

The COLUMN

SHAKESPEARE'S OPTIMISM

*To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*

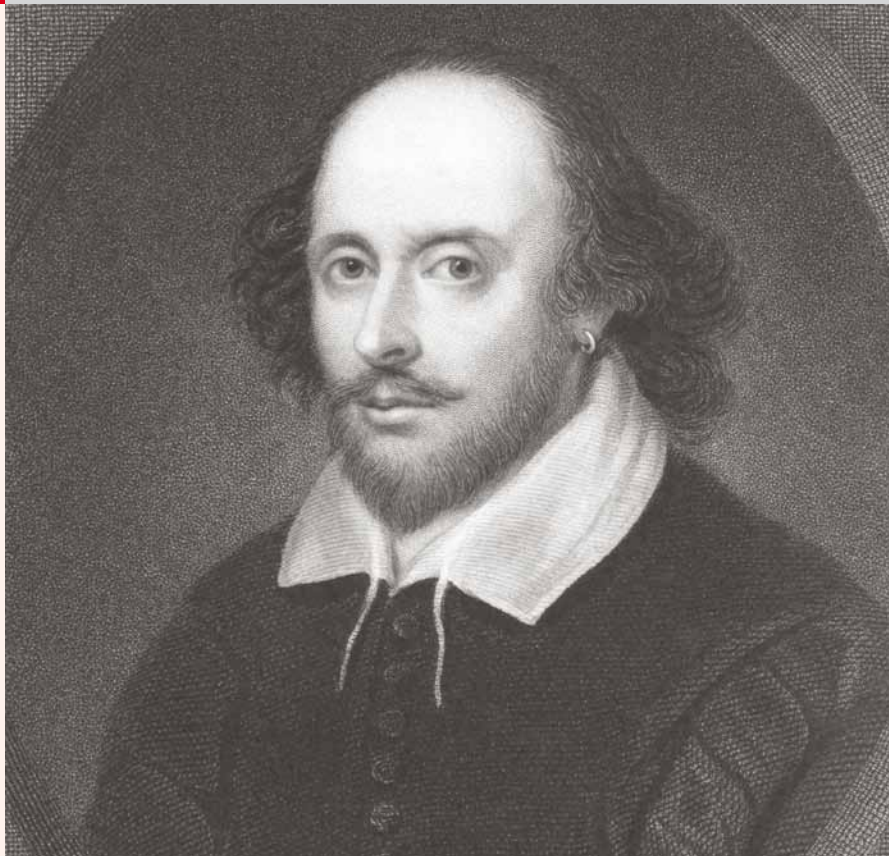
Macbeth (Act 5, Scene 5, lines 17-28)

Macbeth's soliloquy is Shakespeare at his best. On receiving news of his wife's death, Macbeth reflects on his own indifference. For him, death is the last act of a pathetic play, a tale told by an idiot, melodramatic perhaps, but essentially meaningless. Through Macbeth's pessimistic musings, Shakespeare portrays life and history as a hapless record of events, a mere shadow cast by the brief candle. But Shakespeare was not a pessimist. His works include moments of hope, joy, triumph and honor. The wealth of his literary work, so prodigious that some attribute it to divine inspiration, enables him to convey, with boundless beauty, the entire spectrum of human emotions and all the implications arising from our philosophical premises. Should we agree with Macbeth? Is life but a walking shadow? Are we but a single hour in geological time, a drop of water in a vast ocean? Observant readers will perceive that, deep down, Shakespeare is an optimist. He emphasizes the lively and creative side of life over the somber and depressing. In his play Henry V, Shakespeare has the king say:

*There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out.*

Perhaps these words best represent Shakespeare's final optimistic verdict on the spirit of human endeavor.

Richard Vaughan



MAIN feature

Trade routes in ancient times...

As I was making my way to the local supermarket to buy some groceries, the following questions struck my mind:

*"How did trade originally come about? What did our ancestors trade?"
And there I was... immersed in thoughts back in the Ancient times...*

Trade routes were a very important part of people's lifestyles in Ancient times. They were a means for people to exchange not only goods and raw materials but also their own cultures, religions, lifestyles, languages and their identity with other nations from around the world.

Some of the most famous trade routes of the antiquity are the ones dedicated to the trade of silk, spices, salt, jade and amber, copper, bronze, iron etc. Each region was good at trading a particular type of good and so for example – China was known for trading silk, the Arabian peninsula was famous for trading spices, the northern part of Germany was known for its Old Salt Trade route and the Phoenicians were distinguished for their ceramic and pottery trade in the Levant.

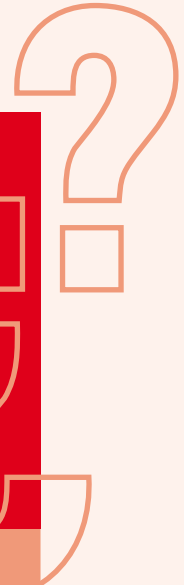
People in Antiquity used various forms of transport in order to trade with other nations. At the beginning domesticated camels and other animals were used in the form of caravans to trade especially in the Arabian Peninsula and in the Far East. Later our ancient civilizations in Egypt, Sumer, Ancient Greece and Rome could make use of boats to trade their goods. This gave rise to maritime trade which was later followed by more sophisticated means of transport such as automobiles and planes later in the 18th century.

It is fascinating to think what a long way we have come from camel trading to online grocery shopping...



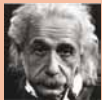
QUIZ

TEST YOUR
KNOWLEDGE



Today's quiz question is inspired by something we all take for granted in our everyday lives – the light bulb...

Do you know who invented the very first light bulb?



Albert Einstein



Humphry Davy



Isaac Newton

You can check the answers on www.vaughanhumanidades.com

USEFUL Vocabulary

To make one's way to – *Estar yendo hacia*. As I was making my way to the post office, the phone rang.

Make use of something – *Utilizar algo*. More people should make use of recycling bins.

To give rise to something – *Dar origen a algo*. The invention of writing gave rise to written literature.

To take for granted – *Infravalorar*. We sometimes take for granted certain things in life.

A light bulb – *Una bombilla*. I need to replace one of the light bulbs in my bedroom.

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THE MAN OF THE MONTH...

Leonardo Da Vinci



Most people associate Leonardo Da Vinci with the following outstanding masterpieces: *The Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*.

However, Da Vinci was not only a painter and a sculpture of Renaissance, he was also an architect, a musician, a scientist, a mathematician, an engineer, an inventor, an anatomist, a geologist, a cartographer, a botanist and a writer – in other words a complete polymath.

Such varied interests can be discovered in Da Vinci's Journals in which he describes the importance of emotions and their expression; the importance of topographic anatomy drawing many studies of muscles, tendons and other visible anatomical features. In his Journals he also writes about some inventions of his such as musical instruments, hydraulic pumps, reversible crank mechanisms and finned mortar shells.