

'If this be Error and upon Me Proved.....'
'Deceptive Displacements' and the Shakespeare Authorship Question:
*The Shakespeare Authorship Question as one of Three Massive and Major Historic
Deceptive Displacements, which fully establish precedency and analogy for each other,
and for this Concept.*

A Temporary Delusion

Recently on a train journey I got out at the station before the one I should have got out at. I had fallen asleep and, having awoken in haste, was hurrying not to get caught by the closing doors. Once I got out I found out that, in the month since I last travelled there, the concrete stairs had been turned round 180 degrees, there were now ticket barrier machines installed at the ticket office. I did have an odd uneasy, slightly uncanny, disconcerting, feeling, to be sure. Then I saw the design and view of the station car park, totally different as it was. Only then I had a big 'aha', I 'clicked'. Yes! I had got out at the wrong station!

Clearly, I had a brief temporary *delusion*. (Robert Pirsig records a parallel case in *Lila*.) My feeling of unease was due to the discrepancy between the believed perception, and the actual perception. It is uncanny, and a form of cognitive dissonance. One might say I had a very brief, low-key, psychosis, a momentary insanity. But if one bears in mind that normally this believed perception would be confirmed by, be congruent with, experiential data, and will therefore remain *unchallenged* in its dominance, does it not then follow that we are *always* in a low key psychosis? In short, is 'sound commonsense' actually a psychosis of normality? Is this relevant to the Shakespeare Authorship Question?

Implications for our Beliefs as Civilisations

To an overwhelming extent we *create our world in light of our desires*, habits, and expectations. Hume, and then Kant, built philosophies on this. Both individuals and civilisations do this at the profoundest level. When huge changes in civilisation are under way, they are often, perhaps always, accompanied by discrepant phenomena, analogous, in the framework of civilisations, to such temporary delusions. It is a matter of subtle, handed down, almost feudal, conventions. (Hegel reminds us that 'feudal' or 'Guild' authority-based dedication or devotion are the foundations of work, and so of unquestioned empirical 'sound commonsense'.) These are juxtaposed with *radical transformations*, a baffling and uncanny combination of convention and concealed evidence. Often more 'hidden in plain view' than concealed!

The Bicameral Mind (Jaynes) and the Legacy of Mixed Mentalities

Can we then make a connection between such low key - though revelatory for theory of knowledge - delusive moments and processes, and the profound *visionary* processes, on which most of the originations of our religion, philosophy, and science are based? Julian Jaynes, in his profound and ground-breaking book, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, 1975/90, - admired by John Updike, Marshall McLuhan, Owen Barfield, Ernesto Rossi, Ken Wilber, Douglas Adams, Richard Dawkins, and Daniel Dennett, - argued that the emergence of reflexive consciousness, as we know it, is as recent as 3,500 years ago. It was preceded by a mode of mentality much more based in visionary hallucinatory processes, experienced as the hallucinated

unquestioned command of gods and ancestors, which Jaynes calls the 'bicameral mind'. And so an enormous, almost unlimited, range of phenomena since then are *transitional* between pure visionary experience, and experience ostensibly based in the 'objectivity', 'commonsense', explicit rational consciousness of a particular age. Such phenomena are uncanny, as gothic writers such as ST Coleridge and EA Poe grasped, and as Shakespeare profoundly dramatised.

Deceptive Displacements in History of Western Civilisation:

Joan of Arc; The Shakespeare Phenomenon; History of Early Christianity; [The Torah: Friedman: *Who Wrote the Bible*]

The great historical anomalies, 'deceptive displacements', are located in such uncanny transitions. 'Deceptive displacement' is an attempt to label and epitomise a process whereby big and intractable things in the fabric of a civilisation, such as the phenomena of Shakespeare, or Joan of Arc, become profoundly skewed in the transition to a new epoch. 'Deceptive displacements' are not confined to fraud. The Shakespeare Authorship is a case of this *par excellence*. There are other colossal instances. *The major cases we are concerned with, all of them, include visionary - bicameral - dimensions, in one way or another, with the dissonant darkness and uncanniness the bicameral involves.* Can 'deceptive displacement' help us *take a longer view* of our problem of proof? Can the other instances of this give us important analogies in our search?

Does Shakespeare Give us the Ontology of this?

Can we cross-connect, with the paradigms available to us, the very thing that is the object and source of our search? – the knowledge, the epistemology, implicit in the Shakespeare Dramatic Poetic? Implicit in the Shakespeare Dramatic Poetic is *a radically different conception of time, history, and historicity than we are accustomed to*, a conception which opens up the closure of questions imposed by a commonsense metaphysic of factuality and linearity. Shakespeare's poetic, among other things, gives us a live and enacted revelation of an *open* future, nesting within it, among wider understandings, an enacted analysis of choiceful self-deception, - 'deceptive displacement' in the psychological sense, - embodying in depth the temporal complexity, as the uncanny, and the visionary, a potential paradigm for 'deceptive displacement' within our personal historicity.

Macbeth's Time Concept

The British commonsense or empiricist-objectivist model of time and history, developed after 1660, including Newtonian time, mostly corresponds to Macbeth's *Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow*, an interminable present in which the future never comes. But Shakespeare gives us something different. *Macbeth* is as great a meditation on time-consciousness as anything by Kant, Heidegger, or Bergson. Macbeth experiences the opposed and conflicting bicameral dimensions of his being like a dreamer or sleepwalker, as Jaynes describes the experience of Achilles and Agamemnon in the *Iliad*.

What Macbeth undergoes and surrenders to is *an uncanny absolute loss of the future*. In visionary mode, he courts the illusion of controlling time, the absolute future, in Act I sc. vii:

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well

It were done quickly: if the assassination

**Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come.**

This prefigures uncannily the eventual consequence, after the suicide of Lady Macbeth, which is realised in *Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow*, which, condemned to an interminable present, expresses a time which has *lost the future*, in which the unenvisageable future simply *arrives*, interminably, in the present. He manages to present this profoundly 'constructive', and mercurial, sense and concept of time, which embodies Greek concepts, in an incredibly lucid and unobtrusive 'vernacular' fashion.

In *Macbeth* Shakespeare enacts and realises the capacity to recognise and express *time's being created moment by moment, in which creation different futures, different possibilities, are being created, which themselves create us*. This alternative is suggested in the rest of the speech, a living denial of the factual foreclosure of time.

First he adduces rational considerations, but the summons of the true future, the future of conscience and living emergence, simply overwhelms, in the hyperbolic visionary way characteristic of this play, his awareness of the present.

But in these cases

**We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust;
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself.**

[and then the transition to the call of the profoundly imagined ethical future]

Besides, this Duncan

Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been

**So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against**

The deep damnation of his taking-off;

And pity, like a naked new-born babe,

Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed

**Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,**

That tears shall drown the wind. [*and then the final, ultimate, quasi-bicameral acknowledgement that he is not in touch with himself*, that he is a sleepwalker]

I have no spur

To prick the sides of my intent, but only

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself

And falls o' the other.

The individual model or concept of deceptive displacement, with its bicameral component

This begins to release us from over-simple notions of historicity.

In this play, with those deep resonances of the *Oresteia* to which Earl Showerman has drawn our attention, and along with, especially, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, we have only the second emergence, after the Greek, after 2000 years, of supreme tragic dramatic art in all human history. Wagner's *Ring* perhaps gives us the third, and that is all.

Such supreme tragic emergences presuppose:

a revolutionary time;

a great culture in the throes of transition;

iconic prophetic-creative, and uncanny, master individuals, individuals congruent with their art, who make a supreme impact on their time, with the psychology to go with that;

and the creation, in a new and Promethean scriptic permanencing, of a gigantic, quasi-blasphemous, innovative form of art for a new world.

Cultural-historical deceptive displacements, the background for such creativities, with their bicameral dimensions

Seemingly, apparently, the great and notorious monster historical anomalies first hove explicitly into systematic historical view in the first half of the 19th Century. Peter Dickson, in his very important book, *Bardgate*, did survey the major and massive historical anomalies, Homer, Jesus, Columbus, and Shakespeare. We have to add to them Joan of Arc. Dickson made his primary analogy for the Authorship Question, the mystery of the whereabouts of Columbus's birthplace, which he explains by *fraud*. This does not seem to engage the consciousness and historicity of an epoch (the *deceptive elements* of all the others, but not Columbus, involve the visionary bicameral dimension, although he did write in apocalyptic mode at the end of his life). *But Dickson does give us the concept of major historical analogies.*

But he does let slip through his fingers, - though paradoxically aware of the relevant data, - the basis for the greatest analogy of all, that of the story, overwritten by a visionary, Paul, of the ostensibly historical Jesus as a 'deceptive displacement'.

‘Deceptive displacement’ may include fraud within its wider frame, but allows us to take up a much subtler relationship to the historicity we are concerned with. The amnesic loss of this unique sense of temporality and historicity, is what TS Eliot called the ‘dissociation of sensibility’ (Eliot, 1921) which took place in the later 17th century, and it runs concurrent with the amnesia for the Shakespeare authorship question itself.

Joan of Arc and the French Perfect Historians (Huppert) of the 16th Century

The same recognition applies to our first analogy, which brings the bicameral dimension of the uncanny into view most blatantly, Joan of Arc.

Inadvertantly himself illustrating the amnesic loss of historic memory, Dickson relates the emergence of the great historical problems to the analytic of historicity undertaken in the early 19th Century, associated with the German historian Leopold Ranke. *But there was an earlier discovery in the 16th Century, of historical methodology in the modern sense, immediately lost again, virtually forgotten now, itself the victim of a deceptive displacement, in which the first of our parallels, Joan of Arc, was briefly understood in genuine historical terms, neither reductively nor miraculously, but historically, and then lost again in the French version of the 17/18th centuries ‘dissociation of sensibility’.*

George Huppert in his book, *‘The Idea of Perfect History’* writes (p182): ‘In short, then, the French prelude to modern historiography was more than a prelude: it was a stunning first act, full of consequences.’ Do these ‘perfect historians’ grasp the concept of historicity/historical consciousness, the concept of inherent historical process and development, as we know it? Yes they do.

Influence on Vico

It is not an accident that the great pioneer of historicity seen in bicameral terms, Vico, clearly draws and learns from the Perfect Historians, La Popeliniere, the most philosophical of them, in particular. Huppert writes (p. 167): ‘Vico, as a matter of fact, far from being ahead of his time....., was a distant disciple of the sixteenth century jurists and historians, a straggler in the history of ideas, echoing Bodin, not announcing Hegel. The philosophical historians of the nineteenth century, Michelet in particular, discovered Vico and saw a precursor in him, a like-minded historicist isolated in the century of the Enlightenment. They did not go back far enough beyond Vico to the sources of his philosophy.’

La Popeliniere clearly anticipates (as does the *Arte of English Poesie*), Vico’s conception of the stages in the evolution of historical consciousness (Huppert, p. 137-138). ‘...La Popeliniere went so far as to suggest that what the Ancients had done was hardly history at all.’ (p. 138)

Therefore, *prima facie*, we may presume that the French Historians of Perfect History did indeed anticipate major elements in the modern concept of historicity. Huppert comments (p. 166):

‘It disappeared again – or at least it was weakened and suppressed - in the course of the next century, precisely during the time when science and Cartesian rationalism became important features of European culture.’

Belleforest, Joan of Arc, and *Hamlet*

The popular historian Belleforest was deeply influenced by this movement. As the transmitter of the saga (Saxo Grammaticus) of *Hamlet* to Shakespeare, in editions of 1572 or 1579, he is *central to the crystallisation of Shakespeare's most intimately personal play*. It is in *Hamlet*, above all, that Shakespeare, as the archetypal chronicler of the great transitions in consciousness, makes the profoundest synthesis between

- i. the 'post-modern' consciousness in him;
- ii. the conflicts of the contemporary 'chronicle' history of his time, including the Protestant versus Catholic, and Feudal versus Bourgeois, ones, especially; and also,
- iii. via the tapping into the Norse Saga, and Oresteian, resonances, and (via the strong sense of childhood connections with folklore and archetype in the play), the primal, pre-historic, bicameral, poetic and oral tradition, archetypal or mythic epoch elements, that is, all three or four of La Popelinere's layers of historicity.

Joan of Arc, both unequivocally bicameral, and unequivocally a woman of military, and patriotic, genius and commonsense, is the parallel striking and paradigm illustration of a deceptive displacement. Huppert remarks (p. 205) 'If I were asked to assign a date to the beginning of her popularity, I would choose 1579.' [Note that date!]

Previously, accounts - displaying a profound and embarrassed incapacity to come to terms with her unique combination of qualities, - had oscillated mythically between the ecclesiastical-mystical-devotional; the cynical 'English' reductive accounts; cynical French reductive 'political tool' accounts; and 'silent' accounts, which skated over the embarrassment of her peculiar role and character as quickly as possible. In 1579, - following indecisive wrestlings with the problem by Vignier, - Pasquier and Belleforest both published sound historical accounts of Joan which drew upon the transcripts of the trials, the heresy trial which led to her burning, driven by the English, and the rehabilitation trial twenty years later at Rouen. Huppert writes (pp. 209/10): 'Belleforest and Pasquier are among the few - perhaps the only ones - who can treat Joan of Arc without lapsing into several varieties of fiction: the fiction of the rationalists, the fiction of the devout, or the fiction of those who pretend her story is of no importance. All three of these varieties flourished from the start and continued to flourish until the end of the Ancien Regime, and not for lack of historical evidence to the contrary..'

'Dissociation of Sensibility'

He ends by saying, paralleling TS Eliot, and with a striking and suggestive Pauline echo (p. 212): '...some profound cultural change occurred in the early seventeenth century. The patriotism of the 1570s disappears, and with it *that understanding of Joan of Arc which would not be revived until the nineteenth century.* [my italic] Until then, Joan remains a pious legend to the devout, a scandal to the sceptics, and an embarrassment to the official historian.'

Here we have 'dissociation of sensibility' accompanying 'deceptive displacement', and historical amnesia, with an underground continuance of what is repressed. This is parallel with what happens to Shakespeare.

The loss of the Shakespeare Poetic, with its extraordinary bicameral recovery of *Greek tragic vision*, and its profound dramatic realisation of modern process consciousness, runs parallel with the loss of the French pioneering understanding of *historical knowledge*. Joan's historical validation lies with that element in the Renaissance and Revolutionary French consciousness, which corresponds to the Whig version of history in Britain, and which, in Britain, favoured the consolidation of the Stratfordian mythos. In Britain, it was the possibility of an uncanny, gothic consciousness-based, politically incorrect, aristocratic author, which was subject to a 'deceptive displacement', and had to be fought, and is still fought, with pseudo-commonsense.

There are other blatant parallels in the history of civilisation.

The biggest of all such analogies, which Dickson inadvertently passed over, is that of the suppression of, and amnesia for, *the role of James the Brother of Jesus as the supreme leader of Jewish Christianity for over twenty years, after the death of Jesus, and his displacement, in a major 'deceptive displacement', by Paul of Tarsus, the consequent inversion of our understanding of Jesus, and the subsequent amnesia for anything contrary, even though the contrary evidence is 'hidden in plain view'*.

Paul sets the template, for the most part, for subsequent Christianity, - for near 2000 years! - Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox. I draw on Robert Eisenman's work here: *James the Brother of Jesus*. This deceptive displacement and amnesia is connected with the crushing of the Jews by the Romans in the two Jewish-Roman Wars, leading to victory by default of the Pauline Gentile vision, cemented in place by Augustine and Eusebius, the Fathers, and by mediaeval Christianity.

Subsequent developments included the Jewish Diaspora, millenia of anti-Semitism, and the development of modern understandings of history, philosophy, and science and technology, which Pauline Christianity favoured. The evidence is there, 'hidden in plain view', right in the New Testament, in the direct collision between the *Epistle of James* and *Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, wherein, nevertheless, Paul takes for granted both James's undisputed leadership of the Christian movement, which was Jewish Christianity, and likewise his being the older brother of Jesus, not a cousin or half relative, with no appeal to virgin birth or the other additions which developed later. The effect of the template was such that Luther, whose greatest commentary is precisely on the *Letter to the Galatians*, comes very near to discarding the *Epistle of James*, deriving from the very brother of his Lord, from the Canon altogether.

Eisenman in turn - such is the violence these dimensions evoke! - is hostile to Paul in somewhat the way many Oxfordians are to the man from Stratford. But there is little doubt whom we ourselves would do business with! James, embodying a deep nobility and asceticism of a puritan kind, is nevertheless a total and fanatical fundamentalist, the force behind the uncompromising Jewish revolutionaries, whose deeds, and whose subsequent being stereotyped, led to the 1800 year Jewish Diaspora and alienation, with its profound redefinition of Jewish identity, and massive anti-Semitism to this day. No *universal* Christianity could possibly have been transmitted from James's Christianity. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 9, describes (v. 22) how he 'made myself all things to all men that by all means some I might save.' Eisenman comments (p. 279-80) 'No clearer philosophy of 'making oneself a Friend to the World' has ever been so baldly or unabashedly put on record. In fact, in announcing this philosophy of 'winning', Paul has perhaps identified himself as *the first modern man*. It only remains for his interlocutor in the *Letter of James* to turn it around, reversing it into the calumny, 'the Enemy of God'.'

Arguably here, however, Paul is doing what makes 'modern man' *possible*. Paul is being pragmatic. Eisenman describes the Jesus family network as most readily understandable on the analogy of a Shi-ite Caliphate, for whom Rome was the great Satan. It is a puzzle that he considers this preferable!!

Three Giant Rococo Parallels

Correspondingly, the Shakespeare Authorship Question, in its bizarrely, and richly, rococo, self-caricaturing, character, shared by the enigma of Joan of Arc, - almost divine jests, both of them, - presents something so alien to both the English Cromwellians, and the strong corpus of scientific Empiricist Rationalists of the English Restoration and Enlightenment, that its 'deceptive displacement' was hyperbolically, almost farcically, successful. *As with* the speculative, visionary, part-bicameral, high-vaulting theological revisionism and accomodation of Paul of Tarsus, *as with* the visionary tragi-comedic innocence of Joan of Arc, evidence for the violation of literal minded commonsense saturates 'in plain view' the Authorship Ruse, but this cunningly outrageous process of 'deceptive displacement' has proved far too baffling for the concrete minded on both sides.

The Purloined Letter: 'Hidden in Plain View'

EA Poe's extraordinary tale *The Purloined Letter* evokes two successive situations where a theft takes place, 'in plain view', of a letter 'hidden in plain view', thus enacting a profound variant in the ancient archetype and archetypal situation of the trickster, Shakespearean to the core, Hermes and Mercury. The Shakespearean mystery seemingly sits in its letter rack, 'hidden in plain view', still apparently awaiting its Poe detective, Auguste Dupin. But Dupin already did arrive, in the unlikely guise of a Comtean Tyneside schoolmaster, JT Looney, who revealed the solution which lay, and lies, 'in plain view'. This 'deceptive displacement' lies in the monumentality of the creation of this memorial art, the impossible blasphemous outrage of tragic writing *as writing* itself. *The letter is already opened, memorialised as writing, as Authorship, 'in plain view'*.

Fortunately, perhaps, almost no one noticed, or notices. It is called 'the First Folio'.