
PROGRESS FOR FUTURE PERSONS

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- A chapter in an in-progress book project: “Valuing Progress”
 - Follows “Who Should Pay for Progress?” (IPSC 2014)
 - A series of investigations of normative commitments underlying innovation and creativity policy, and their philosophical underpinnings
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VALUING PROGRESS: OUTLINE

- Valuation
 - Reciprocity
 - Agency and Luck
 - The Moral Community
 - Across Space
 - Over Time
 - Social Choice Institutions
-

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FUTURE PERSONS: SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES

- Cumulative Progress and Counterfactual History
 - The Nonidentity Problem
 - Present Priorities and Future Persons
 - Responses to the Problem
 - Policy Implications: Organizing Policy Regimes by Time Horizons
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Tomasso Guardati
(a/k/a Masuccio
Salernitano):
Author, *Novellino*
(c. 1476)

Source: http://www.ilportaledelsud.org/masuccio_salernitano.htm



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Luigi da Porto:
Author, *Novella
novamente ritrovata*
(c. 1531)

Source: <http://www.comune.montorsovicentino.vi.it/il-comune/la-citta/villa-da-porto/il-fantasma-di-luigi-da-porto>

- Retold by Matteo Bandello (c. 1554)
- Translated to French by Pierre Boaistuau (c. 1559)
- Translated into English by Arthur Brooke (c. 1562)



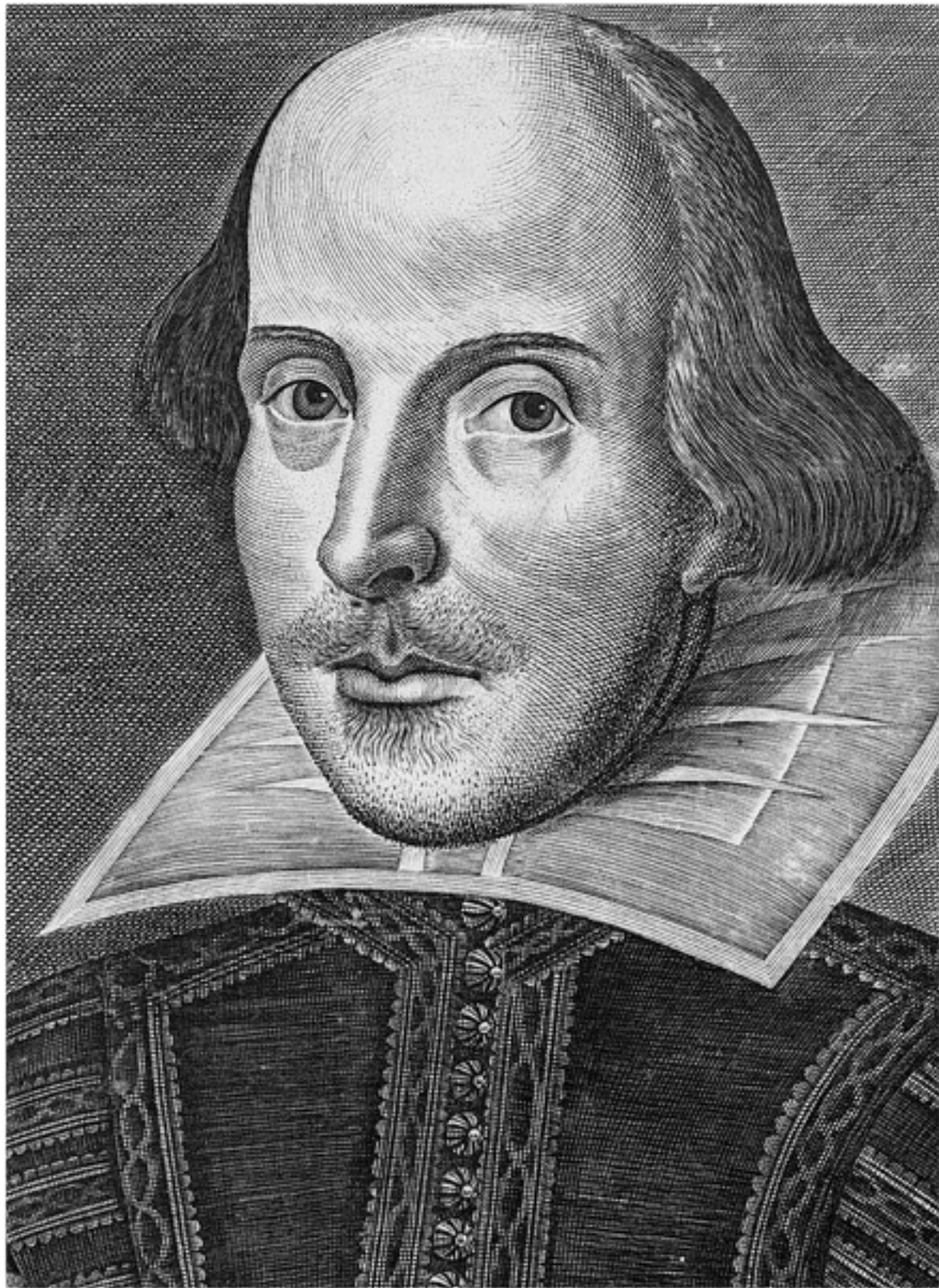
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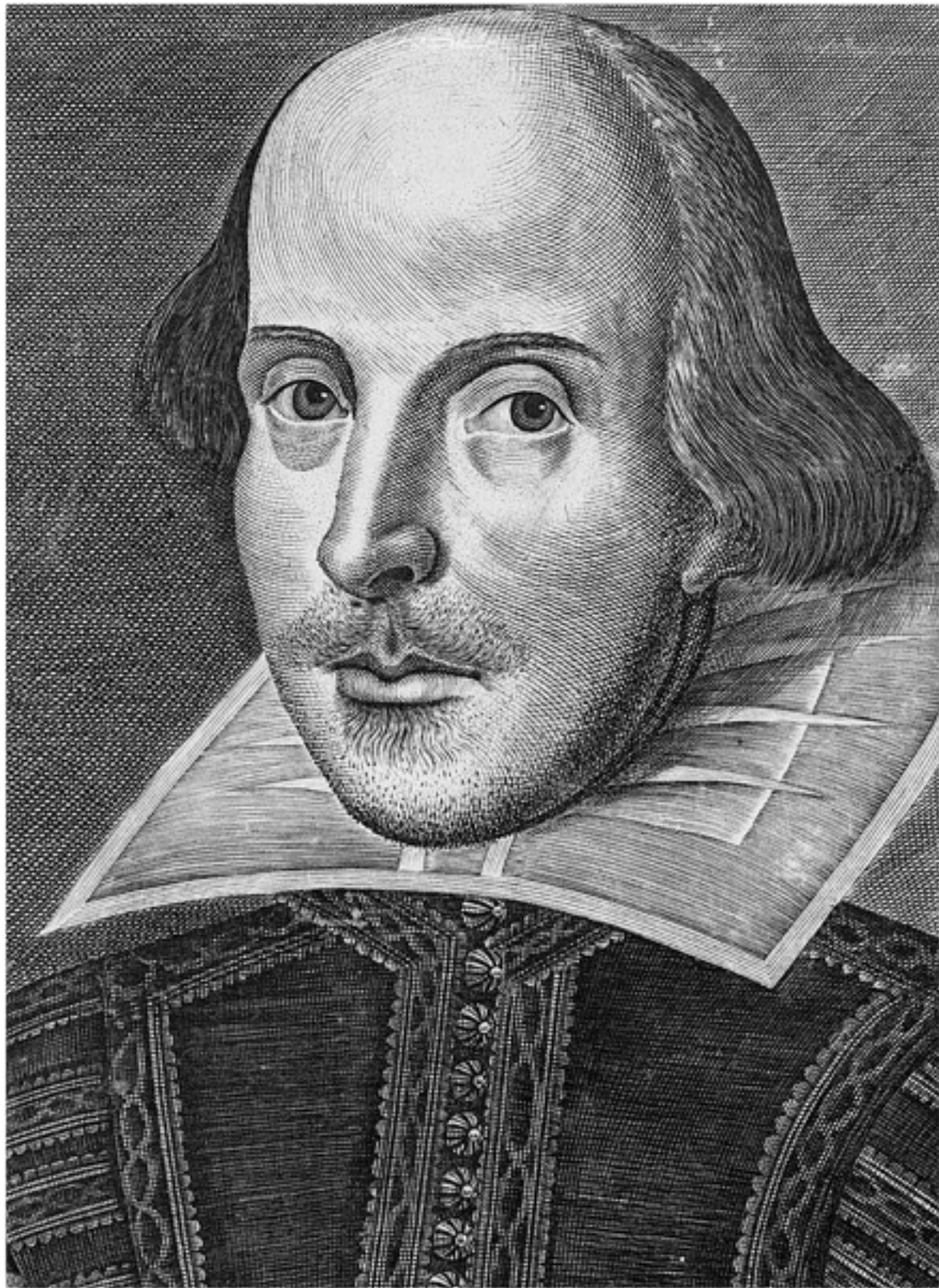
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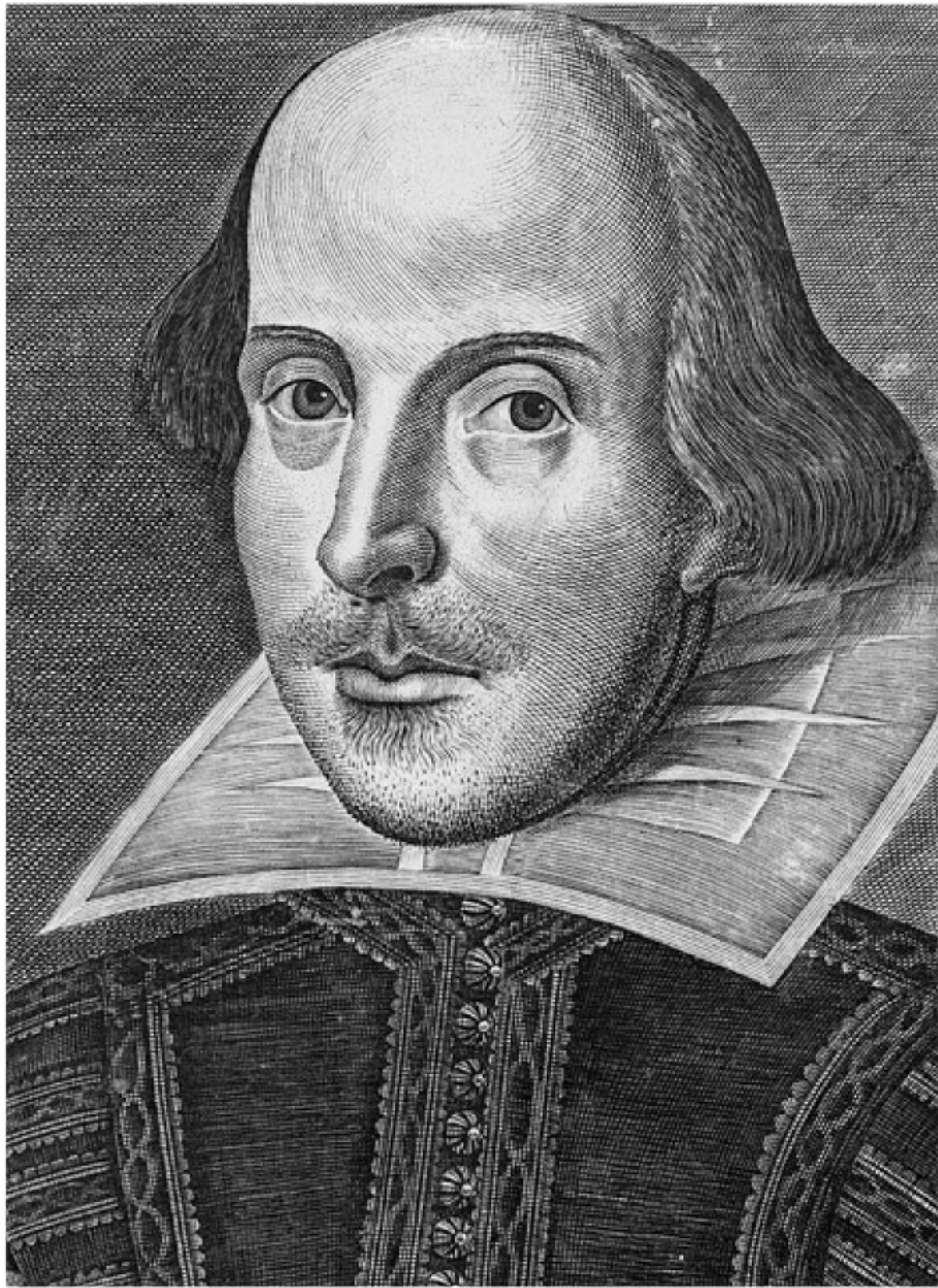
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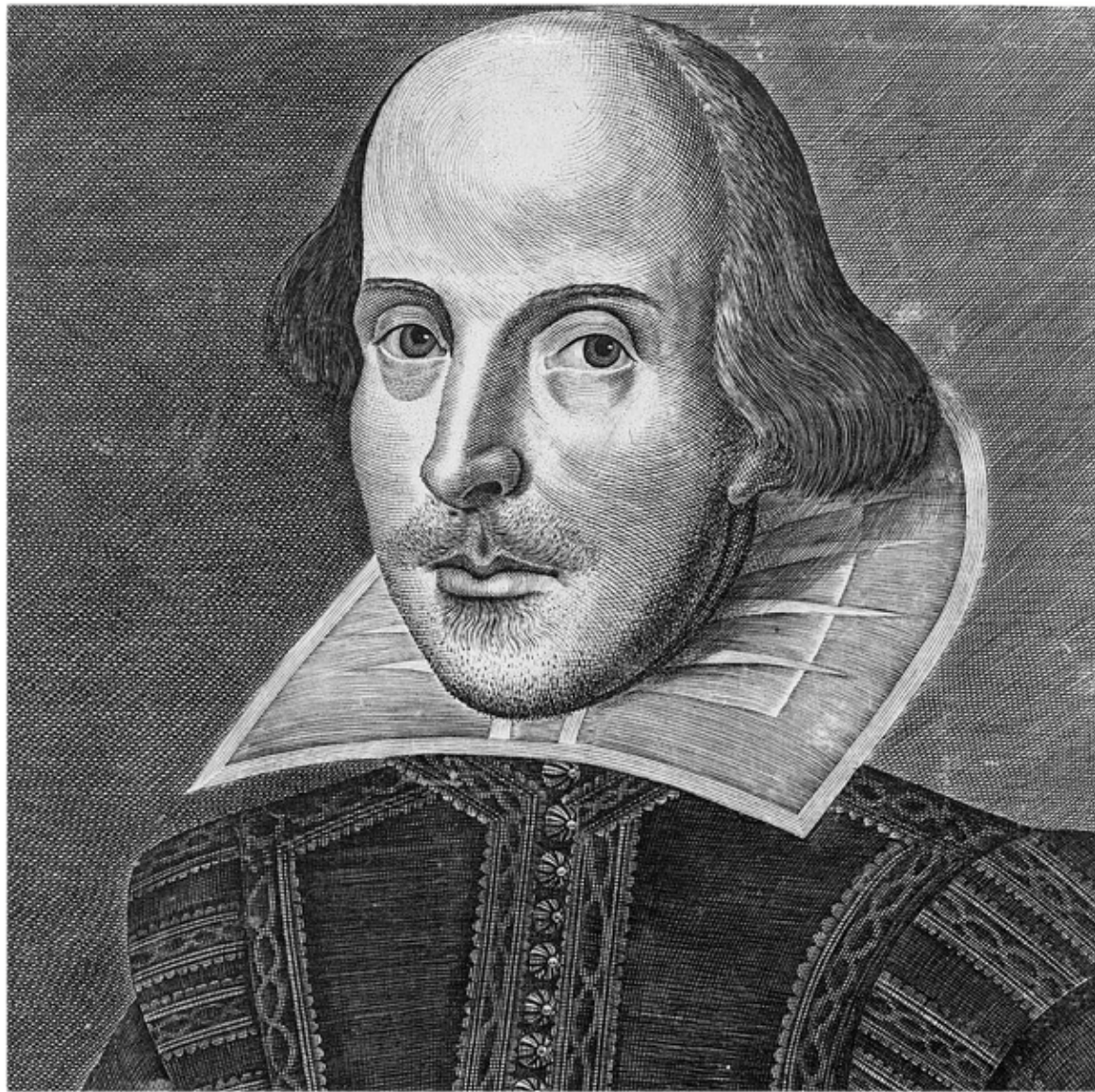


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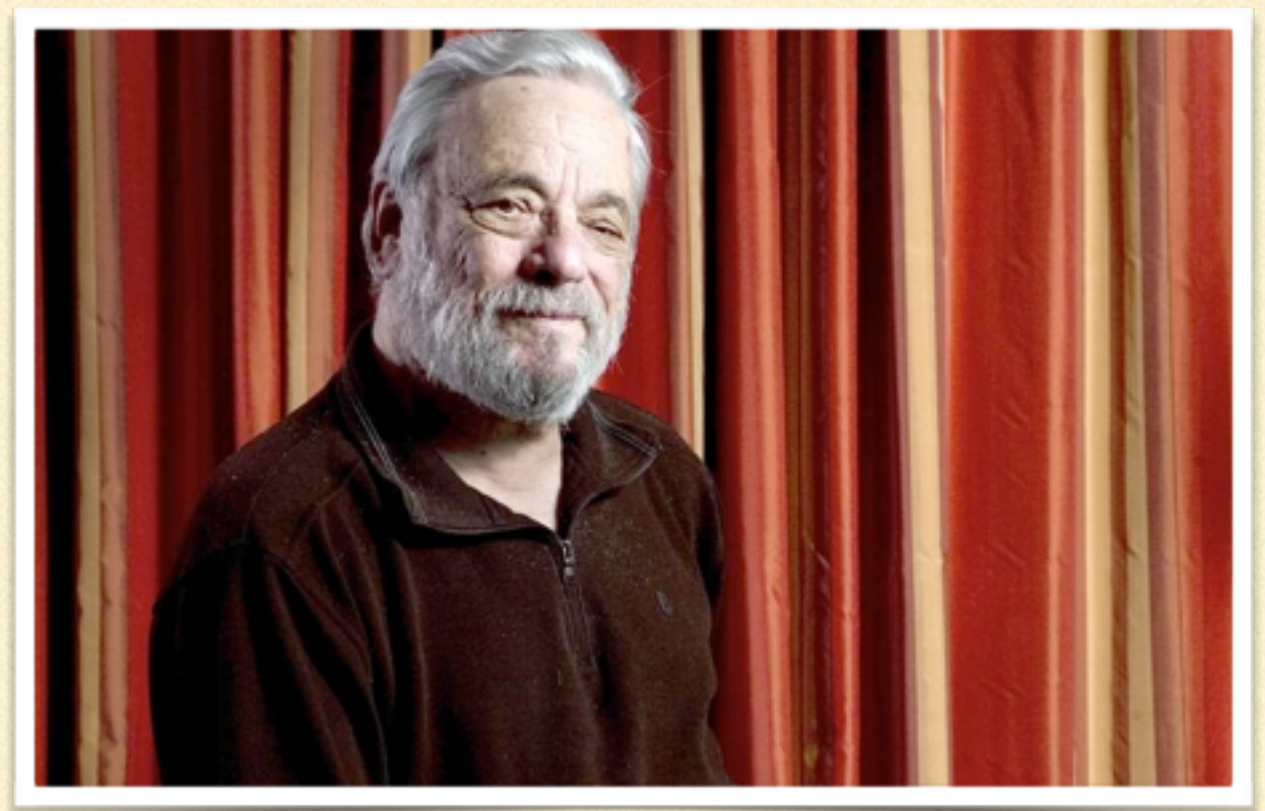


CUMULATIVE PROGRESS AND COUNTERFACTUAL HISTORY



- What would Shakespeare have done without access to Brooke and his sources?
- The world would different today without Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet*. Would it be better or worse? What are our criteria?
- Does our generation have any moral claims on the authors of the 15th-16th centuries? Did we at the time?
- Do future persons have similar claims on us now?

What is Sondheim to
Masuccio Salernitano?



THE NONIDENTITY PROBLEM

- Comparing alternative states of the world on a moral or normative basis is fraught with paradoxes.

“[O]ne woman writes: ‘It is always fascinating to speculate on who we would have been if our parents had married other people.’ In wondering who she would have been, this woman ignores the answer: ‘No one’.”

- Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* 351 (1984)

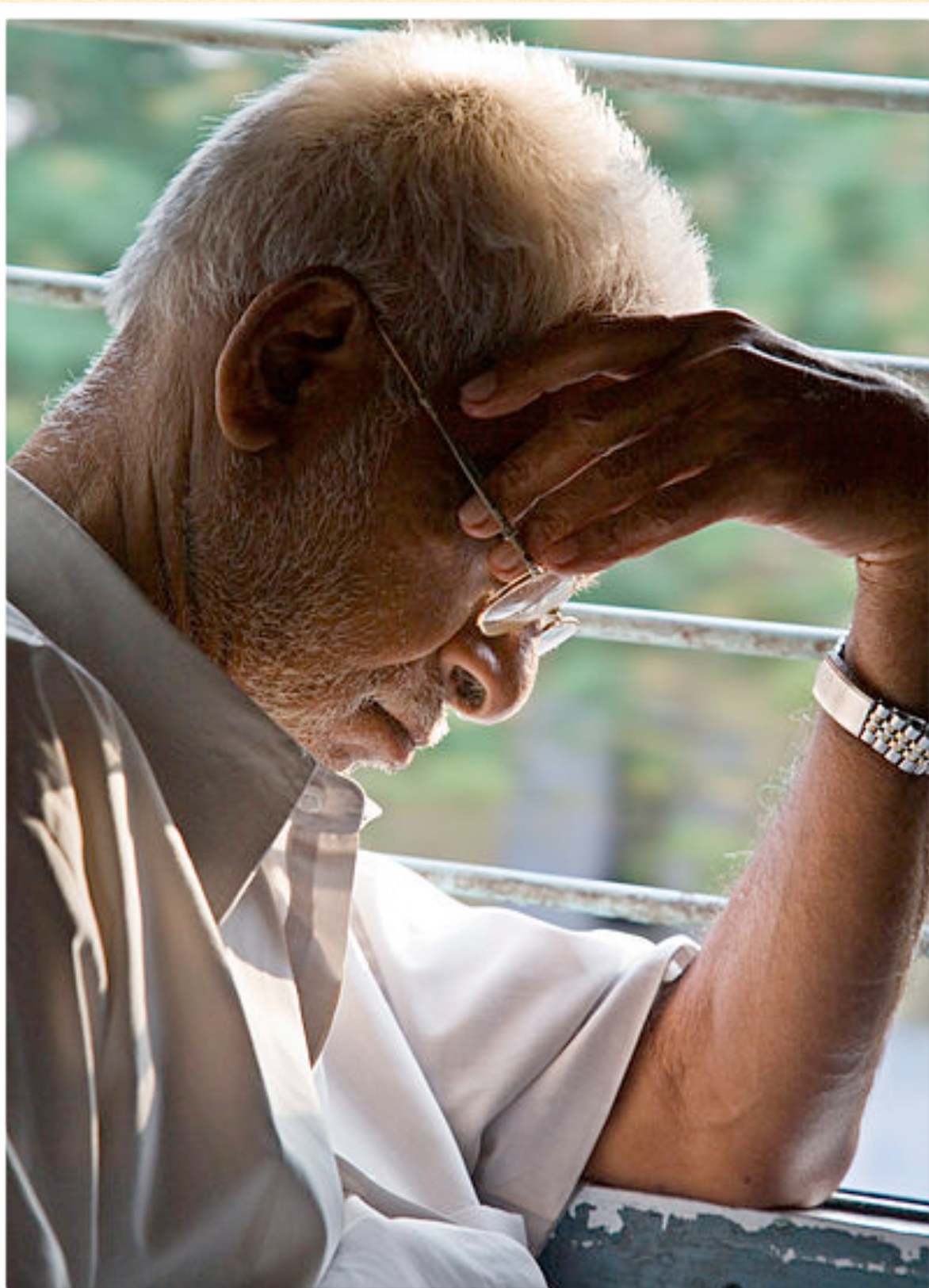
- Policy choices that affect the development of knowledge going forward do not affect future persons, or even future knowledge. They change the identity of those persons and that knowledge. This is not necessarily a comparable relation. So how can it admit to normative evaluation?
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PRESENT PRIORITIES AND FUTURE PERSONS



Source: <http://www.queensjournal.ca/story/2012-10-30/arts/spookier-better/>

- Janet Parker (1938-1978). The last human to die of smallpox.



Source: Jorge Royan, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India_-_An_old_man_-_0800.jpg; CC-BY-SA-3.0

How do our research priorities—and the policy regimes that determine them—affect the existence of future persons?



Source: <https://visualsonline.cancer.gov/details.cfm?imageid=2191>

PRESENT PRIORITIES AND FUTURE PERSONS

- Could it be wrong to forego a cure for one life-threatening disease in order to pursue a cure for a different life-threatening disease? If so, *who is wronged?*
 - How (if at all) can we account for and compare to one another:
 - Descendants of those who we cure, who will be born
 - (Hypothetical) descendants of those we don't cure, who won't be born
 - THESE ARE DIFFERENT PEOPLE, and we must choose which of them will come into being. What are the moral implications of such a choice?
 - Complicating cases:
 - Life-threatening vs. Non-Life-Threatening Diseases
 - Late-Life Diseases vs. Early-Life Diseases: the QALY Model
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RESPONSES TO THE PROBLEM

- The Economic Response: Counting and Discounting
 - The Environmentalist Response: Rights and Norms
 - The Anti-Theoretical Response: Other-Regarding Politics, Channelled through Social Choice Institutions
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