

SIR THOMAS MORE **A member of the First Folio family**

Sir Thomas More is yet another member of the First Folio family. Its writing is a quantum jump in compactness and sophistication from *Lochrine*; yet it too was omitted by Bacon from the First Folio, the reason probably being his lack of low-level involvement in its construction. As we have seen, Bacon signed the Marlovian *I-3HVI* – included in FF - in his usual flourishing way (see post on *A Yorkshire Tragedy*). Yet there is no such evidence of his high style in *STM*, which paints the allegory with a generally, though not uniformly, broad brush, a world away from the tenacity and tightness of *I-3HVI*. However, the citizens' scenes strongly suggest the hand of Shakespeare, in a way similar to the clown scenes in *LOC*.

Sir Thomas More represents the Gnostic ideal, a Solomon/Alexander/Christ, even Francis Bacon figure. This is made explicit in a way atypical of FF, in his association with the poet Surrey, dealings with Erasmus, involvement in a play called 'The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom' and so on; and More emerges from it as one of noblest and most attractive characters in the plays. The rioters represent in general terms the unseen world which surges to shatter the Puritan world-view; specifically, the libido which mutinied against Shakespeare's Puritan superego on that day – a fateful one for Western culture - in 1587, to plunge him into crisis. More's appeasement of them represents the healing of that psychic conflict by Bacon and the Gnostic tradition; while his execution refers to the obliteration by the Puritan tyranny of that tradition, the properly Western cultural inheritance, a disaster which Bacon acutely feared (see post of *Introduction to UDGCB*).

The first scene, with its point of view from the *milieu intérieur*, could only have been written by Shakespeare; while the second, the courthouse scene, reverts to the exterior point of view of the clinician (or his trainee). We have in I, i, on the one side Williamson and his wife Doll; on the other, Francis de Bard, and the Caveler with his doves, who refuses to give them over to Williamson. We remember that the trigger to the breakdown of 1587 was the longtime Puritan Shakespeare's surrender to auto-erotism after coming across an erotic episode in a book, almost certainly the graphically described seduction of Lucius by Fotis in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. Doll Tearsheet in *2HIV* represents this Goddess of the auto-erotist, the Venus created in his imagination: the first name suggesting her artificiality, the second her character as an eternal maiden, forever being deflowered for the first time, forever regaining her virginity: for a tearsheet is a page torn from a book, suggesting the rupture of the hymen. Williamson bears the value of Shakespeare; while Francis de Bard is, fascinatingly, Bacon himself (cf. Francisco in *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, and Friar Francis in *Much Ado*) and, by association, the Gnostic tradition. The attempt by Francis to abduct Doll from her husband, resisted by him, signifies the denial by the Puritan of the Gnostic tradition, and its capacity to soothe his torment. Consistently, the doves, symbol of peace, remain with Caveler, and not Williamson, who protests they should be his.

What is all this business about the goldsmith? He does not appear in this first scene, but his wife is mentioned as another object of Francis' designs. On the plane of allegory, the goldsmith is clearly

cognate with Williamson. We remember that the Fool in *KL* is germane to Protheus in *TGV*, as the primal matter of which the enduring temple of the ego can be made (see post on 'Proteus'). Shakespeare is indeed here a fool, having been made to take the Lucian journey against his will. The goldsmith's finished work is the new Shakespeare, after his rebirth into Gnostic nobility through the ministry of Bacon and the Gnostic tradition. Two "I"s for "Ay"s confirm this scenario. We remember that "I go" symbolises detumescence, or, more broadly, the removal of the unseen world as a threat, through its engagement by the reasoning imagination, in contrast to its denial by the Roman Catholic or Puritan ego (e.g. Caphis' "I go sir" (FF p.83)); and so here:

Doll I, go, and send him [*the Lombard ambassador*] among us, and we'll give him his welcome too..

Francis de Bard has just threatened to complain to their ambassador about her refusal to give in to him: so that Doll's "I, go" means that the grip of the underworld on the Puritan ego may be loosened through the ministry of the Gnostic tradition (ambassador as welcomed). Another "I" for "Ay" in close apposition to 'Doll' (120) serves to identify her with the unseen world. That the written word was indeed the vector of the libido which resonated with Shakespeare's own to set the ego irrevocably on the road to breakdown, is shown by the notice, written by Lincoln, to be publically proclaimed from the pulpit, to incite the citizens to riot. We have seen in *UDGCB* that the character of Lincoln bears the value of the unconscious: the reference being to Lincoln green, where this is the colour of Ireland, which undoubtedly represents always in FF the unconscious. This is perhaps one of the more abstruse associations in FF as allegory; yet it is totally consistent with his role (see below). Thus, there are reprised in I, i, several of the important themes we have noted in *UDGCB*, and, such is the tone of intimacy, its author can only have been Shakespeare. No other name will do.

With the courthouse scene the macrocosm moves upstage, with the inner life of Shakespeare still strongly sensed in the background. The Sheriff Moore is of course cognate with Sir Thomas More (or 'Moore': it is spelt both ways in MS.). The thief Lifter is being prosecuted as a cutpurse; but Moore, by an extremely witty and ingenious *legerdemain*, turns the focus of guilt back on the Justice Suresbie, and has Lifter acquitted. Lifter is in truth an incarnation of Autolycus (*The Winter's Tale*), the reference of both being to the thief Autolycus adduced by Socrates in the early pages of Plato's *Republic*, in his discussion of justice: 'Socrates. – In a word, whenever a man is effective as a guard of any thing, is he not also effective as a thief of it? Polemarchus. – Such seems the course of the discussion. S. – Well then, the just man turns out to be a sort of thief, like the Homeric Autolykus.' The point being made in *STM* and *TWT* is that the criminal in the eyes of the Puritan tyranny is in truth a just man, and a benefit to society: for in his engagement with the unseen world (in the texts proscribed by Puritanism) he offers the hope of subduing it (cf. taming of Kate by Petruchio). This is the clinician (or his acolyte) outlining the first steps of his therapeutic regime of the stricken subject (ultimately Shakespeare).

The first of May as the date of the riot is totally consistent with the scenario outlined above. More "I"s for "Ay"s identify the rioters with the libido; while Sir Thomas More's success in appeasing them is a graphic depiction of the healing by Bacon of his patient's inner wound, and, more broadly, of the capacity of the Gnostic tradition to tame the underworld. Surrey's "I go" (II, iv, 193) signifies the change that is taking place. In a neat *legerdemain*, Lincoln will be executed, the others set free; for the tyranny of the unconscious is being suppressed, as its contents are released into consciousness where they can be worked on by the reasoning imagination (cf. fate of Buckingham in *RIII*; and of the immobilisation by Ariel of the ship's crew in *The Tempest*, while the passengers go free on the isle). More's prevailing upon Falkner to cut his wild hair is an expression of this taming of the underworld, and as such is cognate with the subjugation of Kate, and germane to Hal's 'And as we hear you do

reform your selves,/We will according to your strength, and qualities,/Give you advancement./’ – to Falstaff and his cronies (*2HIV* V, v).

The author emphasises More’s extreme nobility, almost lays it on with a trowel, as described above: but it is none the less admirable and effective for that. *Sir Thomas More* surely deserves more productions than it has received in recent times, at least in Australia. More and more of the First Folio extended family are hammering on the door, demanding to be recognised, as indeed they should be, for their features and general nobility are unmistakeable.

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