Shakespeare Authorship and the *Anonymous* film

by David Cope (2011)

**Preface:** The Oxfordian thesis—the argument that “the man from Stratford” couldn’t have written Shakespeare’s plays and that the Earl of Oxford was the true author—has surfaced periodically ever since Thomas J. Looney proposed it early in the 20th century. Although it has been largely dismissed by serious Shakespeare scholars, the Oxfordian thesis has returned with the release of *Anonymous*, a film which purports to tell how Oxford actually wrote the plays. As a Shakespearean scholar and teacher, I have received queries about this from several professors and students. This is my “take” on it, including my position on the various arguments about Oxfordian authorship and two appendices exploring how the careful use of good sources deflates any claims about the author as court insider or European traveler: my essay on Shakespeare’s use of his Plutarchan source in *Coriolanus*, and a source study exercise from my English 252 class.

1. **The social class argument:** this basically claims that a glover’s son with a grammar school education (equivalent in many ways to a high school education, but featuring the study of Roman classics by Virgil, Horatio and others *in Latin*) could not possibly have understood the intricacies of court life or the histories for which Shakespeare is famous.

   <This neglects the fact that all of Shakespeare’s histories and many of his other plays used Holinshed’s Chronicles (for the histories and some of the tragedies), North’s translation of Plutarch (for the Roman plays), and other sources such as the History of Denmark by Saxo Grammaticus, from which the story of Hamlet (Amleth) is taken. Indeed, some of the lines in *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus* are such close paraphrases of North’s translation that in our time they could be called plagiarism, and there are similar instances of *very* close readings of Holinshed in *Henry V* and other history plays (see Appendices following this document (“Shakespeare’s Uses of Plutarch: Two Speeches from *Coriolanus*” and the student exercise, Shakespeare’s use of his sources) and, for more complete treatment of Shakespeare’s use of his sources, see Geoffrey Bullough’s eight volume set of the *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*). A gifted, literate young writer could easily adapt all of these stories once he learned the structure and format of plays that had “made it” on stage. Further, one need not be a court insider to understand the dynamics of power.

   <A related aspect of this argument is that only a wealthy Englishman would have been able to travel and thus to have known of the politics and cultures of various European and other nations. This neglects the fact that the bookstalls in St. Paul’s Churchyard were packed with guide books on travel to various nations, translations of the writings from those nations, as well as the various accounts of travel by English explorers. The “man from Stratford”—Shakespeare—would have had access to all of these, and indeed, there is a whole school of criticism devoted to where and how both Shakespeare and Jonson used the materials available to any English citizen who could read. The Oxfordians should familiarize themselves with the various scholarly studies of *The Merchant of Venice* and other Italian plays, in particular; all the particulars about Italian customs and culture as found in the plays were available through writings on the subject.

   <The argument also presumes a kind of academic prejudice: that one must be a college graduate in order to research and write good plays and poetry. One need only glance over the long list of master writers who never set foot in a college to see the academic prejudice exposed for what it is. Such geniuses include Shakespeare’s own contemporary, primary competitor, and one of the more scholarly authors of the period, Ben Jonson, as well as Thomas Dekker. The list also includes the romantic poets William Blake and John Keats and novelist Jane Austen. American
masters, too, join these non-college educated poets and writers; their ranks include such authors as Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, Mark Twain, and Ernest Hemingway, among others.

2. The Earl of Oxford died in 1604. I have yet to find any convincing evidence that he came back from the dead to write the plays which appeared from 1605-1611, including such masterpieces as King Lear, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, as well as the four romances (Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter’s Tale, and The Tempest) and Shakespeare’s final homage to Queen Elizabeth, Henry VIII.

Related to this is the variety of topical references to events in these later plays. Not only could a dead man not come back from the grave to write these plays, but one may assume that he would not have access to the history that happened after his death. Examples abound: the references to the 1605 Gunpowder Plot in the porter scene of Macbeth (see Garry Wills’ Witches and Jesuits: Shakespeare’s Macbeth and Antonia Fraser’s Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot); other references include those to the 1608 Midlands corn riots in Coriolanus, and to shipwrecks in the Bermudas and elsewhere in The Tempest (1610-11). In The Tempest, a reference to shipwreck in the Bermudas comes from pamphlets by Sylvester Jourdain and William Strachey, describing such a shipwreck in 1609.

3. The Earl of Oxford’s sonnets are sometimes used to show that he must have written Shakespeare’s as well. The problem here is that the extent writings by the earl are of nowhere near the quality of the writing in Shakespeare’s famed sequence—to call them “mediocre” would be a kind assessment. Oxfordians point out that his extant writings are “juvenilia,” written earlier than Shakespeare’s sonnets, and that as a poet he developed the more mature style of the recognized Shakespeare sequence. There is no evidence to support this; it is pure conjecture.

4. Contemporary references by fellow poets and playwrights refer to Shakespeare, not to Oxford. Ben Jonson, for example, a man known for his ferocious honesty, would never have written his two commendatory poems that front the First Folio if he had doubted that Shakespeare wrote the plays. These men knew each other, as is true in all literary revivals, and it would have been known if the playwright for one company was taking another’s manuscripts and claiming authorship in his name. Oxford is mentioned in Puttenham’s The Arte of English Poesie (1589), Francis Meres’ 1598 Pallidis Tamia, and in Henry Peacham’s 1622 The Compleat Gentleman, but in each case there are problems with claims about his authorship, ranging from the fact that Meres names both Oxford and Shakespeare separately (which would seem to indicate that they are two separate people), to the fact that Peacham only mentions writers whom he considered “gentlemen,” leaving out not only Shakespeare, but Marlowe and Jonson.

5. An exhaustive computerized textual study of language patterns disputes any connection between the two. Elliott and Valenza (2004) claim that “the odds that either could have written the other’s work are much lower than the odds of getting hit by lightning,” noting too that “this argument is too grossly at odds with the available documentary record and stylometric numbers for Oxford to be a plausible claimant” Ref: Elliott, Ward E. Y., and Robert J. Valenza. “Oxford by the Numbers: What Are the Odds that the Earl of Oxford Could Have Written Shakespeare’s Poems and Plays?” Tennessee Law Review 72.1 (2004): 323-452. For the complete study, see http://www.claremontmckenna.edu/govt/welliott/UTConference/Oxford_by_Numbers.pdf.
Appendix A: Shakespeare's Uses of Plutarch: Two Speeches from *Coriolanus*

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The fact that North's translation of Plutarch is the primary source for Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* is well-known, as is his probable use of details from William Camden's *Remaines* and from Philemon Holland's translation of Livy's *Ab urba condita*, published in 1600 as *The Romaine Historie*. These last are often cited as sources for Menenius's fable of the belly (Boyce 135), and the Variorum *Coriolanus* proposes one of the fables of Aesop as a source (645). Muir and others have suggested that Shakespeare's use of the Plutarchan references to corn and famine are related to the Midland corn riots of 1607 (Muir 246); it's unclear whether the claim is intended to reflect a borrowing from contemporary accounts, but the choice of story would in any case provide a comment on contemporary concerns. Muir points out other possible source materials, ranging from Forsets' *A Comparative Discourse of the Bodies Natural* as yet another source for Menenius's fable (242-45) to Richard Knolles's translation of Bodin's *Six Bookes of a Commonweale* on the need to banish a great man because he is a danger to the state (241). Muir also considers two books for references to Coriolanus and politics and to the banishing of Coriolanus—the *Commonwealth of Good Counsaile*, written by Laurentius Grimaldus Goslicius in 1607 (245), and *The Pandectus of the Law of Nations*, a 1602 treatise by William Fulbecke (245-46).

Shakespeare may have known and adapted elements from all these sources, but *Coriolanus* is primarily indebted to Plutarch, and my concern here is to trace how Shakespeare used and transformed the language of North's translation in making his play. One might ask: when Shakespeare differs, what is the substance of that difference, and how and why has he transformed his source material? This essay examines two speeches from the play as a way of
approaching this question, searching out the complexities of the bard’s use of Plutarch. I will show that Shakespeare often deviated from his main source for one or more of five major reasons. These include: (1) dividing a speech into dialogue between two or more persons, (2) enlivening it with more vivid nouns and verbs, hyperbole or metaphors beyond the original speech, (3) condensing a verbose passage to tighten its rhythms and give it greater tension, (4) changing syntax to regularize metrics of lines for more fluid oral delivery, and (5) rearranging the source passage to build the speech to a climax not found in the original translated passage.

The Fable of the Belly (1.1.96-163)

The fable of the belly spoken by Menenius in the opening scene of *Coriolanus* illustrates one of the more complex problems in tracing the use Shakespeare made of his sources. Plutarch spends a paragraph explaining why Menenius Agrippa told the tale to the plebians, then launches into the story:

That on a time all the members of man's body did rebel against the belly, complaining of it that it only remained in the midst of the body, without doing anything, neither did bear any labour to the maintenance of the rest; whereas all other parts and members did labour painfully and were very careful to satisfy the appetites and desires of the body. And so the belly, all this notwithstanding, laughed at their folly and said: “It is true, I first receive all meats that nourish man's body; but afterwards I send it again to the nourishment of other parts of the same. (Plutarch 303)

Shakespeare expands this account in several ways: the phrase "that on a time all the members of man's body did rebel against the belly" is closely paralleled in the Shakespearean version, which only changes syntax to account for the direct address Menenius must make in the play: "There was a time when all the body's members rebell'd against the belly" (96-7).

Shakespeare's adaptation also regularizes the meter of the line, making it more speakable. The poet takes the next part of North's Plutarch, "complaining of it that it only remained in the midst
of the body," and transforms "complaining of it" into "thus accus'd it," providing the speech with a dramatic pause both before and after this transformed phrase. He also incorporates a clarifying simile, "like a gulf," into the second part of the phrase. Next, "without doing anything," becomes "idle and inactive, still cupboarding the viand" (99-100); both this and the previous phrase show characteristic Shakespearean additions: the use of similes, metaphors and vivid images to enliven the speech. Finally, the poet condenses the last phrase and regularizes the meter for more fluid oral delivery: “neither did bear any labour to the maintenance of the rest" becomes "never bearing like labor with the rest" (100-01).

After this, the Shakespearean transformations become more complicated. The Plutarchan phrase "whereas all other parts and members did labour painfully and were very careful to satisfy the appetites and desires of the body" becomes

where th'other instruments
Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel,
And, mutually participate, did minister
Unto the appetite and affection common
Of the whole body. (1.1.101-105)

The single phrase "did labour painfully" is enlivened by transforming its verb into a series of verbs, each of which dramatically punctuates the line with pauses (102); Brockbank asserts that this series of verbs may be adapted from a similar series in Camden's *Remaines*, in which that author translates John of Salisbury's Latin as "for whereas the eies beheld, the eares heard, the handes labored, the feete traveled, the tongue spake, and all partes performed their functions" (29, 102). A second verb phrase anaphorically follows the first, and transforms "were careful to satisfy the appetites and desires of the body" into the much more dramatic "did minister unto the appetite and affection common of the whole body" (103-04).

Even more dramatic changes follow: the last sentence of the Plutarchan account quoted above is expanded into a colloquial exchange between Menenius and the first citizen, allowing room for Menenius's humorous pause before giving the point of the story away, the first citizen's
impatience for the "punch line" (114) and list of how the body's parts reflect the allegory of the
state (115-19)—again reflecting the first citizen's impatience with a well-known bromide. The
rhythms of lines 115 to 117 are most interesting; Shakespeare has created metrical runs of four,
five and six syllables punctuated by caesurae, with their characteristic pauses:

The kingly-crowned head, the vigilant eye,
The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,
Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter. (1.1.11-5-117)

Such phrasing gives the actor a great deal of leeway to emphasize the character's exasperation and
impatience, playing on the audience's familiarity with such allegorical illustrations. Menenius's
response to this exasperation is one of feigned patrician disdain at the first citizen's impudence:

"What then? 'Fore me, this fellow speaks! What then? what then?" (119-20). The questioning
citizen is put in the role of having to explain where the fable leads—Menenius toys with him a
moment, then amplifies Plutarch's brief account of the belly's answer with a series of metaphors
and dramatic pauses, including yet another exchange between Menenius and the first citizen:

Men. Note me this, good friend:
Your most grave belly was deliberate,
Not rash like his accusers, and thus answered:
"True is it, my incorporate friends," quoth he,
"That I receive the general food at first
Which you do live upon; and fit it is,
Because I am the storehouse and the shop
of the whole body. But, if you do remember,
I send it through the rivers of your blood,
Even to the court, the heart, to th' seat o' th' brain,
And, through the cranks and offices of man,
The strongest nerves and small inferior veins
From me receive that natural competency
Whereby they live. And though that all at once"--
You, my good friends, this says the belly, mark me.
Men. "Though all at once cannot
See what I do deliver to each,
Yet I can make my audit up, that all
From me do back receive the flour of all,
And leave me but the bran." What say you to't?
(1.1.127-146)
This amplification serves several purposes. The poetry of Menenius's answer involves a humorous metaphor when he refers to his friends as "incorporate"; *incorporate* literally means "inside the body," and at the same time plays on the meaning of *incorporated*, that is, working together for a common end. Other metaphors swell the speech: storehouse and shop, rivers, the court and seat, cranks and offices (winding passages and remoter rooms; see n. 1397), audits, flour and bran—each of them reinforcing the notion of social organization and common purpose, ranging from the court to the shop and mill. Brockbank suggests that the reference to the "rivers" of blood running throughout the bodily system (lines 135-38) was taken from Holland's Livy (29), but in any case, the rivers function metaphorically as part of the social fabric of the body.

The poetry reinforces the allegorical message with these dramatic metaphors, but the length of the speech presents staging possibilities as well. Because the speech is longer and features dramatic pauses at the end of each of its clauses, there is ample room for stage business; Menenius could in this scene be presented in a number of ways: as a kindly but slightly long-winded patrician, as a man whose eloquence is wasted among impatient plebians (see the first citizen's response in line 147: "it was an answer. How apply you this?") or as a sly but patient speaker, working slowly through the fable to draw the plebians' attention away from their anger and towards the lesson, ending with his humor at the expense of the first citizen, the "great toe of the assembly" (155). The range of possibilities for Menenius and the plebians—both in terms of public persona and the emotional undertones in the presentation of character—is thus dramatically expanded.

Shakespeare's adaptation of a single paragraph of Plutarch thus shows the complexity of his use of his sources. He takes some passages almost verbatim, but regularizes the meter of these passages to make them more fluid, more speakable; he creates dramatic tension, irony and humor by using a citizen as a foil to Menenius; he reformulates prosaic passages with vivid
metaphors and on some occasions amplifies an original passage to suggest greater range in a character's public persona and emotional undertones.

*The First Part of Volumnia's Address to Coriolanus (5.3.94-124)*

A. W. Verity, quoted in the 1928 Variorum *Coriolanus*, is at some pains to point out how Shakespeare expanded and transformed the role of Volumnia in the Plutarchan story. After noting that Shakespeare maintained Plutarch's theme of "the son's subjection to the mother," Verity asserts that "the admirable scene where Volumnia urges Coriolanus to dissimulate has no parallel in Plutarch's Life" (3.2.52-86; Varorium 615). Further, in *Coriolanus*, Volumnia is given the inspiration to propose that she and the other Roman women plead with Coriolanus when he is about to attack Rome; in the Plutarchan account, that idea comes from Valeria (Plutarch 351; Varorium 615, 619). Shakespeare thus greatly expanded the role of Volumnia almost to heroic proportions, while at the same time exploring an intense son-mother relationship and giving her a Machiavellian motivation for the actions she suggests her son follow; while he dramatically changed her role, Shakespeare preserved her appeal to Coriolanus (5.3.94-182) almost intact, but with several significant minor changes and one major rearrangement. In Plutarch, the speech begins, "if we held our peace, my son, and determined not to speak, the state of our poor bodies and present sight of our raiment would easily bewray to thee what life we have led at home, since thy exile and abode abroad" (354); Shakespeare transforms this sentence, again straightening out the syntax and regularizing the rhythm:

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Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment
And state of bodies would bewray what life
We have led since thy exile. (5.3.94-96)
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Plutarch continues:
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But think now with thyself how much more unfortunately than all the women living we are come hither, considering that the sight which should be most pleasant to all other to behold, spiteful fortune hath made most fearful to us; making myself to see my son, and my daughter here her husband, besieging the walls of his native country; so as that which is the only comfort to all other in their adversity and misery, to pray unto the gods and to call to them for aid, is the only thing which plungeth us into most deep perplexity. (354)

This is quite a mouthful for one sentence, and Shakespeare is at some pains to make it speakable:

Think with thyself  
How more unfortunate than all living women  
Are we come hither: since that thy sight, which should  
Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with comforts,  
Constrains them weep and shake with fear and sorrow,  
Making the mother, wife and child to see  
The son, the husband, and the father tearing  
His country's bowels out. And to poor we  
Thine enmity's most capital; thou barr'st us  
Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort  
That all but we can enjoy. (5.3.96-106)

As in the first sentence, the wholesale transference of exact words from Plutarch and the regularizing of rhythms should be apparent. Where Shakespeare deviates from Plutarch, it is to embolden and enliven the speech, as was the case in the example of the fable of the belly; for example, the sight of Coriolanus—which "should be most pleasant to all other to behold, spiteful fortune hath made most fearful to us" is recast with much greater attention to particulars: the sight of Coriolanus "which should make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with comforts, constrains them weep and shake with fear and sorrow." Further, the son and husband "beseiging the walls of his native country" is transformed into vivid hyperbole: the son, husband and father is "tearing his country's bowels out." Finally, in the last part of Plutarch's prose, Volumnia explains that "the only comfort" to those in "adversity and misery"—prayer to the gods—plunges her and the other women into "most deep perplexity." Shakespeare recasts these lines into a statement that approaches an accusation; not only is Coriolanus's "enmity . . . most capital," but she claims "thou
barr'st us our prayers to the gods." Such a transformation increases the emotional intensity of the speech and underscores the dramatic pressure between mother and son in the situation.

Plutarch continues his account of her petition in a lengthy passage that smacks more of reasoning one's way through the problem; it states Volumnia's concerns, but Shakespeare must substantially alter it to maintain the emotional pitch he has already established in the scene:

For we cannot, alas, together pray both for victory for our country and for safety of thy life also. But a world of grievous curses, yea, more than any mortal enemy can heap upon us, are forcibly wrapped up in our prayers. For the bitter sop of most hard choice is offered thy wife and children, to forgo the one of the two: either to lose the person of thyself or the nurse of their native country. For myself, my son, I am determined not to tarry till fortune in my lifetime do make an end of this war. For if I cannot persuade thee, rather to do good unto both parties than to overthrow and destroy the one, preferring love and nature before the malice and calamity of wars—thou shalt see, my son, and trust unto it, though shalt no sooner march forward to assault thy country but thy foot shall tread upon thy mother's womb, that brought thee first into this world. And I may not defer to see the day either that my son be led prisoner in triumph by his natural countrymen, or that he himself do triumph of them and of his natural country. (354-55)

Shakespeare is faced with the necessity of condensing this passage and, because the speech has already gone on for some twelve lines, vary the syntax. Thus at this point, Volumnia resorts to rhetorical questions that parallel the first line quoted above:

For how can we,
Alas, how can we for our country pray,
Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,
Whereto we are bound? (5.3.106-09)
Besides recasting an affirmative into an interrogative sentence, Shakespeare develops two parallel constructions in the repetitions of "how can we" and "whereto we are bound"; this allows the actor to emphasize the near-hysterical tenor of Volumnia's speech. After this, the poet eliminates three lines of Plutarchan prose and seizes on "either to lose the person of thyself or the nurse of their native country," recasting it as "alack, or we most lose the country, our dear nurse, or else thy person, our comfort in the country" (109-11), continuing the pattern of repetition, here with "country." Next, the poet cuts out six lines of Plutarch and substitutes two and a half lines of poetry, retaining one word—"calamity"—from the original: "we must find an evident calamity, though we had our wish, which side should win" (111-13). Then he takes the last two lines of the quotation and refashions them in greater detail; her fear that Martius will be "led prisoner in triumph" is transformed to being "a foreign recreant . . . led with manacles through our streets" (115-15). Shakespeare also recasts her fear that he will triumph over Rome: he will "triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin, and bear the palm for having bravely shed thy wife and children's blood" (116-18). What happens next is most interesting; the poet's lines 118-25 read as follows:

> For myself, son,  
> I purpose not to wait on fortune till  
> These wars determine. If I cannot persuade thee  
> Rather to show a noble grace to both parts  
> Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner  
> March to assault thy country than to tread,  
> (Trust to't, thou shalt not) on thy mother's womb  
> That brought thee to this world.

In this passage, Shakespeare has taken the six lines he had cut out earlier and recast them at the end of the speech. Perhaps there are two reasons why he removed this part of the speech to the end of the first part of Volumnia's first plea; it forms a natural conclusion to her argument to persuade him to relent, and with its reference to treading on his mother's womb, it saves her most potent argument for the last. In any case, the reordering of the passage shows that Shakespeare
Shakespeare read his Plutarch closely—and that he wanted above all to build the speech to a dramatic climax.

Conclusion

Menenius's fable of the belly and Volumnia's appeal are largely drawn from the account in North's translation of Plutarch, though a few details in the fable may be taken from Philemon Holland's translation of Livy or from Camden's *Remaines*. Examination of the two speeches shows that Shakespeare often deviated from his main source, but I have shown that when he did so it was for one or more of five major reasons. First, such deviation sometimes involved creating a dramatic situation by transforming a static speech into a dialogue exchange, as with Menenius and the first citizen. Second, Shakespeare often emboldened and enlivened a Plutarchan speech by particularizing nouns and replacing bland with vivid verbs, or by inserting hyperbole, vivid metaphors or puns to emphasize a point; the principle gives the actor a clearer sense of how to portray character through livelier and more precise language. Third, the poet sometimes condensed a verbose passage to make it more speakable and to get to a point more quickly; at other times he would expand a passage that seemed to have greater dramatic potential than the Plutarchan account had explored. Fourth, he changed syntax to regularize the metrics of lines so they'd be more memorable and more fluid for oral delivery or, if a speech was longer, he changed once from the affirmative to an interrogative statement as a way of breaking up the patterns of a speech, and to give the actor a mode of exploring different emotional shadings. On some occasions, he inserted anaphorae and repetitions as a way of cementing or emphasizing a point. Fifth, on one occasion in Volumnia's speech, Shakespeare removed a section of the Plutarchan passage and placed it at the end of the speech, probably because he saw that this section could provide a climactic moment if the rest of the speech could be recast to lead up to it. In all five cases, Shakespeare's guiding principle was to make the story more dramatic, more accessible and more speakable; he sought to cast the story in such a way that his actors could maximize the emotional potential that North's translation of the Plutarchan story only begins to explore.
Appendix B: Shakespeare and His Sources
(student exercise: source and text comparison).

Historically, one major strand of Shakespearean scholarship has been to study the relationship of Shakespearean texts with the sources from which many of them were drawn (for full treatment, see Geoffrey Bullough’s 8 volume set, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*). Close comparison of sources with the Shakespearean lines reveals not only a great deal about the bard's creative process, but also makes one much more aware of how the poet's ear gives the line its spoken fluidity. Shakespeare's use of his source materials varies from passages creating an entire scene out of bare suggestions in the source text, to rough or overt paraphrase, to rearranging paraphrased sentences in an order more conducive to heightened dramatic expressiveness, or to quotation with a few words changed as a means to regularize rhythms and improve "speakability." The charge of plagiarism, to which a modern writer working in this manner might be subject, was not as serious a problem during this era; indeed, the study of legislation affecting copyright and the right to print and sell books involves a complex history and varying degrees of regulation. For good basic articles on the subject, consult Appendix I ("Censorship and the Law of the Press") and Appendix II ("Notes on the History of English Copyright") in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, edited by Margaret Drabble.

[1414] Whilst in the Lent season the king lay at Killingworth, there came to him from Charles, Dauphin of France, certain ambassadors that brought with them a barrel of Paris balls, which from their master they presented to him for a token that was taken in very ill part, as sent in scorn to signify that it was more meet for the king to pass the time with such childish exercises than to attempt any worthy exploit. Wherefore the king wrote to him that ere aught long he would toss him some London balls that perchance should shake the walls of the best court in France.

2. CLOSE PARAPHRASE OF SOURCE. *Coriolanus* 5.3.94-183: Volumnia's appeal to Coriolanus. Source: Sir Thomas North's 1579 translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* (in Bullough 539-40)

If we helde our peace (my sonne) and determined not to speake, the state of our poore bodies, and present sight of our rayment, would easely bewray to thee what life we have led at home, since thy exile and abode abroad. But thinke now with thy selfe, howe much more unfortunatly, then all the women livinge we are come hether, considering that the sight which should be most pleasaut to all other to beholde, spitefull fortune hath made most fearefull to us: making my selfe to see my sonne, and my daughter here, her husband, besieging the walles of his native countrie. So as that which is thonly comforte to all other in their adversitie and miserie, to pray unto the goddes, and to call to them for aide: is the onely thinge which plongeth us into most deepe perplexitie. For we can not (alas) together pray, both for victorie, for our countrie, and for safety of thy life also: but a worlde of grievous curses, yea more then any mortall enemie can heape upon us, are forcibly wrapt up in our prayers. For the bitter soppe of most harde choyce is offered thy wife and children, to forgoe the one of the two: either to lose the persone of thy selfe, or the nurse of their native contrie. For my selfe (my sonne) I am determined not to tarie, till fortune in my life time doe make an ende of this warre. For if I cannot persuade thee, rather to doe good unto both parties, then to overthrowe and destroye the one, preferring love and nature, before the malice and calamitie of warres: thou shalt see, my sonne, and trust unto it, thou shalt no soner marche forward to assault thy countrie, but thy foote shall treade upon thy mothers wombe, that brought thee first into this world. And I maye not deferre to see the daye, either that my sonne be led prisoner in triumphe by his naturall country men, or that he him selfe doe tri-umphe of them, and of his naturall countrie. For if it were so, that my request tended to save thy countrie, in destroying the Volsces: I must confesse, thou wouldest hardly and doubtfully resolve on that. For as to destroye thy naturall countrie, it is altogether unmete and unlawfull: so were it not just, and lesse honorable, to betraye those that put their trust in thee. But my only demaunde consisteth, to make a gayle deliverie of all evills, which delivereth equall benefit and safety, both to the one and the other, but most honorable for the Volsces. For it shall appeare, that having victorie in their handes, they have of speciall favour graunted us singular graces: peace, and amitie, albeit them selves have no lesse parte of both, then we. Of which good, if so it came to passe, thy selfe is thonly author, and so hast thou thonly honor. But if it faile, and fall out contrarie: thy selfe alone deservedly shall carie the shamefull reproche and burden of either partie. So, though the ende of warre be uncertaine, yet this notwithstanding is most certain: that if it be thy chaunce to conquer, this benefit shall thou reape of thy goodly conquest, to be chronicled the plague and destroyer of thy countrie. And if fortune also overthrowe thee, then the world will saye, that through desire to revenge thy private injuries, thou hast for ever undone thy good friendes, who dyd most lovingly and curteously receyve thee.
3. SOURCE AS STORY OUTLINE, WITH AN ECHO OF A LOST PLAY. Hamlet 3.4: Hamlet in Gertrude's bedroom. Source: Saxo Grammaticus, *Historica Danica* (in Latin; here translated by Oliver Elton in Satin 389-90). The outline of events is somewhat similar:

Amleth slays a spy hiding behind an arras, castigates his mother, and Feng then sends him—with two companions—to die in Britain; he escapes, is betrothed to a British princess, and gets revenge. There are complications in that two intermediate sources lie between Hamlet and Saxo: Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques* which, though untranslated until 1608, presented psychological analyses and dramatic asides; and an "Ur-Hamlet"—a play, now lost, which could have accounted for other differences between Shakespeare's and Saxo's versions.

Having in this wise eluded the snare, he went back to the room. Then his mother set up a great wailing, and began to lament her son's folly to his face; but he said: "Most infamous of women! dost thou seek with such lying lamentations to hide thy most heavy guilt? Wantoning like a harlot, thou hast entered a wicked and abominable state of wedlock, embracing with incestuous bosom thy husband's slayer, and wheedling with filthy lures of blandishment him who had slain the father of thy son. This, forsooth, is the way that mares couple with the vanquishers of their mates; for brute beasts are naturally incited to pair indiscriminately; and it would seem that thou, like them, hast clean forgot thy first husband. As for me, not idly do I wear the mask of folly; for I doubt not that he who destroyed his brother will riot as ruthlessly in the blood of his kindred. Therefore it is better to choose the garb of dulness than that of sense, and to borrow some protection from a show of utter frenzy. Yet the passion to avenge my father still burns in my heart; but I am watching the chances, I await the fitting hour. There is a place for all things; against so merciless and dark a spirit must be used the deeper devices of the mind. And thou, who hadst been better employed in lamenting thine own disgrace, know it is superfluous to bewail my witlessness; thou shouldst weep for the blemish in thine own mind, not for that in another's. On the rest see thou keep silence." With such reproaches he rent the heart of his mother and redeemed her to walk in the ways of virtue; teaching her to set the fires of the past above the seductions of the present.