps, however, the stabling was beside property and not replacing it, or as buildings fell into decay, the usage of the area changed until later the tenements were restored to their original purposes. That there would have been contact between these families is inevitable since several were Corporation Burghers or Aldermen concurrently.

As long as he would have been able to remember, William was part of a family group. As I have already noted, he had remained an only child until his brother Gilbert was born in 1566 when he was two. His sister Joan enlarged the family in 1569, his sister Anne when he was seven. In addition, his brother Richard was born when he was ten and finally his brother Edmund when he was sixteen. If modern research into the effect of birth position in a family is correct, William's position of eldest child is most likely to have made him tend to take on responsibility and be a breaker of new ground. It would also be expected to have given him certain advantages: Robert S. Albert states 'First-born and only sons often receive a disproportionate amount of their parents' attention, encouragement and resources'.⁵¹ There are several good reasons to believe this would have been the case for William. John and Mary Shakespeare's two previous children had both died in early infancy; William was the first to survive. They had nurtured him successfully for only three months when the plague ravaged the town but by God's grace, good luck, or their care of him, he survived. And he was a boy, their first son, and so destined to carry on the family name. He would surely have been well-prized as a child. This assurance of importance within a group is believed to be another requisite for the full development of mere potential into genius achievement.

By 1575, William, now ten or eleven, would have been very aware of his town and surroundings. Childhood was not nurtured as a time to be enjoyed but seen as a period of development leading to responsible adulthood much earlier than present-

day mores decree. He would have been freer, or even expected, to play his part in the life of the town at an earlier age than children of today, and this year in Stratford seems to have had a greater share of grand events of a celebratory nature than was often the case. The daughter of the current Bailiff, Richard Hill, a Wood Street woollen draper, was married to Abraham Sturley, a Cambridge scholar. The bridegroom had been in the employment at Charlecote of the first Sir Thomas Lucy, who attended the wedding in person. This must have been made a grand and memorable occasion.

In August, the Queen herself rode through Stratford, among many other places, on her journey to and from Kenilworth where she spent nearly three weeks that summer. The sight of her train was surely a memorable event for an eleven-year-old boy. Many believe that Shakespeare's description, voiced by Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, of once hearing 'a mermaid on a dolphin's back' is so fanciful and far-fetched that he must have seen the elaborate water pageant prepared for Queen Elizabeth's delight when she was a guest at Kenilworth Castle.⁵² Perhaps it was so. It seems to me more likely that he heard about the extravagant entertainment through gossip rather than that he would have been taken there to see it directly. Stratford did supply a modest six shillings and eightpence towards the expense of her entertainment while she was passing through Stratford but that was a more sober affair of elaborate speeches to her before she crossed the bridge.⁵³ She returned south by way of Stratford and Charlecote and William will surely have had sight of the Queen for whom later he was to perform and write. During this year, his distant

relative, Edward Arden, owner of Park Hall, was Sheriff of the County, which perhaps could have made it more likely that the Stratford branch of the family may have been involved in the welcoming of Her Majesty to the town. John was still an active member of the Corporation at this time, but we do not know how close the branches of this family were so it could have made no difference. Peter Thomson suggests that John Shakespeare's later withdrawal from public life was possibly because of his family links with Edward Arden, who was disgraced in 1583 and beheaded because of his connections with John Somerville of Edson, who had intended to shoot the Queen. This seems a somewhat tenuous, unlikely belief, particularly since the Quineys appear to have been closer to John Somerville the would-be perpetrator of the treason, and they made no move to leave the Council.⁵⁴ In fact, the Shakespeares seem to have been enjoying good fortune at this time. In the autumn of 1575, John bought what is now the western end of the birthplace for forty pounds and soon after applied for a family coat of arms, suggesting belief in his rising status and financial security. 1575 also saw a change of schoolmaster at the Grammar School, an important event in any schoolboy's life. Thomas Jenkins, the replacement for Simon Hunt, was now in charge, and while we have no precise indication of the difference this would have made, we can be virtually sure that the change would have been felt by the pupils. We have no firm evidence of William Shakespeare's schooldays, other than the deduction that he was well educated, and the brief portraits of educational methodology we glean from his plays. These will be outlined in a subsequent chapter.

Judging by the records still extant, 1576 was an altogether quieter and more sedate year in Stratford. The accounts we have suggest that financial and social problems were beginning to be felt here and the Corporation took steps to deal with them.

There were rent increases on some of the Council's properties as the agreements came up for renewal. Each alderman was to pay two pence each week for the relief of the poor and twelve pence per year towards wages for a beadle, a burgess to give one penny a week for the poor and four pence a year to pay and clothe the beadle.⁵⁵

Two aldermen, however, were not to be bound by these new demands: Lewes appears to have been completely excluded from the order and Plumley had only to pay eight, not twelve, pence.⁵⁶ John Shakespeare must have been deemed able to pay for he was not excluded from the order - but it was from this meeting that he gave up attending Council meetings. It is hard to tell whether this factor was merely coincidental with his change of behaviour but his subsequent financial difficulties, made obvious by the debtor claims regularly made against him in the following years, would tend to support the hypothesis. We must remember, of course, that other factors of which there is no record may have played their part too. Others in the town were clearly facing financial difficulties and trying to generate extra income, illegally when necessary. For example, everyone in the town was forbidden to sell any ale to George Turner, his wife or his servants, for they were accused of 'selling on', which could not be allowed.⁵⁷ Ale-sellers had to be licensed, their numbers limited and their produce monitored by the town's aletaster.

Nor was the recession limited to this district. It was in this year, the thirteenth of Elizabeth's reign, that Parliament made The Statute of Caps.⁵⁸ This was set up in the interests of workers in the declining wool trade; it decreed that all males aged seven and above must wear a woollen cap or hat every Sunday, with a fine for each non-observance of the new ruling. This new edict would have affected young William. Perhaps Stratford foresaw some difficulty in implementing this command - both the stocks and ducking stool were repaired at this time!⁵⁹

1577 seems to have been a sombre year throughout England. The Privy Council sent out letters in July demanding that musters be held and lists of men who had been trained to serve as soldiers sent to them. Along with this list, the Privy Council also required to know how many alehouses there were in each town and to be given a list of the inn-keepers. By the middle of October Stratford had complied, but to organize these things cost money and a levy to pay for this work was made on the leading townspeople. John Shakespeare's contribution was assessed at three shillings and fourpence halfpenny; a year later he had still not paid this money to the Council.⁶⁰ For the Shakespeare family it appears to have been a particularly difficult time financially. As William began his crucial teenage years his father's affairs seem to have deteriorated rapidly: his financial difficulties were now becoming recognised. He was not alone: Thomas Jenkins, the school master paid his rent by the quarter, not by the year; Mr Heycroft, the vicar, needed to be lent some money, giving the Council an I O U until Lady Day.⁶¹ Some townspeople were taking lodgers into their houses to gain a little more support, but this was not allowed and the Council took

steps to have them evicted.⁶² In November, the Corporation set up a system whereby they could assess the physical state of their properties and land in Stratford. This would give them a clear picture of where they could expect to extract more rent and where repairs had to be made to keep the town in good condition. Many of those who rented property from the Corporation, either to live in themselves or to derive rent from, would have been contracted to keep repairs up-to-date at their own expense. If times were becoming hard, it was essential that the Corporation protected the town's interests rather than those of a few individuals. Life in Stratford, however, was not entirely gloomy: as we can see by payments made to them, Lord Leicester's Players and the Earl of Worcester's Players were still coming and performing in the town, and in September, Whitgift, at this time Bishop of Worcester, and his train of followers were entertained at the Swan, at the town's expense.⁶³

Overall, however, threat and financial insecurity seemed to hang over Stratford; no doubt the feeling permeated throughout England at this time. In January, 1578, the aldermen and burgesses of Stratford learned they must pay for the furnishing out of three pikemen, two billmen and one archer. On this occasion, John Shakespeare did figure among the seven liable men who were excused from payment.⁶⁴ In September, when some Councillors were fined for being absent from Council business meetings, John Shakespeare, together with Thomas Brogden, who had a tavern in Rother Market, was not required to pay the fine.⁶⁵ Clearly the Shakespeares were perceived to be in serious financial difficulty. How humiliating fourteen-year-old William may have found this may even depend upon how limited and restricted his provender may

have already become. Arthur Kinney paints a distressing picture of the eating habits of poorer people.⁶⁶ Perhaps the Shakespeare children suffered real privation for part of their childhoods. It was a dark time for the whole town. Arms were collected and repaired. Some men sold their swords to the Council, whether for financial or patriotic reasons we cannot know. It was clearly a time of hardship for many, so much so that the Corporation set the price of ale, the staple drink, lower for a second time in a few years. When the latest requirement for the aldermen to pay towards the support of the poor was made, John Shakespeare was excluded from being required to pay this tax too. ‘Item yt ys ordered that every alderman shall pay weekly towards the releif (sic) of the poore iiiij^d sauing Mr John shaxpeare and mr Rob’t bratt who shall not be taxed to paye any thinge.’⁶⁷ In spite of the Council’s efforts to spare him, still John Shakespeare found a need to borrow money, using Asbies as security.⁶⁸ This action led to his son losing part of the property he may have been able to inherit, for John Shakespeare was never able to reclaim the farm.

There were not only financial problems besetting the people of Stratford: there was a shortage of water which to agriculturalists is always a problem and leads almost inevitably to a rise in the price of the food which is available. ‘The first rain that came for many a day,’ reads one contemporary diary entry. ‘All pasture about us was withered; rain in the afternoon like an April shower’.⁶⁹ That same autumn saw a notable resurgence of plague in the town. It was not of the severity of the 1564 outbreak but no one would know that until the infection subsided of course, and by that time several children had died.⁷⁰

There was unrest further afield too. Elizabeth appeared to be seriously considering marrying the Duc d'Alencon. Because of the perceived threat to the life of the Queen from those who did not want such an alliance to take place, a Royal Proclamation was made to forbid the carrying of firearms throughout the kingdom, and in September Stratford Corporation put an embargo on the taking of any weapons to the market after an incident there.⁷¹ William Shakespeare's early life could not realistically be described as one spent in an untroubled, rural paradise. From an early age he was made aware of the dangers which innocent people might face and of the unfairness and inequality of the fates of different individuals, both somewhat formative realisations for a young man.

This perception could only have been heightened the following year, 1579, when his sister Anne died, aged only seven and a half.⁷² In the following December, Katherine Hamlett fell into the river near Tiddington and was drowned. Thought first to have deliberately killed herself, she was buried in unconsecrated ground. Later, however, her body was exhumed and the Bailiff of the time, Henry Rogers, ruled that she had fallen in by accident so she was reburied in consecrated ground.⁷³ The whole incident would be very likely to remain in the memory of the local inhabitants, more especially perhaps affecting one near her age as William Shakespeare was, being fifteen years old at this time.

Another memorable event would have been again watching the newly “trained” soldiers march from the town en route to join the Earl of Warwick at Warwick, each having been given his sixteen pence survival money.⁷⁴ We cannot in fact presume that Shakespeare watched them go: he may well have been one of them or, by this time, have been working somewhere within or without the town. We still don’t know where he was, although many have speculated and convinced both themselves and others that their beliefs must be correct - as, indeed, one at least of them may well be. At the same time, not all of the claims put forward can be correct. It is not likely that William was still at school here. For that reason, it seems unlikely to me that he was ever taught by John Cotton, first an assistant teacher and then the man who took over from Thomas Jenkins altogether. He had reached the age when a boy would move on to university if he were to go there, and nobody has claimed that Shakespeare did that. Contemporary sneers at Shakespeare’s limited education - first by Robert Greene and later Ben Jonson, for example - would seem to preclude that path, as too would his family’s clear lack of expendable funds. There seems to have been no tradition in Stratford of moving on to a university education.

There is no evidence that he took up an apprenticeship either; there are extant several papers dealing with arrangements for apprenticeships and none refers to Shakespeare. They could, of course, have existed once but been lost through time, but a further telling factor against this hypothesis is that, as we know, Shakespeare was to marry three years later. Apprenticeships lasted between seven and ten years and an apprentice was not allowed by law to marry until he had completed his time,

usually not before he was twenty-four years old. One might posit that William might have begun an apprenticeship but withdrawn from it before completing the training. This could happen, by mutual agreement, as some extant documentation proves but it was not common.⁷⁵ While possible, some of these suggestions seem to me like grasping at ever-less-likely straws. Perhaps he was simply working for his father; no legal agreement would need to be drawn up between them, and with his father's permission, perhaps encouragement, he would have been free to marry as and when he chose.

There is a problem with all the possibilities which have been suggested, even sometimes claimed to be the "truth" of the matter rather than a conjecture. We do know that were he still living in Stratford in 1579 he would have had the chance to watch performances both by Lord Strange's Men and The Countess of Essex' Players. As Asa Briggs in his Introduction to Palliser's book says: "Where the facts are missing....it is the duty of the historian to say so".⁷⁶ At fifteen in 1579, we know William Shakespeare had almost surely left, or was on the point of leaving school. We do not know whether he was still living in Stratford. We do know his family had lost little Anne, that they had financial difficulties. We know that Stratford too was not the wealthy town it had been halfway through the century but we know that still troupes of actors visited and performed there.

In the next year, 1580, another muster of troops was made; this time, the selection committee included William Catesbye, High Sheriff of the County for this year. The

following year, he was put in prison for harbouring Jesuits. It was his son, Robert, who was to be fined for his involvement in the Essex plot against the Queen in 1601 and taken as a conspirator in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. Clearly the Queen and the Privy Council had good reason not to trust even those who worked about the Queen's business, apparently supporting her government's policies. No one could be relied on completely, it would seem, and for the people in general, it must have been an age of confusion with little certainty concerning what was right action in both political and religious matters, or to whom one should remain loyal. In William Shakespeare's developing mind, there was plenty to think about for a person of a philosophical nature as he clearly was.

By April of this year, an up-to-date book had been drawn up listing the names and dwellings of the gentlemen and freeholders in Warwickshire.⁷⁷ This included the names of thirty-eight men in Stratford; John Shakespeare is still listed among these, so once again we are given a confusing picture of what his fortune amounted to. I think his inclusion must have been based on the fact that he was a householder rather than upon his easily available liquid assets. In this same year, 1580, both John Shakespeare and his sureties were fined by the Queen's Bench when he failed to appear in Court on the assigned date.⁷⁸ His precarious financial situation could not have been improving. It seems likely to me that, given this circumstance, his eldest son would have been gainfully employed and helping to support his parents' other children. Increasingly I find it difficult to believe he was still dependent on his father, and for him to have been helping in his father's business would not have been

the most practical solution to the family's insolvency. Younger siblings might do that; and while there are a few references connected to the skills and tools of glove-making in his plays, they are not numerous. Since he had grown up with his father's working space being within the family home, he would have learnt enough about the art of the whittawer without needing to have practised it himself to be able to refer to it accurately.

For reasons so far not established there seems to have been a higher incidence of people dying in Stratford around 1580. There is a possibility that records were being kept more carefully than usual, but if this is the case then the recorder went back to more slapdash entering of the deaths occurring in Stratford very quickly! According to the record - and it makes little or no variation whether one counts by the calendar of the time, that is from April to April or by the modern counting from December to December - deaths averaged forty-four a year from 1575 - 1577, then there was a sudden huge increase to seventy-eight in 1578, two of which are attributed to the plague. The years 1579 - 1582 saw an average of 62.5 recorded deaths per year before the number drops sharply again in 1583 to forty-seven, fifty-seven in 1584. Some fluctuation is to be expected for any town in any era but these seem somewhat exceptional. (There is no cause to explore them further here for my purposes but the effect of either so many extra deaths in the town or the cause or causes of these may have been significant to William Shakespeare's mental development too.)

There is a very good and detailed Chamberlain's Account which was presented to the Council in January 1581. It is from such sources that a researcher may glean really accurate information and it is the very diversity of its contents which enables the reader to gain as full a picture as is still possible of life in general at this time and in this town. While I feel it necessary to limit myself to references which clearly could be of relevance to this study, for anyone wishing to study the whole document I have included the version printed in the *Minutes and Accounts Volume III*, reproduction of the original document no longer being possible. (See Appendix).

One very noticeable feature made clear by this Chamberlain's Account is how self-sufficient Stratford was. Not only were the repairs needed in the town carried out by the local artisans, as one would expect, but everything they needed seemed to have been supplied by the local tradesmen. Patrick supplied 'burdens of rodde' - the hazel branches woven between the wooden framework of the houses to support the daub which would fill the spaces. Richard Hornbye made the staples and chains which would secure prisoners to the prison walls, providing extra safety from assault to the townspeople. John Bauden went to collect sand for the town while Nick Barnhurst, who hated the Corporation who supplied him with work, prepared for them a hundred lathes, fifty tiles, a thousand nails, and made the beadle's uniform.⁷⁹ The list goes on and on. As one tradesman or shopkeeper died or became too old to work and, hopefully, bought a place in the almshouses where he could best be supported until he died, another was ready to take his place and continue to supply the service needed by the town. William Hiccoxe became a licensed draper

and set up shop in Wood Street while Thomas Asplyn became a licensed shoemaker, Frances Wheeler a shearman. There was a continuum that never seemed to be interrupted, including such matters as Burgess Thomas Dixon, failing to pay his rent yet again - at this time he owed two years' rent on his tenancy of The Swan in Bridge Street, in spite of the fact that it seemed to do good business. This shortcoming did not prevent The Swan being the venue for some of the Corporate entertainment which was offered from time to time.⁸⁰ I think it was this continuation of the traditional provision of services, one man succeeding another in supplying a commodity which had always been offered in Stratford, which was in part responsible for Stratford declining in its prosperity. As the needs and demands of the town altered, the trades offered were not flexible enough to keep up with these changes. Those who could see that times were changing had to leave the town to follow the new trends which were emerging. Printing was one of the developing trades for example. To be trained in this skill, a man had to leave the town as did both the Field brothers, Richard and Jasper, Richard Badger, Roger Locke and Alan Orien.⁸¹ Still the playmakers visited Stratford and were allowed to perform; in this Account we see payment was made to the Earl of Worcester's Players and to Lord Berkeley's Players. It looks as though more acting companies were joining the circuit, so play-going was likely to be on the increase; but Stratford, leaning towards puritan dogma, was in fact to ban players from the town long before William Shakespeare's plays could be performed there. The last payment by the Council to a playing company was made in 1597, the year Shakespeare purchased New Place. They 'even paid them to go away' Fripp claims.⁸²

In 1582, on the fifth of September, after a gap of six years, John Shakespeare attended the Council meeting in his capacity still of Alderman. Little business was done on this occasion except for the annual task of electing the new Bailiff, so it seems logical to assume that to take part in this process was John's primary reason for attending and that the outcome of this election was important to him. He attended no further meetings of the Council and four years later was put out of office, understandably, and not before time for the efficient working of the town's governance. This is another factor which we would like to understand: why was he allowed to keep the honour so long while apparently doing nothing, and unable or unwilling to contribute to the town's financial upkeep? The answer to this question might lead us to realise what was the standing of the Shakespeare family during William's formative years and how much their fortunes fluctuated. This knowledge might aid the understanding of what caused the development of his abilities into outstanding, undeniable genius.

Also in 1582, as we have already seen, Anne Hathaway became pregnant and her marriage to William Shakespeare was arranged and took place in November.⁸³ This would have been a big event in the family but not necessarily a welcomed change. What would his brothers and sister have felt about this older lady joining their family group? We do not have positive proof, of course, that she did, but since it would have been the traditional thing to do and there are no foreseeable alternatives open to her, we can, almost safely, presume this to have been the case. Her father having

died, she was living with only her step-mother and half-siblings. There would have been some shift in relationships within the Shakespeare household but already, since we are dealing in the main with the development of Shakespeare's genius, we have virtually left the relevant, crucial early years. Since he was still so young, however, this event of marriage followed by almost immediate fatherhood may well have been the final formative factors in his character and development.

So this year of his marriage, 1582, I treat as the end of the part of his life we need to itemise as far as we can. (We know nothing further which nearly relates to him at this time except the birth of the twins early in 1585, shortly before William was twenty-one.)⁸⁴ I think it is worth taking a final look at Stratford too in the same month of November 1582 in which he married. The Council decided a survey of the town was needed and appointed fifteen men to gather information concerning the state of the municipal properties and survey the number and age of trees, a valuable commodity, currently growing on its land. It was carried out promptly on the fifth and sixth of the month and offers us a final look at Stratford's physical appearance. Clearly in the summer months it was a leafy town. The trees, being in fact a cash crop, did not vary much: elms predominated everywhere - had Dutch elm disease struck, Stratford would have been very hard hit! Ash was a poor second numerically but such trees were also plentiful. Hardly any other genus of tree is mentioned, those that are being fruit-bearing: trees were not used as decoration in this hard-pressed town.

As far as property was concerned, some was reported to be in good or acceptable repair but, for a town covering such a small area of land, there were evidently many eyesores. The barns in particular were being left to fall into decay, a sure sign that there was little money to spare for inessential work. For example, John Wheler's barn was declared 'ruinous and reddie to faull' while William Welche's barn was propped up.⁸⁵ Several houses sound almost uninhabitable: the back of George Aynges house in Henley street was 'broken and unthatched' while William Smith had a wood pile 'w^{ch} hurteth arther nualles house'; in Bridge Street Angel Arthernwall, a tenant of Cawdrey's who leased the property from the Council, was found to have 'two bays decayed' while Ann Pinder's house was a 'tenement in decay'⁸⁶. Even in the High Street the south end of Anthony Wolston's house was decayed, there were 'deficiencies' to William Troute's house and there were 'deficiencies' on the side of the gaol hall next to Troute's place.⁸⁷ In a town relying on itself for such building repair business, the fact that some inhabitants are not keeping their property in good repair means that others in the town are not able to pursue the work that enables them to prosper. The poverty of some leads inevitably to the poverty of others. These notes refer only to property administered by the Corporation where tenants had a responsibility to keep them in good repair and they were sited on the main streets of the town, not in little used back alleys. In what condition, as times became harder, would be the property belonging to individuals who owned their houses? In particular, how well cared for would the Shakespeare house be, where we know the owner had long-standing financial difficulties and where there had been found to be nothing to constrain to repay his debts? One feels

that when the Council arranged for a collection to be made throughout the town in 1583 for repairs to be made to the church, and when it was also decreed that all house roofs had to be tiled they were spitting against the wind!⁸⁸

Knowing what high esteem Shakespeare enjoys today because of his writing, it is easy to forget that his actual life was likely to have been one of hardship, difficulty and lack of respect, in spite of his eventually becoming a rich man. As we saw in Chapter Two, some psychologists see suffering as a necessary concomitant of the development of genius potential; if it is, then William Shakespeare would have seen and experienced enough difficulties to assist his. Many believe, and I am among these, that the determination to make a mark on the world, which it seems is very common among such high achievers, is engendered in part by the need to struggle to attain something. Few people are going to devote much of their lives to lonely composition - and it is virtually impossible to create such intricate writing as Shakespeare did if there are constant interruptions - unless this seems to be necessary or their only option to achieve. The 'career' which he adopted was uncertain and scorned by many. It did not lead to respect in any quarter, except among fellow writers and actors, and they were shown to feel envy and jealousy too.⁸⁹ The siting of theatres, on the outskirts of London to avoid the jurisdiction of the Authority in the city, meant actors' working lives were spent among other "undesirable elements" of that society. The outcry when it was proposed to reopen the Blackfriars theatre for an adult theatrical Company is just one clear indication of the widely felt opposition to Shakespeare's chosen occupation and its perpetrators. It

is of interest to note that one of the signatories to the petition to the Privy Council against allowing Blackfriars to be used by an adult Company was Richard Field, the printer from Stratford, claimed in some books to have been 'Shakespeare's friend.'⁹⁰ If the young Shakespeare had led a calm life in Stratford, with little interruption to his serene, youthful development, it is likely he would not have been well prepared for the hardship and difficulties invariably associated with the harrassed, partly itinerant lifestyle which was to be his lot. He never lived while in London in a house which was his own but always in lodgings; he did not put down roots in the Capital. This seems unusual in view of the prosperity which he acquired but may be accounted for by the low status of his profession.

With the benefit of hindsight, we know that he joined a Company which had the security arising from continued support and patronage from the highest quarter. At that time, however, his Company would have not had the assurance that this was not to be withdrawn at any time, even when they had achieved some status. Patrons could be fickle, or lose their own standing. Any Company was perpetually in danger of being banned or disbanded without notice. Added to this is the fact that play-going was not, nor ever has been, a universally selected form of entertainment. Its appeal is limited. As plays moved further away from their religious roots and as the comparative aestheticism of protestantism replaced the richer response to the world which catholicism had engendered, actors and acting became less widely necessary or acceptable to their patrons than before. A few decades after Shakespeare's death, public play performances were to be totally discarded and illegal until well into the

second half of the century. I think it safe to assume that his life in Stratford was not a particularly happy upbringing and this helped to give him the impetus to make his own way as he saw fit. It would also have prepared him to accept a career which was unglorified, hard and hazardous, as the biographies of other contemporary playwrights will confirm.

CHAPTER 5 SHAKESPEARE'S WRITING

Genius - mysterious irrepressibility and its ability to arise from the most unpromising of lineages and to flourish even in the meanest of circumstances.¹

Lykken.

The preceding chapters have set out the reasons for looking closely at Shakespeare's youth, and the factors concerning his early life which have been established or may be deduced acceptably to most people. When we come to study the actual evidence for his genius, his early writing, we face problems. What we would like it to show us is the first signs of what enabled him to become a great writer and the influences upon his development. We want also to observe how his ability to express his thoughts or intentions both expanded and deepened with practice, so that we see his development in action, as it were. Most of us would also like to learn more about the man who experienced this growth. To claim that anything he wrote points to his personal character, opinion or beliefs puts us on unsure ground because in his plays he is writing in the guise of a character created for a particular drama, not as himself. He had the ability to present opposing views and attitudes with the conviction of a believer in whatever was apposite for that purpose. He envisioned equally well the stance of the naive innocent and that of the worldly-wise deceiver, the loyal, faithful subject and the time-serving betrayer, the clever man and the fool, the lover and the

revenger. His language was suited to the standing, the situation and the attitude of the puppet he was creating for that part. All was his, yet nothing was 'his'.

Many believe he was writing personally in his composition of the sonnet sequence.

While it is possible, even likely, that in these poems he was able to express more of his personal thoughts and feelings, we cannot claim them to be the expression of himself without some reservations. To begin with, the thoughts and feelings are not consistent throughout the cycle. This in itself is of little importance since reactions and attitudes to other people vary and fluctuate as time passes or situations change, and some people are bisexual. The ability to enjoy both homosexual and heterosexual relationships allows for dichotomy in the sexes of the beloved subjects to be acceptable or possible, without the apparent inconsistency debarring the writer from being in the process of expressing his own feelings. However, possibility is not certainty. The sonnet sequence was a literary genre not uncommon at this time. It was simply a mode of composition enjoyed as a linked group of poems of a particular style and length, another way to demonstrate a man's control of a type of poetry difficult to sustain for what, in the sonnet sequence Shakespeare wrote, amounts to some 2,156 lines. Whether any or all of the thoughts and feelings expressed in these can be surely described as Shakespeare's personal expression of love, disappointment, regret or shame is also uncertain ground as a basis on which to build incontrovertible evidence about him, his life or his thoughts, and therefore his genius. Since, too, the dates of their composition may well be later in his career than

the earliest plays we know to have been written by him, I will exclude consideration of them from this thesis.

We do not have any personal writing by him: no letters, no diaries, no accounts.

Without these one has little ground on which to base certain knowledge of his personality, his preferences, his attitudes and feelings, or his day-to-day concerns and activities. One cannot be sure whether he wrote continuously or at certain times in the theatrical year, that he wrote in London or Stratford, in a public place such as the theatre itself, or in a more private situation. We do not know if he felt fulfilled as a theatre poet. Such knowledge, if we only possessed it, would supply us with less ephemeral and debatable data and also provide information concerning exactly how he made his money or more about how he spent it, to add to the few deeds and title rights which are documented: it is these deficiencies in our knowledge which have led to assertions from and arguments between his biographers and critics. This lack of autobiographical documentation concerning his character and behaviour forms the crux of the difficulty for the psychologists who have accepted his genius but chosen not to illustrate its growth: they do not believe it can be demonstrated. While I know they are possibly right, still there is the choice to try to trace its development - and accept failure if necessary, which I do.

There are a few documents which give us something of Shakespeare speaking or writing as himself. The first of these is an account of his words as reported by the London Court official in the case between Mountjoy and his son-in-law referring to

their dispute over the dowry arrangement made before the marriage of Mountjoy's daughter.² It is a written deposition of Shakespeare's answers to the questions put to him; his responses appear simple and straightforward though imprecise, and, I would imagine, were of almost as little use to the Court then in the case they were considering as they are to us now in furthering our understanding of the development of his genius. Like the Court of the time, we have no knowledge of whether he truly had only a vague recollection of what agreement had been made originally, or whether he chose to be non-committal being on oath, or in order not to favour either party to the dispute.

The second source is his will.³ Here again we can learn little of the man, even less about his genius. It is not a personally composed document, having, of necessity, to be couched in suitable legal jargon and probably dictated to and rephrased by the solicitor, Francis Collyns, who would use the normal legal terminology rather than the phraseology of the will-maker. While many feel able to glean knowledge of the man from his munificence and his choice of beneficiaries, of his genius I think it says nothing. Mairi Macdonald, Deputy head of Archives at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, who has made a close study of the will, describes it as 'the will of a typical English gentleman', and claims perspicaciously that 'we seek to impose on the document our own theories as to his motives'.⁴ These two documents, therefore cannot play a useful part of my exposition.

The third type of personal writing predates those I have listed and is most relevant here. It is the two dedications of the poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* which were printed with them. The first begins very formally; Shakespeare appears to be uncertain whether his work merits the attention of the Earl of Southampton. The style appears initially stilted and guarded, but how far that displays his actual feeling and how far it only illustrates the accepted form of address for such a dedication by a writer to a possible patron is arguable. Even personal letters of this period often have a formality of expression. Shakespeare writes deprecatingly of his 'unpolished lines' and suggests they are too weak to be offered to a man of the Earl's standing. He confidently promises to produce something better for the Earl, but only if *Venus and Adonis* meets with approval from him. The metaphors he employs are handled very confidently: 'But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear so barren a land for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest'.⁵ He calls the poem 'the first heir to my invention': in what sense he means this is debatable. It is surely not his first piece of sustained writing; perhaps his choice of the word 'heir' suggests he saw it as the first piece he felt able to offer as well worth writing, that he was happy to acknowledge as his, or the first piece of which he was sole author. The dedication ends somewhat chaotically, as if Shakespeare was uncertain how to bring it to a satisfactory close.

I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content, which wish may always answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation.⁵

What is he saying? What does it mean precisely? It is amusing to perceive Shakespeare's apparent struggle to say the right thing to a prospective noble patron. The rhythm of the phrasing is evocative of Dogberry's efforts (written later) to speak to those of higher standing - though without the misuse of words:

But truly, for my own part, if I were as tedious as a king I could find it in my heart to bestow it all of your worship⁶

Shakespeare's second dedication, which precedes *The Rape of Lucrece*, is more confident, clear and precise. He knows now his writing is acceptable to the Earl and suggests he will continue to dedicate all his work to him.

What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours, being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater my duty would show greater, meantime, as it is, it is bound to your lordship, to whom I wish long life still lengthened with all happiness⁷

Even between these two pieces, I think we can detect a more practised ability and knowledge emerging. The final sentence, following a common format, expresses the same wish for the Earl's happiness as the first dedication also attempted, but more succinctly and clearly. These dedications, then, while personal, are still bound by necessity and convention. Perhaps they throw some light on his character by their expression but little more could be safely deduced from them beyond a much greater confidence in his relationship to the dedicatee.

It is in his early plays that we might hope to observe some development of his abilities expressed through subject matter and thought closely connected with his having been brought up in Stratford. When he began writing, he would have been obliged to rely for his material largely on his education and experience of life in the

town, before his time in the much more cosmopolitan world of London and beyond opened up for him a wider scene to draw upon. This is a need common to all writers particularly at the beginning of their careers. It is for this reason that I will limit this research to his earliest known writing only. Most writers, of course, will continue to call upon their early experiences throughout their writing life and Shakespeare may well have done so too. However, we can only be sure this would have been the case for him in his earliest writing and so it is only the earliest of his known plays and poetry that I would confidently describe as having, of necessity, to have taken their being from his time in Stratford and therefore to be of relevant value to this thesis.

Clearly it will be almost impossible to state incontrovertibly that a specific passage denotes an aspect of development, or that Shakespeare's choosing to include or invent an incident in a play arises from a specific experience in his life. One must resort here to high probability, offering as strong support as is available. There will be many factors which are not available to us; however, not to attempt to illustrate the growth of his genius from his work, which is where the evidence for it lies, is not an option. Howe reminds us that 'Even geniuses always have to spend at least a decade learning their craft. Writers, like other makers of creative achievements, put enormous efforts into the task of acquiring exceptional expertise'.⁸ Gardner concurs with this: 'The sheer amount of training and practice a person has undertaken turns out to be the best available predictor of high levels of expertise'.⁹ It will be at least of interest to look at what Shakespeare chose to be his 'training and practice' in the earliest of his writings that we know of. The plays I will look at are *Edward III*, *The*

Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Taming of the Shrew, and Parts I,II and III Henry VI.

The precise order in which the plays were written is not finally established but those named above are thought to be possibly the earliest and it is for this reason I have elected to discuss them. The exception to this is *Edward III*. Since this play seems likely to be accepted widely as partly written by Shakespeare but is not yet universally accepted, I have elected to look at this play first before moving on to discussion of those already part of the canon.

Edward III

The play *Edward III* is in process of moving from Shakespeare's apocrypha into the canon; increasingly it is being claimed as showing signs of having been co-written by him and is included in both the Riverside and Cambridge editions of his plays. It must be an early work - it was printed in 1596 - but Melchiori argues that it was likely to have been performed either late in 1592 or early 1593, in spite of the London theatres being closed because of plague from June 1592. He says: 'The closing of the theatres caused by the plague in June 1592 cannot be assumed as a terminus, since performances took place in or 'about' London for short periods during the epidemics'.¹⁰ He says, '1590 and 1594 are the unquestionable limits of composition'.¹¹ Whether or not he is correct in his estimate, it is certainly an example of early composition if some of it is by Shakespeare.

There has long been controversy over the authorship of this play. Since it is seen to be probably a collaborative composition, along with other of the early plays more

regularly ascribed to Shakespeare, we have the additional difficulty of deciding which scenes or passages are to be ascribed to him. It is generally thought that scenes I.ii., II.i., II.ii., and IV.iv were most likely to have been written by him. I myself would include much of I.i. as well. Robert Hewison and others claim that this play has close affinity with *Henry V*. Certainly the way in which the Archbishop of Canterbury authenticates Henry V's right to the French throne in that play, at even greater length than we have here is evocative of the opening scene.¹² I see, as one possibility, that the play was written but, because of the embargo on stage playing because of plague, was not performed widely, and so Shakespeare was able to reuse much of what he had composed for it. I will show later other examples of his borrowing from a presumed early play for use in a later one. The play was entered in the Stationers' Register by Cuthbert Burby in 1595 and a quarto edition printed in 1596 which claims it is printed 'As it hath bin sundrie times plaied about the Citie of London'. It is upon this claim that Melchiori presumes it to have been performed during the forbidden period. He may be correct; however 'sundrie' is vague in reference to the number of performances the play may have had and 'about' - as he himself notes - imprecise concerning where they may have taken place.¹³ I think one can surmise that during plague visitations, the number of people risking infection in a crowded gathering would have been fairly small. The printer's claim, therefore, should not be read as a good guide to the number of people who would have seen its early performance.

Act I Scene ii interestingly holds both the writer's apology for his own provincial exterior and confidence in his writing skill as he perceived it. At their first meeting, the countess asks King Edward to grace her castle with his presence. She likens it to

...a country swain,
 Whose habit rude and manners blunt and plain
 Presageth nought, yet inly beautified
 With bounty's riches, and fair hidden pride.
 For where the golden ore doth buried lie,
 The ground, undecked wth nature's tapestry,
 Seems barren, sere, unfertile, fruitless, dry;
 And where the upper turf of earth doth boast
 His pride, perfumes, and parti-coloured cost'
 Delve there and find this issue and their pride
 To spring from ordure and corruption's side. 1.ii.145-55.

Likening a house to a country lover is both an ambitious comparison and an unusual one.

That the writer was holding this conceived similarity clearly in his mind is underlined a few lines later:

These ragged walls no testimony are
 What is within, but like a cloak doth hide
 From weather's waste the ungarnished pride.
1.ii.157-9.

Aspects of this description strongly suggest to me a young man, aware of his ability (as most geniuses quickly are), but knowing it to be unproven and unrecognised. He has become aware that in cosmopolitan society his clothes are unfashionable and his manners appear somewhat uncouth. He apparently has little to offer which would be prized by those around him, while he himself realises his promise and so cherishes 'fair hidden pride'. (Green's attack, apparently upon Shakespeare, suggests the opposition his entry into the playwriting fraternity brought upon him, from some quarters at least.¹⁴) Melchiori goes to great lengths in his notes to try to make sense of line 153, claiming

that the word 'presumes' should have been read as 'perfumes' and have been preceded by a comma, but I think the earlier reading was correct.¹⁵ To use the metaphor of a house to stand for the body which surrounds a soul, the important centre of the 'house' was not unusual. To outsiders at this time Shakespeare's own 'house' offers little because his ability is still buried; only his pride supports him, but hidden in his earth, still to be exhumed, lies his talent, his genius, which will eventually give pride to others who discover his ability which comes from his country roots. All young writers are egocentric; if they weren't, they wouldn't have the strong belief that they have something important to say to the world at large, which is their strongest motivation for preserving their thoughts on paper in the first place and expecting to be able to sell their writing. It is a pity so few of us are as right about ourselves as William Shakespeare was! The last three lines I quoted (lines 157-159) continue and underline the metaphor. He suggests he is poorly dressed, but that that is no accurate indication of his true worth - 'These ragged walls no testimony are / What is within' - His outside appearance cloaks what will eventually be displayed when the time is right. In this passage I feel we have an example of Shakespeare writing personally and expressing clearly his awareness of his genius - although the word itself was not then current.

Edward III may offer us some of Shakespeare's earliest love poetry. He could have been writing initially with his own early efforts of courtship in mind, or perhaps professional writing on behalf of someone else had been part of his 'training and practice' before he was recognised as a playwright. He needed to have been practising his lexical skills at length before he could produce outstanding work as we have seen. Act II Scene i is a

veritable inundation of love poetry, nicely balanced by the humorous reluctance of the King's secretary, Lodowick, to use his creative talents to aid his monarch's pursuit and seduction of the beautiful Countess of Salisbury:

This fellow is well read in poetry,
And hath a lusty and persuasive spirit;
I will acquaint him with my passion,
Which he shall shadow with a veil of lawn,
II.i.53-56.

The lengthy feast of poetry which follows has many of the comparisons familiar in many of Shakespeare's better approved works. There are seasonal references from nature, for example: 'There is no summer but in her cheerful looks,/ Nor frosty winter but in her disdain', (II.ii.42.) and 'Her hair, far softer than the silkworm's twist' (II.ii.115.) He builds again on the first of these comparisons, extending the simple metaphor at greater length beginning on line 157.

Say she hath thrice more splendour than the sun,
That her perfections emulates the sun,
That she breeds sweets as plenteous as the sun,
That she doth thaw cold winter like the sun,
That she doth cheer fresh summer like the sun,
That she doth dazzle gazers like the sun,
And in this application to the sun,
Bid her be free and general as the sun,
Who smiles upon the basest weed that grows
As lovingly as on the fragrant rose.

Besides the reiteration of the initial comparison there is also his characteristic use of exaggeration to stress his idea. We have seen this already and his advocacy of this figure for good effect beginning at line 85:

Devise for fair a fairer word than fair,
And every ornament that thou wouldst praise
Fly it a pitch above the soar of praise.
For flattery fear thou not to be convicted,
For, were thy admiration ten times more,

Ten times ten thousand more the worth exceeds
Of that thou art to praise, thy praise's worth.

His use of hyperbole decreased as his appreciation of good writing gradually threw off some of the classical influences which he had acquired, but he retained the use of enhancing a description by using the juxtapositioning of opposites and also in the deliberate repetition of a word or phrase. In lines 101 and 102 he opposes 'throne' with 'footstool' and in line 145 'dark' and 'light' followed by 'the sun' with 'a fading taper' (l.146/7). In both the long quotations given above, deliberate repetition was clear and the same figure occurs within several single lines, for example in 'Since green our thoughts, green be the conventicle' (l.63), and 'I kill my poor soul, and my poor soul me' (l.243). While use of this technique is not exclusive to Shakespeare's writing, such close siting of repeated words is noticeable more in his work than in that of others.

Phraseology found in Shakespeare's sonnet sequence is also in evidence. There is an undoubted link between the line 'Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds' (l.252) and the identical fourteenth line of Sonnet 94 - for which composition the line was first devised need not be debated here. More reworking of favoured phrasing can be seen. There are two references to the spider in fairly similar terms, for example, one in this scene 'a poison-sucking envious spider (l.285), and another in III.I 81., a scene not commonly attributed to Shakespeare. They are both cited by Melchiori as references to the proverb 'Where the bee sucks honey the spider sucks poison'. Certainly the idea of a spider being horrific appears to reverberate in Shakespeare's mind. We meet the same creature viewed with equal dislike in Richard III more than once.¹⁶ I find of most

interest what I denoted as his awareness of his own outstanding ability and the characteristics of his style that are being honed. I have to accept that parts of this play do show evidence of Shakespeare's composition. It is likely then that he began his professional playwriting career as a collaborator but that he swiftly became recognised for his ability, if Green could single him out in 1592 as one who 'is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey'.¹⁴ Not only are the words and style of description in *Edward III* closely reminiscent of other of his works but also other characteristics may be seen which are not very common in the work of playwrights contemporary with him.

There are, for example, thematic habits which occur here and recur elsewhere. One of his greatest achievements to my mind is his ability to underline the philosophical basis of a play by the close alliance between the plot and one or more subplots. In *Edward III* the philosophical argument of the play revolves around the King's need to override his personal desire in order to sustain the upholding of his honour and the good of his kingdom. In the subplot, Villiers, captured by Salisbury, is sent to the Duke of Normandy to obtain safe passage for his captor to the King at Calais. In return, he is to obtain his own freedom. However, the Duke, Charles, does not grant the request but is surprised that Villiers decides therefore he himself must return to captivity, not having fulfilled his task successfully. Charles was willing to protect him from Salisbury's reprisals: Villiers is more interested in upholding his honour. It is Salisbury's trust in Villiers and the latter's scrupulous honesty which gains Salisbury his safe conduct. This doubling and repetition of the theme and consideration of what true nobility is ensures its message is noted by some, at least, of the audience, even within the brevity of a drama.

Shakespeare's skill in taking separate tales and linking them to form a piece of writing which creates a philosophical consideration in the minds of the audience, or readers, is one of the attributes which has led to his position as our greatest writer.

Actual incidents may also echo or be echoed from another work. Here the French send the young English Prince a horse to save himself by fleeing the battle. A further present of a prayer book is sent back scornfully for the perpetrator of this jibe to prepare himself for death with. (IV.iv.91.) The situation is again used in *Henry V* when the Dauphin insults Henry by sending him a box of tennis balls (I.ii.258.) and the deaths of many thousands is foretold in reprisal for this insult perpetrated by the French. Of course it could be argued that other writers may have simply been echoed by Shakespeare. The skill then lies in Shakespeare's choice of when and how he would include such an incident, and the words in which it is expressed. In Act IV, Scene iv for example, a philosophical comment interrupts the action and gives us pause to consider the danger of battle. The speech is given to Lord Audley, who, historically, was close in age to the Black Prince, but here is asked by the Prince for courage to face the fight bravely and who is addressed afterwards as 'good old man' whose words 'a thousand thousand armours...have buckled on my back'. (IV.iv.150). Besides this willingness to reorganize historical facts to make a more effective play which is typical of Shakespeare, and other writers of course, we have in Audley's speech words and attitudes which recur through the canon. For example,

From the instant we begin to live
We do pursue and hunt the time to die.

First bud we, then we blow, and after seed,
 Then presently we fall, and, as a shade
 Follows the body, so we follow death.
 If then we hunt for death, why do we fear it?
 If we fear it, why do we follow it?
 If we do fear, how can we shun it?
 If we do fear, with fear we do but aid
 The thing we fear, to seize on us the sooner.
 If we fear not, then no resolved proffer
 Can overthrow the limit of our fate,
 For, whether ripe or rotten, drop we shall,
 As we do draw the lottery of our doom.

IV.iv.136-149.

We have the sentiment we are familiar with in Jacques' speech in *As You Like It* 'And so from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,/ And then from hour to hour we rot and rot;' here suggested twice by lines 136/7, and then by line 148. II.vii.26. We find too the attitude of Hamlet towards death as he expresses it in soliloquy, first as a natural fear of death:

For in the sleep of death, what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause. *Hamlet* III.i.68-70.

then followed by the acceptance of it as our doom:

If it be now, 'tis not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come. *Hamlet* V.ii.166-8.

Clearly the idea was not new: it is an attitude commonly to be found in sermons and homilies; but the choice of where to place a philosophical comment without destroying the drama of the situation is well chosen.

Perhaps it would be as well to note also that whichever playwrights engaged in the writing of *Edward III*, one at least was able to change the mood of a scene at will. When the King is commanding Lodowick to write love poetry for the assault on the Countess'

honour, Lodowick is amusingly uncooperative, which takes away a measure of the unpleasantness the scene could suggest. Lodowick has shown that he has realised the King is in love but still feels 'guilty fear,/ To dote amiss' (II.1.20). There is a delightful contrast between the impassioned poetry which the King himself creates and the weak offerings which Lodowick contributes, displaying the latter's unwillingness to help the King. First he claims he has written nothing whereas Edward has spoken many effusive lines. Lodowick produces two, both of which Edward objects to strongly, mainly because they praise the Countess for being cool and chaste like the moon and for her constancy - the last things that the King desires in her. Lodowick's choice of a woman to compare her with, Biblical Judith - is not to his liking either of course.¹⁷ Lodowick had already tried to hold up the need to write by his initial questions concerning to whom he must write. His second question: 'Write I to a woman?' is clearly a delaying tack, amusing for the audience: the King responds in lines 96-98:

What beauty else could triumph on me?
Or who but women do our love-lays greet?
What, thinkst thou I did but praise a horse?

The writer turns what in many other writers of this period and the following years would have been a tasteless scene of preparation for seduction into one of black comedy. The intention of king contrasted with the attitude that Lodowick brings to it makes it pleasanter for the audience and perhaps suggests that the envisaged seduction or rape will be frustrated, just as the King's purpose is here. This control of dramatic tension is another of the skills Shakespeare was mastering. Lodowick, as Shakespeare presents the King's secretary here, is a forerunner of the many characters he created by which a man

of lower status is used, often amusingly, to display a quality which his 'betters' need to acquire. He offers thoughts or judgements which the audience may well have but be unable to express. He becomes its mouthpiece, highlighting by contrast the evil or stupidity which may attend the nobility. Shakespeare's awareness of the value of common men seems to me very likely to have been grounded in his upbringing among the people of Stratford.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

The more I read this play, the more I feel it is highly autobiographical, partly in its content and partly in the thoughts and attitudes which are expressed in it, notwithstanding they are uttered in the guise of two of its characters. Before the narrative proper begins, we are given the background to the reasons why one young man chose to leave his birthplace while another stayed back. Valentine and Proteus epitomise the debate that William himself obviously faced in leaving Stratford to find better prospects for himself, which meant leaving his newly made young family. The debate is conducted at some length and while being relevant to the following narrative is not actually necessary for the audience's understanding of the situation which gradually develops. Valentine accepts that a man may be tied by his love for a woman, as Proteus declares himself to be, yet would otherwise

...entreat thy company
 To see the wonders of the world abroad
 Than, living dully sluggardized at home,
 Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness. *Two Gents.* I.i.5-8.

Valentine obviously does not see love as something too life-enhancing. He speaks of 'some shallow story of deep love,' (I.1.21.), and of 'one fading moment's mirth/ With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights' (I.1.30.). Could this be autobiographical? When Proteus objects that his friend is suggesting Proteus' attitude to be unwise, Valentine replies

Love is your master, for he masters you,
And he that is so yoked by a fool
Methinks should not be chronicled for wise.

Two Gents. I.i.39-41.

In other words, he admits that is his belief. He goes further, showing how he thinks love can blight a young man's life:

...by love the young and tender wit
Is turned to folly, blasting in the bud,
Losing his verdure even in the prime,
And all the fair effects of future hopes.

Two Gents. I.i.-50.

The strength of Valentine's opinion is stressed in two ways. Firstly by the fact that when Valentine has left him, Proteus shows how nearly he has been persuaded by his friend's words in his comparison of their situations:

He after honour hunts, I after love.
He leaves his friends to dignify them more,
I leave myself, my friends, and all, for love.
Thou, Julia, thou hast metamorphosed me,
Made me neglect my studies, lose my time,
War with good counsel, set the world at naught;
Made wit with musing weak, heart sick with thought.

Two Gents. I.i.63-69.

The second way that the audience is made to realise whose decision is to be seen as the more worthy is in the names chosen for these two characters. Although here seen

denigrating love to some extent, it is Valentine who is to prove indeed to be the patron saint of love, who will succumb to the power of love under Sylvia's spell but who will be able to offer up his love to sacrifice for the higher love of unselfish friendship, in offering her to his friend. This is unacceptable to many an audience nowadays but this is a play illustrating a dilemma of that period. Attitudes towards relationships between men and men and men and women would have had a different bias when women were owned by men. Shakespeare draws as strong a contrast as possible between the behaviour of the two men. Proteus, named after the changeable Greek god of the sea, proves not only a faithless lover to Julia but an unkind one in uncaringly giving away the ring she had given to him as instance of her love. When unable to win Sylvia's love he is prepared to rape her. In these ways we are led to believe that since he is the better man, Valentine's decision to leave home is presented as the more noble choice.

Such a parallel with Shakespeare's own decision to leave his family in Stratford and experience the wider world of London, while not exactly autobiographical, seems to me to make use of the reasoning behind his decision to leave: why would he create specious explanations when he knew why he had followed Valentine's course of action? The debate carried forward by first the dialogue between Valentine and Proteus and then continued by Proteus' soliloquy comes over to me as important to the author himself. The reasons for a son to leave his birthplace are again explored when Proteus' father, Antonio, is said to have been criticised for having Proteus still idling at home. Antonio is reminded that

...other men, of slender reputation,
 Put forth their sons to seek preferment out -
 Some to the wars, to try their fortune there,
 Some to discover islands far away,
 Some to the studious universities.

He is requested :

To let him spend his time no more at home,
 Which would be great impeachment to his age
 In having known no travel in his youth.

Two Gents. I.iii.6 - 16.

Antonio concurs with the common opinion, saying:

I have considered well his loss of time,
 And how he cannot be a perfect man,
 Not being tried and tutored in the world.
 Experience is by industry achieved,
 And perfected by the swift course of time.

Two Gents. I.iii.19-23.

So it is that Proteus is sent after Valentine to ‘Hear sweet discourse, converse with noblemen’ just as Shakespeare came to do, perhaps aimed to do, by leaving little, insignificant Stratford in favour of the comparatively urbane metropolis.

Which is not to say that Stratford was insignificant in what it had given Shakespeare. The clever play on words of dual meaning between Proteus and Speed in Act I Scene 2 centres on things very much part of Stratford’s daily affairs. First there is the metaphor of the shepherd and his sheep, that the shepherd must lead and the sheep follow him. This moves on to a juxtapositioning of a lost mutton, the errant sheep and a laced mutton, a woman. Speed is complaining that Julia gave him no money for delivering Proteus’ letter to her and so speaks slightly of her. Proteus, objecting, suggests Speed should be put in the pound, with another glance at money

offered by Speed - 'a pound shall serve me for carrying your letter (I.1.102.), which leads to pinfold, another name for the animal 'pound' or 'pen' to which Proteus was referring, moving from there to 'pin' and 'fold' as separate entities, the first contrasting with pound as a very small amount of money and 'fold' used as a reference to the triple folding of a letter for privacy and for the dorse to carry the addressee's name and location. There may be too a play on 'penny', or the proverbial description of an article being 'not worth a pin'. All this skilful exchange lasting over at least thirty-four lines is based entirely on some of the features of Stratford which were central to daily life and speech there. Of course they were equally a part of rural life in many English places at this time, but since Stratford was where Shakespeare's family lived, it will have been this town which put such features into Shakespeare's consciousness.

We do not see either young man bidding goodbye to his family. Shakespeare avoids any type of sentimental, maudlin, or cloying expressions of love by having Lance, Proteus' servant, describe the leave-taking in his family in an amusing yet still effective way. Although Shakespeare writes a comic scene, the picture of a distraught family all in loud expressions of clearly genuine grief at their son's unchosen departure is understandable and touching. It is Lance's disappointment that the dog did not also howl even when 'our cat [was] wringing her hands' and he himself 'lay the dust with my tears'(II.3.8 & 33.), which emphasises most the amusing quality of the scene he describes hyperbolically, enhanced by Lance's efforts to recreate the event for the better understanding of the listeners using his

shoes and a stick to represent the players in the scene. This episode may be Shakespeare's rendition of an uneducated countryman's effort to describe an important event. It is only after these thumbnail sketches that the narrative proper begins to unfold, yet it is these scenes which add inestimably to the quality of the play itself, the story being comparatively trivial and too obvious to be compelling *per se*. I believe this first part of the play clearly owes its portrayal to Shakespeare's Stratford roots.

Lance is used again to provide the reverse to the conventional adored mistress, praised for her *non pareil*, seen in such qualities as her physical beauty, virtue and delicacy. First Valentine gives us the conventional, classical praise dedicated to his mistress, Sylvia: she is 'Sovereign to all the creatures on the earth' and 'her whose worth makes other worthies nothing' (II.4.151 & 164.). Proteus then compares her to Julia: 'She is fair, and so is Julia that I love' but finds that his love is 'thawed' for Julia even though he has only heard of Sylvia's merits and "'Tis but her picture I have yet beheld,/ And that has dazzled my reason's light' (II.4.197, 198 & 207). The love Valentine feels and the lust of Proteus are both thwarted as Valentine is banished by the Duke for loving her and Proteus prevented by Valentine from raping her. But Lance is presented as a realistic lover. In him we see the courtship considerations likely to have been more commonly adopted by the swains of Stratford. For a start he does not advertise his feelings as first Proteus and then Valentine have done. 'I am in love, but a team of horses shall not pluck that from me'(III.1.264). The object of his thoughts is not necessarily chaste 'tis a milkmaid;

yet 'tis not a maid, for she hath had gossips; yet 'tis a maid, for she is her master's maid, and serves for wages'(III.1.266). He is seeing her as a woman and useful partner in his life, not an object of adoration nor of carnal desire alone. His attitude towards her is practical and yet also compassionate and understanding. This is emphasized by his enumeration of her merits employing the terminology used in Stratford when drawing up a list of the assets a man had accrued in his life at the time of his death. In its structure, it mimics the inventories which many Stratford townspeople, among them Shakespeare's father, commonly composed: '*Imprimis*, she can fetch and carry' - why, a horse can do no more. Nay, a horse cannot fetch, but only carry, therefore is she better than a jade. '*Item*, she can milk.' Look you, a sweet virtue in a maid with clean hands.' (III.1.271). The qualities he is listing in this woman are more creditable than the nebulous characteristics which have been ascribed to Sylvia and which were not of her own making even if they existed in truth. He is interrupted in his survey of the unnamed lady's merits by the entrance of his fellow servant, Speed, but the list is continued. We learn that she can brew ale, sew, knit, wash and scour and spin, just as the good housewives of Stratford would. Her defects are also meticulously listed in this inventory, although not all of these prove to be defects - perhaps a subtle way of demonstrating the genuine quality of Lance's feelings for the lass.

Speed '*Item*, she is not to be broken by fasting, in respect of her breath'.

Lance Well, that fault may well be mended with a breakfast. Read on.

Speed '*Item*, she hath a sweet mouth.

Lance That makes amends for her sour breath.

Speed '*Item*, she doth talk in her sleep.

Lance It's no matter for that, so she sleep not in her talk.

Two Gents. III.i.316-21

The list continues. Lance is fully aware that she is slow in words, proud, has no teeth, is curst (that is, is bad tempered), likes her beer, is liberal with her favours and 'hath more hair than wit, and more faults than hairs, and more wealth than faults'(III.i.328ff.). What is his response? 'Stop there. I'll have her'(III.i.345.). Shakespeare is surely using the knowledge he has gained in growing up among the down-to-earth inhabitants of Stratford. He creates a picture which is common not only to the pages of his work but also the archives of historical Stratford. While he ascribes these words and attitudes to a servant and a clown yet he is no more disparaging this approach to choosing a partner than praising the behaviour of either Valentine or Proteus, the 'gentlemen' of his play. He learned much from growing up in the lively environment of this small town I am sure, and this knowledge both informed and enhanced the quality of his writing.

When Lance rails at the indignities he has suffered to save his dog from punishment in Act IV Scene 4, we are given a picture of the close bond which a countryman must have with his animals. Lance has saved his dog from being drowned at birth by accepting responsibility for it and so when the dog misbehaves by stealing food or passing urine in the dining room, Lance takes the blame and the punishment. For the dog's sake he has been whipped, put in the stocks and pilloried - all means of punishment meted out in Stratford. Obviously other towns exacted similar penalties, but it was in Stratford that these made their impression on Shakespeare, and it is his familiarity with the Stratford stocks and pillory and the whippings meted out by the Constable here that he uses to make a stark contrast between the behaviour of a

common man with that of the so-called 'gentleman', Proteus, to good effect. The latter enters immediately after this account and addresses Lance, for no good reason, as 'you whoreson peasant' (IV.iv.42.), so making the contrast more noticeable. Lance had been given a lap dog to take to Sylvia as a gift from Proteus but it had been 'stolen from me by the hangman boys in the market place' (IV.iv.52) - another snippet of Stratford life which stayed with Shakespeare? - and so he had unselfishly been ready to offer his own dog in its place to the lady. It is sympathy for the common man, Lance, which the audience feels, not towards the despicable 'gentleman'. As Lance and his dog, Crab, are dismissed to look for the lost dog, with dismissal from service hanging over Lance if he is not successful, we feel the irony and ambiguity of Proteus' words 'A slave that still on end turns me to shame' very strongly. (IV.iv.60).

In his Introduction to the play, on page one of *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, Stanley Wells notes that the first recorded performance of this drama was in 1762, and he presumes it was acted in Shakespeare's time. I wonder if indeed that was the case. It contains many elements which Shakespeare saw fit to incorporate into later plays; so many that I wonder if it was an early piece which was never staged in Shakespeare's lifetime? If it had never been played then the subsumation of so many elements from it into his later productions could be expected rather than surprising. For example, Lucetta, at Julia's command, runs through the list of her mistress' suitors, giving her own opinion of them just as Nerissa does at Portia's

insistence in *The Merchant of Venice*. Julia follows her love, Proteus, disguised as a young man just as Helen does later in *All's Well that Ends Well*, written much later in Shakespeare's career, and is also made to suffer the man's infidelity in his giving away her ring. These were conventional dramatic devices but used in very similar ways to each other in Shakespeare's work. Julia is also required to go and speak love to another woman on behalf of the man she herself loves, exactly as Viola, disguised as a boy, does in *Twelfth Night*. The autocratic Duke in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* turns against his daughter just as Lord Capulet turns against Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*. Capulet says to Juliet:

An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend.
 An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,
 For by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,
 Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.
 III.v.191-94.

while in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* the Duke plans, should Sylvia refuse to marry Thurio at his demand, to

...turn her out to who will take her in
 Then let her beauty be her wedding dower,
 For me and my possession she esteems not.
 III.i.-79.

The same attitude to a recalcitrant daughter occurs in *King Lear*, and in this same speech, in lines 74 and 75, we have another clear forerunner of the latter play. The Duke in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* says regretfully before disowning Sylvia, 'And where I thought the remnant of mine age/ Should have been cherished by her child-like duty', while Lear, in Act I Scene 1 of *King Lear* declares, 'I loved her

most, and thought to set my rest/ On her kind nursery' (I.i.122.). The later versions of these events which first occurred in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* are superior in language and dramatic execution to those depicted in the earlier play. It seems to me that we are seeing the growth of genius through its developing stages; while the latter may be uneven, as a transitional work it is a treasure.

There are yet more elements which are subsumed from this early play into those of later dates; *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* seems to have been mined for ideas for later dramas. Valentine's despair at his banishment from the place where Sylvia lives is echoed by Romeo's distraught reaction to his banishment from Juliet's side. Both men plan to reach their loves by means of a rope ladder to her chamber. Proteus' swift change of affection which occurs when he hears Julia described is the forerunner of Romeo's similar defection upon merely seeing the new object of his desire; and Proteus discovers the planned elopement of Valentine and Sylvia just as later Helena acquaints Demetrius with Lysander and Hermia's plan to escape to marry in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Iago informs Brabantio that Othello and Desdemona have eloped and married in *Othello*. Finally, right at the end of his writing career, Shakespeare used the situation of young men's friendship being disrupted by their both wanting the same woman again in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Although reshaping and borrowing material was by no means uncommon, with so many elements being used from this one early play, it seems possible to propose that this work, with its multiple references to humdrum aspects of everyday life, (and no

stage history), was not deemed worthy of production, but that Shakespeare himself liked it and so used as much of it as he could as the years passed. In *Hamlet* the Prince says to the Players:

I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted, or, if it was,
not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million.

II.ii.437-9

He goes on to give his own opinion of the play, and that of other critics of it. It is so detailed and specific - and its extent of twelve lines so unnecessary in its context - that the passage reads like a personal experience. If such a reception were given to one of his plays he would be very likely to salvage what he most appreciated and present it again in a different context. *Lance* was too good a creation to be lost and so he transmigrates into *Gobbo* and into *Dogberry*. *Julia* is followed by *Viola* and *Helena*, *Sylvia* foreshadows *Isabella*. What is left behind are the elements he had taken from *Stratford* itself as a wider canvas opened up for him.

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* we also have a band of decent but outlawed men living outside the city in the forest, whose counterparts we meet again in *As You Like It*. *Valentine* is not slow to accept their invitation to join them as the captain of the band, even though they are ‘the villains /That all travellers do fear so much’.

(IV.i.5.). There were people living and working, and no doubt hiding, in the woods just outside *Stratford* and the fear of who or what might be encountered in a wood haunts many of Shakespeare’s characters. It was likely to have been based partly on fact and partly on the tales parents have always used to stop their children being in

danger by venturing too far from home. We may instance the example of Herne the Hunter in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* who ‘shakes a chain /In a most hideous and dreadful manner’ according to the ‘superstitious, idle-headed eld’.(IV.iv.32.) While his servant, Speed, is immediately afraid of the outlawed men in the woods, Valentine relies on simple honesty to protect them and his gamble is successful from the moment he admits to being another banished man. It is interesting that he claims he was banished for killing a man, an act he regrets.

I killed a man, whose death I much repent,
But yet I slew him manfully, in fight,
Without false vantage or base treachery.

IV.i.26-28.

This claimed event does not happen in the play; perhaps Shakespeare had intended to have such an event occurring, perhaps he wrote but discarded it, perhaps he reused the episode from an earlier, unaccepted play, or perhaps Valentine says this simply to strengthen his vulnerable position when faced with these armed men. Though discarded here, such a reason for banishment was used in *Hamlet* when the Prince is sent to England by Claudius, using the fact that Hamlet has mistakenly killed Polonius as an excuse for banishing him from Denmark. One of the band of brigands in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was banished for the same fault which had been discovered in Valentine:

Myself was from Verona banished
For practising to steal away a lady,
An heir, and near allied unto the Duke.

IV.i.45-47.

Another claims to have stabbed someone, while a third claims the same transgression, describing such acts as ‘suchlike petty crimes’ (IV.i.50.). In spite of these outrages, which may, of course, be as fictitious as his own, and with the alternative being instant death, Valentine agrees to live with them, his only proviso being that they respect the safety of women and poor travellers, so maintaining honourable status in the audience’s eyes and eliciting their sympathy for the situation he is trapped by, in spite of being a good man.

To see how Shakespeare developed from a good writer to a much better one, we can compare this meeting with that of Orlando and the banished men in *As You Like It*. They are very similar in situation but the later version is so much more dramatic: Orlando is willing to kill to advance into the forest and steal food, and he produces such a ‘poor passenger’ as is only spoken of here, in going to bring old and distressed Adam into the forest encampment, where he is indeed given succour. In Valentine we see a forerunner of several characters who will later appear in *As You Like It*. Act V. Scene iv begins with Valentine’s soliloquy:

How use doth breed a habit in a man!
 This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods
 I better brook than flourishing peopled towns.
 Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,
 And to the nightingale’s complaining notes
 Tune my distresses and record my woes.
 O thou that dost inhabit in my breast,
 Leave not the mansion so long tenantless
 Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall

And leave no memory of what it was.
V.iv.1-10.

In this one speech we have the feeling of enjoyment which life in the forest brings to such as Duke Senior who finds 'old custom [hath] made this life more sweet/ Than that of painted pomp' (As You Like It II.i.2.). We also have the attitude later personified in Jacques of one who prefers to court loneliness and avoid people, and in addition the longings of the lovelorn lovers, Orlando and Rosalind. The final metaphor which Valentine employs is immediately analogous with the picture which the documents referring to Stratford towards the end of the sixteenth century present of a town showing many signs of decay and ruin. Did Shakespeare also share the feelings about the forest which he has Duke Senior and Jacques display? It seems more than likely to me, especially since they are expressed in what appears to be one of his earliest works.

The Taming of the Shrew

This play has been identified as one of the earliest of Shakespeare's known comedies and my research confirms this finding. It has references to notable features of the town of Stratford which appear to be very fresh to Shakespeare's memory and very familiar to him; consequently it serves to fill out some of the factual information to which the town archives alert us but of which we have little detail. For example, we know that the stocks in Stratford stood opposite the present Georgian Town Hall but

not which misdemeanours among the people caused some of them to be transfixed within them. From *The Taming of the Shrew* we can adduce that one reason for a person to be put in the stocks was for refusing to pay a debt. Christopher Sly is threatened with the stocks by the Hostess of the tavern when he refuses to pay for the glasses which he has broken (I.i.2.). We can also assume that public whippings in Stratford were performed ‘at the high cross every morning’ which is a punishment that Gremio felt it would be better to endure than to have Katherine for a wife (I.i.71.). It is unlikely that Shakespeare added such detail for decoration, or that he invented a location when an actual place where this occurred was well known to him. The High Cross by the Market House at the end of the High Street was the important centre of official activity in the town. Other towns, including London, would have administered the same public punishments but to mention specifically ‘the high cross’, which was a landmark in his home town, suggests strongly at least that it was Stratford’s High Cross which Shakespeare pictured as he wrote.

Shakespeare had, unknowingly, begun his ‘career’ as a social historian for us in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* when, through Lance, he told how he had sat in the stocks ‘for puddings he [the dog] had stolen’, and stood ‘on the pillory for geese he had killed’ (IV.iv.32 & 34). Clearly the stocks formed the punishment for less important misdoings than were merited by the pillory, which is used in a simile in *The Taming of the Shrew* when Hortensio, playing the would-be musician, has the lute used as a weapon against him by Katherine.

And with that word she struck me on the head,
And through the instrument my pate made way,
And there stood I amazed for a while,

As on a pillory, looking through the lute
II.i.153-56.

In *The Taming of the Shrew* the Hostess is willing to fetch the Headborough. (This was an official position in Stratford, initiated only in 1573 -when Shakespeare was nine years old - with the division of the town into eight administrative areas or wards). We learn too how an affronted drinker knew how to revenge himself on a publican. It seems Sly has threatened to ‘... present her at the [Court] leet / Because she brought stone jugs and no sealed quarts’ (I.i.86.). This was one of the perceived misdemeanours known in Stratford, where many household wives, some in Henley Street, were indited for selling illegal ale which had not been tested by the official Ale-taster (John Shakespeare’s first Council office), and sealed as having been accepted as a quality and legitimate source product.

A writer will not often create or fabricate when he has examples in his memory of actual instances and occasions. What would be the point? This realistic presentation would no doubt call forth remembrances in the minds of any audience, no matter which towns its members originated from. So the glimpses of common Elizabethan life we are given are most likely to be based on the reality of life in England in general and on experiences encountered by Shakespeare himself in Stratford, at least in these earliest plays while he was still developing his skills and confidence. There are insights into minutiae of living, such as the ‘old rusty sword ta’en out of the town armoury with a broken hilt, and chapeless’ which Petruchio wears for his wedding to Katherine (III.ii.47.), and how the guest invited to a meal at the last minute can only

be offered 'a thin and slender pittance' of only 'one mess', however welcome he is (IV.iv.60 & 69.). We learn also of the 'rushes strewed, cobwebs swept' to present a tidy house (IV.i.40.), and of the minstrels playing a wedding party back from church (III.iii.56.). We meet the 'breeching scholar in the schools'(III.i.18.), and learn that the children's habit of making an ice slide when the weather affords icy conditions was as current then as it is still (IV.i.12.). We have affirmation that daughters of a rich man might have tutors brought to the house to instruct them in acceptable skills and accomplishments. Common to any town in Britain at that time would have been familiarity with breakdowns concomitant with travelling by horse, especially from poorer districts where the horse a man kept or hired might prove to be a hindrance as well as a help. Grumio tells a tale of just one journey in which 'her horse fell and she under her horse...how the horses ran away, how her bridle was burst, how I lost my crupper'(IV.i.64.): no doubt as familiar occurrences to his audience as present-day tales of traffic hold-ups and car breakdowns are to us! While each item may be unimportant and exaggerated, they are invaluable in enhancing the visual humour he creates and so the richness of the whole play experience.

Evidence comes too of Shakespeare's confidence in writing in Latin, knowing that enough of his audience could translate it, know commonly used phrases through their experience in courts or past church usage, or would recognise its derivation. He also appears to have some knowledge of Italian, which is more likely to have derived from his being in London. Shakespeare makes several references in this play to

common sayings and to snatches of ballads and songs; such references become less numerous in his later writing. At this point in his career, they seem to be in the forefront of his mind. He uses them more particularly in conversations between servants, for example between Grumio and Curtis in Act IV Scene 1 where we find 'Cast on no water' and 'Jack boy, Ho boy!' quoted (ll. 19 & 40.). Later in the same scene, when Petruchio is about to begin a serious onslaught against Katherine's habitual behaviour, he starts singing, appositely for them both: 'Where is the life that late I led?' and then 'It was the friar of orders gray', which is again described as coming from an old song (by Robert B. Heilman, editor of the Signet Classic Edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*). His knowing these snatches allies Petruchio more closely with the rougher elements of society than with his own class and so makes his brusque attitude towards others more easily acceptable.

What are apparently slang terms and colloquialisms are used to differentiate between commoners and the merchant class, although Petruchio also uses coarse language to signify the roughness which he is willing to employ to shock and frighten Katherine into more conventional and considerate behaviour than she has been in the habit of adopting. Shakespeare's interest in the variety of language, and, for the purposes of drama, the variety of its uses, becomes clearly apparent in this play. Shakespeare makes Petruchio master of the honeyed phrase: 'But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers,/ With gentle conference, soft and affable' (II.i.245); however, even his courting language may sound sweet but be barbed:

‘Kate like the hazel twig/ Is straight and slender, and as brown in hue/ As hazelnuts’ (1.249). Here the first part is complimentary, but to be brown was a sign that a woman had to work for a living and was not so pleasing, especially when followed by ‘O let me see thee walk. Thou dost not halt’, that is, limp. Petruchio’s language is very direct and factual when he is speaking ‘seriously’. His speeches are punctuated by the expressed desire to come to the point as soon as possible, indicated by such phrases as: ‘But in a few...’(I.ii.51), ‘Few words suffice...’(I.ii.65.), and ‘Thus in plain terms...’(II.i.263). His language to his servants when he first takes Kate to her new home is studiously unkind and peremptory in tone. He addresses them with such terms as ‘logger-headed and unpolished grooms’, ‘peasant swain’, ‘whoreson, malthorse drudge’, ‘rascal knaves’ and so on (IV.i.111). His servants do not seem surprised by this and so we presume that this is his usual form of address to them. They are surprised, however, that he speaks like this in front of Katherine and even to her later. Curtis reports that in her chamber he ‘rails, and swears, and rates, that she, poor soul,/ Knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak,/ And sits as one new risen from a dream.’(IV.i.170).

The wealth of variety of language which Shakespeare drew upon so effectively had obviously been learned from a variety of sources, including, one may conclude, various sections of the populace of and visitors to Stratford. The strength of expression to be heard in the town, certainly among the general townsfolk, and even that used by the august Aldermen when in dispute with each other, quoted in an

earlier chapter, is an indication of the colourful language commonly employed. Yet, as we may see in the accounts already quoted of such disputes - between the proprietor of the Bear and the Council for example - the bad feeling did not seem to lead to long lasting feuding. In no time the Councillors were entertaining honoured guests at The Bear again, and this forgetting and forgiving attitude is echoed in *The Taming of the Shrew* by Bianca's suitors who decide to 'do as adversaries do in law - / Strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends'. (I.ii.278.), and again when Katherine has been "tamed". Whether the same could have been said for disputes between real marriage partners, where one was the property of the other, is hard to say. However, in subsequent plays, Shakespeare gives us examples of more measured speech between husbands and wives.

The use of the coming of the players to Padua, not just to present the material they have prepared but to be used by those who pay them in any tasks they choose, gives another insight into the lives of those in the playing companies, and possibly into the lives of any poor, unlanded man of this era. The nameless Lord who decides to play a trick on drunken Christopher Sly out of curiosity to see how he will react, takes charge of the company and decides how they will be of most use to him: 'I have some sport in hand / Wherein your cunning can assist me much' (Induc.i.90.). Their response indicates that they are used to performing in any way that is required of them 'we can contain ourselves / Were he the veriest antic in the world' (Induc.i.98.). The same advantage is taken by Hamlet when he chooses the play that

will be performed, to fit in with his plan to unmask Claudius and adds a speech to their play to suit his ends. Whether this ploy owes its inclusion to Shakespeare's knowledge and experience of the players' obligations when visiting Stratford during his youth or derives from his later experience as an actor/playwright is impossible to say; I would favour the latter as more likely.

The close relationship of plays and reality for Shakespeare is demonstrated in *The Taming of the Shrew*. The so-called reality of Sly's life, once it is turned to pretence, becomes as real as the play which is performed for him. Actuality and falsity are one while the play, a pretence, shares the same reality; all are indistinguishable in terms of what is real and what is false. In *Hamlet*, the play of "The Murder of Gonzago" is a fabrication outlining the real murder of Old Hamlet. That Shakespeare was aware of the link and cherished this aspect of theatre highly is clear from his wish, expressed in both these plays, that actors mimic life in their speech and portrayal of events, eschewing exaggerated action or delivery. Perhaps in these two instances at least we can accept that Shakespeare is expressing his own opinion since his characters' main concerns do not centre on these thoughts. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare details poor and bad acting at length, summing up his opinion most succinctly when he writes:

For anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature
III.ii.19-20.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, the lord remembers a young player because of his

tasteful performance - 'I have forgot your name, but sure that part/ Was aptly fitted and naturally performed'. (Induc.I 84). Shakespeare's interest in the antinomy between a person's learned and natural reactions is powerfully echoed by one of the central concerns of the play: what differentiates noble men from common men? It is not behaviour, for noble Petruchio does not behave as other men: his words, behaviour and clothes surprise men from all walks of life. It is not possession: Sly who has nothing remains Sly in his aims and desires whether he is in the gutter or reclining on a lordly bed; he is offered sack but calls for ale; he is offered a 'pleasant comedy' which he cannot distinguish from 'A Christmas gambol, or a tumbling trick' (Induc.2 126 & 134.) and is soon bored by it: "'Tis a very excellent piece of work, madam lady. Would 'twere done' (I.i.251.). We can adduce that Shakespeare sees nurture as only weakly disguising or controlling a person's instinctive reaction or behaviour engendered during earlier years. The Lord wonders how different Christopher Sly would have been, given different circumstances to his birth. The question is posed by Shakespeare's play: 'Would not the beggar then forget himself?' (Induc.I.39.). Although Sly is tutored in how a lord would address his lady 'Madam, and nothing else' (Induc.2.108.), he finds himself quite unable to use this bare word to his "wife", preferring 'madam wife' since he does not know her given name, which is the more natural choice for him. It is implied that it is not birth as lord or commoner so much as early nurture and character which control a person's adult behaviour - much as modern psychologists assert. One could suggest that this was what he held to be true of his own qualities. Whether this belief is maintained throughout Shakespeare's playwriting for characters in general is debatable:

apparently lowly born people, such as Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* and Guiderius and Arviragus in *Cymbeline*, belie their unprivileged upbringing by their inborn grace, which is ascribed to their royal heritage. Perhaps Shakespeare believed inborn characteristics of more importance than nurture. In *The Two Noble Kinsman*, there is a more convoluted suggestion: both men desert their better qualities when suborned by love for the same woman, but retrieve them as one lies dying. At this earlier stage in Shakespeare's writing, when he composed *The Taming of the Shrew*, as the lord is arranging for the players to support his trick on Sly, he shows he doubts the ability of these men to carry off the pretence without laughing at Sly's confusion but they assure him they 'can contain ourselves', (Induc.I.98.), and do so. It is their training which can help them control their natural reactions. The nature/nurture debate continues, but Shakespeare's awareness of the importance of both seems clear.

Differences between the high and low born seem to be seen in early Shakespeare plays as largely exterior to their true worth. Clear contrasts are shown, as in such externals as their clothing: Sly has 'no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor more shoes than feet' (Induc. 2.8.), and Petruchio's wedding garments also illustrate the ways the poor extended the life of their garments. In Katherine's old home, sartorial fashion demands that they will see

silken coats, and caps, and golden rings,
 With ruffs, and cuffs, and farthingales, and things,
 With scarves, and fans, and double change of bravery
 IV.iii.55-57.

Petruchio's outfit for his wedding to Katherine, - which he refuses to change as he regards fashionable clothing of the time as 'masquerading stuff' (IV.iii.87) - is deliberately outlandish, but because of the extremes of fashion, which Shakespeare himself here chooses to lampoon, he can only ridicule interest in dress by mismatching his clothes. Biondello announces:

Petruchio is coming in a new hat and an old jerkin, a pair of old breeches ,
thrice-turned, a pair of boots which have been candle-cases, one buckled,
another laced. III.ii.43-45.

His servant is dressed equally wildly. When Petruchio is taking Katherine back to visit her family home, however, their clothes are no longer outlandish but sober and simple to suit his taste, and, I believe, Shakespeare's, judging by his choice of epithets:

We will unto your father's
Even in these honest, mean habiliments.
Our purses shall be proud, our garments poor
For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich
And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
So honour peereth in the meanest habit.

IV.iii.167-72

Shakespeare appears to favour a lack of showy adornment, in line with the puritan tastes of his day. Perhaps, then, even when writing 'in character' his portrayals can be seen to indicate fairly securely his own personal taste. It is during the journey that Katherine accepts the need for a more tractable behaviour from herself, and harmony between the two begins to be achieved

In more than one of his plays, he ridicules other fashions in behaviour too. Throwing Latinate or foreign phrases into conversation is made to look pretentious. This is particularly noticeable in *The Taming of the Shrew* when Biondello attempts a Latin phrase ‘cum privilegio ad imprendum solem’, a piece of misplaced printer’s jargon, and this is immediately followed by his more natural language to better effect ‘I knew a wench married in an afternoon as she went to the garden for parsley to stuff a rabbit’ (IV.v.19 & 25.). Such contrast is used much more in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. There is also a questioning of the difference between public and private behaviour. Katherine is ‘ashamed to kiss’ her husband initially because they are in public view in the street (V.i.137.), but learns to accept that what is perceived ‘good’ behaviour may not be the most honest. She learns to such good effect that she is able, publicly, to offer to put her hand beneath his foot, then to kiss him and go to bed with him without ceremony, leaving the rest dumbfounded.

In this play, Shakespeare reiterates some of the dramatic ploys noted in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Here Kate demands that Bianca lists and assesses her suitors, but Bianca does not cooperate as Julia did with Lucetta. Shakespeare shows how much skill he had already acquired in following different paths from the same starting point. The need for a man to find a rich wife, which colours many of Shakespeare’s courtship scenes, reappears here too as Petruchio, listening to Hortensio’s description of Kate’s shrewish ways interrupts him with: ‘Thou know’st not gold’s effect./ Tell me her father’s name and ’tis enough’(I.ii.92.). So too is the

scenario of young lovers planning to elope, when they cannot expect to gain parental permission to wed. Some might like to claim that this interest in the financial standing of a bride, which occurs in more than this play, displays Shakespeare's own regrets not to have found a rich bride himself, but I find it only a possible yet nebulous assertion.

The need for a young man to travel is also reiterated in this play, which more certainly reflects Shakespeare's feeling since it was his own personal choice of action by leaving his home town. Lucentio departs from Pisa to visit the bigger city of Padua 'as he that leaves/ A shallow plash to plunge him in the deep'; he comes 'by my father's love and leave', and 'armed/ With his good will'.(I.i.22 & 5).

Petruchio has come to Padua for the same reason:

Such wind as scatters young men through the world
To seek their fortunes farther than at home,
Where small experience grows.

I.ii.49-51.

Can these reiterations be accidental or insignificant? This carefully supported defence of a young man leaving his place of birth does not continue to appear throughout the plays. In Shakespeare's later writing, people leave home for specific reasons, such as to follow a lover, to continue formal education, or to avoid a dangerous or unwelcome situation for example. These examples of young men going to seek whatever fortune may await them are common enough in literature but it is also what Shakespeare himself had done.

Other scenarios are shared by several plays . There is the listing of property and possessions by rivals in love; in this play there is a lively exchange of offered commodities between Gremio and Tranio in their efforts to secure Bianca as a bride. Tranio is able to outbid Gremio because he is not pledging his own fortune but that of his master's father. Gremio realises that it is probably an unsupported offer that Tranio, alias Lucentio, is making:

Sirrah, young gamester, your father were a fool
To give thee all, and in his waning age
Set foot under thy table.

II.i.396-98.

Many years later, Lear is made to say 'I gave you all' (*The Tragedy of King Lear* II.ii.422.), and the Fool berates him for giving away his kingdom to his daughters, obliging himself to depend on their hospitality. Baptista has shown more reserve by promising his daughter to Tranio only if his father agrees to make good his "son"'s offer, or she will go to Gremio. It is interesting that Baptista declared that Petruchio could only marry Katherine with that lady's agreement; he makes no such stipulation for his younger daughter, but I would think this is merely for the sake of making a fast-moving and acceptable drama, avoiding tedious repetition. The listing of goods which a man will part with to obtain his chosen bride is neatly contrasted with Petruchio's listing of what that bride becomes once she has been obtained:

I will be master of what is mine own.
She is my goods, my chattels. She is my house.
My household-stuff, my field, my barn,
My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything.

III.iii.101-4.

While this sounds uncomplimentary and cruel, yet Petruchio is equating a wife with all the things which are precious to a man and essential to his success in life, just as Lance did in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. On a realistic level, a man's wife needs to be his helpmeet if he is to prosper and Petruchio shows how important to him such a valuation is when he adds 'I'll buckler thee against a million' (III.iii.111.).

As in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, there are attributes which, first met in *The Taming of the Shrew*, are reiterated in later plays. Most notable is the unity of purpose which Shakespeare achieves in his greatest work between the individual stories which he interweaves so that they each contribute to a common theme. In the preceding paragraph, we saw the contrasting of listing and the juxtapositioning of attributes so that what seemed unsuitable - Petruchio's list - was in fact the more honest assessment, and contributed to the theme of the play. In another linking, Christopher Sly, like Tranio, is, for a while, lifted above his usual station. Tranio impersonates Lucentio and experiences the difference between being a servant and having a servant. Not too much is made of this until the appearance of the real Vincentio, Lucentio's father, causes serious disruption to their plans. This cannot be echoed by the Sly story for he has been omitted in the accepted Shakespearian version of the story unfortunately. In changing places with his servant, Lucentio has realised that, except where they are already known, they cannot be distinguished as man and master by their faces, only by their clothes and behaviour. In this way, the main theme of where the basis of class distinction lies is introduced, to be more fully

exposed by Petruchio's later antics. While Lucentio shows his awareness of the frailty of judging a person by their outward show, he is himself completely fooled by Bianca's apparent sweetness and obedience, seen in her public demeanour towards her father, and is punished for his careless giving of his affection to a woman who does not prove to be a tractable wife - 'Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her' (I.i.174.). At this stage, Shakespeare seems intrigued by what makes one man of more importance and standing than another, and of superficial judgements made about people. If one considers the changes of fortune of the Shakespeare family during William's formative years, I think one is led to see this interest as personal to the writer and his early experiences in Stratford.

The Taming of the Shrew introduces us to a characteristic of Shakespeare's greatest writing, namely his fascination with and, ultimately, his marvellous control of, language. At the beginning there are several clever but comparatively clumsy examples of his playing with words. Some have two meanings, which cause humorous confusions, such as when Petruchio and Katherine battle in repartee, each trying to confuse the other. In Act II Scene 1, they engage in a fast exchange playing with the double meanings of 'bear', 'jade', 'light', and five or six other words. Another verbal game is introduced when Petruchio tells Grumio to knock at Hortensio's door and Grumio understands the alternative meaning of knock which is to hit someone, and misconstrues the case of the pronoun in 'knock me here soundly' (I.ii.8). Such different forms of expression which can lead to

misinterpretation are introduced for their humorous quality but also to underline the theme of difference and similarity and begin to display the characteristics of the men's relationship with each other. Shakespeare's ability to offer his audience more than one aspect of his play in one piece of wording is another of the qualities for which his work is valued. Probably a better signal we receive of Shakespeare's future mastery of words comes at the end of the comedy with the telling choice of verb which is used by each of the new husbands. Lucentio 'bids' Bianca to come to him, Hortensio 'entreats' his wife, while Petruchio 'commands' Katherine to attend him (V.ii.81, 92 & 101.). After the first two verbs, the second more cajoling than the first, have both failed, one would normally expect an even weaker form of request to follow, but Petruchio's word is stronger than either of the preceding ones and is effective. This choice of single word grouping highlights the theme of the play, Petruchio's methods of taming Katherine and, in addition, both the humour and drama of the whole piece. The ability to bring a play to a fitting conclusion is already a part of Shakespeare's range of skills.

The First Part of the Contention (2 Henry VI)

Having left the comparative freedom of these two romantic comedies to write a group of plays based on historical data, Shakespeare was perhaps less able to draw on his knowledge and experience gained in Stratford. It was not a town where important national events had taken place - excluding his own birth! - (and took only a small part in the later Civil War). However, what happened on the wider English

canvas had repercussions in the town; what was true of English towns in general also applied to Stratford, and a person's attitude to national events will be coloured in part by his nurture. For these reasons, his historical plays may still enhance our knowledge of the man or of his birthplace, and so contribute to our acceptance of the link between the two in the formation of his genius.

Act I Scene iii of *2 Henry VI* begins with Petitioners, hoping to waylay Gloucester, the Lord Protector, and personally hand him their petitions for help to redress their wrongs. Shakespeare works the scene to show the distresses of the common people and the disunity between the King's party and the Protector's supporters. It is used also to move the action forward. The interest for our present discussion is the categories of petition which could, indeed had to be brought to the highest authority in the land: they were concerning everything and anything which instigated a change in procedure, however minor. The first cited here is a private dispute between one man and a church official.

Mine is, an't please your grace, against John Goodman, my lord Cardinal's man, for keeping my house and lands and wife and all from me.

I.iii.16-17.

The second is brought by one man representing his town, protesting at the enclosure of common land by the Duke of Suffolk, and the third is a somewhat casual reporting of treasonous remarks. The last is immediately attended to while the Queen tears up the other two and tells their bearers to start again and take them to their intended recipient next time. There are many instances in the Stratford archives of

petitions which had to be taken to London by the leading Aldermen of the day, including the instance when John Shakespeare accompanied Adrian Quiney to London with a petition on behalf of the town, when William Shakespeare was eight.¹⁸ The accounts they later submitted to the Council prove how expensive and time-consuming this process was yet it was essential to any minor or major change which the town wished to initiate. There was a need to bribe one's way to the correct official and then patiently await his choosing to attend to it.¹⁹ Although Stratford had its own Charter, it was severely limited in its ability to make even minor changes unless the Charter authorized this. For any adaptation not specifically allowed by the Charter, reference had to be made to the Crown through the Privy Council to empower the Aldermen to effect it. Since all the towns of England had the same imposition upon their freedom to administer their town as they saw fit, it is no wonder that time and money had to be spent by a delegation to get a petition heard and responded to in reasonable time. Such a procedure would have been a source of frustration which William Shakespeare would have become aware of while in Stratford when he was young. When he returned to live in the town, Shakespeare never served on Stratford's town Council, although the precedent of his father's official positions in the town and William's own wealth would make him seem likely to have been elected to it if he so wished. His only figuration in the Corporation's papers is when his name appears to have been added, apparently as an after-thought, in the margin of one of the Council's pleas for financial support on an official list of potential donors.²⁰ Perhaps we may assume that he did not wish to be involved in town politics and its hazards, knowing of his father's experiences.

We also have in this play the duel arranged between Peter Thump and his master , Thomas Horner. This is to prove or disprove Peter's allegations of treasonous intent against the Crown which his master fostered. Both men have been primed with drink to help each accept the possibility of facing sudden death. Stratford did see plenty of drunken fighting in the town, including, occasionally, a duel. Since wills were rarely made until death was clearly approaching, perhaps the fact that Peter makes a verbal, public will before he fights, is also behaviour first observed in Stratford. We can be touched by the little that the man has to forego on leaving the world, namely, his apron, hammer and cash. Horner, showing bravado since, if he is guilty, it was believed that God would use this fight to prove who was the honest man and who the liar, declares his innocence of the crime and his allegiance to the Crown. However, he is killed and is quick to admit his guilt before dying. Shakespeare's sardonic humour may be discerned in the subsequent line he gives to York, addressing Peter: 'Fellow, thank God and the good wine in thy master's way' (II.iii.100.), before more publicly declaring that God has shown the truth of the allegation.

Another episode which may well have had its origins in Stratford is that concerning the cozening Saunder Simpcox and his group, who aim to live by begging and claiming miracles when this 'blind' and 'lame' beggar has vision miraculously given to him for the first time. Their simple deception is easily discovered through questioning, not by the King, but by his more experienced and worldlywise advisers, Gloucester and Suffolk. The beadle is called to administer a whipping to Simpcox -

whipping was one of the responsibilities of this official in Stratford - and the 'lameness' is also exposed when he leaps a stool and runs away after one stroke. As was the law in Stratford and throughout England for such an offence, both Simpcox and his wife are to be whipped and returned, passed from boundary to boundary, to the town of their origin. The Wife's explanation: 'Alas, sir, we did it for pure need' (II.i.159.), was not considered a mitigating circumstance in this age but shows us either a typical whine from an exposed wrong-doer, or Shakespeare's awareness of the real suffering some Elizabethans faced in their poverty-stricken existence.

The Duchess of Gloucester's open penance for her transgression is three days' public humiliation, walking through the streets barefoot and wearing a white sheet, to be followed by banishment within the country because she is 'more nobly born' than her confederates who are to be burned or hanged. What appears to us as clearly a double standard for the rich and poor cannot be dismissed so easily. The belief that God decreed the degree of each soul by its birthright suggested to the law administrators of the Elizabethan age that God would not countenance one whom he had chosen to fill a respected place in society being unceremoniously killed, especially when a woman was the traitor. As the age progressed and the Queen's position became more vulnerable, however, this squeamishness was more often overcome for the peace and tranquillity of the realm. Shakespeare was to know much later that his own daughter, Judith, was condemned to put on a white sheet and stand barefoot in Holy Trinity Church for the adultery that her husband had

committed. He writes very movingly here of the Duchess' suffering and of her husband's distress for her and his family's honour.

Jack Cade's uprising seems to be of too great size and importance to have emanated from the streets of Stratford; besides which, many details appear to have originated in earlier writing, such as Holinshed's *Chronicles*. However, some of the description appears to be founded upon his memories of the common people and sights of Stratford. I would cite, for example, the 'leather aprons' of the handicraftsmen (IV.ii.11.), the man born 'under a hedge; for his father had never a house but the cage' (IV.ii.52.), and the man 'burnt i' th'hand for stealing sheep' (IV.ii.64). Of course, these signs were not confined to the streets of Stratford but it was there that Shakespeare would first have met such demarcation and become aware of what each signified. The changes to English life which Cade plans to make are the parochial concerns which would have been of most import for the common people of a town. Stratford's archives meticulously list the prices of bread and beer as they rose and fell, and which William's father may well have announced to his family on his return from the Council sittings. To the poor, any such changes were matters of possible life or death; Jack Cade's choice of political policy would have earned him many followers.

There shall be in England seven halfpenny loaves sold for a penny, the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops, and I will make it a felony to drink small beer.

IV.ii.67-69.

The imagery which Shakespeare employs in this drama is redolent of country knowledge and observation. Take, for example, Warwick's speech in Act 3 Scene 2 when Suffolk is being accused of Gloucester's death:

Who finds the heifer dead and bleeding fresh,
 And sees fast by a butcher with an axe,
 But will suspect 'twas he that made the slaughter?
 Who finds the partridge in the puttock's nest,
 But may imagine how the bird was dead,
 Although the kite soar with unbloodied beak?

III.ii.188-193.

There are many other examples of very natural images: another bird image, for example: 'Seems he a dove? His feathers are but borrowed/ For he's disposed like the hateful raven' (III.i.75.), and a snake, 'Or as a snake rolled in a flowering bank/ With shining chequered slough doth sting a child' (III.i.228.). 'Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep' (III.i.53.) and 'The fox barks not when he would steal a lamb' (III.i.55.): these latter two read like proverbs or common sayings, rather than Shakespeare's original inventions. Nevertheless he is choosing to use these and the earlier examples I have quoted, invoking country images even though he is referring to the machinations of political enemies. The country fear of anything which preys on others, that appears safe and harmonious but hides its true nature, was telling and apposite to Shakespeare whose concerns had been centred around such matters as he grew up and developed his writing skills.

Richard Duke of York : 3 Henry VI

It is again Shakespeare's intimate knowledge of the English countryside and wildlife which is apparent in this play. In Act II Scene 1, Warwick is comparing the enthusiasm to fight shown by Clifford's men with the lethargy of the troops supporting the King who used their weapons '...like the night-owl's lazy flight / Or like an idle thresher with a flail' (II.i.130). His metaphoric language at the beginning of Act II Scene 5, ascribed to Henry, is again an image taken from nature:

This battle fares like to the morning's war,
 When dying clouds contend with growing light,
 What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,
 Can neither call it perfect day or night. (1.1-4.)

This does not seem an image powerful enough to encapsulate a battlefield scenario, although, since it is spoken by the gentle boy-King, perhaps its pallid nature is justified. However, Henry III immediately follows it with a much more effective, extended metaphor of the wind and tide directing the sea's strong vacillation:

Now sways it this way like a mighty sea
 Forced by the tide to combat with the wind,
 Now sways it that way like the selfsame sea
 Forced to retire by fury of the wind.
 Sometime the flood prevails, and then the wind;
 Now one the better, then another best -
 Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,
 Yet neither conqueror nor conquered. (1.5-12.)

It seems possible that Shakespeare was finding that the Warwickshire County-based simile was no longer always the most effective when he was writing about matters of larger import, or that his own experience of very powerful forces of nature was becoming wider and himself more confident to use it. It seems, too, that the process

of the development of his critical powers was directing his writing towards more apposite and sophisticated choices of metaphorical imagery. In Henry's soliloquy, of which these two images were the opening lines, Shakespeare uses country images to stress the contrast between the position the man holds and his personal choice of a lifestyle more suited to his nature but denied to him by birth. He envies the life of the homely swain, able to sit quietly upon a hillside, idly counting time on a home-made clock, his responsibilities dictated by Nature herself, rather than the demands of men. He is sure a man sleeps more restfully under the shade of a bush than under a bed's embroidered canopy with treachery perhaps lurking nearby; that his 'homely curds' and 'cold thin drink out of his leather bottle....Is far beyond a prince's delicates' (1.47 ff.) Here the homely images are used to very good effect to emphasise the difference between two lifestyles - and incidentally form a social document for us!

Richard's soliloquy in Act III Scene ii presents a contrast with Henry's for Richard feels he is kept at a subordinate level by the accident of his birth, being so far down the line of accession to the throne. He does not glory in his lack of power but desires the power the King would gladly forego. Shakespeare gives to him an image underlining his lowly status by its country nature but, at the same time, expressing the strength of his determination to fight his way to pre-eminence however difficult or dangerous the path to power:

And I - like one lost in a thorny wood,
That rends the thorns and is rent with the thorns,

Seeking a way and straying from the way,
 Not knowing how to find the open air,
 But toiling desperately to find it out -
 Torment myself to catch the English crown. (l.174-79.)

Besides Shakespeare's developing skill with choice of telling metaphor, seen in these examples and, I think, elsewhere in this text, we see his confident familiarity with towns to the north of Stratford. He takes for granted Warwick's ability to know how far away support troops are by suggesting some have reached Dunsmore, others Daventry and Southam (V.i.3ff.). He has Somerville differentiate the position of Southam and Warwick by the direction of the drum sound they can hear. Using precise detail like this adds to the feeling of actuality for the audience and enhances the situation, together with the dramatic fact that the drums they hear coming unexpectedly from the direction of Warwick are not, in fact, the 'unlooked-for friends' which Warwick confidently supposes but unlooked-for enemies which his spies have either not detected or whose presence they have concealed from him.

There is a simile in Act I Scene 4 referring to a swan.

...As I have seen a swan
 With bootless labour swim against the tide
 And spend her strength with over-matching waves. (l. 20-22.).

I have never seen a reference in the Stratford archives to swans living on the Avon then as they now do. Since they are 'royal' birds, they would have had the right to be unmolested wherever they were and still be the property of the Crown and therefore of no account to the Burghers of Stratford. However, since Ben Jonson dubbed

Shakespeare 'Sweet swan of Avon' perhaps they were known to inhabit the Avon here at that time and so this simile had its being in Stratford rather than in the London river.²¹ The reference to 'the tide' might well favour the Thames as the inspiration for this simile but yet the fast flow of the Avon through Stratford could well merit the poetic use of the word. In any event, it would appear that gradually Shakespeare's daily concerns during his childhood in Stratford are reducing to the substance of metaphors. Since these common matters would be equally visible to him in the capital, itself largely a rural area by modern standards being very limited in size compared to its present-day extent and having the countryside close to its boundaries, to follow references to country matters through any of his later plays is not defensible. 'Pollution' from other sources of knowledge now opened to him stands in the way of seeing clear and possibly irrefutable evidence of the colouration which residence in this particular town during his childhood had given him.

For me, the early plays show clear evidence of the knowledge and attitudes which were engrafted into Shakespeare by his being a resident of Stratford-upon-Avon, and their expression enhances these dramas. Initially I believed that to claim certain characteristics for the writer himself would prove unsafe. However, I now think that although we know of so little personal writing by Shakespeare, some of his beliefs, attitudes and characteristics are indeed discernable occasionally, with relative certainty. In his diary, Sir Alec Guinness wrote on November 23, 1995: 'I have been thinking about... the prescience Shakespeare shows in some of the plays. Is it deliberate,

accidental or totally unconscious? Probably just the way his mind worked'.²² In a book published in May, 2003, Professor Paul Matthews calls William Shakespeare 'a fantastic practical psychologist. He took his inspiration from what he saw around him and the reason his characters are so real is because he's telling us about real people and real experiences'.²³ The psychologists analyse the way his mind worked as the result of continuous hard work coupled with relevant characteristics, an upbringing conducive to their effective development and finding a metier where there was scope for development. By this stage of Shakespeare's writing career, we can deduce that his outstanding abilities had developed enough to put his achievement above that of more run-of-the-mill writers. I think, too, it is possible to trace his developing genius as his use and description of incident and character grew more sophisticated and his choice of expression was honed more successfully. It is his reusing of material which enables us to see the process occurring. In his introduction to *The Rape of Lucrece*, Wells writes: 'The writing of the poem seems to have been a formative experience for Shakespeare. In it he not only laid the basis for his later plays on Roman history, but also explored themes that were to figure prominently in his later work'.²⁴ While agreeing with the second sentence, I would suggest that, far from being a 'formative experience for Shakespeare', the poem marks the end of his apprenticeship in writing and left him ready to produce his greatest work. Not only had he practised his skills successfully, he had realised many of the secrets of outstanding felicity with words and was able to employ them. He knew what he wanted to do and how he wanted to do it. Drama gave him opportunity to have his words enhanced by physical action and so became his chosen metier, not poetry alone but acted poetry.

CHAPTER 6 SOURCES AND SUPPLEMENTS

Shakespeare... proved that his fine intelligence delighted in the challenge afforded by plots which needed to be doubled, enlarged, intertwined. Mastery of construction indeed seems to have preceded his mastery over poetic imagery and texture; Shakespeare was a fine dramatist before he became a finished poet.¹
 Bullough.

Shakespeare was clearly a creative man yet he chose, or was directed, to adopt well-used legends, plots and factual histories to form the backbones of his drama. Could he not make up a story? Some show that he could by citing plays for which no source has been found, such as *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: that is insufficient evidence by itself since some source material may well have been lost long ago. It is more likely that we can demonstrate his creative ability by looking at some of his sources and assessing what he did with them. Of course, at this early stage of his career, and especially since he is almost surely initially writing in collaboration with established dramatists, he may have had little choice of what he was to write about: an apprentice obeys, he doesn't direct. Bullough thinks that Robert Greene may well have been a co-author with Shakespeare in writing *Henry VI Part I* for example.² Arguments (and unflattering comparisons!) in co-writing may well have been the basis for Greene's petulant outburst of 1592.³ However, by comparing the source material with the expression of those same events in the plays ascribed to Shakespeare, it is possible to study the selection of material, the rearrangements of facts, and how earlier accounts were enhanced, knowing that some of these at least were carried out by him. He also fused individual narratives together, combining them into a new, single, homogenous unit. It is his individual style and usage

of his sources which form a clear indication of his developing, unique ability, since the sources he used were available to other writers who developed them less memorably.

Of course, he was writing in a tradition of recasting old stories, but was there any advantage to Shakespeare in reusing others' material? I think so. When an entirely new narrative is created so that the listeners or readers do not know the outcome of the action, they will focus their attention on understanding the movement of the plot. It is only after several repetitions of the story that other aspects of the piece may be considered. The plays Shakespeare wrote were expected to have a very brief life. At the beginning of his writing career, plays were rarely preserved by printing. Those that have come down to us have survived only in theatre prompt books, which were often skeletal, and later through flimsy quartos and, perhaps, memorial reconstructions. The first well-bound editions were not made until the seventeenth century. A playwright could not, therefore, rely on having his plays well known, except by the actors themselves - and for them a play had to be constantly replaced in the memory by ones newer to the repertoire. *Richard II* was called an old play when revived for one night at the request of the Earl of Essex on the eve of his bid to dethrone the Queen in 1601. It could have been no more than six years old.

If story-telling was not Shakespeare's primary aim when writing his plays, then the story needed to be well known, enabling the audience to be in a position to think beyond the narrative and attend to whatever else was being brought to their notice. I think Shakespeare was much more involved with the idea that action was the result of men's

motivation and their variety of attitudes to the situations in which life put them than in the action *per se*. It was the psychological origin of behaviour which he explored - although he would not have used that terminology in his era. He was a philosophical observer of men and manners; the stories were the convenient coat-hangers on which he displayed a variety of thoughts concerning men's lives through his characters. His interest in the vagaries of men's behaviour may well have stemmed from his classical education in Stratford. Our contemporary well-known philosopher, Bernard Williams, believes he himself developed philosophical skills while studying classical texts at school. 'We did a lot of grammatical analysis of ancient texts and that must have appealed to my taste. I was interested in philosophy before I knew I was.'⁴

Shakespeare's very similar source of education seems likely to have had a similar effect upon him; from his earliest known work, the story is only part of the content of his plays. Of course, he could tell a story well and invent one when he chose, but this was not where his main interest lay. Throwing more light on to the background of a known narrative suited his purpose well, and his insight is one of the qualities for which we still return to his writing.

In this chapter I will compare some of the source materials with the uses he put them to. Again I must restrict my study almost entirely to the earliest plays discussed in the preceding chapter, partly because of the limited length of a thesis but mainly because I am not engaged here in trying to demonstrate Shakespeare's genius, only the growth of his ability as he worked towards his greatest drama - I am discussing the MAKING of his genius. Because, therefore, I must limit observation to his early writing, as far as we have

it, a new problem is posed: since the plays are likely to be collaborations, who wrote what? How can we assess his ability when we could be looking at lines he did not compose? There is no final, incontrovertible, conclusive agreement between all critics and academics about the authorship of particular passages and scenes; the debates have raged for years and look set to continue as research progresses and fashions in belief change. My conclusions, therefore, must be more tentative than I should like and will no doubt be read in the light of contemporary study and belief, as with all scholarship. It will become apparent that I hardly mention his poetic ability. There are three reasons why I eschew consideration of this important aspect of his work. Firstly, in trying to confront three separate disciplines, namely psychology, history and literature, in one thesis, it is difficult not to appear to be glossing over topics too lightly in comparison with others' work; secondly, that area of his ability has already been explored in several books where sufficient space was available for a much fuller consideration than it could be offered here where only sketchy discussion could be accommodated. Thirdly, his sources were not in poetic form overall and so, for this chapter in particular, this aspect of his writing is of lesser direct importance than his selection of source materials.

Two Comedies

The comedies pose the more serious problem because the possible sources from which Shakespeare took his inspiration, or at least some of his basic material, are particularly diverse. Bullough lists several possibilities for the sources from which *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* may have taken being; they include *The Governour* by Sir Thomas Elyot, Lyly's *Euphues*, Montemayor's *Diana Enamorada* and two other possible

influences on the play. He discusses and dismisses works suggested by other researchers. There could have been more which no longer exist or where a connection has not been noted as yet: who is to say? It is certainly likely since not all the books and manuscripts in existence then have survived the intervening centuries. Muir reminds us to accept 'that apparently close parallels may be deceptive'.⁵ Working from the possibilities we have at the moment, however, it becomes clear that whichever Shakespeare had in his mind, he did not copy or adhere to them slavishly.

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* the theme is that of conflict caused by one of a pair of close friends falling in love with a woman. The second man, largely through being closely in tune with the propensities of the other, almost unavoidably becomes enamoured of the same person. This theme had been a common one since the Middle Ages at least: both Boccaccio and Chaucer used it. When Shakespeare was writing, the notion was still under consideration as we can read in Montaigne's *Essays* (1.Xxvii., p.151.), and also in a proverb common at that time: 'Two friends have one soul between them'. Coupled with this we have the mediaeval romance picture of devotion to a woman being scorned, in line with Nashe's complaint in *Pierce Penilesse* against those who 'sit dallying at home, nor will be awakt by any indignities out of his love-dreame'. For my purposes, fortunately, which source, or sources, Shakespeare remembered is not of too much importance; whichever it was, he adapted others' versions considerably, using the premises but with his own treatment moving the focus of the attention.

For example, in *The Governour*, the young friends, Gysippus and Titus, do not leave their homeland. Gysippus begins to visit the lady without the knowledge of his friend: already the bonds of friendship are being strained. When Titus does meet her, he falls in love and then falls ill by repressing his desire for her. Eventually he confides in Gysippus who, to save his friend's life, gives up his interest in her since he feels Titus' love must be stronger than his own to have had such an effect upon his well-being: 'Here I renounce to you clerely all my title and interest that I nowe have or mought have in that fair mayden'.⁶ He knows he will be reviled for the secretive way in which he will arrange for Titus to replace him as her bridegroom but leaves the future to God's providence. The focus here is entirely upon the presentation of perfect friendship and the demands it can make.

This example in the affectes of frendshippe expresseth (if I be nat deceyved) the description of frendship engendered by the similitude of age and personage, augmented by the conformitie of maners and studies, and confirmed by the longe continuaunce of company.⁷

No other aspects of the deceit played upon the lady and her family, for example, are considered. It is a simple exposition of strong and self-sacrificing friendship as a one-dimensional topic. By following the original story's focus too far, Shakespeare limits his play's acceptability and effectiveness, at least for a modern audience. Valentine gives Silvia to Proteus just as Gysippus renounces his love to save Titus' life. Because Shakespeare has created a different situation in which the three are placed, such an action is no longer very appropriate: Proteus is in no danger of dying from unrequited love and has not deserved such dedication to friendship from Valentine. Because of Proteus' despicable behaviour, to give Silvia to him would be to sacrifice her and the

loyalty she has shown to Valentine. In Shakespeare's version of events, the women are given much more prominent roles so we are engaged with what happens to them as well as to the men in the story. Silvia has to be reclaimed and this is achieved but the conclusion of this play is clearly contrived somewhat clumsily.

In John Lyly's treatment of the same situation, some aspects of the tale are altered. Euphues goes to live in Naples and there strikes up 'an inviolable league of friendship' with Philautus. Lyly presents his story as a moral debate on who is most to blame when love of a woman destroys the amity between two men. He suggests that 'neither of them was blamelesse' in his opinion but leaves it to other Gentlemen to decide since 'being of deeper discretion then I am, are more fit to debate the quarrell'.⁸ Philautus is introduced to Lucilla and allowed to court her by her father. Eventually, Euphues is introduced to her household and is enraptured by Lucilla, who treats him with only cold politeness, so he pretends to court another lady, Livia, in order to continue to visit the house. His courtship of both women proceeds slowly so as not to arouse suspicion and to give time for Lucilla to turn her affections from Philautus to himself, which happens. She decides to show the same affection towards both men rather than be disloyal to Philautus. In the absence of both his rival and her father, Euphues and Lucilla finally admit to their mutual love. When her father tells her that her marriage to Philautus is about to take place, she refuses, saying she loves Euphues. During the ensuing distress and anger, however, she marries another rival for her hand, Curio, leaving Euphues without either friend or lover. The two men join forces in blaming Lucilla for her fickleness and resume their friendship. Shakespeare was to use this dramatic moment of a disobedient daughter

in *Romeo and Juliet* but not in this comedy. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* not only does Julia stay fiercely loyal to her lover but when Proteus tries to woo his new love, Silvia, she refuses him on the grounds of his infidelity to his first choice. The women in Shakespeare's play show up the fickleness of Proteus by their own loyal behaviour, in Silvia's case, to a woman she does not even know but with whose position she sympathises deeply.

The story of *Diana Enamorada* is much closer to that of Shakespeare's play. However, it was written in Spanish and there is little reason to believe Shakespeare could have read it until after it was translated into English in 1598. Although somewhat rambling it is in many respects much closer to Shakespeare's version of events than either Lyly's or Elyot's. Perhaps that is why Bullough put the composition of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* later than we currently believe it was written. Bullough mentions various ways Shakespeare could have been introduced to the story via a partial French translation or an English manuscript circulating long before its publication. Again, because it was based on a common theme, this could explain why the two compositions have several facets in common. For example, in both a letter is passed to the beloved lady which she modestly refuses to accept initially, but finally does so. It has been passed via her maid. In *Diana Enamorada*, the man's father suspects his son is too involved with his feelings for the girl and he sends his son away to see more of the world. In Shakespeare's version, Proteus' father sends him to follow his friend, Valentine, to gain worldly experience rather than to remove him from his love - this happens to be the effect of which his father seemed unaware. There is irony throughout Shakespeare's play which adds to its

impact on the audience. Proteus is being deceitful to his father since he pretends that the letter he has received from Julia is sent from Valentine who wishes his friend were with him. Antonio promptly informs his son that he is to be sent to join Valentine but Proteus' objection does not mention Julia: he only claims he has not time to be ready to leave quickly. Already Shakespeare is shaping our opinion of this young man.

Thus have I shunn'd the fire, for fear of burning,
 And drench'd me in the sea, where I am drown'd.
 I fear'd to show my father Julia's letter,
 Lest he should take exceptions to my love,
 And with the vantage of my own excuse
 Hath he excepted most against my love.

I.iii.78-83.

On hearing about Silvia, Proteus has an immediate change of heart - in fact he admits he is made disloyal both to Valentine and to Julia by merely the description of her perfections given him by Valentine. He knows already that the two have arranged their elopement but this does not deter him from planning to get her for himself. Nor is he unaware of the poverty of his behaviour. At the end of Act II Scene iv he shows his awareness of his dishonourable attitude and how quickly his feelings for his friend and for his mistress have been dispelled but, when he could have avoided seeing her, he still goes forward knowing that 'when I look on her perfections, / There is no reason but I shall be blind'. (II.iv.207-08.). Shakespeare states more definitely the situation he wishes the audience to accept than any other versions of the story of which I am aware. He maps out the working of Proteus' mind for the audience. The blame is put fully upon one of the participants only. This picture of Proteus' disloyalty continues throughout until his belated change of heart. He informs Silvia's father of the planned elopement, slanders

his friend, lies about his own motives and gives away the ring he admitted had been given him by Julia as a remembrance of their love, inadvertently causing Julia herself to be his go-between.

In *Diana Enamorada*, Don Felix has wooed Felismena for a long time before he finally manages to get her to accept a letter from him, and still she says she is wrong to reply to it. ‘This letter did I send, contrarie to that I should have done, because it was the occasion of all my harmes and greefes.’⁹ This stress upon her awareness of culpability makes her plan to dress as a page and follow him more obviously a momentous decision for her, and shows the strength of her devotion to him. ‘I felt my selfe so far in his love, that I had no power to retire.’¹⁰ Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* also says that she does not want to accept the clandestine letter passed from Proteus’ page to her attendant but immediately regrets giving it back unread and thinks of ways she can have it offered to her again. Shakespeare does not dwell on the impropriety as Montemayor does but uses the letter to bring humour to the plot. When Julia does get the letter she feels obliged to tear it up unread so that her arch maid, Lucetta, will not have the satisfaction of knowing that her belief that Julia is already in love with Proteus is correct. She then tries to reconstruct it and the following scene is bound to elicit both amusement and understanding from the audience. The additions of expounded psychological motivation and humour to the story are the most obvious extensions of the tale which Shakespeare makes. His version shares with Montemayor’s the woman’s disguised flight to see her admirer and her distress at finding him now indifferent to her and courting a richer

woman. Both discover this by being led by the host of the inn where they are staying to hear Proteus serenading his new lady, which is done in the hope of giving the visitor pleasure - and in both cases the opposite is achieved: both are further distressed. Both take up a servant's post with their loved one and both are sent to plead the suit of that man to the other woman, just as, in *Twelfth Night* Viola, in the guise of Cesario, is sent to plead for Duke Orsino with the Countess. At this juncture, all three versions diverge. While Felismena and Viola both inadvertently cause the woman to whom they are sent to fall in love with them, Celia in *Diana Enamorada* mysteriously dies while Olivia in *Twelfth Night* is given Viola's twin brother to marry. Shakespeare turns minor tragedy into a sorrowful comedy. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Silvia only appreciates the page's compassion for Julia and rewards "him" financially: 'Here, youth; there is my purse; I give thee this / For thy sweet mistress' sake, because thou lov'st her' (IV.iv.178-79.).

Montemayor gives a dramatic ending to his account: Felismena rescues Don Felix from a lethal attack, tells him who she is and becomes his wife. Shakespeare's is more sustained and more dramatic: Silvia, like Julia, goes in search of her banished lover, Valentine, and is captured by the outlaws who have taken Valentine to be their leader and is to be escorted to him. Before the expected happy reunion can take place, however, she is rescued from them by Proteus. This is a complication for the audience since tradition demands that the lady will marry her saviour. Silvia remains constant to her love for Valentine, however and, in frustration, Proteus attempts to rape her. The

dilemma for the audience is decided: Proteus has not followed the knightly tradition and so must lose her forever. Valentine appears and thwarts his one-time friend and claims the lady as his own. Her father approves the match, of course, and Valentine demands reinstatement for all the outlaws too.

Not only is Shakespeare's rendition of the traditional tale more complex, it is more humorous, dramatic and in some measure more realistic, in incident as well as in expression. He uses doubling to lay the stress in the piece where he wishes it to be: in this play, for example, both women go to join their paramours and Lance conducts his own wooing and selection of a mate. The first of these examples gives Shakespeare opportunity to highlight the different behaviours of Valentine and Proteus (who belatedly makes amends when he recognises Julia) when faced with the loyalty of both women; Lance forms a balance of rationality in selection of a wife which compares favourably with the less rigorous assessments made by either Valentine or Proteus.

The most notable difference between Shakespeare's version of the story and its predecessors, however, is the humour which is skilfully intertwined with the sad and distressing nature of the story until its denouement. It is the servants who supply most of this. They have little part in the main events but are far more realistic and engaging than the four lovers. At the same time, they are used by the writer to advance and enhance the story-line and also underline, by means of contrast and exposition, the attitudes and

behaviour of the main characters. Lucetta gives us opportunity to understand Julia's feeling for Proteus, for example. The somewhat staccato and understated farewells of the upperclass families are set against the more effusive one described by Lance in graphic detail. The conversations between the servants and their masters are more realistic and engaging than the artificiality of the main events. Such everyday matters interspersing the actions turn melodrama into something more engrossing, the prime example of this being Lance's description of what he has suffered for his dog, without reciprocity. Clearly he is very fond of the animal yet, having been robbed of the dog Proteus wished to give Silvia as a present, he has offered up his own to her - and is berated for doing so. This is an amusing parallel to Valentine's later wish to give away his beloved partner for Proteus' sake. The loyalty and selflessness of this ill-educated servant contrasts strongly with that of his perfidious master. This use of contrast instead of lengthy moral exposition is one of the hallmarks of Shakespeare's style throughout his writing and is one of its assets. The partially serious banter between Speed and Lance in Act III scene i is typical of Shakespeare's already skilled control of his medium. Speed and Lance play with words, scoring points from each other. Overall, Speed seems to have the upper hand, forcing Lance to discuss the girl he wants when he had said he would not; ironically Lance has the last laugh because Speed's insistence on prolonging the discussion has delayed the message Lance has for him: 'Now will he be swing'd for reading my letter - an unmannerly slave, that thrust himself into secrets! I'll after, to rejoice in the boy's correction'. (Line 369).

From this early play we can perceive how effective Shakespeare's writing and control of his medium is and also how audience-aware he is. His use of humour transforms the traditional story into a clever and amusing exposition not only of loyalty and divided loyalties but of the gap between the behaviour and attitudes of members of society.

While his presentation of characters may be exaggerated to obtain contrast, it is hard to believe that Shakespeare's awareness of divergence between classes was not, at least in part, founded on his experience of life in Stratford during his formative years: I think it would be perverse to deny this likelihood.

The second comedy is *The Taming of the Shrew*. In his book *Backgrounds of Shakespeare's Thought* Hankins claims this play 'reflects a background of proverb lore'.¹¹ Certainly it has a theme common in the literature and sermons of that time. Bullough lists its main source as being from a lost play with some influence from *Supposes* by George Gascoigne.¹² There may also be some reliance for its inspiration on Paul's 'Epistle to the Ephesians' in *The Bible*: 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the wives head, even as Christ is head of the Church' (V.22-27.). The tone of Katherine's final speech echoes that of St Paul: 'Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, / Thy head, thy sovereign, one that cares for thee'. (V.ii.151-2). The theme of obedience and mastery is not confined only to women in relation to men but also to servants in relation to their masters. This was not an innovation by Shakespeare: St Paul advocated this also in an epistle (VI. 1-9).

The main controversy stems from our having two versions of the play, usually differentiated by being known as *The Shrew* and *A Shrew*. Discussion centres on which is the earlier or the most Shakespearian version; once again opinion still remains divided. While *The Shrew* is the better play, *A Shrew* has a greater use of the Christopher Sly plot which seems more typical of Shakespeare's interest in comic pretension which we see in other plays, such as *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*. At present, however frustrating it may be, we can only accept Heilman's decision that to be dogmatic here is to rely on 'assumptions and likelihoods rather than very hard evidence. In the end, we do not really know what the relation between the two plays is.'¹³ In the Oxford edition of 1988, my main source of play reading for this thesis, the editors still leave the matter at the same level: 'The exact relationship of these plays is disputed'.¹⁴ This, of course, makes the assessment I am trying to make of limited validity in this instance. However, Bullough claims that 'Shakespeare was interested in the Tinker as typical of a certain class and even of a locality, as he showed by adding many allusions to Warwickshire places and family names'.¹⁵ If this is so, then the play is of significance to this thesis and must be examined. However, Bullough believes that the quarto version [*A Shrew*] is 'a badly printed version of the old play which Shakespeare used as his main source for *The Shrew*'.¹⁶ In this case it would seem that Shakespeare was more interested in cutting down the importance of Christopher Sly in his own version, so his interest in the local tinker figure is hard to accredit. To establish anything relevant to Shakespeare's burgeoning genius with any certainty from examining this play may prove impossible.

Three disparate elements are combined here: the elevation of a man from a lowly status to a higher one, the taming of a harridan by uncouth and cruel methods and men's propensity for choosing a bride by her looks and public behaviour only. The writer links them by making the marriage of the attractive girl dependent upon the need for her elder sister to marry first, which is the situation in Gascoigne's version also. There is also the reversal of expected marriage suitability in that the shrewish Katherine makes a better wife than the hypocritical Bianca or the experienced widow. The Sly story shares the premise that what is seen to be the situation is not necessarily the truth of the matter. He seems, in common with the other men, to have difficulty in coping with women, being thrown out of the inn by the landlady and thinking, having watched the play, that he can improve his home situation with his wife by practising what it has taught him. All of the plots are very tongue-in-cheek in the way they are presented. However, to see this as indicative of Shakespeare's skills requires that both plays were written by him, or that whichever was the earlier was his work.

The theme of a difficult wife had been known in the vernacular since Chaucer's writing and before that in several Latin texts. It has continued to be used as a source of amusement until the present day. The humour may lie in incidents attendant on the situation and/or on its solution. *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* share the incident of a musical instrument being used as a weapon, and also of the hero wearing strange clothes to his wedding. Both show the new bride being worn into submission by cruelty, administered mainly by her husband but also by his servant. If the two plays were written by different

playwrights, the second did little creative work, except in lengthening or shortening the existing text. I believe that they share authorship but were written at different times, which limits my difficulty in discussing them in relation to this thesis.

The Bianca plot varies more widely between the two versions, mainly in that there are two siblings not one younger sister in *A Shrew* but more suitors in *The Shrew*. The humour relies on the same basic incidents. Gascoigne's *Supposes* shares some similarities but its focus is different, centring on illegitimate pregnancy and a long-lost son, neither of which figures in either *Shrew* play. Bullough categorizes *Supposes* as 'a hard, dry, classical comedy of subterfuge and misunderstanding', which would not fit either *Shrew* play accurately.¹⁷ Certainly the English writer(s) knew Gascoigne's story but used incidents from it rather than its theme. While *A Shrew* was printed in 1594 'to be sold by Cuthbert Burbie, at his shop at the Royal Exchange', *The Shrew* was the version we have from the *First Folio* of 1623. The latter is considerably longer and the tapster who ejects Sly from this tavern is female not male. This slight change adds to the study of male/female aggression and dissension which permeate this text.

There are no close parallels for the *Shrew* plays then that are known to us. Well known, traditional materials have been conjoined to give an amusing piece of moralistic advice, as much to men as to women, although the latter bear the brunt of the calumny. There is little plumbing of psychological reasoning shown to lie behind the actions of the

characters and so the play, in its present form at least, remains the slightest piece ascribed to Shakespeare. However, there are aspects of the sustained, multi-headed attack upon Katherine's shrewishness which hold the attention, and the Sly story, if only it were complete, would add a depth of field to the portrait of the difficulties men and women have in working successfully in unison. Bulloch claims: '*A Shrew* thus provided ample material on which the creative genius of Shakespeare might work; only the golden touch was needed'.¹⁸ This belief, however, begs a few questions. It would mean that Shakespeare did not write *A Shrew* and most of the Sly episode was not of his making. The changing of names and location might be more easily understood, however, since they are hard to account for if both plays are by the same writer. The flatness of most of the characters and the unevenness of the writing could belong to his earliest period and have guided his understanding of how to create outstanding compositions. Perhaps the ending of *The Shrew* is the best guide to the development of Shakespeare's estimation of what writing was for. The play is visually gripping and lively but the ending is more static. The men are sitting talking and their wives are sent for but do not appear until Katherine fetches them in; her means of achieving this are not disclosed. The thinking behind Katherine's changed behaviour is verbally explained. For many this final scene is disappointing: for those of the audience who have enjoyed the spectacle it is not interesting; for those who find the underlying premise of the battle of the sexes to have more importance, it is unbalanced. Since the writer chose to conclude the play in this way, we can presume that he wanted to display the thought and moral choice which Katherine had made, not simply the slapstick which the story evoked.

The Henry VI Trilogy

The most common source for these plays is Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Unlike the sources of the comedy plays, these were a serious and straightforward exposition of history so far as it was known. Written in six large volumes, they are based on many earlier texts and cover first a history of the world, then outline the history of the British Isles. The task for writers to face in creating plays from them was different from adapting earlier literature, in that they needed to flesh out incidents from largely factual accounts and bring to life the perpetrators of the events; the limitation authors faced was that they needed to adhere to the known factors, neither the characters involved in the events nor their outcomes being alterable, if their main concern was to dramatize history. Clearly, since Shakespeare did alter historical data this was not his primary purpose. From this we can deduce the writer's focus in these plays lies elsewhere. The plays written early in Shakespeare's career do not appear to have been composed in historically chronological order. Here I shall treat the three Henry VI plays as being designed as one entity, since, whether or not they were composed in chronological order, the ending of *1 Henry VI* leads directly to the opening of *2 Henry VI*, and Part 3 begins in sequence too.

The history plays are necessarily derivative from historical accounts and data. The main problem for the writing of the Henry trilogy is to turn a sprawling series of battles over the same territories into dramatically satisfying entertainment. Bullough notes that

‘Many critics have thought the play (*3 Henry VI*) a failure owing to its long catalogue of woes, the lack of comic relief. To a reader of the sources on the contrary it seems an astonishing *tour de force* in its handling of sprawling, recalcitrant material’.¹⁹ This may be said of all three plays. Shakespeare had no need to introduce a second subsidiary plot for the material itself supplied enough strands to ensure width of treatment of his topic. He did, however, not only draw on several lengthy texts, including Hall’s and Monmouth’s histories of England, Holinshed’s chronicles and probably Grafton’s work based on Hall’s as well, but added short episodes of his own devising. His primary interest appears to have been not the historical events so much as the theme he could explore by his exposition of them. The condensing of the battles causes some characters to become historically displaced, breaking historical accuracy. The plays’ effectiveness to show the limited perspicacity and the self-regard that many men have is of more importance to the writer(s) than the retelling of history. When one reads through the 130 pages of only Holinshed’s account of Henry VI’s reign, it is possible to appreciate how well the dramatist has compressed and reorganized events to create plays which have dramatic effect. Bullough claims Shakespeare seems closest to Hall’s attitude towards the events and that he adopts Hall’s pattern of writing. Hall thought ‘the wicked sins and unthankfulness of the inhabitants towards God the cheefe occasions and causes of the transmutations of kingdoms’.²⁰ This attitude I do not find particularly prevalent in Shakespeare’s plays, although it is expressed by some of his characters. More obvious, however, is Hall’s aim as described by Bullough: ‘... to show the evils of dissention in the state, and of the wickedness in the individual, to trace the workings of Divine Justice in its effects on the sinner himself, on his posterity, and on the unhappy people over

whom he ruled'.²¹ I think Shakespeare appears to follow this line of thought not so much as a theological interpretation of history but because of his fascination with the human mind and its machinations, which colours all genre of his dramas. It is for this reason that Shakespeare adopted Hall's treatment of Joan of Arc and developed it. The scene in which Joan talks to her attendant devils, is echoed when the Duchess of Gloucester resorts to witchcraft to further her ambitions for her husband and herself. Differences in attitude and action between the French and English are highlighted by the way in which the French unite to follow the Maid of Orleans while the English summarily try, condemn and banish their Duchess. Both incidents are used to further the overall theme of loyalty and disloyalty: while Joan is abandoned by all, the Duchess' departure is marked by the deep regret Gloucester shows towards his wife as she is escorted to exile. This is a small detail which adds limited but effective underlining to the theme.

The battles and sieges are permeated by men who change their allegiance or withdraw support which would have altered history. Often these instances are fabricated by the dramatist. Bate believes that the 'genius is in the embellishment' and that is what we are seeing in Shakespeare's moving of historical fact into relevant thematic drama.²²

Burgundy is persuaded by Joan to give up his allegiance to the English cause and join with France; York is prevented from helping Talbot because Somerset does not supply him with reinforcements (I Henry VI. IV.iii.9-16.) The Dauphin underlines the effect this has had, in Shakespeare's version:

Had York and Somerset brought rescue in
 We should have found a bloody day of this.
 I Henry VI. IV.vii.33-4.

The tragedy of the situation for the English is given poignancy by the resultant deaths of Talbot, the English soldier most feared by the French, and his brave young son who may have followed in his footsteps. This personalising of a situation is typical of Shakespeare's style of exposition. Shakespeare's realism and timing are hallmarks of his ability; these control what he includes from his sources and how he manipulates them. As Bate observes: 'There is no other writer like Shakespeare for condensing ideas and feelings into memorable words and phrases'.²³ The condensing achieved in the *Henry VI* trilogy is truly remarkable in such a young and comparatively inexperienced dramatist. Hall believed 'Fame is the triumphe of glory, and memory by literature is the very dilatour and setter furth of Fame': certainly if it was recorded by a Shakespeare a 'memory by literature' may be attained.²⁴

His work, of course, gives equal fame to his fabrications. The touching and effective deaths of the Talbots, with the father cradling his dead son in his arms while he himself dies contrasts strongly with Joan denying herself to be her father's daughter when he comes to die with her when she is condemned by the English to burn to death. Her father then says he would choose a worse death for her. Another fabrication by the dramatist is the entrapment of Talbot attempted by the Countess. This incident gives the audience the frisson of fear of his fate (and that of the English forces), followed by the dramatic entry upon his signal of a hundred soldiers there to protect him. In such an incident we are

offered drama and a depiction of a man's astuteness and his courtesy towards the lady from whom he takes only a meal for his men although she hoped to take his life.

Where Shakespeare's sources offered him dramatic detail he took and elaborated it. The killing and maiming of Sir Thomas Gargrave and the Earl of Salisbury by the Gunner's son while they were at their spying position is very briefly described in Holinshed's account but Shakespeare enlarges it to give character to the child who had been ordered to fetch his father should the English go to that point at which the gun had been trained. We see the boy, if the stage direction is not a non-authorial addition, crossing the stage with the lighted taper which will fire the charge. It is this building up of small dramatic incident which uses the audience's imagination to picture the sudden change in control between the French and English which is the subject matter in hand. Bullough writes 'Already Shakespeare appears as the artist in design whose constructive ability is unequalled by his contemporaries'.²⁵ For example, he clearly prepares at the end of one section of the plays a leading figure, and possibly an event too, which will initiate the situation in the next instalment of Henry VI's reign; Suffolk comes to the fore at the end of *I Henry VI* in going to collect Margaret, the young king's bride-to-be, and introducing her to the king in the opening scene of *II Henry VI*. Her coming dowerless and replacing the king's original intended queen leads to much of the action which is to follow. At the end of *II Henry VI*, it is the duplicity of the lords who have espoused York's claim to the throne and the strength of his position which prepares us for the contest for the kingship which shapes the action of *III Henry VI*.

Those who have suggested that Shakespeare could only write if someone else supplied the content are surely mistaken. He chose to use the possibly familiar skeleton of events and thus enable his audience to appreciate still, through his treatment of factors, an interesting and thought-provoking exposition of the past. To do this, it was not necessary for him to write the plays in sequence, of course. With one part constructed, it would have been simple to supply either a forerunner or a sequel to its beginning or end. The order of composition need not delay us here since all the plays are among his earliest printed compositions. Whether or not *I Henry VI*, for example, was newly composed or a reworking is not too relevant: any plays at this time may have been in either category. Henslowe's *Diary* lists several payments to dramatists for reviving or adding to old plays. Still Shakespeare's skill is traceable here, if only in the introduction of the Common Man into *II Henry VI*.

Shakespeare was clearly intrigued by people, their attitudes and what they choose or are led to do. He learned to make them as complex and yet credible and understandable as the confines of a play will allow, largely by the detail he includes, insignificant in itself but telling. People clash because they come from different viewpoints and have different needs and aims. They misjudge how others will behave and react. This is seen in the intrigue and double dealing which constitute the main thrust of these plays. It is seen again in a different scenario in the third scene of *2 Henry VI*, where three citizens are trying to present petitions to the Lord Protector. As we noted in an earlier chapter, nothing much could happen in England at this time except through the auspices of a

senior parliamentarian. Queen Margaret is made to intercept the men and read their petitions. This in itself is a masterly, economic stroke by the writer. The Queen and Gloucester are in opposition to each other; her desire to know what might be happening in his “camp” is believable. The three petitions are different in nature and seriousness from each other: one is concerning a private dispute with a neighbour, one is of the public distress caused through enclosure of land by Suffolk, who is attending the Queen, and the last a treacherous reporting of a man’s words by his servant. All were relevant to the concerns of the audiences of the time. They represent the types of petition sent on several occasions by the townspeople of Stratford to London, on one occasion employing Shakespeare’s father on just such a mission. The Queen tears up the first two, telling the petitioners to begin their applications for support over again - a slow and costly process to them, carelessly ordered by the Queen, who will not be personally affected by them. The third she has attended to immediately - an indication of her character to the audience. Suffolk, upon reading the second petition, which concerns himself, calls the carrier ‘Sir Knave’ somewhat threateningly, as the man indicates with the nervous response ‘Alas, Sir, I am but a poor petitioner of our whole township’. (I.iii.25-6.) We learn in this something more about Suffolk.

At the same time, the brief episode prepares us for and lends credibility to the strength of the rising of the people in support of Jack Cade which is soon to follow. But before this, the incident of the alleged “miracle” occurs. Simpcox and his wife are brought to the delighted king for they claim he has been cured of blindness. Many accept the claim

at face value, including the naive king, while the more astute Lords put the claim to the test and prove his assertions a hoax. We realise that the poor people may be as self-serving as their masters, that the king is too ready to believe what he is told; there is a balance set up between the two classes' behaviour. However, the poor people receive immediate judgement: Simon Simpcox is whipped, his wife insulted and the two of them sent back to the north. Her final words 'Alas, sir, we did it for pure need' (line 159), are entirely disregarded. The reactions to their departure adds to the pointing of the scene as the Queen laughs heartily at the spectacle of Simpcox' flight while some of the bystanders see his ability to do so further evidence of the "miracle". Perhaps he will make a little money from his deception after all!

There is comedy in this sequence too, of course, and again in Peter Thump's duel with his disloyal master, Horner, whom he accuses of sedition to the Queen. Horner maintains his innocence and Peter prepares for death. The sparcity of the goods he has to leave in his will are notable. It is expected that God will show who has been lying by making the other the victor. He does so: Horner is killed and makes a hasty confession before dying. During the preparation for the contest, Horner, a practised swordsman, and therefore knowing himself to be advantaged in this fight, has been plied with drink by his supportive neighbours and has accepted their kindness. It proves to be his undoing as York notes: 'Fellow, thank God and the good wine in thy master's wame'.(II.iii.100.)

These brief incidents of conflict between the classes prepare the audience for the more serious and widespread confrontation to come. The construction is excellent.

Holinshed's account of the period shows many areas of northern France changing hands several times before France could finally retain possession of them. He attributes their final success to the internal unrest between the Lords of England; their fighting each other instead of acting in unity against France meant that insufficient money and troops were assigned to defeating the French king and his allies in Burgundy and Normandy.

The English victories are ascribed to the courage and endurance of a few military leaders who had fought with Henry V, and to the will of God. As these men died or were killed, England's internal bickering used up the power of their descendants, but no mention of God's will being seen in this is made by Shakespeare. He shows great skill in directing his factual material so that, while the audience learns something of the times in which these plays are set, their attention is drawn to the participants and to their motivation.

We are shown the suffering of individuals and how international events impinge on the lives of those drawn into them. We begin to see mankind as unable to control his own life: even those in authority with the power to impose their wishes on others cannot control the final outcome which their choices give rise to. This is not ascribed to an omniscient God, however, but seems more to lie in the complexity of life and accident. It is this turning factual writing into thought-provoking drama which is one major factor which has led to Shakespeare's work dominating that of others in his field for so many centuries.

Edward III

Edward III is now widely accepted as a play by Shakespeare or one in which he had a part. Roger Warren claims 'the play shows events on the world stage in terms of personalities, as often in Shakespeare's undisputed work'.²⁶ In this play at least the amalgam of events, as told by Froissart's *Chronicles*, offers two sets of incidents which can be fused to form a composite, interesting, dramatic whole. The King is enamoured of the Countess of Salisbury but when she rejects his love he pursues her no further. Holinshed's account makes no mention of this affair. In the novel by Painter, told in *The Palace of Pleasure*, the would-be lover is not so easily repelled and resorts to blackmail and threats towards her parents and is only finally dissuaded from seducing her by her determination to commit suicide in front of him should he not desist. In Painter's romantic story, both the king and the countess are unmarried so the lady remains pure and the king achieves his goal by marrying her. Combining the story with historical reality made this neat solution unusable yet the plot was too good to be given up. By changing characters' names, eliding events and battles, and ignoring chronology when necessary, the writer has reduced the long historical accounts of both Froissart and Holinshed, merged with the racier story of Painter, into a fairly brief play. Using events as illustration, the theme becomes an exposition of the conflict between national and personal choices: by pursuing the woman, the king must neglect the warring situation in which England is placed with attacks coming from both France and Scotland. To neglect the defence of his kingdom - besides the moral implication of deserting the needs of his

family - is not open to a king, yet the power of his passion for the chaste Countess is overwhelming and disables Edward from concentrating upon concerns of state.

The combination of history and romance has been well constructed to form an excellent drama with no apparent solution other than tragedy, yet this is skilfully avoided. Sams claims: 'Their [the plots'] controls provide large-scale structure, their inter-linkages create phrases and imagery. Further, each is adroitly aligned as a separate aspect of one single unifying topic, namely the rights and wrongs of vows and promises'.²⁷ The interlinking is very effective. In rescuing the Countess who is besieged in her castle Edward acts chivalrously and she shows decorous but heartfelt gratitude. Accepting her invitation to rest at the castle is proper behaviour on both sides, but it is his undoing since he has opportunity to realise her beauty and goodness to which he is drawn. By lingering at the castle, unable to stop looking at her, Edward both gives opportunity for the French to gain the upperhand in the fighting and the audience to see his struggle to overcome his illicit attraction and desire for her. His love is natural - Froissart describes the Countess as one 'who was then reputed for the most sagest and fayrest lady of all England'.²⁸ Seeing the king's unhappiness, the Countess is puzzled and does all she can to relieve his depression. Were they not both already married, their alliance would be honourable, as is their behaviour. It is when she says she will do anything to relieve his distress, being a good subject and knowing that her husband would expect her to do all in her power to aid the king, that his dishonourable request dramatically causes a crisis. She must refuse for both their sakes (she is never portrayed as being enamoured of the king).

The king's predicament in the play appears to be resolved by the entry of his son, the Black Prince, whose appearance reminds Edward forcibly of his wife. He immediately organizes his troops to deal with the situation with France but a message from the Countess saying she wishes to see him melts his new resolve to return to warring.

Lod: My liege, the countess with a smiling cheer
Desires access unto your majesty.

King: Why, there it goes: that very smile of hers
Hath ransomed captive France, and set the king
The Dauphin, and the peers at liberty. -
Go, leave me Ned, and revel with your friends.

II.ii 101-106

We have just witnessed, at the end of the previous scene, how Warwick (in this play made father to the Countess), has been cornered into having to request his daughter to give in to the king's wishes and heard her adamant refusal which her father applauded although it seemed to ensure the downfall of the hopes of his entire family. The audience is held in suspense: the king, having been prepared to leave his siege of the lady and turn his energies to besieging France has revoked his decision. While we condemn him we are shown in sharp contrast the delight her request engenders compared to the distress of the maddened king who received the Emperor's messages from Audley and Derby, unable to think of the Emperor with the Countess so firmly commandeering his every thought. The audience will feel sympathy with his change of mood and also be confused to hear of the Countess' 'smiling cheer'. The writer has complete control of his audience and is seen to be able to manipulate them as surely as he manipulates history, narrative and actors. Edward sees his son and his wife as 'black' and the Countess is again his sun.

The moods, action and emotion of the play are brought into an entirety and the questions in the mind of Edward ,and so of the audience, are resolved it seems:

For she gives beauty both to heaven and earth.
The sin is more to hack and hew poor men,
Than to embrace in an unlawful bed.

II.ii.111-113.

What is legally and morally wrong appears to be supportable by his argument; yet the inclusion of the word ‘unlawful’ creates indecision. It also appears that the Countess has perhaps come to the same conclusion. Left alone with him, she is apparently amenable and happy to obey her father until she interprets for all her attitude to the situation, which is diametrically opposed to Edward’s, as the contrast in her expression indicates:

Count: My father on his blessing hath commanded -

King: That thou shalt yield to me.

Count: Ay, dear my liege, your due.

King: And that, my dearest love, can be no less
Than right for right, and render love for love.

Count: Than wrong for wrong, and endless hate for hate.

II.ii.122-27

The drama does not stop there. The Countess produces her ‘marriage knives’, - what an effect this compressed phrase creates! - and says that their spouses must be murdered before they can be united. The king accepts one knife and agrees to kill his innocent wife. The Countess, surprisingly, says she will be happy to kill her husband and the king says it ^{is} her beauty which is the guilty factor responsible for their situation. The Countess’ [^] outburst against the King for agreeing to her plan finally assures the audience that this will not happen. Commanding the king to stay where he is, she backs away from him and then announces her real intention. Her husband lives in her heart and that is where she

will “kill” him. Her complete control of the situation is indicated in her authoritative words:

Stir not, lascivious king, to hinder me:
My resolution is more nimble far
Than thy prevention can be in my rescue;
And if thou stir, I strike.

II.ii.177-180

She proceeds to make the king swear never to accost her again and so saves the king from behaving unsuitably. He reverts to reason and to his original mission: in a series of battles, he defeats the French, enabling his son to prove his own courage and so earn the right to succeed his father.

The changes which the playwright makes to the narratives supplied by Holinshed, Froissart and Painter all lead to a strong, unified exposition. Making the king and countess married rather than unwed turns a risque romance into a serious study of moral rectitude. By having an important, historical figure as an anti-hero/hero, the resolution is lent gravitas; the juxtapositioning of love and war, contrasted and yet similar in their power to affect the lives of men, is carried through expertly. It is hard not to see Shakespeare as the most likely candidate for authorship of at least this episode of the play, which is not derived from any of the source materials except in merest outline. In his appendix to his edition of the play, Melchiori quotes, and agrees with, Metz’ assessment of the adaption from the sources of this play that it ‘exhibits an ingenuity and sophistication only intermittently glimpsed in earlier plays and virtually not at all in those based on chronical materials’.²⁹ Besides the episode discussed here, the

adaptations to historical facts are made to create a story which enhances the characterisation or forms a unity between the actions

These early plays are indicative of how Shakespeare was building upon the tradition of play-writing which he had inherited. The earlier aim to direct moral behaviour through entertainment of the mediaeval miracle and mystery plays is still distinguishable in his need to write for a purpose, to illustrate human behaviour and its consequences. The great comic tradition of the *commedia* is seen in the slapstick elements of his own comic writing. His education had opened to him the classical stories of men, the gods and fate, not for entertainment but as exercises which developed his power to analyse language, and they incidentally fired his imagination. The plays which were performed in Stratford, whatever they were, would have demonstrated to him the difference between reading literature and performing it, as might also acting plays at school, if this teaching method was current practice in Stratford when he was at school. Muir quotes Baldwin: 'His grammar-school training had been insistent that he must gather into notebook and mind materials out of which later to compile by imitation his own work'.³⁰ With all these elements of drama in his mind, he developed the ability to amalgamate them so that his writing was able to combine disparate factors. This adjunctival blending of comedy and tragedy was part of the English dramatic convention. Shakespeare had the insight to merge them, to break up one type of presentation by the insertion of another in such a way that the two were complementary, both subscribing to an underlining theme. In this way a complex structure was formed which has never been bettered.

He did not confine himself to the lives of great or powerful people but showed the common man both affected by and affecting outcomes of their own actions and those of others. All men are seen as unable to control their destiny entirely, while Destiny itself is no longer shown as Fate, immovable and unaffected by man's choices. Shakespeare creates many separate strands of action, all having a bearing on the final result. His writing was already suggesting a philosophical concern with life and an awareness of its complexity which he was able to express effectively in dramatic mode. This has made his work of lasting interest to generations

The truth of this statement may be underlined by the photograph overleaf, taken in the Globe Theatre on September 21, 2003 at the conclusion of a performance of *Twelfth Night*. Four hundred years have passed since the play's composition but still the audiences are happy to do as Shakespeare asked and 'Give me your hands' in appreciation of his writing.

[My thanks go to Howard Smith who took the photograph at my request and to Mr Mark Rylance, Director of The Globe, for permission to use it].



*But that's all one, our play is done,
And we'll strive to please you every day.*

Twelfth Night v.i 403-4

After 400 years an audience still shows its pleasure (at the matinee performance of *Twelfth Night* at the Globe in London on 21st September, 2002).

Photograph by H.W. Smith. Permission to print obtained from Globe Director Mr. Mark Rylance.

CONCLUSION

Triumph, my Britaine, thou hast one to showe
 To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe....
 For a good poet's made as well as borne
 And so wert thou.

Ben Jonson¹

Those psychologists who have made a special study of genius agree that for such a phenomenon to emerge among us some criteria are essential. Outstanding talent alone will not guarantee that, in time, work of the highest calibre will automatically be produced. To ensure that it did, one would also need to have found opportunity in a suitable discipline for unlimited practice to be made by someone willing to devote much of his or her life to the selected pursuit. The family surroundings and living conditions would also have to produce, by accident or design, a stimulating upbringing for the child destined to surpass others and that child would have to have inherited or nurture the characteristics of perception, curiosity and perseverance. All these would have to come together at a time and place that were conducive to the importance and development of the discipline or *metier* in which the genius was to work. To have all these conditions operative at the same time would be unusual and difficult to engineer. It is not hard to see, therefore, why so few excellent people leave an incontrovertibly outstanding legacy to those who follow in their footsteps. Let us consider each of these aspects of genius-creation in relation to Shakespeare.

The age in which he lived produced several men who left their mark on the world. In the disciplines of art and science, great changes and innovations were made which have helped to form our tastes and knowledge today. Historians have rightly called the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the beginning of modern Europe. The list of men of achievement whose lives were contemporary with Shakespeare's is a long one: in art, for example, Hilliard, Rubens, Hals and Bernini each had a lasting influence on artists who succeeded them. Discoveries and innovations were made throughout western Europe: the achievements of Galileo, Kepler and William Harvey spring quickly to mind. These men were all following in the footsteps of a previous generation of great exponents of their respective disciplines, which included Bruegel, Titian, Tintoretto and Copernicus and so had been given inspiration and intriguing directions to follow.

Drama was not lagging far behind, although it had been so much under the auspices of the church and so closely linked to the purposes of moral and religious teaching that its wider development was initially comparatively slow. Glynne Wickham believes 'Drama served to celebrate occasion in Christian Europe [thus] the exposition of the nature and significance of that occasion inevitably took precedence in play-makers' minds'.²

However, the stranglehold which catholicism had held over most people in Europe was loosening, which gave rise to new individualism and experimentation. The Catholic Church had been the centre of contemplation for centuries, but Glynne Wickham claims: 'With the Reformation, new doctrines replaced those of the old faith, translating the drama into a battleground for political polemic'.³ Peter Thomson notes that 'the schism

[between catholicism and protestantism] seems to have been particularly deep in the Midlands', and concludes that 'National and local tensions...were having their effect on life in Stratford during Shakespeare's boyhood and youth'.⁴ When a controlling religious force no longer holds automatic ascendancy then something other, or new, must take its place. The changes allowed the study of wider texts from previous cultures to play a greater part in education and study. In the literary world, close study of the Bible and religious texts was joined, not superseded, by classical literature. The ethos underlying this literature was markedly different from Christian teaching. The dichotomy of religious attitudes presented by these two great literatures led to discussion and controversy, which in themselves are stimulating to thought and a new questioning of belief. At the same time, the emergent protestantism needed to denigrate catholicism in order to justify its replacement by the changed religious precepts; this, too, would add to uncertainty concerning the truth about the godhead, so opening the way to personal interpretation, experimentation and interest in establishing the answers to the questions about man, life and the universe. Throughout Europe, philosophers were writing and offering their insights into these matters. First Montaigne and later Descartes set out their own *weltanschauung* to guide lesser thinkers to syncretise their philosophical standpoints. These philosophers are still read today. The new freedom to think led to a wide diversity of opinion and, subsequently, writing. This, because of the discovery of printing, was disseminated to an extent that had not been formerly possible. So there was created a freedom to think, a need to syncretise or to make choices from the plethora of newly-current philosophies, or to develop one's own philosophy, and finally a method by which thoughts could be shared by many had been invented.

All forms of dramatic entertainment were affected by these innovations. Julie Stone Peters writes: 'In the late fifteenth century, half-improvised farce, costumed civic festivals, biblical stories enacted out on platforms, the songs of court poets, and the dancing of mummers were confronted by print - by a drama conceived in the fixed and silent forms of the text'.⁵ She goes on to claim that "the theatre" 'was anachronistic as an institutional designation before the mid-16th century' although not all would agree with her.⁶ Glynne Wickham traces the history of the theatre from the fourteenth century, for example, but he does recognise the '1570s as a watershed in the annals of English drama'...[There was] a sharp change of direction implicit in the substitution of regular weekday performance by actors who commissioned and presented plays in order to earn their daily bread, for those former occasional and infrequent performances, production of which had been governed by holidays and the opportunity created by obligatory leisure for audiences to attend performances'.⁷ Such a plethora of new possibilities is ideal for a man to be stimulated to write and to keep on writing. Although most technical writing would still be done in Latin, the universal language of the preceding era, by the time of Shakespeare's birth it was no longer unusual in this country to write in English. Tracts, homilies, songs, poetry and drama, that is, writing carried out for entertainment or general enlightenment, was commonly composed in the vernacular

In drama, tastes changed. The earliest English plays were based on biblical stories and scenarios. Now there was a wider base of sources to use and audiences eager for a more varied diet than they had had hitherto. The old religious plays were superseded by plays

centred on classical stories and imaginative recreations of a Golden Age. Shakespeare himself seems to have been stimulated by the plays of contemporary writers, Lyly and Marlowe in particular, and perhaps tried to imitate some of the attributes he found in their works. Bullough sees him as: ‘imitating his seniors but gaining confidence with practice’.⁸ Practice was guaranteed to him as time passed: Bentley points out that whereas Queen Elizabeth had between four and eight plays per year performed at her command, James gradually increased the number to nearer twenty plays per year.⁹ When Shakespeare began to write, therefore, the age itself was one which would suit a fledgling genius admirably. He was there at the right time to ‘solve a particular problem at a particular moment in history’ in his discipline.¹⁰ In 1615, the Master of the Revels, Sir George Buc in ‘Treatise of the Third University’ wrote:

The most ancient kind of poetry, the dramatic, is so lively expressed and represented upon the public stages and theatres of this city, as Rome in the age of her pomp and glory never saw it better performed (I mean in respect of Action and Art, not the cost and sumptuousness).¹¹

Shakespeare’s work surely had played a notable part in this ‘lively’ expression. Stanley Wells in *Shakespeare for All Time*, tells us: ‘Behind his characters lie the personification of late mediaeval morality plays [but he] left his models behind’.¹² Shakespeare had, then, the benefit of a tradition to follow but the situation in which he could branch out and develop both subject matter and style, and there was a demand for him to do just that. What created the demand and enabled it to be satisfied?

While he was still a child, theatre performance had continued its itinerant custom, allowing him to experience drama in his native town, but had also developed some static theatrical sites. This new development was a catalyst for changes in the ways theatrical presentation could be made. Purpose-built theatre buildings appeared in London for the first time, for example, The Theatre in 1576 and The Curtain in 1577. Kernodle says: 'A new audience was reflected in a new form of stage and a new kind of acting company'.¹³ Although they were few, they ultimately led to a theatre-going public who could rely on drama as a form of regular entertainment. 'Shakespeare emerged at a time when audiences were hungry for theatre. Audience and arena were ready.'¹⁴ Not, perhaps, in the guise in which we can appreciate it: Thomson reminds us 'It is only...since the installation of separate seats, a darkened auditorium, that the English theatre has become the decorous institution we take for granted'.¹⁵ Shakespeare and his contemporary writers would have surely appreciated the respectful quietness and undivided attention which most audiences afford actors and dramatists' works today. Ben Jonson railed at the groundlings as a 'rude, barbarous crew no brain hiss anything that mounts above their grounded capacities', and claimed that the gallants 'approve nothing, be it never so conceited or elaborate, but sit making faces and spitting and cry "Filthy! Filthy!"'¹⁶ Shakespeare's comments in *Hamlet* partly echo Jonson's opinions: Hamlet thinks the groundlings 'for the most part capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise' while Polonius needs 'a jig or a tale of bawdry or he sleeps'. (III. ii 11-12 and II ii 503-4).

However, there was created a need for a constant supply of new drama. Previously, itinerant actors had been able to replay the same drama again and again in different towns, perhaps a small consideration when placed against the inconvenience of constant relocation.

Thou shalt not need to travel, with thy pumps full of gravel any more, after a blind jade and a hamper; and stalk upon the boards and barrelheads to an old cracked trumpet.¹⁷

While this remained the norm for many players, for those in the protected Companies it was only necessary during summer seasons and in time of plague or some other extremity which enabled the closure of theatres to be enforced. Plague was bad in London only in 1593, 1595, 1603 and 1610. These years seem often enough in Shakespeare's career but not too disruptive by themselves. The London death toll would seem to be the yardstick by which closure was deemed necessary, but the figures we have are confusing. Barroll and Leeds note the figure of fifty from all causes but that by James' reign this had become thirty from plague but adds 'the number was never considered absolute'.¹⁸ It was the earliest of these outbreaks of plague which proved the most devastating and caused the haste to stop all gatherings when the later bouts struck the city. 'The crown perceived plague to be a clear and present danger to London as the seat of governance. Closing the theaters, gathering places of the multitude, was one measure of preventing this danger.'¹⁹ In addition to spreading plague, playing in the theatre was seen as 'too frivolous in Lent or at times of official mourning,...and as too great a gatherer of crowds in times of political emergency'.²⁰ In spite of these interruptions to their work it becomes clear why, in comparison with earlier and

following periods, the status of professional players gradually improved. Indeed, being an actor became a profession in England for the first time. Because their work was popular with so many people, it became possible to earn sufficient money without resorting to itinerancy or having a supporting occupation outside of theatre work.

Acting as a career was a new concept. In 1584, the City Fathers wrote to the Privy Council stating: 'It hath not been used nor thought meet heretofor that players should have or should make their living on the art of playing' because previously, 'these men had other trades to live of'.²¹ Many people still regarded such men who chose to make a living in this way with scorn while many players did not advance respect for the new profession easily. Not all were naturally law-abiding: 'although players are allowed to play only once a week they play two or three times' it was claimed.²² There are also instances of fighting, and indeed killing among the players. Since before this time they had had no recognised place in society and had found a need to flout the law, some continued in their habitual ways. With no police force, the Government and town officials could only hope to apprehend and stifle a few law-defying individuals. They had some success however. Bradbrook tells us that 'the firm controls of the three preceding monarchs resulted in casual and guild players being censored out of playing'.²³ The prohibition of nocturnals which had been made in 1543 had to be reiterated in 1553, 1569 and 1584, which suggests it was much easier to issue an edict than to enforce it.²⁴ Queen Elizabeth also banned historical plays during her reign, yet, in spite of these

restrictions, drama became increasingly a part of royal entertainment and also of the common people.

It became so acceptable that it was made possible for children to be pressed into joining boys' companies, even without a father's permission, although the child's wage was paid to his father. Henry Clifton, Esq., of Tofttrees in Norfolk was not pleased when this happened to his son who was taken to 'exercise the base trade of a mercynary enterlude player, to his utter loss of tyme, ruyne and disparagment'.²⁵ From some quarters there was still a campaign against the 'common stage player, one that professeth himself a player and lives by the gain thereof, as by his trade or occupation' according to Bradbrook.²⁶ Barroll and Leeds suggest that 'Being a member of such a "profession" was socially quite removed even from the situation of another commoner. Making common plays could give a Shakespeare neither the gentled leisure to create nor social prestige as a creator of writings considered literary in his time'.²⁷ It is not surprising, therefore, that the bust sculpted as his memorial in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford originally held no quill pen in its hand! Certainly in 1572, common players were still legally classed as a type of vagabond and needed to be licensed. When the *Act for the punishment of vagabonds, and for the relief of the poor and impotent* was made law, a troupe had to be owned by a nobleman or a Justice of the Peace and its behaviour and upkeep was his responsibility.

And for the full expressing what persons shall be intended within this branch to be rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars...it is now set forth...all fencers, bearwards, common players in interludes and minstrels, not belonging to any

baron of this realm or towards any other honourable personage of greater degree.²⁸

It has occurred to me that possibly stage players were not the same as ‘common players in interludes’ but it would appear the distinction, if it existed, was too fine to be risked by any company of players. While this limited the number of players, it enhanced the status of those who survived to that of servants of a noble master. The lord’s badge was socially as well as legally of great value to the men, especially in the conflicts over their plays and playing with city officials, merchants and the clergy. Theatre in London flourished while performances in other towns must have declined. Local Justices were no longer empowered to license performances, as had been the case in Stratford during Shakespeare’s childhood as we know, and towns which had sometimes kept a small store of costumes to be hired for playing sold them off.²⁹ The fact that Shakespeare’s final and long lasting connection was to the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, later to become the King’s Men, guaranteed him opportunity to continue to write and play for many years in some security, or so long as the whims of those nominally in charge of the Troupe allowed - which hindsight shows us was throughout his mature career. Schoenbaum notes: ‘For over two decades he remains with the same troupe. No other dramatist of the period can be identified so comprehensively and so consistently with a theatrical milieu’.³⁰ Bentley tells us that it was often disputes between a theatre company and the owner of the building which led to the breaking up of that company. The Theatre, The Globe and then Blackfriars were all owned by the Burbages and their players, a system which worked well and helped to protect Shakespeare’s livelihood.³¹ He would have

been paid as sharer, book-keeper and actor. The closeness of the group is illustrated by the small legacies they left to those surviving them in their wills: for example, Shakespeare received a thirty shilling piece from Augustine Phillips and he, in turn, left money to Burbage, Hemynges and Condell.³²

So it was the right era for a dramatist to develop his skills, given the right circumstances. What further advantages did Shakespeare enjoy which enabled his up-bringing to help him to hone his awe-inspiring abilities? We know too little of his family life during his developing years to be able to claim with certainty exactly how being born the eldest son of John Shakespeare advantaged him. At least we can deduce that it did not hold him back. We can also feel sure that it was a well-functioning family in relation to William in that John was happy to acknowledge him as his heir and that William had, at the very least, a good working relationship with both his sister and his brother Gilbert during his manhood. The fact that his younger brother followed him into the acting profession again shows that William's chosen work was unlikely to have been regarded as an anathema to his family. I have already spoken of Gardner's belief that the main parental role is to give the child confidence to practice whatever his choice dictates (Chapter 1, page 31) and I have also suggested that he may have been able to practise writing on pieces of animal skin used by his father while other children may have had no access to writing materials of any sort. There is the example of the young Richard Quiney, a boy in Stratford who was just a few years senior to Shakespeare, asking his father, returning from a visit to London, for a present of two small copy-books in which he could write.³³

Paper was not a commodity which would have been easily available to purchase in Stratford. Shakespeare's family circumstances, then, may be taken as not inimical at the very least. We are not sure how well his parents were educated or even if they knew how to write. Although we have no signature from either, other than recognisable 'marks', some people at this time used a mark from choice not necessity. In *2 Henry VI*, perhaps William was airing not only his father's prejudice when he wrote: 'Dost thou use to write thy name? Or hast thou a mark to thyself like an honest plain-dealing man?' (IV.2.101.). It is hard to believe that John Shakespeare could carry out the work he did for the Corporation without some ability with a pen. If his ability was limited, his son's expertise may well have been all the more appreciated and encouraged.

Shakespeare clearly made use of his education in his writing. He would have become acquainted with classical literature during his schooldays. The education of that time relied more heavily on memory work, repetition, and public speaking than a modern education does. The comparative limitation of the subjects covered would also have led to more depth of participation and practice in those particular aspects of education than is possible now because of the more diverse study attempted in schools. Hankins claims: 'He had not only a creative mind but also a well-stocked mind: a successful synthesis of learning with life'.³⁴ Professor Wells says that: 'Various forms of word-play' were studied in school.³⁵ He instances puns, quibbles, double entendres and comic misunderstandings. Wells writes

'Even in his earliest plays he emerges fully formed as a poet and prose writer of exceptional accomplishment. There must have been earlier writings still, if only

schoolboy exercises, that have not survived. It is in his early plays and the narrative poems that his rhetorical education most clearly shows itself. It was a training....³⁶

This training is not likely to have been merely theoretical. While he would have been drilled in the use of the technical devices which rhetoric employs, he would have been given practical opportunities to use them, to note and present several facets of an argument, probably in school debates. He made use of this skill in drama by creating characters who offer opposing attitudes and it is on such conflicts that the substance of many of his plots is based. Muir writes: 'His grammar-school training had been insistent that he must gather into notebook and mind material out of which later to compile by mutation his own work.'³⁷ Taking into account the high cost of paper and the problem of the need constantly to resharpen a pen and make your own ink, it is more likely that he was trained to remember, which would have been invaluable to him as an actor, this memory-training enabling him to recall much of what he had read even a long time later.

Because we have virtually no knowledge of Shakespeare's actual time in school, we cannot analyse closely the early development of his poetic ability. We cannot even prove that he went to school in Stratford, but common sense tells us that he went to school, or received a good education somewhere, and that the likelihood that this was in Stratford is overwhelming. Unfortunately we do not know what precisely was studied at the King Edward Grammar School here or whether its syllabus varied greatly under the succession of masters who were employed during Shakespeare's school years. Again we have to

judge by what has been recorded about other educational institutions of the era and by the fact that the teachers who worked here at that time were university-trained men. From his writing we know some of the texts with which he was familiar and from which he worked; which of these he used at school and which he met at a later date we cannot say for sure. His writing suggests that he had access to books after he had finished his education. The theatres of the time are unlikely to have kept literature for playwrights to browse, so Shakespeare had access to another library. Wells' belief echoes the psychologists' claim that he had to have been writing fairly continuously in the years preceding the time when his first public words were heard. So we can deduce that Shakespeare's control of language began at school and was honed by whatever occupation filled his late teenage years and early twenties. This occupation had to be one which necessitated creative writing, giving him the opportunity to emerge 'fully formed as a poet and prose writer of exceptional accomplishment', and where a library was open to him. That he could have been a soldier, for example, as has been suggested, is shown to be out of the question; it is unlikely also that he worked as a lawyer's clerk, - another guesswork suggestion - for formal, repetitive writing would not lead to outstanding literary achievement in a short time.

The town gave him more than his formal education. It gave him a knowledge of a wide variety of people with differing fortunes. The nucleus of people in the town would have remained constant, giving an observant person time to gain an in-depth awareness of the of many individuals surrounding him. At the same time, 'outsiders' would visit regularly,

to buy and sell in the market; still others would pass through, making use of the bridge as they moved north or south. There were also some settlers from other parts of Britain and further afield, as some surnames coming into Stratford's archives testify.³⁸

Shakespeare's plays take some of their humour from his awareness of national and local differences between men, as well as the gulf existing between classes of men. This knowledge and opportunity to observe subtleties he had picked up early in his career and is a skill which he began to profit by while he was still in Stratford. Jonathan Bate describes him as being 'receptive to every mood, every position and disposition: hence the intermingling, the layering and counterpoint, which is one of his stylistic landmarks'.³⁹ He attributes this ability to 'that same mobility which characterized the dramatist's social life' and that mobility surrounded him in Stratford as well as later.⁴⁰ It could have been while he was yet a child that, through seeing plays performed in the town each year and by acting out stories at school, he realised how physical representation of thoughts, philosophies and ideas could become a clarification of them, both for the onlooker and for the performer, and, as a result of this, acting and writing became his chosen medium.

All the criteria which the psychologists agree are necessary for the successful development of genius then (see Chapter 1) were in place for the young Shakespeare. The tenor of his writing, his use of what he saw and experienced around him and the proliferation of what he produced lend credence to the belief that he had the requisite characteristics, besides suitable attendant circumstances during his youth, to ensure his

inborn ability was not wasted. He had that 'harmony of attributes, a compound rather than merely a mixture' which Neumann described.⁴¹ Next we might ask, were any of the possibly necessary conditions strongly advocated by some of those studying the making of a genius also relevant to Shakespeare's developing days?

Albert, Csikzentmihalyi, Duff and Simonton believe some early trauma 'a necessary condition for the flowering of genius'.⁴² If some childhood trauma is necessary to ensure the full flowering of nascent talent then Shakespeare's family circumstances were certainly likely to have provided it through the death of his young sister, the fluctuations in his father's fortunes and, perhaps, other incidents of which we know nothing. What we do know was documented in Chapter Three. Csikzentmihalyi suggests this distress during childhood leads a child to try to escape the difficult circumstances surrounding him by creating an alternative world for himself through imagination, and, in addition, he will develop a strong desire and will to succeed in his own life.⁴³ Galton and Gardner both note the need for this sense of will and purpose, or 'engagement', in Gardner's words, and Steptoe talks of the 'determination' he has found common to geniuses (see Chapter 1). Both of these attributes appear to have been part of Shakespeare's psyche.

Gardner also believes that 'disengagement' may well follow if a genius' domain does not continue to follow the direction which inspired him in the first place, possibly because society's tastes change. Evans points out that 'Masques seemed to be eschewing the

naturalism and realism which Shakespeare had created in drama'.⁴⁴ They were highly visual and used rhymed verse, whilst he excelled at creating natural speech patterns through blank verse and prose to consider serious issues. Certainly the direction which staged plays took was towards spectacle and frisson rather than addressing deeper issues seriously, which was where the focus of Shakespeare's main work lay. Even his comedies spring from sad occasions or serious and dangerous situations involving unrequited or lost love, treachery and banishment as *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* clearly demonstrate. The earlier comedies share the same characteristic while later comedies can only be assigned to that category in that they end happily for the better people. The central action of *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well that Ends Well* and *The Winter's Tale*, for example, is very dark. We do not know why Shakespeare gave up writing for the theatre but 'disengagement' seems possibly to have occurred. The use of purpose-built theatres enabled Companies to build up collections of scenery and costumes which had not been convenient for itinerant players. Pinciss and Lockyer write of the 'splendid court masques of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, naming *The Golden Age Restored* as a typical example.⁴⁵ Using such visual aids, while advantageous to presenting spectacle, inevitably withdrew some of the attention from the language of a play and made its visual impact more important, its verbal description less so. Schoenbaum suggests that Shakespeare's last play, the collaborated *All is True*, may even have been the play which was cancelled in favour of the 'greater pleasures' of a masque on 16 February, 1613 to honour the marriage of the King's daughter, Elizabeth.⁴⁶ Although some of his earlier plays had been performed for this occasion, the trend towards spectacle and away from using dramatic situations to give rise to serious thought

was undeniable. Drama did not follow the pathway along which Shakespeare had taken such strides. We cannot tell how far this was because of the inability of others to imitate his work successfully, because of dramatists' preference for racier writing, or public demand for lighter treatment of dramatic subjects. When, after the Restoration, plays were again permitted for public entertainment, while some of Shakespeare's plays were revived, they were also often rewritten by such dramatists as Sir William Davenant and Nahum Tate to reflect public taste more acceptably. Pepys admired Davenant's version of *Macbeth* as 'a most excellent play in all respects, but especially in divertissement, though it be a deep tragedy... one of the best plays for a stage, and variety of dancing and music, that I ever saw'.⁴⁷

Some psychologists, Albert and Csikzentmihalyi among them, say genius may be recognised in someone who can apparently take prodigious leaps forward along the paths which he introduces into his chosen discipline. Morelock notes the same attribute as 'spontaneous knowing'. Wells, as a literary man, notes the same ability in different terms:

Shakespeare's success over so wide an emotional and intellectual range marks him out not only from most, if not all, his contemporaries, but also from virtually any English writer from any period.⁴⁸

What an accolade that is! Hankin quotes fourth-century Macrobius: 'The physicists said that the world is a great man, and man a little world': perhaps Shakespeare exemplifies 'a little world' in himself.⁴⁹ Hankin sees that the idea of such a resemblance or "cosmic sympathy" is prevalent in Shakespeare's plays and contributes to their greatness.⁵⁰

While many have noted this quality in the work of any genius, few find it possible to define or analyse it clearly. I think Wells, writing of Shakespeare's achievement, comes closest to understanding and explaining where the greatness lies, at least with regard to Shakespeare's work: 'As his mastery increased, his technique became less and less apparent, as if intuition were taking over from intellectual effort'.⁵¹ The idea of the importance of practice, advocated by the psychologists, is confirmed by literary criticism. Writing from a great, well-practised genius becomes so skilful that we cannot follow the working of his mind and methods well enough to understand or analyse accurately how he has achieved his result, and so we resort to terms such as Csikzentmihalyi's 'enormous leap'⁵² or Bate's 'something indefinable, some peculiar alchemy of genes and circumstances. Genius is the word we reach for'.⁵³

The final suggestion which should be confronted when we are considering such an undisputed genius as Shakespeare is the possible link between the qualities of genius and madness. In his life there is nothing that we know of to support a belief in this possible aspect of genius. When Csikzentmihalyi speaks of some 'benign abnormality in the brain' which can lead to outstanding creativity I do not think he was picturing any type of madness.⁵⁴ A writer's divergent thinking and breaking of norms which have been thought of as 'rules' may make him seem very 'different'; his need to introduce change and novelty may also seem unusual to many initially. As we saw in Chapter 1, Steptoe and Medawar deny a connection between genius and madness completely. We may find it difficult to understand how the genius achieves his success and, since his work,

perhaps his lifestyle deviates from the norm, such a person is labelled 'eccentric', even 'mad'. This indicates a possible lack of appreciation on our parts which may lead to a certain isolation for him. Gardner speaks of a likely 'fusion of childlike and adult attributes', and claims a genius is likely to enjoy solitary pursuits, but these are both subjective pronouncements and far removed from insanity. No one has ever successfully demonstrated any signs of madness in Shakespeare, although he has been able to indicate madness in characters such as Timon and Lear very well and use it as a vehicle for some of his most powerful writing. Contemporaries who knew him intimately, such as Chettle and Jonson, described both him and his work in respectful and affectionate terms.

Jonson, in his *To the Memory of my beloved, The AUTHOR Mr William Shakespeare* spoke of 'the race,/ Of Shakespeare's minde, and manners brightly shines/ In his well torned, and true-filed lines'. John Heminge and Henrie Condell in their address 'To the great Variety of Readers' in the *First Folio of Shakespeare, 1623* wrote: 'His wit can no more lie hid, then it could be lost. Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe: And if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to vnderstand him'. His personal writing and one recorded court appearance both display a balanced mind. His business acumen would also count in favour of Shakespeare being a man well able to understand and reason effectively. Perhaps this study of Shakespeare can lay to rest this 'gothic illusion' (Medawar) once and for all.

For Shakespeare then, all the agreed criteria laid down by psychologists studying the making of genius hold good. In addition, many of the facets thought by only some of

them to be necessary, or at least influential, were in place for him. The particular combination of disciplines which I chose to study did little to reveal the development of his poetic ability; they directed attention towards his use of subject matter and skills of dramatic presentation. Perhaps a study linking psychology with Elizabethan education and literature would throw more emphasis on the phenomenal power of his linguistic skill. I felt a thesis too short to tackle such a wide canvas, so choices had to be made and then adhered to.

Michael Howe wrote:

A young person's progress through early life is analogous in some respects to a journey. Each individual follows a route that is partly unique, and tracing that route makes it possible to begin to understand how and why that person became capable of their particular accomplishments.⁵⁵

My chosen group of studies has allowed, I think, a more positively supported identification of how his "lost" years must have been spent, thus eliminating some rather hypothetical extravagances. There is a limitation on the possibilities as to what he was doing, some of which have been noted already in the thesis. He had to be writing creatively and have access to a library, therefore he was not a soldier or a solicitor's clerk, or holding horses outside a theatre. Regular practice had to precede his mature, sophisticated output. If he was a schoolmaster in the country (the claim made by William Beeston, son of actor Christopher Beeston), his employment is far more likely to have been as a family tutor than in a school like Stratford's. In the latter he would have been struggling to have paper and would have had constantly to make for himself other necessary writing materials such as pens and ink. The Stratford accounts of the

schoolmaster needing advances on his stipend suggest that few school masters could indulge in the purchase of much paper. If he lived in a rich man's house, paper could have been more generously supplied and other necessary materials would have been prepared by a lesser servant.

Oh, there's a brave traveling scholar entertain'd into the house o' purpose, one that has been all the world over and some part of Jerusalem; h'as his chamber, his diet, and three candles allow'd him after supper.

Shakespeare, as a young and untried tutor, would not be likely to qualify for such special treatment as Master Beveril, the man spoken of here in Middleton's *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's* (Act III Scene i l 142-5), since the latter was secretly known by Mistress Low-Water to be her brother, but materials to aid his teaching should have been to hand. It is likely that a library would also be available to him and some spare time too, as was clearly the case for the tutors delineated in *The Taming of the Shrew*. As Gardner says, he needed to 'develop minute by minute, day by day'.⁵⁶ It is not likely that Shakespeare was employed by one of the rich families close to Stratford either. If he had had such a connection with the higher society of Stratford, his name would almost certainly appear somewhere in the town's annals.

The psychologists have shown us what to look for and historical data has given us some of the answers. The psychologists have also made clear to us some of the characteristics which Shakespeare needed to have had. Many we could adduce from the magnificence of his work but still it is good to have these confirmed as necessary for him to have

achieved so much. He had to have had at least a good general intelligence and exceptional mental energy. He needed 'a sense of purpose and direction in order to sustain the immense and prolonged efforts required for the most substantial of human achievements'.⁵⁷ Barroll and Leeds suggest that whenever his plays could not be enacted, Shakespeare stopped writing. This assumption is based on knowledge that during the closure of theatres through plague, Shakespeare turned to writing poetry early in his career and that his output of plays seems to have fallen again at the end of 1602, when plague hit London once more. 'Denied the visual and auditory realization of his plays on stage, Shakespeare's creative drive for drama seems to have faltered.'⁵⁸ If they are right, then the practice which Shakespeare did before becoming known was most likely to have been poetic rather than dramatic in nature; or, alternatively, he wrote, for some unknown troupe, plays which have not survived.. Whatever means he chose to develop his ability, he had to have been highly creative. Hankins points out that there was then a relative paucity of words in the English language and he had to find ways, not only by the creation of new words but by novel phrasing and description, to write as originally as he did. Creating ontological neologisms must have become second nature to him. Hankins claims: 'He had not only a creative mind but also a well-stocked mind: a successful synthesis of learning with life'.⁵⁹ He had to have 'remarkable powers of concentration' (Lykken, p.34) and be highly motivated (Csikzentmihalyi, p. 53), not giving up in the face of failure.

These characteristics, added to his talent, were still not in themselves enough. He must have had to practice constantly and uphold his self-belief in order to improve steadily. Perseverance would have become habitual to him. The routine, everyday incidents which he encountered would have been of more importance than isolated, dramatic events which biographers look for, and it would have been his reaction to these which shaped his ability. Albert claims: 'A successful and satisfying career depends on an individual's personality, aptitudes and interests working together. An important step in continued career success is making sense of one's experiences'.⁶⁰ Shakespeare appears to have made sense of his own experiences and, at the same time, enlightened many other people's understanding of their world. In a book published in May, 2003, Professor Paul Matthews calls William Shakespeare 'a fantastic practical psychologist'.⁶¹ His life may have been traumatic for him, sadly, but it has benefitted innumerable others.

APPENDIX

Chamberlains' Accounts presented to Stratford Council for the Year ending September, 1580.

(For reference to this document in the text please see page 133.)

The Chamberlains' Accounts were drawn up each year when the election for the new Chief Burgess had taken place at the September Meeting of the Council and the term of office of his predecessor had ended. It took some time for these accounts to be sorted out so they were not presented until the next January Meeting, and they were often still incomplete, as is this one. I have tried to check the reckoning on several of these accounts and my total has never yet agreed with that of the Chamberlains. However, this is not to infer dishonesty on their part. As you can see, no effort was made to keep the figures separate from the explanations or in columns. Keeping the town's accounts was obviously a messy business. The Chamberlains needed to accept money when it was offered; they also needed to pay creditors when requested or as soon after as they could. The amounts were often very small and their insignificance would render them easy to forget. No attempt seems to have been made to balance the accounts but merely to record the transactions which had taken place during the year. They are very detailed in this respect and have been well annotated too..

The double date merely indicates that the numerical year changed in April, so for the Elizabethans the year was still 1580 while by modern reckoning the date was January, 1581. 'Fine' means the rent due on a property, it is not a monetary punishment.

Such a document as this is invaluable to the social historian who is studying such matters as working practices, rural self-sufficiency, entertainment expenditure and numerous other social matters relevant to the Midlands at that time. For this reason one exemplar has been appended here; many more are available for study at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Centre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

CHAMBERLAINS' ACCOUNT, 26 JAN., 158 $\frac{0}{1}$ 81

Paid to their man that serued them for his iiij dayes worke	
Paid to John Bauden for digging vp foure load of sand at the Heathe	ij ^s iiij ^d vj ^d
Paid to M ^r Salisbury for the cariage of fyve loades of sand	iiij ^s iiij ^d
Paid for xij hundred of tiles and xxiiij ^{ty} gutter tyles	xvij ^s ij ^d
Paid for cariage of the same tyles to John Gibbes and Michaell ffenn ¹	iiij ^s iiij ^d
Paid to M ^r Barnehurst for Mekins apparell ²	xvij ^s
Paid to Thomas Tyler & Richard Hierne for iiij dayes worke	vj ^s viij ^d
Paid to their man for his foure dayes worke	ij ^s iiij ^d
Paid to Edward Mills & his man for carpenters worke ouer the steares ³ of the scoole	xv ^d
Paid to M ^r Lewes for two hundred of lathe nailes	iiij ^d
Paid to Thomas Tiler for his wickes ⁴ worke	v ^s
Paid for his mans wickes ⁴ worke	iiij ^s iiij ^d
Paid to M ^r Lewes for a hundred of lathe nailes	ij ^d
Paid to M ^r Lewes for a hundred of lathe nailes	ij ^d
Paid to Thomas Tiler & Richard Hierne	vij ^s iiij ^d
Paid to their man for v dayes worke	ij ^s xj ^d
Paid to Margaret smithe for sweping the streete after the tiler	j ^d
Paid to M ^r Waterman ⁵ for a pottell of sacke that was given to the Justices	xvj ^d
Paid to M ^r Waterman for a pottell of clarett wine	xij ^d
Paid to John Smith for wine that was given to the Justices	ij ^s
Paid to M ^r Queney for a pound of Sugar that was given to the same Justices	xxij ^d
Paid for a drinking that was bestowed on them that bare the armor before the Justices	xx ^d

Summa pagine iiij^{li} xvij^s vijd

Paid to M^r Barnehurst for a thowsand of lathe nailes⁶ xvij^d

¹ i. e. 'Paid to John Gibbs and Michael Fenn for carriage of the same tiles.'

² For his uniform as Beadle. See further for Master Barnhurst's business, p. 82.

³ The School was over the Gild Hall and approached by a staircase in the Quadrangle.

⁴ Week's.

⁵ Of the *Swan*. This and the next four items are for refreshments at the Musters. Note sugar supplied by Master Adrian Quyny at 22d. a lb.!

⁶ Master Nicholas Barnhurst of Sheep Street supplied building materials as well as beadles' uniforms.

Paid to M ^r Barnehurst for a hundred of longe lathe	x ^d
Paid to M ^r Barnehurst for half a hundred of tiles	x ^d
Paid for a penyworth of eight penny nailes	j ^d
Paid to Thomas Tiler & Richard Hierne for vj daies worke	x ^s
Paid to their man for his sixe dayes worke	iiij ^s vj ^d
Paid to M ^r Cooke ¹ for seven hundred of tyles	xj ^s viij ^d
Paid to Hinde for eleven hundred of tyles	xvij ^s x ^d ob
Paid for foure quarters of lime	xiiij ^s iiiij ^d
Paid for a girdle to Charles benton for John taberer ²	vj ^d
Paid to the foure traine men at the commaundement of M ^r baliffe	xvj ^d
Paid to John Wattes for caryinge & recarrying his fornitude ³ when he went to bee trained	vj ^d
Paid to Thomas ffosacre for the like	vj ^d
Paid to John Harris for the like	vj ^d
Paid to John taberer ² for the like	vj ^d
Paid to John taberer ² for mendinge the springe of his peese within the stocke	vij ^d
Paid to William Richardson for making the cocke of the same peese	vj ^d
Paid to Thomas Tiler for his three dayes worke	ij ^s vj ^d
Paid to his man for his three dayes worke	xxj ^d
Paid to Thomas Biddle for glewing a gunne stocke & making a gunne sticke for John Wattes peese	iiij ^d
Paid to Charles Benton for a quarter of a pynt of solett oyle	iiij ^d
Paid to William Evans for scowringe v armoures & for picking ⁴ & mendinge them	ij ^s vj ^d
Paid to Thomas tiler for sixe dayes worke	v ^s
Paid to his man for sixe dayes worke	iiij ^s vj ^d
Paid to Richard Cowell for puttinge vp a propp to beare the first peese in one of the Almes howses	ij ^d
Paid to Hughe Jones for making the chamber flowre	xvj ^d
Paid to M ^r Barnehurst for a thowsand of tiles	xvj ^s viij ^d
Paid to Richard Cowell for propping the almes howses	iiiij ^d
Paid to William Richardson for making the licence ⁵ that letteth the clock goe	vj ^d

¹ Alderman Cawdrey *alias* Cooke.

² John the Taberer, a player on the tabor or small drum used for light and festive music, as for dancing, and accompanied usually by the pipe. Not infrequently the same musician played both instruments at once, as Kemp's accompanist on his famous Nine Days' Dance to Norwich.

³ A slip for 'forniture'.

⁴ Dressing.

⁵ Release.

CHAMBERLAINS' ACCOUNT, 26 JAN., 1581 83

Paid for oyling and scowringe three peeces thre swordes and a dagger vj^d
 Paid for mendinge the greate pynne that beareth the pulleis of the crosse clocke ij^d
 Paid to Henry singgleton & his man for their dayes worke about taking vpp of the steares and making the Cole howse¹ dore xij^d
 Paid for nailes belonging to the same worke iij^d
 Paid to Goodman Moore the yron man for xvj barres of yron for the window² vj^s x^d

Summa v^{li} viij^s ob

Paid to Hugh Aunger for workemanshipp about the window² vj^s viij^d
 Paid to Henry Wilson for timber to make the window² vj^s viij^d
 Paid for a stocke locke³ for the Cole howse¹ dore xij^d
 Paid for nyne bordes iij^s vj^d
 Paid for carying of the same bordes to the yeld hall j^d
 Paid for two hundred of seven penny nailes xiiij^d
 Paid for half a hundred of ten penny nailes v^d
 Paid to Richard Cowell for his dayes worke in making the paintis⁴ and mending the benches x^d
 Paid to Henry Russell for the cheif rent of Milles howse viij^d
 Paid to M^r John Combes for a cheif rent going out of the ground of Shottery vj^s viij^d
 Paid to M^r John Combes for two amerciamentes⁵ for default of sute of court of the Gilde xij^d
 Paid to M^r Whateley that he laid downe to the Workemen for dressing wood in the chappell gardeine xij^d
 Paid to M^r Whateley that he laid downe to the Workemen for mending the walles of the Cole howse¹ ijs vj^d
 Paid to the Earle of Darbyes players⁶ at the commaundement of M^r Baliffe⁷ viijs iiij^d
 Paid to M^r Rogers⁸ for the second payment of a subsidy dew out of the vicaredge xxxvj^s
 Paid to the glacier for glacinge the windowe² xvij^s
 Paid to Oliver Hiccoxe for ij casementes for the windowe² iij^s vj^d
 Paid for a rope for the greate bell viij^d

¹ At the Gild Hall, see p. 98.

² At the Gild Hall: p. 80, vol. i. xvii.

³ A wooden-cased lock.

⁴ Penthouse.

⁵ Fines.

⁶ They also performed at Coventry and Leicester (J. T. Murray, *English Dramatic Companies*, ii. 237, 302).

⁷ Nicholas Barnhurst was Bailiff 1579-80, Robert Salisbury 1580-1.

⁸ The Steward.

Paid to the Almes folke for the pinfolde	viiij ^d
Paid for oyle for the clockes	ij ^d
Paid to M ^r Woodward for the rent of M ^r Vicar howse ¹	xxiiij ^s
Paid to the smithe that worketh in goodwif balamyeshopp ² for two clasppes of yron	iiij ^d
Paid to M ^r Barnehurst y ^e xvj th day of October in parte of pay- ment of the money that he laid downe for the oxe ³	iiij ^{li}
Paid to Humfry Brace for vij ^{li} & iij quarters of Sugar ⁴	xiiij ^s viij ^d
Paid to M ^r Barnehurst the xxvj th day of December ⁵	iiij ^{li}
Paid the sixte day of January to M ^r Barber	iiij ^{li}
Paid to Charles benton for sugar ⁴	xxxix ^s v ^d
Paid to M ^r Barnehurst	vj ^s viij ^d
Paid to Peeter smarte & William Wilson the chamberlaynes fee	xx ^s
Summa pagine xx ^{li} iij ^s vij ^d	
Summa totalis disbursed Cxix ^{li} ij ^s j ^d ob.	

Petitions.

The seid Chamberlaines praye to bee exonerated for M ^r Jenkins howse ⁶	x ^s
ffor the chamber where the Armour hangeth ⁷	v ^s
And for one quarter rent for the chamber lett to William Rawbone ⁸	xv ^d
ffor two yeres rent dew by Thomas Dixon ⁹	iiij ^d
ffor an Annuall rent dew by Lawrence Mason	viiij ^d
ffor the heires of Bromley ¹⁰	xij ^d
ffor John Smithe	xij ^d
We pray to bee dischargd of Anthony Tanners debte ¹¹	viiij ^{li} xj ^d ob
Summa petitionum ix ^{li} ij ^d ob	
Summa totalis disbursed & to be allowed is vj ^{xx} viij ^{li} ij ^s iiij ^d	

¹ The last payment.² After the death or during the sickness of Goodman Richard Ballamy, who made his will 12 June, 1580.³ A prize ox to be fattened as a Christmas gift, probably to the lord of the manor, the Earl of Warwick: see p. 119, below.⁴ Sugar-loaves for New Year gifts to local gentlemen.⁵ This item and the next may be for the ox, which would cost therefore £10. This is for a prize animal.⁶ The late Schoolmaster's house in the Chapel precincts: see p. 98.⁷ A chamber above the Council Chamber.⁸ In the Chapel precincts: see ii. 67, 74, 86.⁹ A ground rent of the *Swan*. ¹⁰ See pp. 71, 73, note 1, 78, note 11.¹¹ See pp. 28, 38, 49.

At this Hall William Wilson made his accompte as it shall appear in another place amongst the Chamberlaines accomptes.

[*Council Book A*, 298.]

26 January, 1580 $\frac{0}{1}$

[ACCOUNT OF WILLIAM WILSON AND PETER SMART, MADE BY WILLIAM WILSON.]

Burgus } Ad aulam ibidem tentam xxvj^{to} die Ianuarij Anno
Stratford } Regni Domine Elizabethe Regine nostre nunc &c.
vicesimo tercio.

At this Hall William Wilson¹ one of the Chamberlaines of the Borowghe of Stratford aforeseid made his accompte for one wholle yere (that is to say from the feast of St. Michaell Tharkeaugell which was in the yere of our lord god 1579 vnto the feast of St. Michaell Tharkeaugell in the yere of our lord god 1580)² as well of such money as he hath receaued as also disbursed in the yere aboueseid.

Receiptes :

Imprimis the yerly rent	lvij ^{li} xvij ^s viij ^d ob.
Receaued of M ^{tres} Jeffereys in full payment of her ffine ³	i ^s
Receaued of John Tailor for the annuall rentes dew in his accompte ⁴	vij ^s v ^d
Receaued of Peeter smarte at the yelding vp of his accompt. ⁵	xliij ^s x ^d ob
Receaued of John Tailer as arrerages of widow lockes rent	xv ^d ob
Receaued of John Smithe for stone and bricke	xxxij ^s
Receaued of S ^r John Huband Knighte by the handes of M ^r Nashe ⁶	xxxvj ^{li}
Receaued of M ^r Cotton ⁷	iiij ^{li}
Receaued of Thomas Deege for the first payment of the ffine of his howse ⁸	xl ^s
Receaued of Henry Tommes & John Awoode wardeins of the	

¹ For William Wilson, see p. 2, note 5. He lived in Henley Street, next door, apparently, to Richard Hornby, where he succeeded Gilbert Bradley. His house was burned down in the Fire of 1594.

² Some entries are of later date than Michaelmas, 1580.

³ For the lease of her house in Sheep Street, the Shriue's House. See pp. 20, 41.

⁴ 16 January, 1578 $\frac{8}{9}$.

⁵ 20 January, 1578 $\frac{9}{10}$.

⁶ See pp. 12, 14, 17, 25, 27, 30.

⁷ See pp. 38 f., 45, 48.

⁸ In High Street, on the site of the Garrick Inn: see p. 71.

occupacion ¹ for the freedome of the brotherhood of William Hiccoxe	xiijs ^s iiij ^d
Receaved of William Parsons for the ffyne of his howse ² & in parte of payment of forty markes ³	xiiij ^{li} vjs viij ^d
Receaved of Thomas Asplyn for his fredomme by the handes of Thomas Robertes & Thomas Swaine wardeins of shue makers	xx ^d
Receaved of Philippe Greene for the ffine of his howse ⁴	xx ^s
Receaved of William Grenewaye for the half yeres rent of a gardeine	xx ^d

Receiptes for the bell & the pault.

Receaved for the bell for Graftons childe ⁵	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Goodwif Winfeild ⁶	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Keckes childe of Drayton ⁷	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for M ^r Nashes man	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell & paulte for John page ⁸	viiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for M ^r Cloptons keeper ⁹	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell & paulte for John wilkins ¹⁰	viiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Hughe piggins childe ¹¹	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for William Walford ¹²	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for goodman Griffins child ¹³	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for goodwife Hannes ¹⁴	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for William Badgers child ¹⁵	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell & paulte for M ^r Somerfeildes sister ¹⁶	viiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Thomas Robertes childe ¹⁷	iiij ^b
Receaved for the bell for Thomas Walkers childe ¹⁸	iiij ^d

¹ The occupation of Drapers. William Hiccocks set up for himself in Wood Street.

² In Wood Street (on the site of nos. 26, 27, and 28), late John Page's. See p. 72, note 3. ³ i. e. one half. ⁴ In Ely Street: p. 72.

⁵ '1579, Dec. 17 Rachel daughter to Roger Grafton' (*Register*, p. 29).

⁶ '1579, Jany. 8 Anne Wynfeild' (*Ib.*).

⁷ '1579, Jany. 11 Thomas son to Thomas Keck' (*Ib.*, p. 30).

⁸ '1580, April 25 John Page' (*Ib.*). See p. 72, note 1.

⁹ ? 'April 25 Thomas Howght' (*Ib.*). There was a Deer-park at Clopton (but not at Charlecote). ¹⁰ 'May 23 John Wilkenonne' (*Ib.*).

¹¹ 'May 26 Margret daughter to Hugh Pigget' (*Ib.*).

¹² 'June 1 William Walford' (*Ib.*).

¹³ 'June 9 Nicholas son to Griffen Aproberts' (*Ib.*).

¹⁴ 'July 4 Janes Hanns' (*Ib.*).

¹⁵ 'July 2 Edward son to William Badger' (*Ib.*).

¹⁶ 'July 5 Mistress Ales Summerfeild' (*Ib.*).

¹⁷ 'July 8 William son to Thomas Roberts' (*Ib.*).

¹⁸ 'July 11 Richard son to Thomas Tayler' (*Ib.*). Tayler was a walker or fuller.

Receaved for the bell for Stevanns of Clifford mille ¹	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for olde Barratt ²	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Gills Dawghter ³	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for mother Healie ⁴	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Antony Rookes childe ⁵	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Richard Colchesters childe ⁶	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell & paille for goodwif Godwine ⁷	viiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for William parsons childe ⁸	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Goodwife holmes ⁹	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Hamlett Sadlers childe ¹⁰	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Mathew Bromley ¹¹	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Goodwife spearepoynt ¹²	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for M ^r Maxefeildes childe ¹³	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell for Emme Snell ¹⁴	iiij ^d
Receaved for the bell & paille for goodwife best ¹⁵	viiij ^d
Receaved of John smith for arrerages of rent	v ^s
Receaved of the same John smith for arrerages of rent	ij ^s

Summa totalis recepta—vj^{xx}iiij^{li} xiiij^s xj^d ob vltra
 Antony Tanners debt w^{ch} is—viiij^{li} xj^d ob ¹⁶

Summa totalis receaved & to be accompted for is—
 vj^{xx}xj^{li} xv^s xj^d

Wherof disbursed :

Paid to M ^r Eglionby ¹⁷	xl ^s
Paid to M ^r . Rogers the steward for his fyve quarter Wages ¹⁸	vj ^{li} v ^s
Paid to Henry Russell ¹⁹	xx ^s
Paid to Roberte Gibbes ²⁰	xx ^s

¹ 'Aug. 11 John Stevens' (*Register*, p. 30).

² 'Aug. 22 Edmund Barrett' (*Ib.*). Blacksmith and host of the *Crown Inn* in Fore Bridge Street (on site of nos. 12-14).

³ 'Sep. 23 Katherin daughter unto John Gyll' (*Ib.*).

⁴ 'Oct. 8 Elizabeth Healee' (*Ib.*). ⁵ 'Oct. 9 Mary Rooke' (*Ib.*).

⁶ 'Oct. 19 Ursula daughter to Richard Colchester' (*Ib.*).

⁷ 'Oct. 22 Elizabeth wife to Thomas Godwen' (*Ib.*).

⁸ 'Nov. 2 Elizabeth daughter to William Parsonnes' (*Ib.*).

⁹ 'Nov. 13 Jone wife to William Holmes' (*Ib.*, p. 31).

¹⁰ 'Nov. 16 John son to Hamnet Sadler' (*Ib.*). Note the two forms Hamlet and Hamnet. See pp. lvi, 160.

¹¹ 'Nov. 22 Mathew Bramley' (*Ib.*). See p. 73, note 1.

¹² 'Nov. 29 Emme Sperpoynte' (*Ib.*).

¹³ 'Dec. 3 Maximilian son to Edmund Maxfyld' (*Ib.*).

¹⁴ 'Dec. 16 Emme Snell' (*Ib.*).

¹⁵ 'Dec. 29 Elizabeth wife to John Best' (*Ib.*). ¹⁶ See pp. 28, 38, 49.

¹⁷ The Recorder. ¹⁸ His salary apparently until Christmas, 1580.

¹⁹ Bailiff's Serjeant. ²⁰ Alderman's Serjeant.

CHAMBERLAINS' ACCOUNT, 26 JAN., 1581^o 79

Paid to Mr Higges ¹	xxv ^s
Paid to Richard Mekins ²	xvj ^s viij ^d
Sum xij ^{li} vj ^s viij ^d	
Paid to Margaret smith, ³ for makinge cleane about the chappell	xx ^d
Paid to Mr Heycrofte vicar	xx ^{li}
Paid to Mr Higges for his five quarters wages ⁴	xij ^{li} x ^s
Paid to Mr Cottom schole maister his wages for iij quarters ⁵	xv ^{li}
Paid to the Almes folke	xx ^{li} xvj ^s
Paid to the Almes folke out of Bessell burdettes rent	ij ^s
Paid for a quire of paper to make the chamberleyens booke ⁶	iiij ^d
Paid for half a quire of paper that Mr Rogers ⁷ had	ij ^d
Paid to Robert gibbes ⁸ to the vse of Mr {baliff} Bote ⁹	xl ^s
Paid to Mr Barber ¹⁰ for a reconing of charges, at the eating of a bucke that Sr John Huband gaue Mr baliff and his bretheren ¹¹	xvij ^s
Paid for a tenth of the vicaridg	xl ^s
Paid for a quittaunce for the same	iiij ^d
Paid to Robert Hall for Masons worke about the chimney in Burfordes House ¹²	xvij ^s iiij ^d
Paid to Hinde for nailes to make their scaffold	j ^d
Paid to Gilbert Charnocke for caryng a lode of sand	vij ^d
Paid to two labourers that caried the stone out of the garden	xij ^d
Paid for two strike of lime	x ^d
Paid to Jenkins the Masons boy ¹³	j ^d
Paid to Robert gibbes for the mantle tree ¹⁴	ij ^s viij ^d
Paid to Mr Salisbury for two loade of clay	x ^d
Paid to Richard Burforde for digginge vp the stone in the foundation of the chimney	iiij ^d
Paid to Hinde for nailes	j ^d
Paid to Patricke for three burdens of rodde to winde the walles ¹⁵	vj ^d

¹ Half a quarter's salary as Assistant Minister.

² The Beadle.

³ We have here the surname of 'Old Margaret'.

⁴ To Christmas, 1580.

⁵ To Michaelmas, 1580.

⁶ Their Account Book—who could therefore write! See p. 95.

⁷ The Steward.

⁸ Serjeant.

⁹ Master William Bott again: see p. 17. He was buried at Snitterfield 1 Nov., 1582.

¹⁰ Of the *Bear*.

¹¹ At the October Leet.

¹² Within the Chapel precincts: see p. 48, ii. 33.

¹³ The boy of Jenkins the mason.

¹⁴ The horizontal beam (here, apparently, stone) over the opening of the fire-place.

¹⁵ Hazel-rods to wind in and out of the laths between the timbers. Upon

Paid to Richard Cowell for two dayes worke him self & foure dayes his man	iiij ^s ij ^d
Paid to Philipp grene for a hundred of lathes	viiij ^d
Paid M ^r lewes for two hundred of lathe nailes	iiij ^d
Paid to Richard Hyerne	vij ^d
Paid for a strike of lime	v ^d
Paid to two laborers to winde, dawbe, & groundsill ¹	xij ^d
Paid to Richard Hornbe for linckes & staples for the seriauntes to make fast their prisoners ²	xij ^d
Paid for foure quarters & one strike of lime	xiiij ^s vj ^d
Paid to Thomas Moore for making two rackes to hange the gunnes & billes in	iiij ^d
Paid to William Evans for making cleane the Armor & repaying it with buccles and rivettes	x ^s iiij ^d

Summa pagine iiij^{xxxv}ij^{li} v^s iiij^d

Paid for wine that was given to M ^r Grevill ³	ij ^s iiij ^d
Paid for wine that was given to S ^r Thomas Lucy & Sir William Catisby ⁴	iiij ^s iiij ^d
Paid to Gyles the carpenter for laying in a sill betwixt the Joyners Howse & the almes Howse ⁵	iiij ^d
Paid to John Bauden for windinge & Dawbinge ⁶	iiij ^d
Paid to Hughe Anger in earnest ⁷ for making a window	iiij ^d
Paid to John Bauden for carying in the claye that laye before the Yeld Hall dore	j ^d
Paid for oyle & a stopp for the chapple clock	ij ^d
Paid for a hooke & hyнге for the window of the crosse	ij ^d
Paid to M ^r lewes for a hundred of lathe nailes	ij ^d
Paid to Philipp Grene for a hundred of longe lathe	viiij ^d
Paid to Thomas Tiler & Richard Hyerne for there foure dayes worke ⁸	vj ^s viij ^d

this basket-work was 'daubed' the clay, which when dry and cracked held the plaster. See the item below: 'To two labourers to wind, daub and ground-sill, xij^d.'

¹ The groundsill was the foundation of masonry on which the timber-work rested (not clay floor, as stated in vol. ii, 8, note 11).

² Another indication of the unsettled condition of the neighbourhood. Introduction, pp. xxxvii-xl.

³ 'Master Greville' would probably be Sir Fulke, but possibly (see the next entry) his son Fulke, the friend of Philip Sidney.

⁴ See p. 54, note 2.

⁵ See p. 43, note 7.

⁶ See p. 79, note 15.

⁷ Advance payment.

⁸ Tilers, then, received 10d. a day, in our pre-War money about 7s. a day. Their 'man' had 7d. a day (next item).

NOTES

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- 4 Gardner, p. 8.
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- 8 *ibid.*, p. ii.
- 9 Dennis, p. 24
- 10 Schoenbaum, quoting Carlyle's lecture 'The Hero and the Poet' in 'Shakespeare the Ignoramus' in *The Drama of the Renaissance*, ed. by Elmer M. Blistein (Providence-Brown University Press, 1970), pp. 154-164 (p.154).
- 11 Gardner, p. 176 (quoted).
- 12 Steptoe, p. 1.
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- 14 *ibid.*
- 15 Steptoe, p. 3 (quoted).
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- 17 Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi, 'Creativity and Genius: a systems perspective' in *Genius and the Mind*, pp.39-64, (p. 39).
- 18 *ibid.*, p. 61.
- 19 Gardner, 'The Relationship between early giftedness and later achievement' in *The Origins and Development of High Ability* (Willey: Chichester, 1993), Ciba Foundation Symposium 178, pp. 175-186, (p. 176).
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- 21 Gardner, *Extraordinary Minds*, pp. 11-13.
- 22 *ibid.*, pp. 35-36.
- 23 *ibid.*, p. 35.
- 24 Albert, in *Genius and the Mind*, p. 118.
- 25 *Extraordinary Minds*, p. 5.
- 26 *ibid.*, p. 26.
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- 42 William Duff, *An Essay on Original Genius* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 291.
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- 47 *ibid.*, p. 131.
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- 49 *ibid.*, p. 132.
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- 52 *ibid.*, p.39.
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- 56 K. Anders Ericsson, Ralf Kampet and Stefanie Heizmant, 'Can we create gifted people?' in *Origins and Development*, pp. 222-248 (p. 229).
- 57 *ibid.*, p. 230.
- 58 *Origins and Development*, p. 180.
- 59 *ibid.*, p. 178.
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- 61 *ibid.*, p. 179.
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- 85 *ibid.*, p. 222.
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- 88 *Extraordinary Minds*, p. 63.
- 89 *Genius Explained*, p. 18.
- 90 *ibid.*, p. 4.
- 91 Andreas C. Lehman and K. Anders Ericsson in *Genius and the Mind*, pp. 67-90, (p. 89).
- 92 pp. 244-245.
- 93 *ibid.*, p. 224.
- 94 *Extraordinary Minds*, p. 28.
- 95 *Genius Explained*, p. 3.
- 96 *Origins and Development*, p. 178.
- 97 *Genius Explained*, p. 18.

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- 2 *Minutes & Accounts* (hereafter designated M&A), ed. by Peter R. Coss, Dugdale Society 5 vols (Hertford: Stephen Austin, 1990), II, 80.
- 3 M&A, II, 45, 47 and 51.
- 4 *ibid.*, 79.
- 5 M&A, (Hertford: Stephen Austin, 1990), IV, 16.
- 6 See map following page 52.
- 7 Prothero, G.W., *Statutes and Constitutional Documents 1558-1625* (Oxford: OUP, 1894), reprinted 1934 4th edition, The Queen's Injunctions, 1559, Article XXIII, Edict on defacing Icons, p. 186.
- 8 M&A, I, 128.
- 9 Mother Margaret', later called ' Margaret Smith' and finally 'Lame Margaret' when she was succeeded by 'Mother (Elizabeth) Ashwell'. The payment for the whole year rose from iii^d initially in 1563 to xvi^d in 1593.
- 10 See for example M&A, I, 123.
- 11 M&A, III, 84.
- 12 See map following page 52.
- 13 *ibid.*
- 14 *ibid.*
- 15 M&A, I, 123.
- 16 *ibid.*
- 17 M&A, IV, 3.
- 18 Richard K. Moriss, and Ken Hoverd, *The Buildings of Stratford-upon Avon* (Stroud: Sutton, 1994), p.32.
- 19 *ibid.*, 28.
- 20 A new law had been introduced in the sixteenth century demanding that chimneys be built of brick but even after the two disastrous fires which occurred in the 1590s, this too expensive material was not always used when the houses were rebuilt in Stratford.
- 21 M&A, III, 126.
- 22 Moriss, p..5.
- 23 *Miscellaneous Documents* (hereafter called *Misc. Docs.*), VII, p.101.
- 24 Moriss, p. 5.
- 25 Keith T.Parker, *The Guild Chapel* (Stratford-upon-Avon: S/A Art Society & Guild School Assoc., 1987), p. 24.
- 26 D.M. Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth: England under the later Tudors 1547-1603* (London: Longman, 1983), p. 220.
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- 3 *ibid.*
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- 7 *ibid.*, 42.
- 8 *M&A*, V, 100.
- 9 Prothero, p. 98.
- 10 *ibid.*
- 11 Haynes, p. 4.
- 12 Richard Savage, transcriber, *Register of Stratford-upon-Avon Burials 1558-1653* (London: Parish Registers Society, 1905), p. 9.
- 13 Palliser, p. 47.
- 14 *ibid.*, 36.
- 15 Papers of Sir Edward Heath, *Liber Edward Heath Darwin Vitae Meae*, held at the Stratford Archives Department, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Henley Street.
- 16 Savage, p. 9.
- 17 Palliser, p. 92.
- 18 F.G. Emmison, *Archives and Local History*, 2nd. Edition (Chichester: Phillimore, 1974, rep. 1978), p. 57.
- 19 Margaret Gay Davies, *The Enforcement of English Apprenticeship 1563 - 1642* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard, 1956), p. 167.
- 20 W.E. Tate, *The Parish Chest: A Study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1946), p. 186.
- 21 *M&A*, V, 103.
- 22 Anthony Holden, *William Shakespeare: His life and work* (London: Abacus, 1999), p. 15.
- 23 *ibid.*, 13.
- 24 Davies, p. 238.
- 25 *M&A*, II, 34.
- 26 Salzman, pp. 21 - 282, p. 239, col. 1.
- 27 Barry Coward, *Social Change and Continuity in Early Modern England 1550-1570* (London: Longman, 1988), p. 12.
- 28 Arthur F. Kinney, ed., *Elizabethan Backgrounds: Historical Documents of the Age of Elizabeth I* (Connecticut: Archon, 1975), p. 127.
- 29 *Council Book A*, p. 4. NB: A 'Hall' was a meeting of the Council.
- 30 *Misc. Doc.* I, 100; Halliday, p. 23.
- 31 State Papers Domestic Elizabeth I, S.P 12/243, no. 76.
- 32 *Misc. Doc.* ER 30 / 7.
- 33 *M&A*, IV, xxxix.
- 34 Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* (London: Longmans Green, 1886), 6th edition, vol.II, February 24, 1591.
- 35 The Burbage case was resolved after ten years. It was initiated 24 July, 1582; John Shakespeare was told in 1592 to release him from his contract and return the £7 rent to him by 29 September. *M&A*, IV, xxxix.
- 36 SBT Records Office, MS. ER 274. Letter was written 24th October, 1598.
- 37 Greg, W.W., ed., *English Literary Autographs: A Collection of Facsimiles 1550-1650* (available in the Shakespeare Institute Library, ref. FZ 42).
- 38 *M&A*, IV, 154-157.
- 39 *Misc. Doc.* V 20.
- 40 *M&A*, II, 11.

- 41 Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, *Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries* (Stratford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1907), p. 219.
- 42 Samuel Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life*, revised edition, (Oxford: OUP, 1987), p. 29.
- 43 Public Records Office, London, PROB 1/4, sheet 1.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4 . SHAKESPEARE'S MINORITY

- 1 Howe, p. 97.
- 2 Ben Jonson, Introductory poem in First Folio, *To the Memory of My Beloved, THE AUTHOR, Mr William Shakespeare*, l. 43.
- 3 Andrew Steptoe, 'Exceptional Creativity and the Psychological Sciences', in *Genius and the Mind*, pp. quotes Lykken in 'The Genetics of Genius', p. 3.
- 4 Steptoe, 'Mozart: Resilience under Stress' in *Genius and the Mind*, pp. 142-167, p.143, quoting Plomin, 1994.
- 5 For a fuller discussion of the problem, see Jeanne E. Jones, *Family Life in Shakespeare's England: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1570-1630* (Stroud: Sutton, 1996), pp. 11-17.
- 6 CB : A, 4: "At the Hall holldyn in oure garden the 30 daye of avguste anno 1564"
- 7 *M&A*, I, 145.
- 8 Pinciss, p. 34.
- 9 *M&A*, IV, 3.
- 10 James VI of Scotland alias James I of England, born June 1566 to Mary, Queen of Scots.
- 11 Savage, *Register of Baptisms* (London: Parish Register Society, 1897), 12.
- 12 Pp. 115 and 143.
- 13 *Misc. Doc.* 1, 100.
- 14 *M&A*, II, 11.
- 15 *Hamlet*, I ii 179-80.
- 16 *M&A*, II, 11.
- 17 *ibid.*, 12.
- 18 *ibid.*, 13.
- 19 Robert Bearman, *Shakespeare in the Stratford Records* (Trowbridge: Sutton, 1994), p. 22.
- 20 *M&A.*, Corporation notes for 1569. Letter sent to London Court of Aldermen and to many shires in March, 1569 and again in June signed by Bacon, Cancellarius, Norfolk, W. Howard, P. Knollys, W. North, R. Leycester, W. Cecil and Wa. Milmay., "Journal" xix, fo. 171 be, pp. 152-3. Also found in Aydelotte, *Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds*, Appendix A6 p. 65.
- 21 *M&A*, II, 21 and 96.
- 22 *2Henry IV*, III.2.
- 23 *M&A*, III, 4 and 8.
- 24 Savage, p. 15.
- 25 *M&A*, II, 35.
- 26 David Thomas, *Shakespeare in the Public Records*, (London: HMSO, 1985), p. 2-3
- 27 These orders were regularly up-dated. See for example, *CB :A*, 133 and *M&A*, II, 35.
- 28 *M&A*, II, 40.
- 29 *ibid.*, 41.
- 30 *M&A*, II, 37-42.
- 31 *M&A*, II, 58.
- 32 Honan, p. 311.
- 33 *ibid.*, 31.
- 34 For this child, John Shakespeare is designated Maistre Shakespeare, *M&A*, II, 18.
- 35 *Council Book : A*, 148/ *M&A.*, II, 53.
- 36 Prothero, p. 66. See also Band, Thomas H., *Robert Dibdale of Stratford-upon-Avon 1556- 1586.*(Stratford: 1987)
- 37 An Acte for the punishement of Vagabondes and for the Releif of the Poore & Impotent in *Statutes*, IV, 590.
- 38 Prothero, p. 66.
- 39 *ibid.*, 45.
- 40 For example, *M&A*, I, 123. This embargo was repeated by each newly-elected Council.
- 41 *M&A.*, II, 71.
- 42 *ibid.*, 73.
- 43 *Misc.Doc.*, X, 20.

44. *M&A*, III, 13.
45. Rent Roll, *M&A.*, II, 80.
46. Palliser, p. 67.
47. House conveyance from Hall to John Shakespeare
48. *M&A.*, II, xliii.
49. *ibid.*
50. Of the four Wheler children, only the last born, Johanna, appears in the Baptismal Register of the church, in 1563. It seems that Wheler was newly settled in Stratford, or perhaps would not have his previous children baptised into the Catholic religion.
51. Albert, p.118.
52. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II i 150.
53. It was usual for the town to contribute to all the Queen's summer progresses, in the vicinity or not: see also *M&A.*, II, xxix.
54. Peter Thomson, *Shakespeare's Professional Career* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), p.14.
55. *Council Book A*, pp. 172-3.
56. *ibid.*
57. *M&A*, II, 111.
58. *M&A*, II, 114.
59. *ibid.*, 118.
60. *M&A.*, III, xxxv.
61. *M&A.*, II, 103, and *M&A.*, III, 8, 23 and 140.
62. *Council Book A*, 179/ *M&A.*, III, 8.
63. *M&A.*, III, 13-14.
64. *Council Book A*, 182/ *M&A.*, III, 11.
65. *M&A.*, III, 18.
66. Kinney, pp. 140-144.
67. *M&A*, III, 24.
68. Thomas, p. 5.
69. Gerald Suster, *John Dee: Essential Reading* (GB: Crucible Aquarian Press, 1986), p. 62.
70. *M&A*, III, 25.
71. *ibid.*, p. 35.
72. Savage, *Register of Burials*, p. 29.
73. *M&A.*, III, 50.
74. *ibid.*, p.45-6.
75. Davies, p.192.
76. Palliser, Introd. By Asa Briggs, p. xiii.
77. *M&A*, III, 50.
78. *ibid.*, p. 64.
79. See Appendix.
80. *M&A*, III, Introd., p. xxxiii.
81. Levi Fox, *Borough Town of Stratford-upon-Avon*, (Stratford: Corporation, 1953), p. 72
82. Edgar I Fripp, *Shakespeare's Stratford* (London: OUP, 1928), p. 48.
83. *M&A*, III, 111.
84. Baptized February 2, 1585, Savage, p. 39.
85. *M&A*, III, 105, 107.
86. *ibid.*
87. *ibid.*, p. 108.
88. *M&A*, II, 114.
89. In relation to Shakespeare, that demonstrated by the playwright Greene in *A Groatsworthe of Wit* is the most telling.
90. Wilson, p. 219.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5 : SHAKESPEARE'S WRITING

- 1 Lykken, p. 29.
- 2 PRO Court of Requests REQ 4/1, 1612.
- 3 PROB 1/4.
- 4 Mairi Macdonald, writing in "Shakespeare at the Centre", vol. 2, no. 3, November, 2002.
- 5 *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, Wells et al, p. 224.
- 6 *Much Ado About Nothing*, III.v.19-21.
- 7 *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, p. 238.
- 8 Howe, p. 157.
- 9 Gardner, p. 42.
- 10 Melchiori, Giorgio, ed., *King Edward III* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), Introd. P. 5.
- 11 *ibid.*
- 12 Rob Hewison, writing in *The Sunday Times*, 12 July, 1987, p. 49 (quoted by Melchiori, p. 48).
- 13 Melchiori, p. 3
- 14 For Greene's attack on Shakespeare see Note 89 to Chapter 4.
- 15 Melchiori, p. 75, note to l. 153.
- 16 *Richard III*, I.ii.240 and IV.iv.81.
- 17 Judith of the Apocrypha who cut off the head of Holofernes, Nebuchadnezzar's general.
- 18 John Shakespeare went to London with Adrian Quiney in 1572, CBA p. 50.
- 19 Examples of bribes paid to various officials to get a petition heard in London, M&A vol. III, p. 98.
- 20 Shakespeare's name was added to the side of the official list of those who were to be, or had been, donors of contributions required by the Highways Bill, for the upkeep of roads through the town in 1611 (Misc. Doc. I. 4.)
- 21 Ben Jonson, *Comedies, Histories and Tragedies*, quoted in Shakespeare: *The Complete Works*, p.xlvi, col.1.
- 22 Guinness, Sir Alec, *My Name Escapes Me* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 62.
- 23 Paul Matthews, *The Bard on the Brain* (Chicago:Univ. Of Chicago Press, 2003), due to be published in May, quoted in *The Stratford Standard*, March 21, 2003, p. 2 col.1.
- 24 Wells, p. 237.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6 · SOURCES AND SUPPLEMENTS

- 1 Bullough, Geoffrey, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), vol. III, p. 40.
- 2 *ibid.*, p. 197.
- 3 Greene's attack on Shakespeare in 1592 not only paraphrases a line (I.iv.138) from *III Henry VI* but also suggests by its 'beautified with our feathers' phraseology lines from *II Henry VI* 'Seems he a dove? His feathers are but borrowed / For he's disposed as the hateful raven.' (III.i.75-6).
- 4 Stuart Jeffries "Profile of Bernard Williams" in the *Guardian Review* of 30.11.2002, p. 22, col. 1.
- 5 Muir, Kenneth, *Shakespeare's Sources: Comedies and Tragedies* (London: Methuen, 1957), p. 14.
- 6 Quotation from *The Governour* by Sir Thomas Elyot, Bullough, p. 216.
- 7 *ibid.*, p. 217.
- 8 Quotation from Lyly's *Euphues*, Bullough, p. 218.
- 9 Quotation from *Diana Enamorata* by Montemayor, Bullough, p. 232.
- 10 *ibid.*
- 11 Hankins, John Erskine, *Backgrounds of Shakespeare's Thought* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1978), p. 218.
- 12 Bullough, p. 66.
- 13 Heilman, Robert B., ed., Signet Edition of *The Taming of the Shrew* (New York, 1966), p. 15.
- 14 Wells & Taylor, p. 25.
- 15 Bullough, vol. I, p. 60.
- 16 *ibid.*, p. 57.
- 17 *ibid.*, p. 66.
- 18 *ibid.*, p. 64.
- 19 Bullough vol. III, p. 167.
- 20 *ibid.*, p. 15.
- 21 *ibid.*, p. 11.
- 22 Bate, p. 12.
- 23 *ibid.*, p. 325.
- 24 Bullough III, p. 10.
- 25 *ibid.*, p. 168.
- 26 Warren, Richard, ed., *Edward III* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2002), p. xvii.
- 27 Sams Eric, *Shakespeare's Edward III* (Berwick-upon-Tweed: Martins, 1996), p. 3.
- 28 Quoted by Warren, p. 182.
- 29 Melchiori, p. 178.
- 30 Muir, quotation from Baldwin's "Five-Act Structure", p. 18.
- 31 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V.i.439.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

- 1 Dedicatory Poem 'To the memory of my beloved, the AUTHOR Mr William Shakespeare: And what he hath left us' in *The First Folio of Shakespeare, 1623*, ll.41-2 and 63-4.
- 2 Wickham, *Early English Stages*, p. xxi.
- 3 *ibid*, p. xxii.
- 4 Thomson, pp. 11 and 12.
- 5 Peters, Julie Stone, *Theatre of the Book 1480 - 1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p.1.
- 6 *ibid*, Note 2, p. 313.
- 7 Wickham, *Early English Stages*, p. xix.
- 8 Bullough III p. 158.
- 9 Bentley, Gerald Eades, *The Profession of Player in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1643* (Princeton: Univ. Press, New Jersey, 1983), p. 9.
- 10 Howe, in *Genius Explained*, p. 12.
- 11 Though written towards the end of Shakespeare's life, his work is clearly to be included in this praise of plays demonstrating 'Action and Art'.
- 12 Wells, Stanley, *Shakespeare For All Time* (London: Macmillan, 2002), p. 131.
- 13 Kernodle, George R., *The Theatre in History* (London: University of Arkansas, 1989), p. 316.
- 14 Bate, p. 152.
- 15 Thomson, p. 24.
- 16 Kernodle, pp. 330, 337.
- 17 Bentley, quoting from *Poetaster* (Ben Jonson), III 167-70.
- 18 Barroll, J. Leeds and John Leeds, *Politics, Plague and Shakespeare's Theater: The Stuart Years* (first printed Cornell University Press, 1991), paperback print (London: Ithaca Press, 1992), p. 99.
- 19 *ibid*, p. 15.
- 20 *ibid*, p. 15.
- 21 Msc. Doc. I.2.172.
- 22 Bradbrook, p. 58.
- 23 *ibid*. p. 36.
- 24 *ibid*, p. 37.
- 25 Gibson, p. 164.
- 26 Bradbrook, pp. 95 & 227.
- 27 Barroll and Leeds, p. 11
- 28 Prothero, p. 69.
- 29 Bradbrook, p. 37.
- 30 Blistein, p. 162.
- 31 Bentley, p. 14.
- 32 *ibid*. P 19.
- 33 Fripp, *Master Richard Quyny*, p. 133.
- 34 Hankins, p. 239.
- 35 *Shakespeare For All Time*, p. 159.
- 36 *ibid*.
- 37 Muir, p. 18.
- 38 The Burials book referring to the time of Shakespeare's youth lists many names not inherent to the Midlands including Bicher (French), Checket (Essex and Hants), Ensedale (Derbyshire), Dege (Irish) and Jones and Apryce (Welsh).
- 39 Bate, p. 152.
- 40 *ibid*. p. 151.
- 41 Neumann quoted by Lykken in 'The Genetics of Genius' in *Genius and the Mind*, p. 31.
- 42 *Origins and Development*, p. 191.
- 43 *ibid*. P 190.
- 44 Evans, p. 88.
- 45 Pinciss and Lockyer, p. 134.
- 46 Schoenbaum, p. 276.

- 47 Wells, *Shakespeare For All Time*, p. 187.
48 *ibid*, p .129.
49 Macrobius in 'Commentarium in Somnium Scipionis' II.xii. 11,(quoted by Hankins,
p. 17.
50 *ibid*.
51 *Shakespeare For All Time*, p .161.
52 Csikzentmihalyi in *Genius and the Mind*, p .39.
53 Bate, p. 158.
54 Csikzentmihalyi in *Genius and the Mind*, p. 39.
55 Howe in 'Early Lives: Prodigies and Non-Prodigies' in *Genius and the Mind*, p. 97.
56 Gardner, p. 30.
57 Howe, in *Genius and the Mind*, p. 108.
58 Barroll and Leeds, p. 18.
59 Hankins, p. 239.
60 Albert on 'G.H.Hardy and Srinivara Romanujan' in *Genius and the Mind*' p. 122.
61 Quoted from *The Bard on the Brain* (University of Chicago Press) in 'The Stratford
Standard' on Friday, March 21, 2003, p.2, col.1.

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