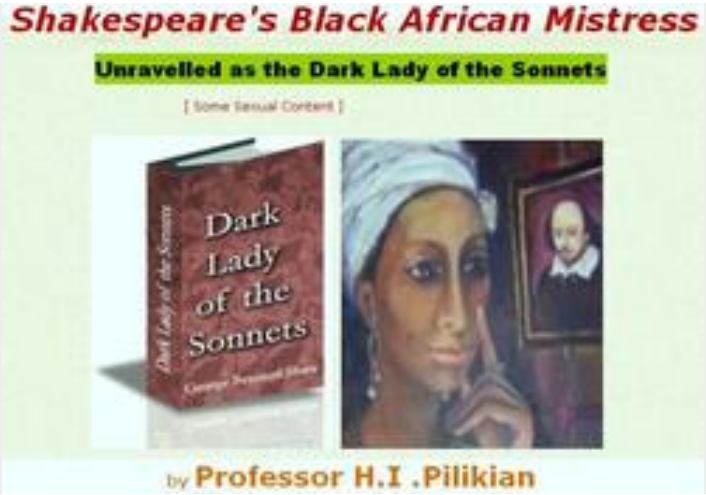
SHAKESPEARE'S BLACK AFRICAN MISTRESS

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Category: Opinions

Professor Pilikian's Discoveries Revolutionize Shakespearean Studies

By Edwina Charles, MA Hon (*Phil*), MSc Hon (*Psych*), London, 3 July 2012

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The professor's fingers seem to be so much on the pulse of global socio-cultural concerns of renovation, that his themes always catch the wind of change in radical re-thinking of ossified and sclerotic mindsets. Upon the invitation of Mr. Shahin Rafatfoo, President of the *Open Discussion Society* of Birkbeck College (University of London), on the day (8th June, 2012) of his most recent public lecture, the Professor had picked up the *Evening Standard* headlining England's *Plea to Stamp Out Racism* – the curse of European football … little anyone knew that the professor had sharpened a huge nail to hammer forcefully in the coffin of global Racism as such, proving that "*Britain's and the world's greatest playwright and poet, Shakespeare was actually passionately in love with a Black African slave, unwillingly whored* in a Southwark South Bank brothel, in the immediate environmental vicinity of Shakespeare's living quarters".

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African slave, unwillingly whored in a Southwark South Bank brothel, in the immediate environmental vicinity of Shakespeare's living quarters".

The English will not accept this until their neo-Nazi BNP (British National Party) and BDL (British Defense League) disappear one day … A very respectable looking old gentlemen, silver haired and old-fashioned, began heckling the professor mid-stream. Thankfully, he had the wisdom to leave soon after, allowing us to enjoy the rest of the professor's epoch-making path-breaking lecture.

Standing upon the shoulders of the classical giants of Shakespearean scholarship, E.K. Chambers, Caroline Spurgeon, Eric Partridge, Sewell (the professor's own tutor in his teenage years at *the American University of Beirut*, Lebanon), Pilikian opened up new trenches in the linguistic archeology of the Shakespearean texts with stunning results – *entirely evidence-led*, Pilikian provided scholarly exegesis while reading the texts of the *Sonnets* un-controversially dedicated to *the Mistress*, starting with Sonnet number 127, the very first of the mistress-sequence, where the Bard's very first line

In the old age black was not counted fair

launches the theme of the Black Beauty – we thought it started with Black Consciousness in America, but the Bard has been there half a thousand years ago …

But now is black beauty's successive heir

arguing that Black with black-eyes

… *my mistress' eyes are raven black*

is the new Blonde-with-Blue-eyes … (the Medieval Viking and English ideal).

What can be more explicit about the Mistress' skin- color than

Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place

…… *black wires grow on her head*

Any African will recognize the above line as a description of own hair … And finally, one of the most powerful emotional outbursts Pilikian has targeted as a clinching evidence of the mistress' African Black identity – the last line of number 147;

Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

Professor Pilikian states, "*Shakespeare is screaming down the centuries that the woman he loved passionately was not mildly dark, olive-skin colored Southern Aristo … as the racist fools have blinkered themselves to, but that she was African-black, like the Night … and you cannot get blacker than Night itself*!"

Shakespeare also underlines the 'sexy' fact that his mistress' eyes are frequently full of tears – "*they*

mourners seem" (127, line 10), then again in the first line of the last Couplet (line 13)

…. *they mourn, becoming of their woe*

All commentators, without exception, have (mis)-understood those lines very superficially as tears shed for … the love of Shakespeare. Professor Pilikian establishes *beyond a reasonable doubt* that in fact they are the tears of an African slave, homesick, raped daily endlessly in a Southwark brothel, as a prostitute. Today's London South Bank area was full of *stew-houses*, supervised by *Abbesses* running *Nunneries* … an Elizabethan euphemism for Brothel-*Madames*. And one of the greatest traders in human flesh, the whoremongers, was the *Bishop* of Winchester … Southwark prostitutes were called *Winchester Geese* … no wonder Britain fell into a civil war and Cromwell *had* to come to power for a while!

Professor Pilikian, incredibly but as a matter of historical fact is *the very first scholar* to have picked up the thread of ***Slavery*** clearly expressed by Shakespeare in Sonnet number 133

But slave to slavery my sweet'st friend must be?

Shakespeare is referring to the fact that his own male "*sweetest friend*" is also passionately entangled with the same slave-woman, to the degree of intensity that he has become a slave to the slave …

***Shakespeare's passion for Black people*, even exploring different *shades* of Blackness, is still a virgin field in Shakespeare criticism and *evidence of institutionalized racism Professor Pilikian wishes to abolish*.**

"*Othello, the Black Moor is arguably the noblest human being in the entire Shakespeare canon – he is a faultless, sinless human, almost a Black Jesus Christ!*" Pilikian confirms confidently, adding, "*you have a slightly more comical, but warmly humane character in the Prince of Morocco (in the Merchant of Venice) coming a-courting all the way from … Africa!*"

Professor Pilikian pointed out that already at the end of 16th c. the English landed aristocracy had began a fashion of owning a couple of slaves in their households – Lady Raleigh of the prominent Elizabethan intellectual Sir Walter Raleigh was one of the first. Queen Elizabeth the First's Ladies-in-waiting *frequently disguised themselves as black-women*, in court-masques, *impersonated* for sexual excitement exotic African females.

Pilikian pointed out that Shakespeare very subtly *"and with the skill of the great poet so typical of him alone in world literature"* could elaborate the theme as a complex metaphor in the very next Sonnet (number 134), arguing that neither his male friend nor he himself will ever be able to "*be free*" of their passionate slavery to the slave-mistress;

…. …… *he will not be free*

…… *and yet am I not free*

Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be

where Shakespeare has (in professor Pilikian's words) "*re-enforced almost in concrete, his poetic conceit of a slave as a vassal, and a sadly de-humanized wretch*". Friends in the audience I noticed were left open-mouthed at the magnificence of the professor's discoveries and definitions.

I can only wish that Professor Pilikian rushes into publishing a book on his impeccable textual fact-driven discoveries and 'archeological' decipherments …

I would like to end my brief report by informing the readers of the most radically innovative yet, and stunning exegesis by Professor Pilikian of the most famous number 128, universally mis-understood as the evidence of Shakespeare's glorification of his Dark Lady's exceptional musicality and instrumental skills … absolutely ridiculous and laughable in the professor's true understanding of Shakespeare's extraordinarily clever elaboration of his poetic musical conceit.

There are hilarious descriptions by distinguished scholars fantasizing Romantic scenes of Shakespeare standing there at his 'aristocratic' dark-skinned (Spanish type …) mistress' side watching her amorously play beautifully on a *virginal* …

The first observation Professor Pilikian made is that no … virginal is mentioned or portrayed or metaphorized in any sense in the text … but merely a "*blessed wood*" with strings as harsh as "*wire*" (echoing the hair-wires quoted above) that produce sound which is cacophonous and grates on Shakespeare's ears … and let us not forget that Shakespeare had an excellent ear for music!

The wiry concord that mine ear confounds

Shakespeare then describes in intense eroticism (which is what has distracted the scholars obviously) the … "Jacks" = the wooden Key-pegs on a stringed instrument, never on a primitive harpsichord like a virginal!!

Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap

To kiss the tender inward of thy hand

Professor Pilikian points out, and he is *absolutely right*, that there is a single hand (grammatically in singular, the other holding the instrument) in question banging on the … key-pegs/jacks of the instrument … *portraying a woman who does not know how to play the instrument*, and is *furiously banging with her palms hilariously on the key-pegs* … as if it were an African drum …

The life and soul of African music is in percussion and rhythm, not melody as in the European tradition … probably the poor woman is 'speaking' with her drum-beats,

Making dead wood more blessed than living lips

crying (her raven-black eyes) out for help (from neighboring villages on the Thames …) to come and save her from the hell-hole she has been thrown into … It is the saddest, sweetest description of a

caged slave in world-literature!

If nothing else, this very first absolutely correct explanation of Shakespeare's this particular Sonnet (128) displays Pilikian's crackling mind of a genius.

I think Shakespeare has met his Armenian match and must be dancing in his grave, of sheer *joie de vivre* … joy of life!

A film was made by Chad Manian, University Lecturer in Economics, uploaded onto the Web, edited into ten-minute chunks;

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXCsyPVdYAk&feature=relmfu

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=K4kM2xHdstY Etc.