

Was Shakespeare a Man or a Woman?

Discipline-Based Art Education as a Tool for Literary Inquiry and Guided Discovery

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Abstract

This article provides guidelines for student investigation that address teaching and learning objectives for both the social studies and language arts. Building on historical inquiry methods, the authors advocate for Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) as a vehicle for this learning. Because the curricula in secondary English/language arts and history potentially overlap, the question of the legitimacy of William Shakespeare's contributions to the Western canon provides opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. Students grapple with the question of whether Shakespeare would have been capable of writing all the works for which he is credited. They consider two other individuals who represent possible authors who were in position to develop the literary works that conventional histories ascribe to Shakespeare. Students pursue teacher-guided, self-directed, and collaborative activities to attempt to unravel the mystery of Shakespeare's identity and establish the legitimacy of his authorship of internationally celebrated dramas that have been celebrated for over four centuries. The importance of this learning is the impetus it offers students to pursue deep reading of Shakespeare's works to achieve social learning, as well as to exercise research skills that may avail students of keen insights to become better critical readers and historians.

Keywords: critical studies, discipline-based art education, Shakespeare

Often times, educators' narrow interpretations of the social studies emphasize hero and villain figures who characterize the nature of a time, location, and/or place (Loewen, 2007; van Kessel & Crowley, 2017). Writers of history may portray heroes and villains selectively, focusing on individuals' accomplishments or failures, rather than their entire stories. For example, textbook portrayals of Christopher Columbus, Pocahontas, and Thomas Payne may support justification of the quest for the American Dream; however, when presented with their whole stories, their candidacies for hero status tend to diminish (Hedges, 2015; Isenberg, 2016; Loewen, 2007). The authors and editors of K-12 textbooks simplify and edit their compilations to fit a broader social narrative and stir feelings of patriotism among the future citizenry (Loewen, 2007).

These distortions occur in the histories of other places besides the United States. One may find an English icon of modern European literary history in William Shakespeare (1564-1616), whose poetry and dramas have entertained audiences and classrooms for generations. This practitioner-oriented article addresses an issue of interest to social studies education researchers and secondary classroom teachers. We direct this call for investigative inquiry to a secondary social studies researcher and English teacher audience because we believe that students would benefit from investigating questions that remain about the authorship of the work that academia credits to Shakespeare. The lack of original manuscripts, the humble contexts of his upbringing, and the genuineness of the feminine emotions expressed in these works give rise to questions about the legitimacy of this authorship. They also inspire critically minded scholars to probe the legitimacy of Shakespeare's contributions to western culture, the canon, and the studies of middle and high school students (Winkler, 2019). The many international sites that host Shakespeare in the Park, Shakespeare festivals, Globe Theater models, and Shakespeare camps, entertain audiences, yet rarely if ever, discuss the origins of the manuscripts and their historical and current influences.

This article serves several purposes: (a) to inform the social studies education research community about an understudied area of critical European history; (b) to provide English literature educators with an alternative basis for interpreting the meaning of Shakespearean works; (c) to convey the social relevance of reframing understandings of Shakespeare through practitioner-oriented critical study; and (d) to present a strategy for facilitating students' art-based inquiry learning about a revered literary and historical figure.

In this article, we describe a historic controversy that provides the basis for a lesson activity that uses Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) strategies as tools for inquiry learning about “The Shakespeare Authorship Question.” The learning invites students to play the roles of history sleuths to ascertain and defend theories about the origins of works officially attributed to William Shakespeare. Through this inquiry, students may uncover new perspectives on the Shakespeare canon representing a call for justice and inclusion.

We draw attention to the Shakespeare controversy and the potential influence of its solution on interpretations of the works and the social meanings that they convey. The use of Discipline-Based Art Education advocates the use of affective learning to promote students’ empathetic identification with the various author candidates and their possible writing motives.

The content of this article appears in the following sequence. After presenting our theoretical frameworks, we describe the questions that concern the authorship of Shakespeare’s works and the problem with giving him credit. Second, we provide information that concerns two authorship candidates: Edward de Vere and Amelia¹ Bassano Lanier. Third, we explain the background elements of DBAE and its appropriateness for this approach to learning. Finally, we describe the lesson activity, providing a formal plan for teacher classroom use and closing with attention to “heroic” personalities that invite scrutiny for mental health.

Theoretical Frameworks

Theories that inform our work include critical theory, inquiry learning, and art-based affective learning theories. Examination of alternative social narratives represents an essential social studies classroom process to empower traditionally marginalized students. Through inquiry learning, students examine, debate, and evaluate historical evidence to present and defend new historical perspectives.

Discipline-Based Art Education traditionally represents a tool to evoke student emotions in the study and creation of artworks that depict social studies concepts. In this article, we present a variation of Discipline-Based Art Education that employs dramatic/literary works as the instructional organizing centers to stimulate student emotions that prompt their empathy with historical figures from 16th and early 17th century Elizabethan England.

¹ We note that sources do not agree on the spelling of Amelia. We default to Amelia, as used in Hudson’s (2014) work.

The Drama of Historic Distortion:

Using Questions about Shakespearean Authorship to Promote Student Inquiry

The critical analysis of primary sources represents an essential process to developing an authentic interpretation of history. Through their reinterpretation of evidence, revisionist historians provide interpretations of the past through different perspectives that provide alternatives to traditional accounts. For example, Dunbar-Ortiz (2015) reveals the histories of the Americas as civilizations of many peoples spread across the North and South American continents with diverse lifestyles. Some early English migrants perceived these indigenous peoples as having better lifestyles than the English and Europeans based on availability of food, hours of work, attitudes toward life, family ties, and physical fitness and strength (Mann, 2011).

Traditional historians omit the inventive practices of the Iroquois government and communicate that the foundations of U.S. government present in the *Declaration of Independence* and *Constitution* derive solely from the ideas of John Locke and the European Enlightenment (Johansen, 1982). Indeed, Locke's writings seem peculiar when noting Locke's own role as a charter member of a New World colony (Isenberg, 2016). His writing in advocacy of representative governance did not extend to his own practices in the colonization of the New World. Isenberg (2016) observed the following:

Locke, like many successful Britons felt contempt for the vagrant poor in England. He disparaged them for their "idle and loose way of breeding up" and their lack of morality and industry. There were poor families already in Carolina, as Locke knew, who stood in the way of the colony's growth and collective wealth. (p. 45)

Some of the historical queries that have arisen since the original release of Loewen's (2007) research have served to reclaim and rewrite the history of the New World's indigenous peoples and to reveal the savagery of its Old World conquerors. The revisionist history becomes a story of epidemic diseases, violent overthrows, and tribal extinctions resulting directly or indirectly from profit-minded actions (Reséndez, 2016). Many works now question broadly accepted historical assumptions about ideas, events, and people as further investigation reveals new, more profound understandings of what history textbooks have long presented as truth.

Other recent queries have focused on the telling of European history, the meanings of classic literary works, and the social messages that they offer. For example, Bobbitt's (2013) re-analysis of Machiavelli's *The Prince* suggests that the work does not represent the one of

dominance as conventionally believed. Questions about Shakespeare, another widely recognized European figure who lived about a century after Columbus, provide the basis for literary controversy. The effects of Shakespeare's popularity and reputation led to cultural naissances and renaissances in some cases, although the origins of the works credited to him are questionable and have come under scrutiny for their maltreatment of women in matters of objectification, political marginalization, and profiteering. As we close the article, we also discuss how Shakespeare's works often portrayed heroes/heroines with violent personality disorders. Surely, representation through drama of such imperfect social behavior merits attention, despite the tragic heroes that descend to English and American literature from the Greeks—whose characters possessed problems much larger than did those of the average person.

We propose that inquiry into the Shakespeare authorship question empowers students who have experienced social marginalization and who appreciate opportunity to expose falsehoods of dominant narratives designed to preserve existent power structures. Shakespeare's hallowed accolades in the Western canon also cause the insertion of a literary "foreign" language into the English curriculum that has alienated many students. Indeed, some teachers' method of presentation of the works of Shakespeare and their expectations for students (usually to read them as high literature rather than dramas or plays to be enacted and experienced) has contributed to students' inattentiveness and failure to master the reading of long dramas (Agnello, 2001). Perhaps as a predictable result of the accolades afforded to Shakespeare, these teachers have contributed to a classist learning setting by creating a ubiquitous regard for what counts as good literature and for whose works students should value in English classrooms.

Romeo and Juliet, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet* serve as curricular staples that represent vehicles for teaching about, among other topics, young love, family strife, suicide, power, incest, rhetorical argumentation, and intergovernmental disputes. Yet classroom teachers and their students give little or no thought to the conditions or experiences that prompted the author's presentation of these themes and how the relationship of the author's social position to these literary works merits attention in the secondary English curriculum. An alternative account of authorship that reframes the meanings of these writings offers potential to spark interest in these works among students, who traditionally struggle to make sense of these works. This motivation originates from (a) a clear connection that explains how an author's background informs the motives for his/her writings, (b) the implications of alternative authorship

possibilities for the meanings of these dramas, as well as (c) the value of a revised social canon that offers a critical perspective with which students can identify.

Background Information

Originally proposed by authors such as Mark Twain, the Shakespeare controversy centers around claims that many of the works attributed to Shakespeare either represent works by others that Shakespeare usurped or are works for which Shakespeare served as a pen name. The attribution problem arises because of (a) inconsistencies between the works and representations of Shakespeare's background, (b) questions about Shakespeare's writing abilities, and (c) lack of original manuscripts that verify the authenticity of the Shakespeare as author attribution (Cutting, 2018). The evidence for Shakespeare's social origins, educational background, family, and lifestyle suggests that Shakespeare lacked the knowledge, ability, and experience to write about the issues presented in the works with such intimacy and detail. Rather, he may have served as a broker who bought the rights to the plays.

Leigh, Casson and Ewald (2019) explain how the scientific method may be applied to resolve this quandary and structure student inquiry. They assert that the basis for this method lies in the possession of a partial amount of knowledge and the necessity of developing and testing hypotheses to reexamine or expand that knowledge. This article draws from the premise that the claims for William Shakespeare's authorship of the works to which he is credited relies upon a limited amount of circumstantial evidence. We accept other researchers' hypotheses that alternative authorship candidates exist and that the evidence for their claims provides legitimate basis for inquiry.

We focus on two possible alternative authors for these works, with the first being Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), who realized much greater academic achievement and social status than Shakespeare. The second possibility is Amelia Bassano Lanier (1569-1645), whose life experiences paralleled those of several lead women in Shakespearean plays. While other author candidates exist, we focus on these two prospects because (a) both cases lend themselves to the commencement of student inquiry processes, (b) one case provides for discussion about the concealment of women's accomplishments in history, and (c) the indefiniteness of the solution, in both cases, allows opportunity for student inquiry into other theories. As students consider each writer's claim to authorship, they may inform themselves about how the reader might read, view, review, interpret, critique, and eventually respect the

literary works. With enough consideration, they can begin to appreciate the worth that laudable pieces in the collection of literary works bring to the narrative/s of the dominant culture in a social setting where there is contestation to ethnic or linguistic superiority.

Examination of the authorship conundrum represents much more than a matter of literary credit. Authorship influences the purposes of the works and their meanings. Alternative accounts have the potential to engage learners who may otherwise lack interest because the works' message, characters, or lessons do not affirm their own life perspectives. As students learn in their study of great literature, the background and experiences of the author influence the ideas that inspire the development of the literary work of art. Therefore, facilitating inquiry into de Vere's and Lanier's authorship claims offers opportunity to interest students who otherwise feel little or no connection with the content. A guiding "So what?" question can be altered to, "So who?". Students are tasked with solving a mysterious conundrum, rather than just reading a long literary work.

What has been in the shadows for 500 years may kindle students' interest in pursuit of important "new" or additional facts/knowledge, alternative analyses/explanations/interpretations, and underlying social biases. In the following sections, we present the cases for Edward de Vere and Amelia Bassano Lanier. Much scholarship presents de Vere as the lead candidate for authorship, yet the circumstances of Bassano Lanier's life and analysis of language in the Shakespearean plays and sonnets provide compelling evidence that indeed, the author may well have been female. We offer background information on these two rival attributions to help the reader grasp the importance of engaging students in dialogue about historians' varying interpretations of evidence. In both cases, we describe the connections of the rival author-candidate to four works usually attributed to Shakespeare—i.e., *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*.

Edward de Vere (1550-1604)

We draw our information about the claim for de Vere from two works (i.e. Anderson, 2005; Cutting, 2018). As much scholarship tends to concur with the claim of de Vere, our coverage of his case is obligatory. Edward de Vere was fourteen years older than Shakespeare. Cutting (2018) suggests that de Vere may have been the illegitimate son of (then) Princess Elizabeth (daughter of King Henry VIII) and Thomas Seymour (the brother of Jane Seymour,

Henry VIII's third wife, and husband of the widowed queen, Katherine Parr). de Vere was raised as a ward after age 12, supported by Sir William Cecil, an advisor to Queen Elizabeth.

de Vere was well educated, traveled extensively, spoke multilingually, and possessed social connections. His courtly life advantaged him in his ability to capture the thoughts and language of royals and put him in a much better position to write *Hamlet*, *Prince of Denmark*, and *King Lear* than that of William Shakespeare. Such a background would explain lines spoken by Hamlet and Lear as those spoken by aristocrats, rather than commoners. Perhaps his writings reflect his own experiences gathered in cultivated conversation, rather than invented imagined language. His travel to Italy in 1575-76 could well have provided the basis for writing works such as *Julius Caesar*.

de Vere's status as an illegitimate child serves as a vehicle to which some students may relate. First, and foremost, he would be a member of a non-traditional family. He might have had experiences to which many foster children can connect. The bigger question for the students to answer is why would an illegitimate child born of high status not be credited with certain accomplishments? As students consider his feelings of abandonment and lack of stability in such a familial situation, the lack of a secure foundation and/or feelings of abandonment could seem palpable. Third, students experiencing unwanted pregnancies may anticipate the emotional imprints on the unborn child and their influences on future dispositions of that child. What may such a birth mean for all concerned?

Yet it is de Vere's privileged status that gives credence to his authorship candidacy. de Vere possessed a brash and unrestrained personality (perhaps inherited from his birth father) that only his privileged status could enable (Anderson, 2005; Cutting, 2018). Powerful *censorship* in Elizabethan England placed authors of information damning to the Crown in tenuous, precarious positions. Whereas the courts tried Marlowe and other playwrights for the political incorrectness of their works, Shakespeare somehow managed to continue his work without being arrested or tried. Many of his works were politically critical. Queen Elizabeth I paid de Vere a £1,000 annuity though the underlying warrant provides no justification for its payment (Cutting, 2018). This warrant was uncharacteristic of Elizabeth as she did not typically dole out money to anyone, and it was an imprudent financial policy for England, given the precarious state of its treasury (Cutting, 2018). This annuity may have supported de Vere's lifestyle and writing, while covering up the story of her giving birth to an illegitimate son.

Would students consider him fortunate? de Vere represents a child of privilege who receives protection to conceal his origins. His writings express emotional struggles in a world where quests for power take precedence over genuine love for others.

Connections to Plays

One may observe elements of de Vere's experiences in the scenes and characters from *Romeo and Juliet*. According to Anderson (2005), Friar Lawrence represents the personification of de Vere's tutor, Lawrence. Further, Anderson (2005) observed that the jousting and knife fights in *Romeo and Juliet* arguably presented innovative dueling tactics, brought to England by Rocco Benetti.

Other de Vere connections to well-known Shakespearean dramas can be observed in *Othello*. According to Anderson (2005), Iago's concerns about his wife's fidelity relate to de Vere's own concerns about his wife's fidelity during his visit to France. Iago's worries are not those of a compassionate man to be admired and emulated. Rather, they are indicative of a person consumed with manipulation. His obsession with controlling others comes with the cost of worrying about others manipulating him.

In *Hamlet*, life parallels exist between Hamlet and de Vere. Anderson (2005) explains an aspect of this parallel.

Just as Hamlet's review of Fortinbras' troops leads directly to an ocean voyage overtaken by pirates, de Vere's crossing with Duke Casimir's army was soon followed by a channel crossing intercepted by pirates....The "pirate[s] of very warlike appointment" boarded de Vere's ship, and they stripped it bare. ... De Vere was, as the French ambassador latter reported to his superiors, "left naked, stripped to his shirt, treated miserably, his life [would have been put] in danger if he hadn't been recognized by a Scotsman." (Hamlet notes that the pirates had him "set naked on your kingdom.") (pp. 112-113).

There are other connections to de Vere's life. For example, the playwright might convey anxiety in the play *Hamlet* over the pregnancy of de Vere's first wife, Anne, for the flowers described at the site of Ophelia's drowning were representative of the anti-fertility drugs used at that time (Anderson, 2005). Anderson (2005) has argued that Hamlet's lamentations about Ophelia are motivated by de Vere's remorse for his treatment of Anne.

Concerning *Macbeth*, Anderson (2005) draws a parallel between Queen Elizabeth I and Lady Macbeth. Elizabeth expressed great remorse and even denied responsibility for communing

the death of Mary Queen of Scots; similarly, Lady Macbeth confesses grave sorrow for her actions leading to the killing of King Duncan. Edward de Vere served on the jury for Queen Mary's trial, and it is possible that he immortalized Queen Elizabeth's sense of guilt through this play.

The case for de Vere relates his privileged lifestyle, his education, and the parallels between his experiences and the play settings. His annual annuity and status may have provided him license to write content that would be otherwise treasonous. de Vere possessed the means, opportunity, and motivation to write the works attributed to Shakespeare. Students would ponder his ancestry, his motivations, and his access to the power structure to decide if, indeed, he was the laudable but unrecognized author.

Amelia Bassano Lanier (1569-1645)

We rely primarily on two references to inform about Lanier's possible connections to the authorship of Shakespeare's plays (i.e., Hudson, 2014; Kauffman, 2018). She was born to Venetian immigrants and baptized in 1569. Her father was an Italian musician who played in the court; her mother was English.

Hudson (2014) observes connections between Lanier's origins and elements of the Shakespearian plays. The plot in *Othello* contains jokes/puns about the family name in Scene 3 of Act 1. One can translate the word Bassano as a musical instrument or a male anatomical appendage (Hudson, 2014). Iago, in Scene 3 of Act 3, speaks to Othello about the prospect of his wife's infidelity. Iago's speech imagery contains figures that are the same as those in a fresco at the Piazza of Salt, located on a square in Bassano, Amelia's Italian hometown (Hudson, 2014).

According to Hudson (2014), Amelia Lanier came from a family background in theater, had access to royal resources, and ultimately experienced resentment towards the courts and emasculating experiences. She was well versed in the multi-meanings of language, and her life experiences paralleled those described in Shakespeare's writings. She had means, opportunity, and motive for writing, which support her claim to authorship.

Through sponsorship of Susan Bertie, Countess of Kent, Amelia received a literary education (Hudson, 2014). After her parents' death when she was 18 years old, she became the mistress of Henry Carey (Queen Elizabeth I's cousin and son of Mary Boleyn - Anne Boleyn's sister - and William Carey). Hudson (2014) suggested that Carey's biological father was Henry VIII, Elizabeth's father.

Some students might find the gender question important to the crediting of certain great works to a man rather than a woman. Certainly, Amelia might have been quite gifted, and yet had her talents ignored, because of social status, gender, or geographic/ethnic origins. Hudson (2014) observes that Carey was a patron of the theater arts, and he may have used many of the sexual puns and metaphors that appear in the Shakespearean plays. Additionally, his status provided Amelia opportunities for travel to historic sites that gave her access to monuments and records that informed about historical moments (Hudson, 2014). Bassano Lanier's connections to *Macbeth* can be observed in the details of the murder of Lord Darnley, second husband of Mary, Queen of Scots, which occurred at night in the same manner as Macbeth's murder of King Duncan. Bassano Lanier had access to Carey's records of the event during their visits to Scotland (Hudson, 2014). Descriptions of Hamlet's castle, Elsinore, match the layout of the castle Elsinor, visited by Bassano Lanier in 1582. Images in the play match images on the tapestry in the castle. Hudson (2014) has linked the star exploding in the first scene of *Macbeth* to the supernova observed by Tycho Brahe. Bassano Lanier spent much time with Tycho Brahe during her visit to Denmark.

According to historical accounts, Amelia became pregnant, and the court dismissed her. This event caused her resentment towards the royals' sexual freedom and efforts to arrange marriages, which she writes about in her plays. Hudson (2014) asserts that *Taming of the Shrew* is a rewrite of Lanier's *Taming of a Shrew*, which appeared soon after her court dismissal:

the central dynamic is again that of a wife wanting to speak freely against male opposition, which defines her as a shrew. Amelia had begun a 1,500-line earlier version, *A Pleasant Conceited History Called the Taming of a Shrew* (published in 1594), before she evidently left for Italy in late 1593. (p. 161)

Sources often provide conflicting views and differences of opinion that students need to evaluate. Scholarship that concerns possibilities for Lanier's authorship claim provide one example. According to Kauffman (2018),

Amelia's education and knowledge of the Tudor court and of Italian and Latin literature was such that the theatre producer and scholar, John Hudson concluded she must have wrote (sic) Shakespeare's plays and sonnets (Hudson, 2014). This would involve a conspiracy with numerous English aristocrats and actors and is not accepted by most reviewers. (p. 8)

According to Hudson (2014), Emilia's (Iago's wife) speech against husbands in *Othello* first appears in 1623, seventeen years after Shakespeare's and de Vere's deaths and it is unlikely that this speech was published posthumously. Because it was prohibited for women in Renaissance England to write for the theater, Bassano Lanier would have had to broker her works serendipitously. Hudson (2014) noted that Shakespeare was a play broker through whom Bassano Lanier released her works. Her familiarity with the theater network would have provided access to him. Hudson claimed that Bassano Lanier's dislike for Shakespeare appears in the work *As You Like It*, in the characters Touchstone and William. He also pointed out that the Greek word for Touchstone is bassanos (the same as Lanier's maiden name) and represents an unhappy outcast character, much as she was at that time.

Hudson (2014) noted that other evidence of Bassano Lanier's connection to the Shakespearean works relate to her Italian family origins. It is perhaps unusual that Shakespeare knew so much about the basis for many Italian settings in his works, and Lanier's poetry contains such numerous commonalities. No other English playwright during the 1500s used her name, Amelia; however, it represents the most common female name in Shakespearean plays. Her access to the Bassano family library would have given her material to emulate because it contained novellas by Bandell and Da Porto, which have commonalities with the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* (Hudson, 2014).

The literature would provide a reasonable belief that either de Vere or Bassano Lanier had the background, knowledge, opportunity to author the writings attributed to William Shakespeare. Affecting students' analysis about the evidence and the conclusion to which it directs requires a process that stimulates students' cognitive and emotional processes.

Discipline-Based Art Education and Inquiry Learning

Discipline-based art education (DBAE) involves the study of four art disciplines (i.e. art aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production) to engage students in exploration of learning content related to a work of art, including literary works of art. With regard to its social studies applications, the art history component of the DBAE model provides a means of easily integrating arts learning with content and topics in various social science disciplines, including history and literary history (Laney, 2018; Lucey & Laney, 2017; Lucey et al., 2013). Visual artworks, music/songs, and literary/theatrical works often relate to socially relevant topics and/or historical personages and events. These works of art serve as limited sources of historical or

social studies information and provide a motivating starting point for generating questions and doing more detailed research to answer those questions. In other words, observing, experiencing, discussing, and interpreting the meaning of a work of art has the potential of introducing more in-depth research and analysis across subject areas (e.g., art, social studies, and English/language arts).

As we engage the DBAE that serves as a tool, not only to engage learners' in observing artworks and generating their own related artworks, but also to engage students in inquiry for meaningful, in-depth, integrated learning in both the arts and social studies, we can study the arts in many forms. The study of various aesthetic texts or other works of art, even if not historically authentic/accurate, allows for multilateral interactions among the art participants (Garrett & Kerr, 2016). Indeed, studying artworks from different times and/or places informs about the likenesses and differences in how people in different contexts may have wanted to report/represent historical topics to inform, encourage, and/or warn contemporary/future audiences. Inquiry into a work of art involves careful study, looking for evidence of authenticity and/or historical accuracy, establishing its social-historical contexts, and discerning the artist's and/or patron's meaning/intent. Appreciating the social relevance and importance of a given work of art goes beyond recognizing what is going on in an isolated frame/picture.

The employment of four art disciplines (art history, art criticism, art aesthetics, and art production) make DBAE ideal for the kind of inquiry that we advocate. Class discussions related to art criticism (i.e., analysis of art/literary elements and interpretation of art/literary meaning) and art aesthetics (i.e., analysis of the aesthetic beauty/worth of a work of art/literature) promote students' critical thinking skills, while art production requires development and application of students' creative thinking skills. The catalyst for such learning comes from the teacher who (a) presents students with a highly motivating artwork that evokes a problem to be solved and/or questions to be answered; (b) invites students to make initial observations and inferences about the work of art through guided discussion; (c) guides student inquiry/research related to the problem and/or unanswered question(s)--by finding background information on the artwork, artist, and/or social-historical context of the work of art; (d) helps students synthesize the findings of their research through the creation/production of related art products and/or performances; and (e) encourages collaborative problem-solving, teacher-student interactions, and student-student interactions throughout the process.

Activity Explanation

In the following description of a sample inquiry-oriented lesson activity, students examine the question of whether William Shakespeare truly authored the works credited to him. Through investigation of ownership, credit, and fame, this inquiry invites students to consider how power, deception, and reputation can influence conventional history, which may or may not truly merit the label of “truth.” The sample lesson plan contained in the appendix features these steps. The first two steps occur in the initial presentation of author candidate portraits. The third step occurs in the student examination of materials at the various learning stations. Steps four and five are evident in student team research and development/dramatization of their testimonies.

In the activity, we resist a binary solution (for or against Shakespeare as author) by allowing for the possibility that Shakespeare authored some of the works for which he is credited, but not all of them. We stress the importance of teaching-learning activities of this kind in stimulating student interest in the inquiry process. A definitive answer to the research question is not the desired student outcome; instead, the focus is on process rather than product—to promote (a) student critical thinking and problem-solving and (b) student use of inquiry steps/processes as life-long learning tools.

The following over-arching question motivates critical inquiry: Should Edward de Vere or Amelia Lanier receive credit for the works attributed to William Shakespeare?

The following three sub-questions guide the inquiry process:

- What could William Shakespeare, the businessman and actor, have to gain socially and politically by being credited with authorship of these works?
- Why would Edward de Vere have written all of these plays only to broker them and use the pen name of Shakespeare?
- Given her publication of poetry under her own name, why would a woman with an Italian name (i.e., Amelia Bassano Lanier) write plays under a pen name and provide them to the play-broker William Shakespeare?

The sample student activity described in detail below values student engagement in critically analyzing the backgrounds and origins of literary works attributed to William Shakespeare. Leigh, Casson and Ewald’s (2019) discussion of the scientific method’s application to this authorship quandary provides a basis for structuring student inquiry in the sample lesson. By guiding students’ analysis of literary passages to form hypotheses to be tested (and/or to form

unanswered questions for further study/research), the activity guides students' historical criticism of primary texts to structure their inquiry. The resulting discussions serve to pique student interest in: (a) the question of artistic/literary authenticity and accuracy and (b) the steps/processes of critical inquiry as a life-long learning tool. Ultimately, these inquiry experiences lead to classroom conversations about Shakespeare's background (compared to the backgrounds of other viable author candidates) and its support or non-support of his authorship of the plays and sonnets credited to him.

The lesson activity also provides an opportunity for students to examine the dynamics of power in the formulation of dominant social messages within society. It presents female students with a prospective historical role model that informs one about: (a) the social injustices that women have experienced throughout history and (b) how to articulate them (Alvermann et al., 1997). The art/literature creation experience provides an opportunity for students to use firsthand memories in the creation of artistic literary products/performances that defend or advocate for feminist positions and encourage further study into gender-related social justice through the arts.

In this lesson, students assume the roles of historical detectives who analyze evidence to explore alternative views of history. The purpose is to encourage students' examination of presented information and build student appreciation of possible strategies that they can employ, now and in the future, to find solutions to their problems and answers to their questions, based on the evidence that they discover, analyze/interpret, synthesize, and explain/communicate. Exploring the simple question, "Did William Shakespeare really write the canon to which he is credited?" stimulates important knowledge gathering, critical thinking, and use of classic literary texts to uncover their historical/social/cultural origins, their meanings, and their reflection of and impact on society—past, present, and future.

The lesson materials include scenes quoted from the following texts: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Julius Caesar*. These literary artworks serve as content vehicles for the students' guided discovery and inquiry, as they contemplate selected passages and make inferences about authorship based on events, emotions, and language that are present in the selected texts.

Romeo and Juliet

This play offers strong female roles and the poetic device of iambic pentameter. Such features would not require the English writer to have any international travel experience, and

they could be devised of his or her own accord. When presented with the introduction to *Romeo and Juliet*, students see how the playwright summarizes the whole storyline of the play in a short passage and how the playwright's background and perspectives influence his/her telling of the events. This preamble influences how audience members interpret the meaning of these events and the underlying motivations behind characters' actions, such as why the two families are at odds with each other.

The activity described here encourages the students to ponder the playwright's explanation of the basis for power possessed by the two families, the friar, and the nurse. Yet the author's subtle use of language and knowledge of social roles informs readers/viewers about the power dynamics at play. Does this theatrical work depict some prohibited love that de Vere or Lanier experienced?

There are power relationships present within the play based on the wealth, social eminence, and political influence of the two featured families--the Capulets and Montagues. Students reflect on how authorship (i.e., the author's background, prior experiences, and perspectives/values/attitudes) influences how certain dynamics are portrayed in the play—e.g., the nature of the priest's power and the relationship between the Church and powerful families. Of particular interest to students might be how/why the friar works with Romeo and Juliet to help them achieve their matrimonial union. Students ponder how the author's background might explain/contribute to his/her knowledge that, in a wealthy family such as the Capulet family, the nurse knew more about Juliet than her mother knew about her. Students are encouraged and motivated to think about how author perspective informs one's learning about wealth and its translations into family rituals, routines, and expectations.

Hamlet

In *Hamlet*, one area for inquiry concerns a women's fragility. Ophelia, not a common English name, represents the name of a person known by Lanier. The presence of music in the play is consistent with Lanier's family background. Yet both Lanier's and de Vere's experiences in aristocracy would provide an awareness of power in social relationships and its emotional rewards and consequences.

The prince is keenly aware of his mother's overhasty marriage to her husband's brother. He cannot forgive her for not mourning the loss of her husband and Hamlet's father longer than she did. He overgeneralizes his sadness and disappointment into an articulated distaste for

women, “Frailty, thy name is woman!” The students, in the lesson plan contained in the appendix, consider whether similar references to women’s weaknesses have continued to the present day. The drama players enact the deterioration of Hamlet’s state of mind and his relationship with Ophelia. If Hamlet rejects Ophelia largely because of his attitude toward his mother and his obsession with avenging his father’s murder, is the gender question relevant? How do gender and power relations affect the relationship between Ophelia’s father, Polonius and Ophelia, as well as that between him and his son, Laertes? They can also consider how gender and power relations affect Queen Gertrude and her new husband, King Claudius. What is power and who has it? Who is exercising what power over whom? Which author candidate would have known about those kinds of royal intrigues?

Macbeth

The play *Macbeth* also offers interesting insights into power and the lengths to which those who desire it are willing to go. There are parallels to Dante’s *Inferno*, to which Lanier had access, and the musical elements are consistent with a playwright who had background in the arts. According to Hudson (2009),

Another example is *Macbeth*. When the devil-porter at the hell gate says ‘this place is too cold for hell’ he is referring specifically to the frozen 9th circle of hell in Dante’s *Inferno*, which was the fate awaiting those---like *Macbeth*---who killed their guests, their kinsmen or their lords. Even the order in which *Macbeth* names his victims is taken precisely from Dante’s account. (p. 1)

A line at the beginning of the play, “Fair is foul, and foul is fair,” suggests that “fair” describes something pretty or pleasant to behold—perhaps a female. The line in its entirety may suggest that appearances lack substance. It also may signify patterns of self-justification that de Vere may have practiced or to which Lanier may have fallen victim. Students consider the “foulness and fairness” of the characters and their deeds. What background must a playwright possess to describe these relationships in detail?

Julius Caesar

Finally, In *Julius Caesar*, we question whether a businessman, an Earl, or an ambitious woman would write about power and manipulation. In these lines a negative reference to women’s lack of courage occurs:

Let it be who it is, for Romans now

Have thews and limbs like to their ancestors.
But, woe the while! Our fathers' minds are dead,
And we are govern'd with our mothers' spirits;
Our yoke and sufferance show us womanish.

There is no record of Shakespeare traveling to Italy, although records indicate that both de Vere and Lanier did. Students deliberate the difference between the kinds of ambition that they attribute to Caesar and those they see enacted by other characters. Students investigate power relationships presented within the canon of social studies. They can more effectively question the power afforded gender, name, and economic status in the selection of literary, historical, and political heroes whose lives become the substance of the curriculum — often in only partial telling of their stories.

These examples illustrate the potential complexity of speculation brought about by examining these works. The second author facilitated this teaching-learning activity in an online learning environment with a small group of graduate students. He observed enthusiasm in the students' dramatization of character personas and in students' responses to characters (e.g., the portrayal of and responses to Queen Elizabeth I in the "courtroom" setting). He also noticed the students' acknowledgement of the value of this activity in piquing their curiosity about a previously unfamiliar controversy that traditionally represents a significant part of the null curriculum.

A final purpose to this activity relates to pointing out patterns of resistance and intolerance among the privileged and to acknowledging failings and weaknesses among the privileged. Because all human beings are fallible and because members of royalty are human beings, it follows that members of royalty are also fallible. Such fallibility is often not discussed in historical accounts as authors gloss over the importance of considering personalities and social positioning when attempting to understand historical events and human achievements and failures. Social justice is not a given in human interrelationships. On the contrary, achieving social justice requires sacrifice of pride and courage to withstand social criticism.

Pride would appear to be a motivation in Queen Elizabeth I's payment of an annuity to de Vere to enable his indiscretions. The decision to cast Lanier from court for being pregnant would not seem to be a courageous one.

The research literature documents a pattern of insecurity among the dominant culture as evident in the narcissistic and angry outbursts of Queen Elizabeth I. Hudson (2014) observed that:

...(c)onfronted with any opposition or disappointment, the queen would fly into a rage. She would not hesitate to insult her chief advisors...knowing that they could not hit back. As for her maids in waiting, she would hit them without qualm. She hit so hard that on occasion her blows would break their fingers, causing her maids to wail aloud. (p. 33)

Hudson (2014) also noted that Elizabeth desired to exile black people from London, blaming them for a plague. Royalty concealed their own indiscretions, just as members of the Privy Council murdered Christopher Marlowe to prevent his disclosure of their atheistic views, covering-up the deed by fabricating an “official” story that he had died in an accident. In U.S. society, one can see the persistence of such conduct (i.e., the infliction and concealment of injustices by the privileged) within historical patterns of small-town mobbing (i.e., rounding up gangs of people, targeting politically incorrect, non-conforming community members) (Isenberg, 2016). One may also find evidence in the theft of school awards and destruction of property in Black schools (Morris & Morris, 2000). These acts of violence even exist through patterns of mobbing present in academia (Crawford, 2019).

The “official” account of Shakespeare’s authorship may represent an effort to maintain a social cannon that preserves the façade of perfection within privileged aristocracy—a depiction that the public were expected not to publicize, question, or challenge. In our examination of Bassano Lanier and de Vere, we observe the efforts of those who entered the privileged, aristocratic royal environment through conditions not of their own making/choosing. The confirmation of their authorship renders the Shakespeare portfolio a warning against becoming entrapped in the manipulation and intrigue that occur in communities obsessed with power. To conceal the possible authorship by de Vere or Bassano-Lanier would represent an act of pride and an inability or unwillingness to acknowledge the failings of royal personages to engage in a culture of humility and love.

One may construe Queen Elizabeth I’s outbursts, Marlowe’s murder, and the subsequent cover-up as behaviors indicative of people who find it difficult to accept (a) different perspectives and (b) accountability for their own actions. These expressions of intolerance are symptomatic of Intermittent Explosive Disorder, a condition that affects approximately seven

percent of the general population (National Institute of Health, 2006) and approximately 50 percent of those diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (Insel, 2010). In our alternative view, the Shakespeare canon represents a depiction of greed, selfishness, and objectification. It portrays lifestyles of the mentally unwell.

When we consider the possibility that de Vere was a product of the aggression of Thomas Seymour towards Princess Elizabeth (the future Queen Elizabeth I), we understand the emotional imprints of anxiety and anger that de Vere may have experienced and the effects of these insecurities on his relationships with women. Alternatively, when we consider the intimidation of young Amelia Bassano Lanier when presented with her role of satisfying the insatiable appetite of Henry Carey, we appreciate the anxiety and anger that she may have felt as a sexual object and the effects of these insecurities on her yearning to be valued for herself.

The circumstances of both de Vere and Lanier would indicate that life tragedies, often not of their making/choosing, prompted these author candidates' emotional distress. The legitimacy of their authorship prospects may prompt a reconsideration of the Shakespeare canon as a call for help and relief from the social marginalization imposed by a small group of mentally unstable and narcissistic people of privilege. Obsessed with personal gain and power, the privileged are blind to their unjust treatment of the socially marginalized, leading them to commit heinous acts, resulting in misery and discord among the many innocent people affected by their actions. The DBAE teaching-learning experience ultimately centers on questions of social identity--who we are as a society; who we wish to be...or not to be; whom we wish to reward as achievers, discoverers, and artists; and who, if anyone, we are willing to sweep aside, to be hidden, and subjugated by dominant historical narratives.

Conclusion

For five millennia, the dominant culture has imposed standard interpretation of the Shakespeare narrative on students. Disrupting this narrative by examining the counter narratives that illuminate alternative accounts of history prompts students' critical consideration of the origins for these works and their social/political purposes. As a final thought, we suggest that the over-arching question of whether Shakespeare deserves credit invites contemplation about the basis for patterns of lies, deceptions, and cover-ups among the privileged. The underlying motives for such behaviors and the social inferences that they provide offer fertile ground for further classroom inquiry.

The persistence of efforts to dispute results of the United States' 2020 Presidential Election communicate the importance of future citizens' abilities to interpret patterns of evidence and their sources. It also necessitates skills to interpret the motives associated with claims to truth and wherewithal to discern their legitimacy. Fostering the development of critically thinking citizens who are open to examining alternative social perspectives represents an essential aspect of educating for a democratic society. The importance of inquiry into the Shakespeare authorship question lies not only in the late 16th century. It can be found today in American governance and the patterns of media deceit that remain largely concealed and unchallenged.

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Appendix
Lesson Activity
Shakespeare on Trial

Guiding Question

Should William Shakespeare receive credit for the works attributed to him?

Sub-questions:

- What did William Shakespeare, the businessman and actor, have to gain socially and politically by authoring such works?
- What benefit may Edward de Vere have realized by writing these plays using the pen name of Shakespeare?
- What if a woman with an Italian name (i.e. Amelia Bassano Lanier) received credit for the plays produced by the businessman William Shakespeare? Would her authorship alter the reputation of the Globe Theater? How?

Limited Data Sources or Evidence

Students are provided with information about three authorship candidates and with selected aesthetic and literary texts for analysis, inference-making, and inquiry.

Artworks

This activity employs several artworks, both visual and literary.

- Amelia Lanier portrait by Nicolas Hilliard (1547-1619)
- Edward de Vere portrait unknown artist (1575)
- William Shakespeare portrait, Chandos portrait, John Taylor (d. 1651)
- Selected texts from Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Hamlet, and Julius Caesar.

Lesson Introduction

The lesson begins as a whole class. It presents textual portraits of the three authorship candidates (Shakespeare and two alternatives), bringing student attention to the background details, artists, and nature of the people depicted. To pique student curiosity about the significance of those portrayed and to stimulate their motivation to engage in inquiry about these individuals, the whole class views and discusses the portraits in the following sequence (1) de Vere, (2) Lanier, (3) Shakespeare. This introduction provides background information about the

artworks to orient the students to the historical time period (i.e. English Renaissance), the social context, the meanings/intents of the artists, the resources needed for the creation and preservation of these artworks.

In the class discussions that follow, students compare the timelines of the three authorship candidates' lives and observe that all were contemporaries who represent possible authors of the literary works traditionally attributed to William Shakespeare. The whole class reviews dialogues from scenes found within classic Shakespearean works (i.e. *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Romeo and Juliet*) to examine the patterns of language. Authorship identity considerations revolve around each candidate's need/ability to write cryptically and keep his/her identity secret, positionality within society to pressure and manipulate, and susceptibility to becoming a victim of social injustice. The following list of guided discussion questions are used to help students critically analyze the dramatist's language:

- What may have motivated the author to write these dialogues/conversations?
- What author-candidate voice (or voices) are heard in the actual exchange being depicted on stage?
- What are the social, historical, and dramatic events/stories being portrayed—directly or indirectly?

Inquiry

Present the guided discussion question for the inquiry portion of the lesson: How do aesthetic and literary texts inform readers/audiences about their respective authors?

Inform students that background information about artists is helpful in understanding their dramatic and visual works. Examining viable alternative authorship attributions of Shakespearean works informs one about the different possible meanings/interpretations/messages they yield regarding power and oppression.

Organize students into groups to examine evidence to support authorship claims, assigning each group a particular authorship candidate. Depending on the number of students in the class, create three or six stations. Each station contains copies of the dialogues discussed in the whole class setting, background information about a particular author candidate (i.e., Shakespeare, de Vere, or Bassano Lanier) (see Appendix). If six stations are employed, there should be two stations for each authorship candidate. Handouts contain information about the

authorship candidates, widely accepted by scholars, to orient the students. The lesson materials also include lists of additional resources, on a separate attachment, for teacher reference.

Student Discussion and Presentations

After the groups rotate through their stations, they work together to discuss evidence for their authorship candidate (and those of other authorship candidates) and devise their arguments and rebuttals. To argue/present their cases, students engage in one of the following two activities: (1) development of dramatic stories in which students act out their cases/theories and demonstrate their findings/conclusions or (2) presentation of authorship cases through an Elizabethan court simulation, following the protocols customary for that time. Students develop their cases in small groups and come together to present their cases in front of the whole class.

Final Teacher-Led Debriefing in the Form of an Interactive Discussion Group

The class debriefs through a whole class conversation about the content and the learning experiences.

- To what extent did this activity disturb your previous conceptions of Shakespeare and his works?
- How did you feel about the possibility of alternative authorship and your introduction to the backgrounds of the alternative authors?
- If Bassano Lanier were proven to be the legitimate author of these works, how would you be affected by (or what would you feel about) your revised understanding of the meaning of these works?
- What advantages were there to be gained in Shakespeare's receiving credit for works actually created by others—particularly if it turned out to be a woman author?
- How might validation of de Vere's authorship inform you about how emotions influence the exercise of power and respect toward others?
- How would you argue the authorship claim of a candidate that you were not assigned?
- How would the basis (or arguments) for your new authorship claim compare with the basis (or arguments) for your old authorship claim (for the author candidate you were originally assigned)?
- What unresolved/unanswered questions do you have? What primary sources would you want to study to answer these questions?

- Roman and Greek myths represent tools to warn society about social vices. This perspective differs from claims that myths are used to explain scientific phenomena. How does the posing of the Shakespearean authorship question prompt you to rethink the nature of Roman/Greek heroes in the minds of the privileged?
- How does this activity inform you about literary history, historical evidence, and the importance of critical thinking?

Background Information

Amelia Lanier painting by Nicolas Hilliard (1547-1619). Hilliard was an artist of the Tudor court who developed many portraits of royalty and members of the English court, particularly Elizabeth I. The circumstances of this particular portrait are unknown; however, would appear to be during Lanier's service to the court.

Background Information

Edward de Vere painting by unknown artist. c. 1575

Background Information

William Shakespeare portrait by John Taylor (d. 1651), also known as the Chandos portrait, was attributed to Taylor by George Vertue in the 1700s.

Evidence Sheet I

William Shakespeare

Biographical Information and Arguments that Support and Challenge his Authorship Claims

Biography

- He was born to illiterate parents.
- Received at most a grammar school level education.
- Shakespeare was a businessman by trade.
- Worked as an actor from age 28.

Supporting his claim

- Authorship was not criticized until long after his death.
- Biographies represent unreliable evidence to support authorship.
- Evidence for Shakespeare is the same as for contemporary authors.
- Ben Jonson identifies Shakespeare as an author after his death.
- Misspellings of names were common during the time.
- Contemporaries worked with Shakespeare for 20+ years.
- While WS never visited Italy, he never visited Greece or Egypt either.
- Providing circumstantial evidence does not prove that the plays were not products of creativity and imagination

Challenging his claim

- Given the tenuous political climate, it is unlikely that any author, except one of political power, would write plays that challenged the social order.
- The vocabulary evident in WS's plays and sonnets are not consistent with Shakespeare's humble origins.
- His accounts make no mention of any literary works.
- His death was not publicized in London and he is buried in an unmarked grave.
- Shakespeare signs his name differently than on published works.
- His church effigy may originally have been to his father.

- Only one of his daughters was literate.
- No original manuscripts were found (and no accounts of a life deemed literary).
- The only records of Shakespeare's handwriting are six signatures.

Evidence Sheet II

Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford

Biographical Information and Claims

- Fourteen years older than Shakespeare.
- Well educated, well-travelled, multilingual, and socially connected.
- After age 12, supported by an advisor to Queen Elizabeth.
- Court reputation for his athletics, and socialization.
- Not tried for the contentious nature of play content.
- Writings reflect own experiences, rather than imagination.
- Secret annuity indicates a relationship to Queen Elizabeth.
- Poetry and playwriting receive praise from contemporaries.
- Authorship considered an open secret.
- The play gives voice to Hamlet and Lear as aristocrats, not commoners.
- Parallels and commonalities between his poems and “Shakespeare’s” poems.

Evidence Sheet III

Amelia (Bassano) Lanier

Biographical Information

- Born in 1569 to Venetian immigrants.
- First woman in England to publish a volume of poetry.
- Mistress of Henry Carey (son of Mary Boleyn), patron of arts and theater.

Evidence

- It was prohibited for women in Renaissance England for women to write for the theater.
- Approximately four out of five plays during the 1580s were written anonymously.
- Her name was not used by any other English playwright during the 1500s; however, it represents the most common female name in Shakespearean plays.
- Amelia's speech against husbands in *Othello* first appears in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death.
- Parallels in her life experiences are evident in Shakespearean plays, such as *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Hamlet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Othello*.
- Her poetry, published after Shakespeare's and de Vere's deaths, provides stylistic parallels.

Authorship

- Wrote three sonnets and a comedy in the same year of Shakespeare's poem "Venus and Adonis".
- Published her book of poetry *Salve Deus Rex Judaorum* the same year of *The Winter's Tale*.

Writing Sample I

Romeo and Juliet

http://shakespeare.mit.edu/romeo_juliet/full.html

Act I

Scene I

Enter Chorus.

Two households, both alike in dignity
(In fair Verona, where we lay our scene),
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
The fearful passage of their death-marked love
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which, if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

Chorus exits.

Discussion Questions

1. There is summation at the beginning of the play. What do you understand will happen as is indicated in this introduction to the drama?
2. Consider the power relations between parents and children as the children attempt to overthrow their parents' animosity toward each other.
3. This play ultimately expresses a resistance to arranged marriages. Why might your author candidate write about this?

4. Which author candidate is most likely to present these relationships?
5. How may the passage inform you about your author candidate's life experiences?

Sampson

A dog of that house shall move me to stand: I will
take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

Gregory

That shows thee a weak slave; for the weakest goes
to the wall.

Sampson

True; and therefore women, being the weaker vessels,
are ever thrust to the wall: therefore I will push
Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids
to the wall.

Gregory

The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.

Sampson

'Tis all one, I will show myself a tyrant: when I
have fought with the men, I will be cruel with the
maids, and cut off their heads.

Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of references are made to power in the preceding exchange?
2. Who is accorded power?
3. What emotions characterize power and how are conditions for these emotions present in your author candidate's experiences?
4. How may the author's background and reputation inform about the gender relationships expressed here?

Scene III

In this scene, Romeo and Juliet learn that they are falling in love, in but at a distance, each with someone who is a member of the family's arch enemy. Juliet is a Capulet; Romeo is a Montague. The two families have been at odds for years.

Juliet

Go ask his name: if he be married.
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

Nurse

His name is Romeo, and a Montague;
The only son of your great enemy.

Juliet

My only love sprung from my only hate!
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathed enemy.

Nurse

What's this? what's this?

Juliet

A rhyme I learn'd even now
Of one I danced withal.
One calls within 'Juliet.'

Nurse

Anon, anon!
Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone.

Exeunt

Discussion Questions

Even before power is exercised by the two lovers to see each other, each knows that Juliet feels her great love is for an enemy of her family.

1. How is power exercised in social relations when people set themselves up as enemies of certain groups?
2. What emotions do people experience when they exercise these behaviors?
3. What kinds of animosity exist between sworn enemies before violence is committed?
4. How is power exercised in people's reputations?
5. Codes of honor discipline people into certain behaviors. Do you feel that this may express love or lust? Romeo and Juliet view each other differently than the other family members even before they have spent time together?
6. How may these relationships represent the emotional sensitivity of your author candidate?

Scene V

Romeo

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear;
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.
Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Discussion Questions

1. To what extent are these expressions of love or lust?
2. What kinds of expressions are used to describe the beauty Romeo finds in Juliet?
3. Does your author candidate's background inform the meanings of these images? Why do you think so?
4. What is the basis for the Nurse and Friar Lawrence exercise power over the teenagers and their families?
5. To what extent would your author candidate have been more sympathetic to Romeo and Juliet's urgent love?

6. By the end of the tragedy, Mercutio, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet, Paris, Lady Montague die. How does tragedy enlighten us about the emotions of power and their influences on the perceptions those who serve them?
7. How may these relationships have been evident in your author candidate's life?

Writing Sample II***The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark***

<https://www.w3.org/People/maxf/XSLideMaker/hamlet.pdf>

Read the following lines from Hamlet, who is upset with his mother's behavior entailing her hasty marriage to Claudius, who is the brother of her former husband, King Hamlet.

Act II**Scene I****Hamlet**

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on't—
Frailty, thy name is woman!—
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,

Like Niobe, all tears:--why she, even she-
O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer--married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules: within a month:
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not nor it cannot come to good:
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

Discussion Questions

1. What emotions undergird Hamlet's complaint?
2. Hamlet is particularly disgusted at his mother's lack of tears so quickly after his father's death. He is heartbroken and says so. What candidate do you envision as penning these words and why? Would a female writer have been more apt to express the heartbrokenness that a young man feels about his mother's actions than a male writer would have?
3. One unspoken issue in Claudius' marriage to Gertrude is the fact that Hamlet does not inherit the throne. By bypassing Hamlet, Claudius comes to power. As we continue reading *Hamlet*, what emotions guide the power that has affected the characters—particularly Claudius.

Scene III

Laertes

Think it no more;
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal.
Perhaps he loves you now,

And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will: but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth:
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
The safety and health of this whole state;
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head.
Then if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon:
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:
The canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Ophelia

I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart.
But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you perceive to be the meaning of this exchange? Laertes' passage is quite long; Ophelia's is much shorter. How does this exchange communicate the respect and power afforded boys and girls in many families even through today?
2. The play unfolds, and Laertes' words take on more significance. How would a son of a diplomat versus a daughter be expected to behave? (Polonius, an adviser to the King, is the father of Laertes and Ophelia.
3. As this scene develops from the preceding one and moves into the next one, we see that Laertes will go to France to pursue his studies. What is the difference between how he and Ophelia are expected to develop themselves? How may the background of your author candidate inform the expression of those differences?

Lord Polonius

Indeed, that is out o' the air.

Aside

How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness
that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity
could not so prosperously be delivered of.

I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—
My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Hamlet

You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will
more willingly part withal: except
my life, except my life, except my life.

Lord Polonius

Fare you well, my lord.

Hamlet

These tedious old fools!

Discussion Questions

1. Shakespeare's works contain several references to pregnancy in. Sometimes a character will say that words "are pregnant with meaning". In this case, Polonius states, "How pregnant sometimes his replies are!" How has pregnancy informed your author candidate's life and how may this information shape the view of this exchange? Would a female or male writer been more likely to have made such allusions to situations and words as being 'full of meaning' like a woman's belly might be full with child?
2. What does Polonius believe is the matter with Hamlet? Explain how a female versus a male writer might have discussed the issue of love from a parent's perspective.
3. Polonius is a controlling father, particularly of Ophelia. Do you perceive this to be an expression of love?
4. Does his concern over Hamlet's love express sensitivity toward his daughter? What is his objective in expressing such concern? What would be your author candidate's intent?

Writing Sample III

Macbeth

<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/macbeth/full.html>

Act I

Scene I

Shakespeare and Macbeth's Witches

ALL – three witches recite together:

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

Scene III

Macbeth

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you perceive to be the intent of repeating the idea that “Fair is foul and foul is fair”? Who considers fair to be foul? Who considers foul to be fair? What may your author candidate's perspective be?
2. Consider that the actors in Shakespeare's day were men. The men acted the parts of witches who were women. Society marginalized women that it considered witches. Women as witches were often scapegoats for social problems. In addition, women who did not adhere to society's strict discipline accorded them were often outcasts, misfits, and sometimes represented as having ties to the supernatural and evil or satanic forces. Why would your author candidate make the witches who foretold events in the play women even though actors of the time were men?
3. How likely is it that your author candidate have provided for male witches or warlocks?
4. In what ways would your author candidate interpret the line “Fair is foul and foul is fair”?

Scene V

Inverness. Macbeth's castle

Lady Macbeth

Give him tending;
He brings great news.

Exit Messenger

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

Enter MACBETH

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

Macbeth

My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.

Lady Macbeth

And when goes hence?

Macbeth

To-morrow, as he purposes.

Lady Macbeth

O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

Macbeth

We will speak further.

Lady Macbeth

Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me.

Exeunt

Discussion Questions

The exchange between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth suggests that the indication from the witches has foretold that Macbeth shall become king through some violent deeds. She assures her

husband that the coming days will lead to his becoming the sovereign, the master—that is the king.

1. What kind of woman is Lady Macbeth revealing herself to be?
2. How does your author candidate's story inform these beliefs?
3. Who are more violent? How do we know?
4. What have been the lengths that people who rise to power are willing to go to be able to acquire power?
5. Why would Lady Macbeth assure her husband that he needed only to look forward to his becoming the king and that she would take care of the rest? "Leave all the rest to me."

Scene VI

Before Macbeth's castle

Hautboys and torches. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, and Attendants

Duncan

This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

Banquo

This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed,
The air is delicate.

Enter Lady Macbeth

Duncan

See, see, our honour'd hostess!

The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God 'ild us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.

Lady Macbeth

All our service

In every point twice done and then done double
Were poor and single business to contend
Against those honours deep and broad wherewith
Your majesty loads our house: for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.

Duncan

Where's the thane of Cawdor?

We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor: but he rides well;
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.

Lady Macbeth

Your servants ever

Have theirs, themselves and what is theirs, in compt,
To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.

Duncan

Give me your hand;
Conduct me to mine host: we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess.

Discussion Questions

1. The queen appears to be presenting a loving welcoming face in this exchange between her and King Duncan. What do you think will happen with regard to the plot of Duncan's murder?
2. In creating Lady Macbeth's character, the playwright portrays her as a woman quite capable of evil. What experiences do you think that your author candidate may have gone through to write about this?
3. Could your playwright candidate find it appropriate to portray Lady Macbeth as capable of committing murder?
4. Does Lady Macbeth's role in the murder pique your interest?

Writing Sample IV***Julius Caesar***

<https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/79a6077d/files/uploaded/Julius%20Caesar%20%20Full%20Text%20PDF.pdf>

This drama opens with Cassius planting seeds of dissension as he tries to build Brutus' confidence that he could be as great as Caesar. The stage is being set for Brutus to begin entertaining the idea that he could be the emperor if circumstances were different than they are at the present time.

Act I**Scene II****Caesar**

Would he were fatter! But I fear him not,
Yet if my name were liable to fear, (205)
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius.
He reads much, He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music; (210)
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit
That could be moved to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves, (215)
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd
Than what I fear, for always I am Caesar.
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him. (220)

Discussion Questions

1. With what kinds of people would Caesar like to surround himself?
2. Why does Caesar believe that Cassius is not to be trusted?
3. What does this kind of comment reveal about the emotions by which people hold power?

Scene III**Cassius**

You are dull, Casca, and those sparks of life
That should be in a Roman you do want,
Or else you use not. You look pale and gaze (65)
And put on fear and cast yourself in wonder,
To see the strange impatience of the heavens.
But if you would consider the true cause
Why all these fires, why all these gliding ghosts,
Why birds and beasts from quality and kind, (70)
Why old men fool, and children calculate,
Why all these things change from their ordinance,
Their natures and preformed faculties,
To monstrous quality, why, you shall find
That heaven hath infused them with these spirits (75)
To make them instruments of fear and warning
Unto some monstrous state.
Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man
Most like this dreadful night,
That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars (80)
As doth the lion in the Capitol,
A man no mightier than thyself or me
In personal action, yet prodigious grown
And fearful, as these strange eruptions are.

Casca

'Tis Caesar that you mean, is it not, Cassius? (85)

Cassius

Let it be who it is, for Romans now

Have thews and limbs like to their ancestors.

But, woe the while! Our fathers' minds are dead,

And we are govern'd with our mothers' spirits;

Our yoke and sufferance show us womanish. (90)

Casca

Indeed they say the senators tomorrow

Mean to establish Caesar as a king,

And he shall wear his crown by sea and land,

In every place save here in Italy.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the meaning of dialog between Cassius and Casca?
2. What is “womanish”?
3. Why would your author candidate be apt to write such lines in a piece of literature?
4. How would such a portrayal of women inform about the nature of power and How does one overcome it?

Act III

Scene I

Brutus

Grant that, and then is death a benefit;

So are we Caesar's friends that have abridged (115)

His time of fearing death.

Stoop, Romans, stoop,

And let us bathe our hands in Caesar's blood

Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords;

Then walk we forth, even to the market-place,

And waving our red weapons o'er our heads, (120)

Let's all cry, "Peace, freedom, and liberty!"

Cassius

Stoop then, and wash.

How many ages hence

Shall this our lofty scene be acted over

In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

Brutus

How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport, (125)

That now on Pompey's basis lies along

No worthier than the dust!