

attendance were shaped by shifts as “exceptionalist” as those examined by Carole Shammass, Sarah Deutsch, and Elizabeth Clark-Lewis.

*Barbara Ryan*  
National University of Singapore

### Fostering Periodical Studies

TO THE EDITOR:

Regarding Sean Latham and Robert Scholes’s essay “The Rise of Periodical Studies” (121 [2006]: 517–31), I would like to note that the “minor press” (518) that published *American Periodicals* for twelve years was the University of North Texas Press; the journal’s stalwart editor was James T. F. Tanner; the president of its sponsoring organization, the Research Society for American Periodicals, at the time of the journal’s inception was Robert J. Scholnick; and the founder of the organization at whose convention the research society was created, the American Literature Association, is Alfred Bendixen.

Also warranting acknowledgment are those working at research libraries who have steadily and steadfastly acquired (and continue to acquire) the original—sometimes rare, even unique—magazines and newspapers in the first place. They make possible the digitizing Latham and Scholes mention—and have long made possible the scholarly pleasure of reading the actual artifact and thereby coming as close as possible to the experience of the periodical’s original readers.

*Richard Kopley*  
Penn State University, Worthington Scranton

**Reply:**

Richard Kopley properly acknowledges the significant contributions of the scholars, editors, and researchers who built the intellectual institutions that have made possible “the rise of periodical studies.” As we note in our essay, *American Periodicals* (among other journals) is a vital part of this infrastructure, though its mission and its close association with the American Literature Association mean that its perspective is—quite rightly—limited to a particular sector of literary

studies. As our survey of digitizing projects makes clear, however, critical work on magazines now extends across national borders and intellectual disciplines, creating a space for new kinds of inquiry that significantly extend what was once considered a relatively narrow field of specialization.

This field is just now taking shape, largely because of the stunning changes in the reproduction and dissemination of archival materials made possible by digital technologies. It is only thanks to the efforts of rare book rooms and the librarians who staff them, however, that the fragile remnants of periodical culture survived into the digital age. What we call the “hole in the archive” (520) emerged primarily in general collections where magazines were stripped of advertising before being bound and assigned increasingly rare shelf space. This problem, by the way, was first reported by Ellen Gruber Garvey in 1999 (“What Happened to Ads in Turn-of-the-Century Bound Magazines, and Why” [*Serials Librarian* 37.1 (1999): 83–91]), though we learned of this only after our article was in print.

In many cases, the hole in the archive is visible only because rare book curators preserved intact issues of old magazines, allowing scholars to recognize the damage that had been done. Often, these surviving issues were part of private collections, such as the personal libraries and papers of writers, critics, and artists. Unfortunately, library catalogs almost never provide the information necessary to determine whether or not a number or a volume is genuinely complete, advertisements and all. Those involved in periodical studies should strongly encourage their libraries to undertake this urgent bibliographic task so that we can see how badly damaged our archives are, while gratefully acknowledging the diligent work of those who have fully preserved this crucial segment of print culture.

*Sean Latham*  
University of Tulsa

*Robert Scholes*  
Brown University

### Shakespeare at Oxford?

TO THE EDITOR:

Is it not time now for more scholars of Renaissance literature to consider the possibility

(even plausibility) of Shakespeare's having been present in some capacity at Oxford University, even if just as an auditor? He could well have been aware of Richard Eedes's play *Caesar Interfectus*, which was performed at Christ's Church College at Oxford in February and March 1582. The play-script of the drama was full of diacritical marks (its epilogue survives in the Bodleian Library, where I have scrutinized it with care) and could well be the source for the famous phrase "Et tu, Brutè?" in *Julius Caesar*. (Shakespeare may have used the phrase in passing somewhat earlier than *Julius Caesar*, if he was indeed behind the "Et tu, Brute, wilt thou stab *Caesar* too?" in the "bad Quarto" of *3 Henry VI*, known as *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke* [ca. 1594].) He may also have obtained the Latin phrase by having had temporary access to one of the scripts for the Eedes play if he knew an actor in it.

Hamlet's absence from attendance at Wittenberg University may even indirectly reflect on the playwright's inability to remain at Oxford (which is incidentally right between Stratford and London). Shakespeare would not have been able to stay long in the Oxford area in 1582 because of his having made Anne Hathaway pregnant and having to return to Stratford to help raise the family.

Barbara Everett's *Young Hamlet* presents evidence that the Stratfordian read another manuscript related somewhat to *Hamlet* (140–41): namely, John Florio's well-known translation of Montaigne's essays. Florio happened to be at Oxford at the time of the Eedes play, where he was tutor for the earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare dedicated poetry. So I agree with Howard Staunton, in his edition of *The Plays of Shake-*

*peare*, that Eedes's work could well have been the chief source for the familiar *Brutè* reference.

A London Shakespearean, Gil Elliot, in her letter in the *Times Literary Supplement* (25 July 2003), also defended the view that Shakespeare went "to university," citing Peter Alexander, the well-known Shakespearean authority from Scotland, to this effect. The dramatist's works were too learned not to have been inspired by such academic influence. True, Stephen Greenblatt, in his recent *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (2004), denied the Stratfordian's having had any "university education" (11), yet evidently he meant by this only that the formal records do not reveal any. Other Renaissance playwrights were students at Oxford but do not appear in the official records. Of special interest is David George's note "Thomas Middleton at Oxford" (*Modern Language Review* 65 [1970]: 734–36): George writes, "Anthony à Wood could find no record of [Middleton's] degree and . . . wrote him off the Queen's College record" (736). Academically speaking, I prefer Alexander's decision to Greenblatt's. It makes more common sense based on the data involved.

A. C. Baugh's *A Literary History of England* (Crofts, 1967) has a section on the Renaissance by Tucker Brooke and Matthias A. Shaaber, where this statement appears: "There is even a possibility, but no definite proof, that [Shakespeare] may have had a term or two at Oxford" (620). There is a footnote to this: "This idea is developed by J. S. Smart, *Shakespeare Truth and Tradition* (1928), pp. 175–182" (520n4).

*Robert F. Fleissner*  
Central State University (retired)